

Stoneman Dispatch

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Of the Inland Empire, Department of California and Pacific

Email: camp18@suvpac.org Web: www.suvpac.org/camp18.html

Volume 9, No.6, November, 2018

Happy Thanksgiving! Enjoy the Winter Holidays!

Message from the Camp Commander

Greetings, Brothers!

I hope this message finds you and yours healthy and in good spirits.

As most of you may already know, our next camp meeting will **NOT** be at the Palm Springs Air Museum, as has been our custom over the years for our December meeting. Instead, on Saturday, December 15th, we will be participating in the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Evergreen Memorial Historical Cemetery in Riverside, hosted by Brother John Morris.

In conjunction with other ceremonies across the United States being performed at the exact same time, this ceremony will start at 09:00 and last approximately one hour. We will then meet at the American Legion Hall in Corona at 12:00 pm (noon) to conduct our regular camp meeting and most importantly, have camp elections for the coming year. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend both of these functions or at least the camp meeting at noon.

November is the month that Brother Rudy sends out our annual dues forms for the coming year. I would humbly ask you all to respond as soon as possible after receiving the notice so that he can put our accounts in order. I am sure the camp, would also appreciate this.

Brother Richard Burns, PCC, is recovering from surgery and seems to be doing well.

More on page 2, see COMMANDER

Tentative Camp Calendar

Saturday Nov. 10 – Veterans Day Flag Placement at Evergreen Cemetery. Want to help/volunteer? Email Brother John Morris at: john.morris.6@us.af.mi for more information.

Saturday Dec. 15 – Wreaths Across America, Camp participation with uniformed Color Guard. Ceremonies start 9:00 am at Evergreen Cemetery, Riverside. More information on page 2.

Saturday Dec. 15 – Camp election meeting at Corona American Legion Hall, 1024 B, S. Main St. 12:00 p.m.

Saturday Feb. 9, 2019 – Lincoln Shrine Open House and Camp Display, Redlands. 11:00 am – 3:00 pm.

Saturday Feb 17 – Camp Meeting, Corona American Legion Hall, 10:00 am.

March 22-23, 2019 – Department Encampment. More Information to follow in the next newsletter.

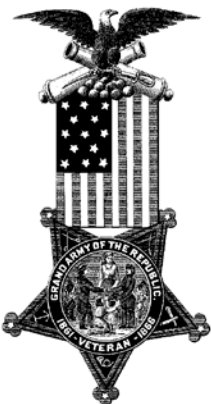
Civil War Symposium March 23, 2019

Camp 18 Brother Bodie Crowder (JR Member) is organizing a Civil War Symposium scheduled for Saturday, March 23, 2019 at the ESRI Café, 380 New York St. Redlands, 92373. The Symposium will be held between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm.

Besides being the Organizer, Brother Bodie will be a Keynote speaker in the afternoon session along with other noted Civil War Historians, Meg Groeling, David T. Dixon and Bruce Smith.

More on page 2 see SYMPOSIUM,...

*Dedicated to Preserving the Memory
of the Grand Army of the Republic
And the soldiers who Fought to Save the Union 1861 - 1865*



COMMANDER from page 1.

I'm sure he would appreciate hearing from any of you about how he is doing.

Finally, as most of you know, my time as Camp Commander is coming to an end. I would like to say that it has been an honor to be your Camp Commander for the past three years. Camp 18 is a vibrant and active camp within the Department of California and the Pacific and we have many talented and passionate Brothers participating in many areas to promote the memory of our ancestors who fought to save the Union. I sincerely thank all of you for making my job as your Commander easier. I look forward to assisting the new Camp Commander in whatever way he needs me in 2019.

As always, you can contact me at: psychrn10@aol.com or by phone at 909-862-7129. I would especially like to know about any Brothers or their family members who are ill or in distress.

Wishing you all a Joyous Holiday Season and Happy New Year . . .

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

Steve Doyle,
Camp Commander.

SYMPOSIUM continued from page 1,..

This "most of the day" event will include lunch and a raffle, beside the great information about America's Civil War 1861 – 1865.

For more information about this event and prices, please visit the website: www.southwestcivilwar.com .

We'll have Bodie give us more information at the December Camp meeting.

Brother Bodie is a fun personality and should be a great and interesting speaker at this symposium. If you will not be attending the Department Encampment in Bakersfield on March 22-23, please support Brother Bodie and his fantastic effort, bringing the American Civil War Experience to Redlands.

Wreaths Across America from page 1 calendar.

Camp 18 has committed to participate in Wreaths Across America 2018 where Brother John Morris will be the Master of Ceremonies. As mentioned on page 1, this ceremony will take place on Saturday, December 15, 2018 with an early start time of 9:00 a.m.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS with civil war uniforms to participate, at least 6 will be

needed. Uniformed Brothers will be needed for a Color Guard and Escort/Honor Guard. The Wreaths Across America Service will be much like our Camp's Memorial Day Service.

If available for such a project, please contact the Editor at: rev03@dc.rr.com

Annual per Capita Dues

It is that time of year again, my Brothers. Notices will be mailed out next week with a self-addressed "Return" envelope included for a quick and easy return. Please return your dues payment before the end of January 2019.

Welcome New Brother



At the October meeting the Camp initiated new Brother Joseph E. Justin (Gene) of Corona, California.

Brother Gene comes to us via the Civil War service of his Great - Great Grandfather Hiram E. Vincent of Company A, 22 New York Volunteer Infantry who served from May 1861 through June 1863.

Brother Gene was unanimously elected into Camp membership.

In the photo below, Brother Chaplain Bill Daley (left) assists with the Initiation of Brother Gene Justin.



“Guard of Abraham Lincoln?”

Private William Billings (1836 – 1929)

Submitted by Brother Steve Doyle, Camp Commander

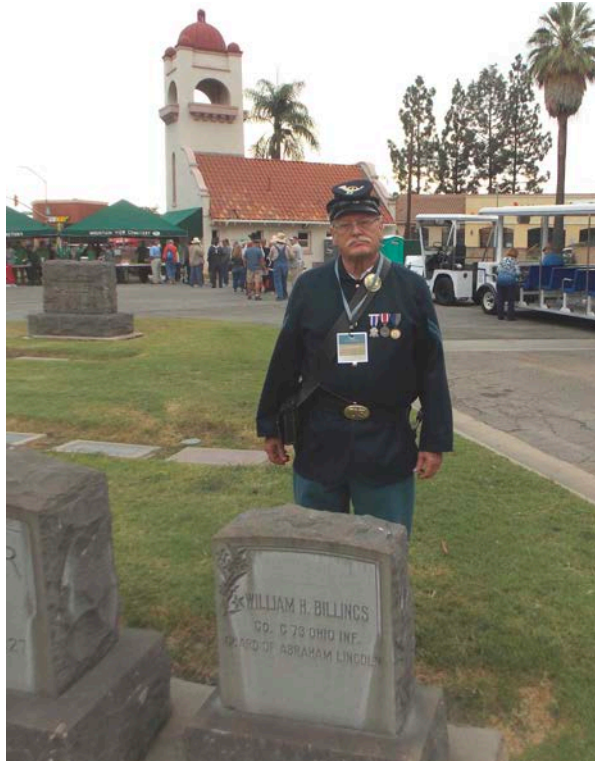
On Saturday, October 6th, I was invited by Nick Cateldo of the San Bernardino Historical Society to participate in their annual Mt. View Cemetery Tour, and to present the only Civil War Veteran buried there: Private William Billings. Of interest to me, and also to historians, is the fact that, “Guard of Abraham Lincoln” is on Billings tombstone. I did some investigating on line and came up with some interesting facts.

To begin with, Private Billings was with the 73rd Ohio Infantry Regiment that fought at Gettysburg and he was wounded on the third day of fighting during Pickett’s Charge. He was subsequently assigned to the “Veterans Reserve Corps” in Washington, D.C. which was made up of rehabilitated veterans who could no longer be useful in combat but could otherwise perform non-combatant duties like guard duty, cooking and being orderlies.

In November, 1864 the Washington Police Force created the first Permanent detail to protect President Lincoln. I could only find the names of these two Bodyguards; John Parker, the bodyguard who left his post while guarding Mr. Lincoln, allowing Booth to assassinate him; and William H. Crook, who held Parker responsible for Lincoln’s death. It is unlikely that Private Billings was either one of the other two Body Guards to Lincoln while he was alive. However, upon Lincoln’s death, some interesting facts occurred that would allow Private Billings to claim he was, “Guard of Abraham Lincoln”.

First of all, after his death, Lincoln’s body was brought to the White House on April 15, 1865 and remained there until April 19th. One account states that, “At the east gate of the White House there were Soldiers and no one was admitted to the grounds.” Could Private Billings have been one of these soldiers at the White House guarding

Continued on page 4, see Billings,.....



Above; Camp Commander Steve Doyle poses with the headstone of Private Billings at Mountain View Cemetery in San Bernardino.



**General George Stoneman Jr.
Camp 18 Officers**

Camp Commander,	Steve Doyle
Sr. Vice Cmdr,	Michael Bullard
Jr. Vice Cmdr,	Richard Burns
Sec/Treas,	Rudy Velasco III
Camp Council #1	Michael Emmett
Camp Council #2	Rudolph Velasco IV
Camp Council #3	John Morris

Appointed

Camp Chaplain	Bill Daley
Camp Historian	Burt Hogue
Graves Registration	Michael Emmett
Newsletter Editor	Rudy Velasco III
Patriotic Instructor	Richard Burns
JROTC & Eagle	Richard Burns &
Scout Coordinators	Rudy Velasco III

If you have something of interest that you would like to add to this newsletter, something that our **Brothers** might enjoy like an article, a photo or a Civil War event, contact the Editor, Rudy Velasco for placement. rev03@dc.rr.com



Billings, continued...

the President's body? He was in the Veterans Reserve Corps at this time and could have been utilized in that capacity.

Secondly, on the morning of April 19th, Funeral Services were held, followed by a Funeral Procession of three miles to the Capitol Rotunda. It is documented that the, "Ninth and Tenth Regiments of the Veterans' Reserve Corps headed the Column during this Funeral Procession." Was Private Billings in this Funeral Procession protecting the President's body?

Thirdly, the President's coffin rested in the Rotunda of the Capitol from the 19th of April until the evening of the 20th. During that time thousands paid their respects to the fallen President as guards marshaled the sight-seers into a double line which separated at the foot of the coffin, passed on either side, was reunited again and was guided out by the opposite door. Did Private Billings assist with guiding mourners past the President's body?

And lastly, by April 18th, arrangements had been made for a chronology for Lincoln's Funeral Train; it would leave Washington on April 21st and arrive in Springfield, Illinois on May 3rd. Biographer and friend Isaac N. Arnold wrote: Non-Commissioned Officers of the Veterans Reserve Corps were detailed to act as a body guard and Major Generals of the Army were directed to attend the train and keep watch, so that at all times during the journey, the coffin should be under their special guardianship. Did only Non-commissioned Officers from the Veterans Reserve Corps guard the President's Funeral Train? In all likelihood, privates would have been needed as well.

So it comes down to this: did Private Billings take liberties to embellish his own legacy by having, "Guard of Abraham Lincoln" put on his gravestone? I don't think we will ever truly know . . . But the factual evidence that I have presented is this: Private Billings was assigned to the Veterans' Reserve Corps during the time that Lincoln's body was being guarded; and soldiers from the Veterans' Reserve Corps were involved in at least some aspects in guarding the President's body from the time he was assassinated on April 14, 1865, until he was laid to rest in May, 1865, in Springfield, Illinois. You can draw your own conclusions, but I for one, would not question the integrity of a Union Soldier wounded at Gettysburg. . .

A Visit to the Lincoln Memorial Shrine

A few weeks ago I made the quick trip to Redlands to visit the Lincoln Memorial Shrine, moreover to view the "Reflections of the Face of Lincoln" animatronic presentation. I was quite happy with the approximately 20 minute show.

Here is a short report without giving away all of the details.

The back drop of the room is set like an Antebellum parlor wall with colored wall paper and

heavy drapes surrounding the window. There is a large Federal Eagle decorating one of the walls and marble looking busts on the side tables. An Infantry marching drum sits on the floor.

Through the window you can see the sun shine and the grass blowing in the breeze. A quiet narration can be heard explaining life of the 1860's.

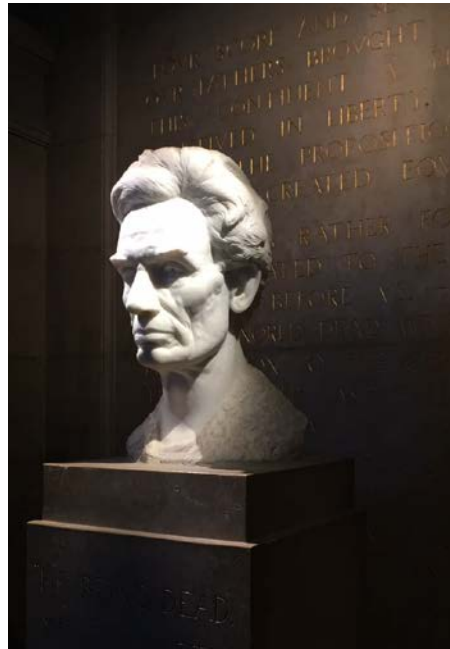
Then the lights dim and the sky darkened, the rain begins to pour and with a crack of thunder the bombing of Fort Sumter begins.

The parlor room comes to life with a narration of a chronological order of events during the Civil War.

You see abolitionist Frederick Douglas describe the plight of the American enslaved and pioneering nurse Clara Barton defines organizing relief efforts for the wounded Union soldiers. Then there is the 16th president.

You will have to visit the Lincoln Shrine and see the show to learn the end of this production.

"Reflections of the Face of Lincoln" will be showing at the Lincoln Shrine until December 29, 2018. Tickets to the show are \$5 per person and can be purchased upon arrival. Show times begin every 20 minutes and start at 1:20 p.m. The Lincoln Memorial Shrine is open daily 1pm till 5pm, Tuesday through Sunday, closed on Mondays.



Above; a bust of Abraham Lincoln, the first item to come into view when entering the Lincoln Shrine.

