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THE MISSION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN IS TO PROVIDE SERVICE TO VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Veteran's father appointed by Mr. Lincoln

By James Therese

It's hard to believe there are any children of Civil War veterans still alive. But when you shake hands with William (Bill) Upham Jr, you can feel the history. At 92 years old, this WWII veteran has had some memorable experiences. He was blessed by Pope Pius XI in 1932 in Rome, met General Patton in 1944 in England, wounded in 1944 in France, awarded two Bronze stars for valor, been a member of the Milwaukee Yacht Club for 50 years, had three children and was married to his wife, Betty Ann, for 71 years. It is difficult to imagine a legacy more rich and rewarding. Then...Bill talks about his father.

"My father, William Upham Sr. was wounded at the first battle of Bull Run in 1861 and left for dead. A minie ball had pierced his chest above the heart and left an enormous exit wound," said Bill.

After three days, scavengers scrounging the battlefield came upon Upham Sr. and took off his shoes.

"He must have startled the crap out of those thieves because my father said, "I hope to use



those shoes some day," recalls Bill.

Still alive, Upham Sr. recovered at a Confederate hospital and was shipped to the infamous Libby Prison in Richmond. A few months later, he was paroled during a prisoner exchange and had a personal audience with Mr. Lincoln. He asked to see the young man's wound.

"When he was old, I used to help my father get dressed and would place both hands on his back trying to cover the wound. I couldn't cover the whole thing," Bill remembers.

Mr. Lincoln appointed

Upham Sr. to West Point in 1862. Upon graduation in 1866, Upham Sr. was assigned as the Officer of the Guard at Fort Monroe, Virginia, responsible for guarding Jefferson Davis, the former President of the Confederacy. He got to know Davis well playing chess and talking with him until the wee hours of the morning. Davis was very familiar with Wisconsin, having spent time there as a young officer, and even fathered an illegitimate child with a Menomonee Indian. Upham Sr. resigned his commission in 1869.

"My father returned to

Wisconsin and became one of the founders of the town of Marshfield. He owned many businesses, served as mayor and was very much loved by his neighbors," said Bill.

In 1895, Upham Sr. was elected governor of Wisconsin running on the strength of the old Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). As governor, he commissioned the state historical building on the UW campus. He served one term. In 1916, he remarried a much younger woman after the death of his first wife and begat two sons, William in 1916 at age 75 and Frederick in 1921 at age 80.

"I always defer to my dad for fathering two children so late in life. He was the boss. I grew up idolizing him. I still miss him and love him," said Bill.

William Upham Jr. lives in a nursing home in Milwaukee and still meets with his WWII comrades for brunch every Monday morning at the Milwaukee Yacht Club. His brother, Frederick, lives with his wife in Fort Collins, Colorado. For more on the Upham story, please consult Civil War Fathers-Sons of the Civil War in World War II by Tim Pletkovich.

Support the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team

The 32nd Infantry Combat Brigade Team of the Wisconsin National Guard has been called up for active duty in Iraq. This will affect nearly 3,500 local soldiers and is the largest operational deployment of Wisconsin National Guard Forces since World War II.

The Wisconsin American Legion is going to do everything we can to support these soldiers and their families during their deployment and after their return home. This month, we will be mailing a key tag to all of you who have donated to our direct mail fundraising appeals (labels, post-it notes, etc) in the past. These key tags will have a Red Arrow wrapped



in a yellow ribbon on one side and the address of the Wisconsin American Legion on the other. You can attach your keys to show your support for the 32nd. And should you misplace them, they can be mailed directly back to us so that we may return them to you.

Please support this important appeal. The funds raised will go a long way in letting these soldiers and their families know how much we appreciate their service. If you have not donated to Legion programs in the past but would like to help out with this appeal, send your name and mailing information to Jessika at jessika@wilegion.org.

Annual Lincoln Pilgrimage

The 75th Annual National American Legion Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln will be held in Springfield, IL on Thursday, February 12, 2009. The hosts of the event are Springfield Post #32, Auxiliary Unit #32, and Sons of The American Legion Squadron #32. The commemoration begins

on the evening of Wednesday, February 11, with an Open House at Springfield Post #32. The Program continues on February 12, with a Breakfast honoring National Commander Dave Rehbein, the Pilgrimage to the Tomb, and a Lincoln Commemoration Luncheon.

From December 15, 2008 to

January 15, 2009, the Department of Wisconsin ran a contest where the two individuals who recruited the most members won an all expense paid trip to the Lincoln Pilgrimage. This year's winners are Past Department Commander Al Richards and Department Historian Mike Rohan.