



Photo courtesy of G. Dodge

John Cook was a diminutive 4 feet 9 inches tall upon his enlistment at the age of 14 on June 7, 1861. He was born on August 10, 1846 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Before the war he was a laborer. At the Battle of Antietam, the young bugler was awarded the Medal of Honor for serving the guns. See story on page 25.

The Civil War Medal of Honor Recipients of Arlington National Cemetery

BY *GEORGE W. DODGE*

Medal of Honor recipients did not initially hold Arlington National Cemetery in high regard since it originated as a potter's field during the Civil War on May 13, 1864. Over 5,000 soldiers were interred within a year.¹ After the war, the remains of several thousand soldiers within a circuit of fifty miles from Washington were disinterred and reinterred in Arlington. Many were unknown. It would take the burials of distinguished high-ranking officers to begin to alter the perception of Arlington Burial Grounds as a potter's field.

When General Philip H. Sheridan died on August 5, 1888 at Nonquitt, Massachusetts, he held the highest ranking position in the U.S. armed forces. Sheridan is popularly regarded as one of the three most prominent Union generals from the Civil War, along with Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman.² Sheridan's burial in front of the main entrance of Arlington House ushered in an era in which interment at Arlington was desirable. A series of interments of major generals and an admiral followed Sheridan's burial:

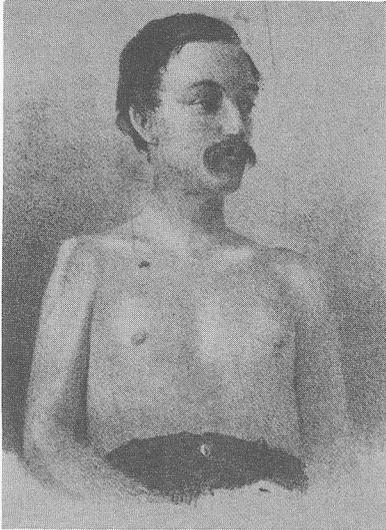
| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| General George Crook | 1890 |
| Admiral David Porter | 1891 |
| General Montgomery Meigs | 1892 |
| General Abner Doubleday | 1893 |
| General Stephen Burbridge | 1894 |
| General Walter Gresham | 1895 |
| General John Gibbon | 1896 |
| General John Mason | 1897 |
| General William Rosecrans | 1898 |
| General Horatio Wright | 1899 |

The next sequence which gradually increased the status of Arlington National Cemetery was the series of interments of 95 Civil War Medal of Honor recipients. These burials began early in the twentieth century. This article presents the stories of six Civil War Medal of Honor awardees buried within Arlington National Cemetery. It proceeds in chronological order of the events

in which brave acts were performed, two in 1861, four in 1862. Four of the six recipients were wounded in action.

Charles F. Rand

On July 18, 1861, three days before the First Battle of Bull Run, Union and Confederate forces skirmished along the Bull Run stream at Blackburn's Ford. As the Confederates, under the command of General James Longstreet, were gaining an upper hand, virtually the entire Twelfth New York Infantry, except for 60 men, fled in disorder.³ The Twelfth New York sustained 34 casualties, the highest of any regiment on the field.⁴ However, twenty-two year-old Charles F. Rand refused to retreat. The Medal of Honor was awarded to Rand for his determination to remain and engage the enemy.⁵



Courtesy of Broadfoot Publishing Co. The Army Medical Dept. took this photograph of Charles F. Rand circa 1867 to illustrate the primary decapitation of the head of the humerus of his right shoulder.

A native of Batavia, Genesee County, New York, the 5 feet 7 inch blue-eyed Rand was a printer before enlisting as a sergeant.⁶ According to a certificate filed by Lt. John Foote of the Twelfth New York Volunteers, Rand volunteered for service on April 15, 1861 within 10 minutes after President Lincoln called via telegram for volunteers.⁷ A U.S. Senate report states that "it is claimed that Rand was the first man to enlist in the United States"⁸ for federal service as opposed to militia duty. When the Twelfth

New York State Militia merged into the Twelfth New York Infantry, it necessitated a reduction in non-commissioned officers. Upon discovery that another sergeant was to be reduced to the ranks due to the consolidation, Rand resigned in favor of that sergeant.⁹

During the Seven Days Battle before Richmond, Virginia, Rand received a gunshot wound on June 27, 1862 at the Battle of Gaines's Mill, Virginia (the name refers to a mill owned by Dr. William G. Gaines). While recuperating from the resection of his shoulder, Rand was captured at Savage Station. He was paroled a month later, transported to Satterlee Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and discharged from the service on a disability. While in the hospital recovering from his gunshot wound, Rand met nurse Gabriella Hemingway, a Catholic nun of the Sisters of Charity. They were married in New York.¹⁰ In

November 1863, Rand joined the Twenty-second Regiment of the Veteran Reserve Corps (ne Invalid Corps.) and was commissioned as a lieutenant. He was assigned to duty at Douglas Hospital in Washington, D.C. in May 1864.¹¹

Rand was breveted captain for meritorious service in 1865. He was transferred to Texas in 1866 to manage the regional Freedman's Bureau. However, while in Texas, Rand's wife Gabriella and their infant daughter died of disease. Following a postwar examination of Rand, an attending physician stated that despite the shoulder wound, Rand had use of his arm and "plays well on the banjo."¹² By 1869, Rand's right arm was weakening. He then enrolled at Georgetown University earning a medical degree in 1873.¹³ However, by 1874 Dr. Rand had little use of his right hand. He

returned to Batavia and practiced medicine for the next twenty-five years. In 1889 he married Louise C. Platt, and moved to Washington, D.C.¹⁴

In 1907, Rand attended a unique ante-mortem memorial service at Arlington Cemetery in which the Medal of Honor Legion dedicated a monument over his prospective grave. The Legion was organized in Washington, D.C. in 1890 by Medal of Honor recipients to promote fellowship and patriotism. Dr. Rand died on October 13, 1908 at his residence on 15th Street in Washington and was buried in Section 1, Grave 125B near the Fort Myer Chapel.¹⁵ The private marker of Dr. Rand and his wife, Louise Catherine, is on the front row facing Meigs Drive. The partially rough granite block acknowledges Rand as a Medal of Honor recipient but does not recognize his occupational status as a physician.

George H. Palmer

On April 4, 1861, nineteen-year-old George H. Palmer enlisted in the state militia as a bugler in Company G of the First Illinois Cavalry in Monmouth, Illinois, furnishing his own horse.¹⁶ The company was raised and commanded by his father, who had served as a U.S. Cavalry officer in the Mexican War.¹⁷ Palmer was awarded the Medal of Honor for gallantry at the Battle of Lexington, Missouri, a Confederate victory (September 20, 1861). While fighting

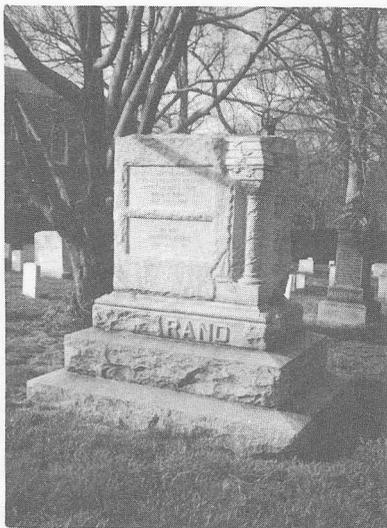


Photo by G. Dodge

The Medal of Honor Legion placed the monument of Dr. Charles Rand conspicuously in the front row on Meigs Drive near the gate by Fort Myer Chapel.

dismounted during that battle, Palmer led a charge that recaptured a federal hospital occupied by enemy sharpshooters.¹⁸

A native of New York, Palmer was mustered out of the regimental band on October 9, 1861 less than three weeks after his conduct at Lexington.¹⁹ He was immediately commissioned as a lieutenant in Company A of the Eighty-third Illinois Infantry. Although Palmer graduated from the Chicago University Preparatory School, he chose to pursue a military career. On January 22, 1867, Palmer was appointed as a lieutenant in the United States regular army. His military tenure included service in the Civil War, the Indian wars, and the Spanish-American War until his retirement as a major on February 27, 1899.²⁰



Courtesy of Broadfoot Publishing Co.
George Palmer

Palmer and his wife, Estelle, had two daughters, Ruth and Mrs. C.H. Noble, and three sons, Ned, Guy, and Bruce—the latter two sons served in the U.S. Army in World War I.²¹ Palmer died on April 7, 1901 in Harrison, Illinois and is buried in Section 3, Grave 2104. Palmer's obituary, prepared by the Illinois Commandery, began: "Death loves a shining mark! The grim Destroyer found one when he struck down the subject of this sketch."²²

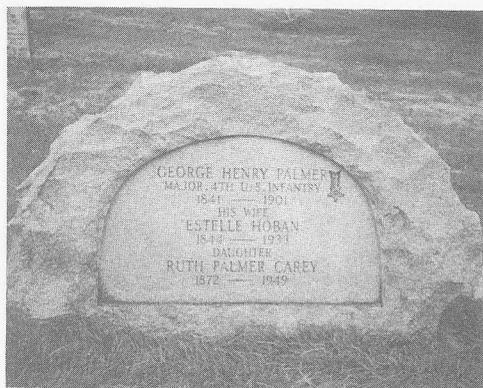


Photo by G. Dodge

George Palmer followed the military tradition of his father (Mexican and Civil Wars) and great-grandfather, (American Revolution) by earning the Medal of Honor and later serving as an officer in the regular U.S. Army.

Daughter Ruth Carey, who married a captain of the Sixteenth United States Infantry, wrote a letter in February 1905 to support a pension increase for her mother in which she mentioned that her father "received a medal of honor for certain gallant and meritorious service at the battle of Lexington MO." Estelle Palmer lived until November 1, 1933 and was buried the next day in Arlington Cemetery. Ruth Carey also rests under the private granite marker which is adorned with a bronze replica of the Medal of Honor.²³



Photo courtesy of G. Dodge
Michael Dillon

Michael A. Dillon

Michael Augustus Dillon, born at Chelmsford, Massachusetts in 1839, enlisted in Company G of the Second New Hampshire Infantry in May 1861.²⁴ When four Union cannons were captured during the May 5, 1862 Battle of Williamsburg, Virginia, the twenty-three-year-old Dillon jumped up from the prone Union company line and urged his comrades to recover the guns. According to Private Dillon, a company lieutenant loudly complained, "Get down, Dillon, you are drawing the enemy's fire!"

Dillon responded: "What in hell are we here for? Come on boys, come on! We mustn't let them take that battery." An exploding shell shattered

Dillon's rifle, and he received a gunshot wound in the leg. Nevertheless, Dillon continued to lead the successful assault. Since certain officers had abdicated their leadership, Dillon filled the gap by rallying the men to recapture the cannons and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his gallantry at Williamsburg and at Oak Grove, Virginia, where on June 25, 1862 he brought in vital information from a reconnaissance.²⁵

In the Second Battle of Bull Run, Dillon was severely wounded by a bullet through the right lung (August 29, 1862). Twenty-two years after the battle, Dillon recounted that he laid on the battlefield for twenty-nine hours after being wounded in an attack "by a large body of rebels."²⁶ He was discharged on a disability and joined the Veteran Reserve Corps in September 1863. In 1865, Dillon was described by seven officers who had known him for four years as "a brave soldier and an honest patriot and a young man of capability and exemplary habits."²⁷

After the war on July 1, 1866, Dillon wed Theresa Quinn, a native of Ireland. They had five



Photo courtesy of G. Dodge
A 1901 artist's rendition of Private Michael Dillon rallying his company near Fort Magruder during the May 5, 1862 Battle of Williamsburg, Virginia.

daughters: Mabel, who died in infancy, Bessie, Rose, Agnes and Marie.²⁸ In his postwar career, Dillon clerked, since his wound prohibited him from manual labor. Dillon's correspondence to the Pension Bureau attributed his incessant cough, severe hemorrhages, and headaches followed by intense vertigo to his lung wound. Dillon's physicians asserted that manual labor tended to induce these symptoms. Accordingly, he applied for several pension increases and was eventually granted a grade two rating when his disability was deemed "equivalent to the loss of a hand or leg."²⁹ Dillon served as a commander of the Medal of Honor Legion and resided in Washington until his death in 1904.³⁰

George D. Sidman

On the third day of the Seven Days Battle on the outskirts of Richmond, Virginia, the Sixteenth Michigan Infantry, part of General Dan Butterfield's brigade, was outnumbered and under attack. As the federal forces began to waiver, George Sidman, who had enlisted in April 1861 as a sixteen-year-old drummer, picked up a flag and helped rally the regiment during the Battle of Gaines's Mill.³¹ The Sixteenth Michigan had 214 casualties, including Sidman, who was severely wounded in the left hip.³² He was awarded the Medal of Honor for "distinguished bravery."³³

Unable to walk because of his gunshot wound, Sidman was captured at Savage Station two days later along with 2,500 sick and wounded Union soldiers, including the previously mentioned Charles F. Rand. He was paroled a month later and left a Point Lookout, Maryland, hospital against medical advice. While his regiment was in Washington, D.C., he located his unit but was not allowed to rejoin it because of his unhealed wound. The Sixteenth Michigan then proceeded into Maryland in pursuit of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Sidman again tried to rejoin his regiment by riding a stray horse to Antietam. A native of Rochester, New York, Sidman was permitted to remain with his Michigan comrades.³⁴



Photo courtesy of G. Dodge

George D. Sidman was a Private in Co. C, 16th Michigan Infantry.

Sidman served as color bearer during the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia (December 13, 1862). He planted the colors within 150 yards of the Confederate position behind the stone wall at the foot of

Marye's Heights. The fire from Robert E. Lee's soldiers was so strong that no Union regiment broke through the Confederate ranks in this sector. Amidst gunfire, Sidman ran canteens to wounded Union soldiers who lay exposed on the battlefield. Although his name does not appear on Fredericksburg casualty sheets, a post-war account indicates that Sidman was slightly wounded during the battle.³⁵

On March 1, 1863, Sidman was promoted to corporal and continued to serve in the color guard in battles at Chancellorsville, Kelly's Ford and Middleburg, Virginia. At the Battle of Middleburg on June 21, 1863, Sidman was wounded in his right foot and subsequently transferred to Company D of the Twelfth Regiment of the Veteran Reserve Corps in December 1863.³⁶ Sidman's father, Abram, was killed in 1864 while serving with Company A of the Fourteenth Michigan Infantry.³⁷ In 1865 Sidman served as an orderly at the murder trial of the Lincoln conspirators. After the war, Sidman returned to Bay City, Michigan, and served one year as a tax assessor. From 1877 to 1880 Sidman ventured into South Africa in pursuit of diamonds and gold.³⁸



Photo by G. Dodge
George Sidman is buried in Section 3, Grave 2492 next to his second wife Francene, who died in 1939.

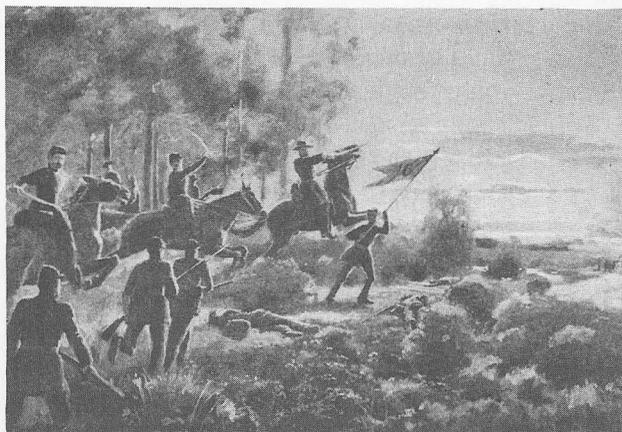


Photo courtesy of G. Dodge
A depiction by artist William W. Stilson of drummer George Sidman leading his brigade near Bottom's Bridge over the Chickahominy River during the Battle of Gaines's Mill, Virginia.

Upon his return to the United States in 1880, Sidman was made a special examiner of the Pension Bureau in Washington, D.C., and then Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and held that position for forty years. He was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic, a veteran's association, and served as an officer of the Medal of Honor Legion. Doc-

tor- recommended summer sea voyages were the norm for Sidman as he sought ways to alleviate his hip pain. Sidman's first wife, Josephine, died in 1883. They had one son, Charles. Sidman remarried in 1885 and had another son, Theodore, who was a major in the Fifty-ninth U.S. Infantry when the elder soldier died in 1920. George Sidman is buried in Section 3, Grave 2492 next to his second wife Francene, who died in 1939.³⁹

John Cook

On September 17, 1862 at the Battle of Antietam, Maryland, fifteen-year-old bugler John Cook of Company B, Fourth U.S. Artillery, volunteered for service as a cannoneer after observing that nearly all of the battery cannoneers were killed or wounded. The battery was positioned near the Hagerstown Pike in the vicinity of the Dunker Church. Confederate infantry was advancing from the west woods. Cook provides this account of his action:

...[Capt. Campbell] had just dismounted, when he was hit twice, and his horse fell dead. I started with the captain to the rear and turned him over to one of the drivers. He ordered me to report to Lt. Stewart and tell him to take command of the battery. I reported, and, seeing the cannoneers nearly all down, and one, with a pouch full of ammunition, lying dead, I unstrapped the pouch, started for the battery, and worked as a cannoneer. We were then in the very vortex of the battle. The enemy had made three desperate attempts to capture us, the last time coming within 10 or 15 feet of our guns.⁴⁰

Cook was a diminutive 4 feet 9 inches tall upon his enlistment at the age of 14 on June 7, 1861. He was born on August 10, 1846 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Before the war he was a laborer. At the Battle of Antietam, the young bugler was awarded the Medal of Honor for serving the guns. Cook was familiar to the Union soldiers of the Iron Brigade since Company B provided their artillery support. A soldier in the Seventh Wisconsin Infantry of the Iron Brigade wrote that "Cook was as game as an Eagle...the command was a family and every man in it known for his worth."⁴¹ At the Battle of Gettysburg, Cook was used as an orderly to carry messages.⁴² Upon the expiration of his term of service on June 7, 1864, Cook reenlisted as a landsman for the U.S. Navy. The blue-eyed veteran was now over 5 feet



Photo by G. Dodge

John Cook's marker, located on the western side of McPherson Drive in the front row, has an incorrect inscription of his wife's maiden name, McBride.

6 inches tall when he boarded the Union gunboat *Peosta* in September 1864. He served on that vessel until June 28, 1865.⁴³

After the war, Cook was employed as a court police officer in Cincinnati. On April 30, 1870 he was married to Isabella McBride by a Methodist minister. The Cooks had three children: John Wesley, Rebecca Ruth and Margarette (who died at the age of 5 1/2). On a pension form, Cook wrote that there "never will be a [marital] separation till Gabriel blows his horn."⁴⁴ He further wrote of throat and lung trouble which began in January 1863 while stationed at Aquia Creek, Virginia. In 1887, the Cooks moved to Washington, D.C., residing on L Street. Cook died on August 3, 1915 and was buried two days later in Section 17, Grave 18613. His wife, Isabella McBride, died within a year on March 16, 1916.⁴⁵

Wager Swayne

Buried in Section 3 is Medal of Honor recipient Wager Swayne, a graduate of Yale University and Cincinnati Law School. Swayne's father was Virginia-born Noah Swayne, who was the first of President Abraham Lincoln's five appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court. The anti-slavery Swayne family relocated to Ohio before the Civil War. In 1861, Wager Swayne, a Columbus, Ohio native, was commissioned to lead the Forty-third Ohio Infantry.⁴⁶ Swayne, despite having had no military training, had an impact on the battlefield during the Union victory at Corinth, Mississippi (October 4, 1862). For his efforts in that battle, Swayne was awarded the Medal of

Honor. His citation reads: "Conspicuous gallantry in restoring order at a critical moment and leading his regiment in a charge."⁴⁷

During the "March to the Sea" or Carolina Campaign, while commanding a brigade, Swayne was wounded by an artillery shell fragment at River's Bridge, South Carolina (February 2, 1865). His right leg was amputated above the knee. Battle reports describe Swayne as "brave and excellent" and "very brave and valuable."⁴⁸ In 1865, Swayne was commissioned in the regular army as colonel of the Forty-fifth U.S. Infantry. He was then placed in charge of operations in the Alabama Freedman's Bureau. Swayne also served in Tennessee and Kentucky.⁴⁹

In 1870, Swayne retired from the Army and went to New York City to resume his law practice. However, Swayne maintained



Photo courtesy of Broadfoot Publishing Co.
Native Ohioan Wager Swayne was Lieutenant Colonel of the 43rd Ohio by the age of 27.

fraternal military relations as a member of the New York Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, a Civil War officer's organization known today as MOLLUS. In 1887, Swayne presented an address entitled *The Ordinance of 1787 and The War of 1861*. Swayne detailed how wars affect the legal process and that the origin of the Thirteenth Amendment was Article VI of the Ordinance of

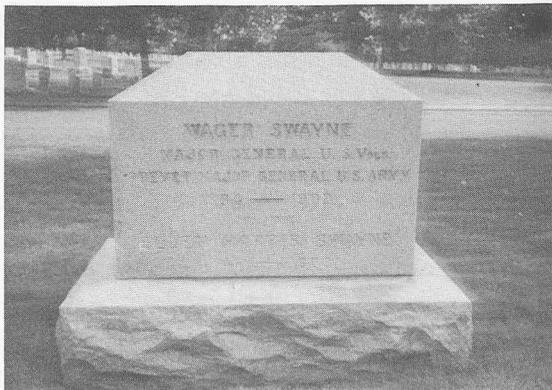


Photo by G. Dodge

Attorney Wager Swayne's marker bears no inscription indicating his Medal of Honor status.

1787, an ordinance to govern U.S. territory northwest of the Ohio River.⁵⁰ Wager Swayne died in 1902 in New York City. His private headstone lists his final rank, Major General, the last Major General of Volunteers appointed during the Civil War.⁵¹ It also indicates that his wife, Ellen Horina Swayne, is buried with him in Section 3, Grave 1406. Swayne's marker does not acknowledge that he received the Medal of Honor or a law degree.

Notes

George W. Dodge is an Arlington native. He would like to specially thank Virginia S. Dodge for encouraging his interest in local history. Also, thanks to Paul Sale Photography for reproduction of the photographs and publisher Tom Broadfoot for the use of several pictures.

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- ⁸ U.S. Senate Bill S-4658, Calendar No. 833, Report No. 827, March 24, 1902.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
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- ¹² Military Service Record of Charles F. Rand, National Archives, and Pension of Charles F. Rand, National Archives.
- ¹³ Georgetown University Archives, Special Collections.
- ¹⁴ Pension of Charles F. Rand, National Archives.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.* and *Medal of Honor*, p. 5. Pursuant to a 1955 act of Congress, the Legion of Valor was created. In 1958, Congress chartered the Medal of Honor Society which, unlike the Legion of Valor, limited membership to Medal of Honor recipients. The Medal of Honor Society museum is located aboard the carrier *Yorktown*, harbored at Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. July 23, 1998 interview with Ronald O. Dake, Executive Director, Medal of Honor Society.
- ¹⁶ Military Service Record of George H. Palmer, National Archives.
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⁴⁵ Ibid.

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⁴⁷ *Congressional Medal of Honor*, p. 920.

⁴⁸ *Official Records*, Vol. 44, Part I, pp. 194, 376, 798.

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⁵⁰ *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, Vol. 57, pp. 265-358.

⁵¹ Sifakis, *Who Was Who In The Union*, pp. 400-401.