

CHICOPEE

21

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL & PATRIOTIC COMMITTEE

MAYOR JOHN P. MOYLAN & ALL CITIZENS

GATHER TO PAY HOMAGE TO OUR ONLY

CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR HERO

CHARLES H. TRACY



BORN 1833 DIED 1911
CIVIL WAR SERVICE 1862-65

12:45 p.m. Wolcott & Allen 10/21/79

The Congressional Medal of Honor is the highest decoration bestowed to a member of the Armed Forces by the U.S. Government for conspicuous valor in combat. So rare is this award that of all the Chicopee Residents that have participated in every war only one has ever earned the honor. This man is Charles H. Tracy.

Though only several thousand were awarded the Medal of Honor, of those who fought on the side of the Union in the Civil War, Charles Tracy has even the rarer distinction of being one of only 28 soldiers, of those several thousand, to be cited for bravery on more than one occasion, either of which alone was sufficient to have entitled him to the Medal of Honor. The official citation reads as follows:

Date of Issue: November 19, 1897

"Citation: At the risk of his own life, at Spotsylvania, 12 May 1864, assisted in carrying to a place of safety a wounded and helpless officer. On 2 April 1865 advanced with the pioneers, and, under heavy fire, assisted in removing two lines of chevaux-de-frise; was twice wounded but advanced to the third line, where he was again severely wounded, losing a leg."

Charles Tracy was born in 1833 in Jewett City, Connecticut. He moved to Chicopee as a young man. It was here that he learned his trade as a machinist at Ames Manufacturing.

He enlisted for 3 years in the 37th. Regiment, Co. A, Mass. Volunteers in August 1862 and was soon promoted to Sergeant.

During his term of enlistment he participated in all the major battles of his Regiment except one at Sailors Creek, Va. - 4 days after suffering his wounds.

At Spotsylvania, Va. in May of 1864, the Regiment was engaged having an especially severe experience on the 12th. It was because of actions taken this day that Charles Tracy was first cited for bravery.

On April 2, 1865, the 37th. Regiment participated in a general assault on the Confederate defense perimeter around Petersburg, Va. On this day during the advance, while assisting in the removal of two lines of Chevaux-de-frise, Charles Tracy was twice severely wounded, necessitating the amputation of the right leg in an Army field hospital. A Chevaux-de-frise is a timber from which pointed spikes project 5 to 6 feet used in warfare to defend a passage, plug a breach in the lines or impede cavalry.

In May 1865 he was promoted to 2nd. Lieutenant but was never mustered into this higher rank because of delays in the Mass. Adjutant General's office. He was discharged for wounds on July 4, 1865 in Chester, Pennsylvania. Shortly there after he returned to Chicopee, where he lived with his family until their move to Charlestown in 1897.

While in Chicopee he was an active member in both the G.A.R., an organization of Civil War veterans, and Lodge of Odd Fellows. He was also Commander of the G.A.R. Post 103 in Chicopee. There was a great deal of regret when he left the town for a position in Boston's Customs House.

Health considerations forced him to retire in 1909, but he remained active until 1911 when he was taken seriously ill. He died on September 13, 1911. His funeral was held in Chicopee. Charles Tracy is buried in Chicopee's Fairview Cemetery.

Special thanks to:

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Lt. Colonel Chester Gorski for the use of the Chicopee National Guard Armory.



1896

FAIRVIEW CEMETERY SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1979

PROGRAM

INVOCATION - ELLSWORTH WHITE, PASTOR FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

"AMERICA" BY CHICOPEE COMP BAND, WILLIAM SITTARD, DIRECTOR

VETERAN'S AGENT ALVIN "BUD" GAGNON

PRESIDENT T. BUDYNKIEWICZ - CHICOPEE VETERAN'S MEMORIAL & PATRIOTIC COMM.

CHARLES N. COLLATOS - MASS. COMM. VETERAN'S SERVICES

INTRODUCTION OF PLATFORM GUESTS

GOVERNOR EDWARD KING

"GETTYSBURG ADDRESS" - CLAYTON RUFO

NOEL PICKUP - CHAIRMAN CHICOPEE CEMETERY COMMISSION

"BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC" - COMP BAND

INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

U.S. CONGRESSMAN EDWARD P. BOLAND

MAYOR JOHN P. MOYLAN - REMARKS - PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION

DOUGLAS T. HOLMAN - GRAND NEPHEW - PRESENTATION OF MEMORABILIA

PROCESSIONAL

UNVEILING OF HEADSTONE & PLACING OF WREATH - MAYOR MOYLAN & D. HOLMAN

MILITARY SALUTE - A.N.G. 2nd. BN. 104TH. INF. - S.F.C. R. CISEK

TAPS - ROBERT HOMAN-STEWART RITTER-ROGER FORGET-- COMP HIGH SCHOOL

CLOSING REMARKS - MASTER OF CEREMONIES DEL BARABANI

BENEDICTION - PASTOR ELLSWORTH WHITE

"NATIONAL ANTHEM" - COMP BAND