

Grant Ceremonies and Parade.

By George J. Weinmann & Arthur Kirmss

April 27, 1997 marked the Centennial Celebration of the Grant's National Monument and Ulysses S. Grant's 175th Birthday. Oliver Tilden Camp # 26, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War held its traditional initiation of new members inside the rotunda of this the nation's largest mausoleum also on this day. Starting at 11:30 A.M., Senior Vice Commander (S.V.C.) George Weinmann gave the Call to Order, while the drummer of Company H, 14th Brooklyn gave the long drum roll. The advancing of the Color Guard heard "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again" played by Brother Arthur Kirmss of Tilden Camp on his piccolo recorder. The Invocation was given by Naval Captain and U.S. Marine Corps Chief Chaplain George Pucciarelli. Following was the Pledge of Allegiance led by Junior Vice Commander Bill Mason. Arthur Kirmss sang the National Anthem, and N.Y. State Commander Sons of Union Veterans James Grismer introduced the guests of honor, first of whom was Commander-in-Chief Sons of Union Veterans Alan Loomis. Twenty two new members of Tilden Camp were called forth to grasp the National Flag, — taking the members' oath. S.V.C. George Weinmann then introduced again Commander-in-Chief Alan Loomis who spoke about the Centennial Event. A remembrance was delivered by Tilden Camp Commander Cliff Henke, dedicating this service to the memory of deceased Bro. Joseph Mullen, and Bro. Barton Denis Eaton, ESQ. Bro. Kirmss played "Taps." Benediction was offered by U.S.M.C. Chaplain George Pucciarelli, with closing by our Camp Commander Cliff Henke. S.V.C. George Weinmann then gave the order to "Retire the Colors," as Bro. Kirmss played "The Battle Cry of Freedom." Special thanks to Capt. Robert Danielski's Co. H, "14th Brooklyn," the Color Guards of N.Y.S. Sons Camps Sidney and Caywood, along with visiting S.U.V. Massachusetts Camp Color Guard and the Michigan Camp Commander and Color Guard. We also thank "The Greenpoint Monitor Museum" President, Janice Lauletta, and Evelyn and Erica Matechak for attending.

Afterwards the National Park Service held the Centennial Parade and Grant's Tomb memorial ceremonies. Gov. Pataki's representative spoke, as did Commander-in-Chief Alan Loomis. Both were invited by S.V.C. Weinmann, who helped coordinate the ceremonies with the National Park Service by contacting reenactors, Sons Camps, and other interested persons. Our Commander, Cliff Henke, N.Y. State Commander James Grismer, and S.V.C. George Weinmann, members of the National Park Service Grant Committee, attended preparation meetings for the parade and ceremonies.

Special thanks to N.Y. Dept. Auxiliary S.U.V. member Anna Marie Weinmann for assisting her son S.V.C. George Weinmann in preparing for this historic event.

Centennial Parade Highlights

Highlights of the parade included: The Battalion of West Point Cadets who led the parade; a float covered in red, white & blue flowers, depicting Grant's famous words "Let Us Have Peace." "U.S. Grant" Schools bearing the General's name and School Bands from towns across the country marching with well known reenactment units such as — Capt. Danielski's Co. H, & Bro. Tony Mollo's Co. E, "14th Brooklyn" New York State Militia; Capt. Tom Moore's 88th New York State Volunteers "Irish Brigade"; Brian Pohanka's 5th New York State Volunteers "Duryee's Zouaves"; the horsemen of the 10th NY Cavalry of Tilden Camp's own Bill Uhlinger; Co. H, 119th New York State Volunteers Historical Association. Marching with Tilden Camp as a combined "Sons" unit were the Camp Color Guards from Sidney Camp & Caywood Camp - both NY State; the Massachusetts Color Guard, and the Michigan Camp Commander and Color Guard. Individual sons of various camps from across the nation



marched, with family and friends. The parade began at 103 Street and ended at (122 Street) Grant's Tomb. The Ceremony at Grant's Tomb was covered by Local & National News - including major NY City & Nationwide News TV Networks, and very special guests were the Grant Family with Ulysses Grant Dietz as a speaker. In attendance were also other prominent Grant family members.

Wreaths were placed outside the Tomb. One was placed by West Point for the President of the United States. Tilden Camp's and Sons' National wreaths were also placed earlier in the day during the Tilden Camp initiation ceremony.

For special effects, a Civil War Artillery Battery fired salvos across the river from the hill by the monument. A unique local group attending was the OLD GUARD of the City of New York, a Veterans Association who have preserved military artifacts and wear the uniforms of early New York City Militia. Their Commandant, Colonel John A. Gargan, and his men are special friends of Tilden Camp. The OLD GUARD had a long association with the Sons Camps in N.Y.C. in the past. The day was successful for the Sons, all participants and the Park Service. The weather was grand and so was the day!

1998 Commemoration

The Sons' next Annual Commemoration Ceremony of the Birthday of General Ulysses S. Grant will be held on Sunday, April 26, 1998 at Grant's Tomb at 122nd Street and Riverside Drive in Manhattan. The ceremony which includes the initiation of new members of the Oliver Tilden Camp will begin at 11:00 A.M. rain or shine. For information contact George Weinmann, Chairman of the General Grant Committee.

Camp History

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War was established in 1881 as the successor to the Grand Army of the Republic, the Union Army Veterans' organization. It was chartered in 1954 by an Act of Congress.

The Oliver Tilden Camp #26 was created in 1884 and is now the only Camp in the downstate area of New York State. The Camp was named for Captain Oliver Tilden who lived in Morrisania, an area of the Bronx. When the Civil War came, Tilden formed Co. A, 38th Volunteer New York Infantry. He was killed at Chantilly, Virginia on September 1, 1862. Tilden is buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx.

Meetings of the Oliver Tilden Camp are held monthly on a Wednesday from September to June at the 7th Regiment Armory in Manhattan. A business meeting is held which includes a presentation on some aspect of the Civil War.

The Oliver Tilden Camp conducts the annual observance of General Ulysses S. Grant's birthday on the last Sunday of April at the National Monument in upper Manhattan. New members of the Camp are initiated during the General Grant ceremonies. The Camp also participates in the Memorial Day, Flag Day and Veterans Day parades in the City; the annual November Flag Service at St. Thomas' Church and the Flag Service sponsored by the Military Order of the World Wars. The Camp's Color Guard and Musical Unit participate in community parades. The Camp also participates at encampments, displaying artifacts in a Civil War officers Wall tent. It is also involved in commemorative services at Cypress Hills National Cemetery & other cemeteries in the area.

If you are a male descendent of a soldier, sailor or marine regularly mustered and honorably discharged during the War of Rebellion, 1861 to 1865, consider membership in this friendly and active Camp. Members of the Camp will assist in identifying a veteran ancestor. Membership may also be extended as an "Associate Member" for individuals without a veteran ancestor. For more information, contact Senior Vice-Commander George J. Weinmann, 55 Jewell St., Brooklyn NY 11222-3507.