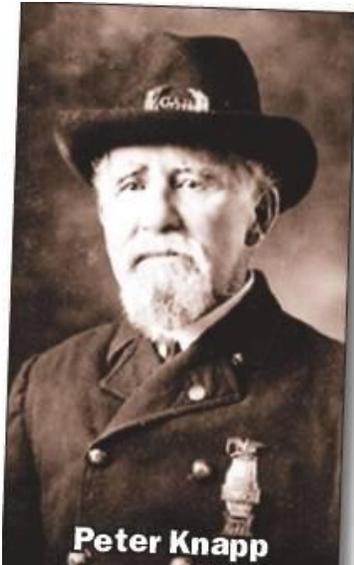


## HIS REST IS HISTORY - CIVIL WAR VETERAN WITH SANDUSKY ROOTS FINALLY BURIED - FIGHT PUTS KNAPP IN NATIONAL CEMETERY

BY TOM JACKSON

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LEFT: Peter Knapp

Courtesy photos/Deborah Ratto Dash

BELOW: An Army rifle squad salutes Peter Knapp during his burial at Willamette National Cemetery in Oregon



BELOW LEFT: Alice Knapp, of Oregon, speaks with media at the funeral. Alice's in-laws are Peter Knapp's descendants. She, along with Debbie Peevyhouse, a friend of the Knapp family, worked to get Peter Knapp buried in a national cemetery.

BELOW RIGHT: Civil War re-enactors perform during Peter Knapp's funeral at Willamette National Cemetery in Oregon.



### SANDUSKY

In 1859, 17-year-old Peter Knapp left Ohio and headed west to see the world. He enlisted in the Union army in 1861 and, as a soldier, survived a bout of typhoid and several famous battles, including Vicksburg and Missionary Ridge.

He died April 13, 1924, in Washington state.



But the story doesn't end there.

Last week, Knapp's cremated remains were buried at Willamette National Cemetery in Oregon. He is the first Civil War veteran to be buried at that cemetery, and he may be the last Civil War veteran buried in the U.S.

As it turns out, Knapp was a Sandusky native — born here June 2, 1842. He was also party to some curious newspaper stories that caught the nation's attention about six decades after the end of the Civil War.

The stories featured Willis Meadows, 78, a Confederate veteran who in 1921 coughed up a bullet that had become lodged in his body during the battle of Vicksburg. The bullet remained in his body all those years, until Meadows suffered from a violent coughing fit that forced the projectile to pop right out of his mouth. The story made national headlines in 1921, according to a 2009 article in the Medford Mail Tribune, an Oregon newspaper.

When Knapp read the 1921 article about Meadows, he suspected he was the soldier who had shot Meadows. The two men made contact and soon became friends, according to the newspaper.

Fast forward to present day. A member of Knapp's family read the 2009 Mail Tribune article and showed it to Alice Knapp, of Oregon, whose in-laws are Peter Knapp's descendants. Alice, a genealogist, decided to learn more about him. When she contacted the Mail Tribune for help, the newspaper sent her Peter Knapp's obituary. But Alice wanted to know more.

Where was Peter Knapp buried? The obituary said he'd been cremated at Portland Crematorium, but no such business exists in Portland these days. Alice, ever the detective, phoned mortuaries in that city until she discovered the current business name: Wilhelm's Portland Memorial Funeral Home. "When I called them up, I asked them if they knew where he was buried," Alice said. "Actually, they said he was there. He was in their storage tower." "I called back later and asked if his wife was there, and they said yes," Alice said.

No one in the Knapp family had ever claimed the ashes of Peter Knapp or his wife, Georgianna, who died in 1930. Their ashes remained in storage for decades. Alice decided Knapp and his wife should be honored with appropriate burials. It seemed logical to have him buried in a national cemetery, because he was a war veteran. She grew frustrated, of course, when federal officials demanded discharge papers for Knapp. Such papers hadn't been issued to Civil War veterans.

Debbie Peevyhouse, a friend of the Knapp family, jumped in to help.



Peevyhouse (pictured left) is founder of the California Medal of Honor Project, which marks the graves of Medal of Honor recipients in that state. Peevyhouse knows how to deal with federal cemetery bureaucrats, and she has many friends in

the veterans community. After some phone calls, she was able to set up Knapp's funeral, recruiting Civil War re-enactors, an Army rifle squad and current military officers to help.

A large contingent of the Patriot Guard Riders attended the funeral. The motorcyclists are known for attending services at which members of Westboro Baptist Church show up to protest; the bikers rev up their engines to drown out the controversial church protesters, Peevyhouse explained. "We had 150 of them show up and pay their respects," she said. The service drew a huge crowd, including television stations and The Associated Press, said George Allen, director of Willamette National Cemetery.

On April 13—88 years after his death — Sandusky native Peter Knapp was finally laid to rest.