

**Membership Badges
of the
Grand Army of the Republic**



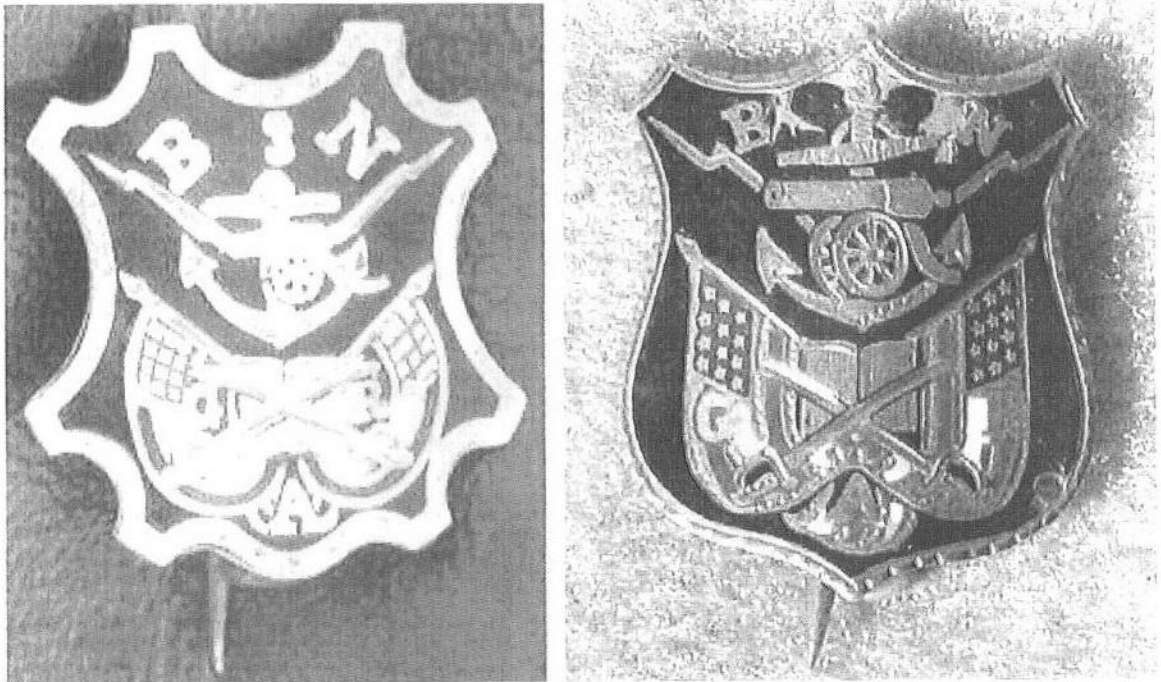
**Presented at the
18th Annual Encampment Banquet
of the
Civil War Veterans Historical Association**

**by
George G. Kane
Editor, *The Veteran*
Newsletter of the CWWHA**

**May 1, 2004
Mansfield, Ohio**

Introduction

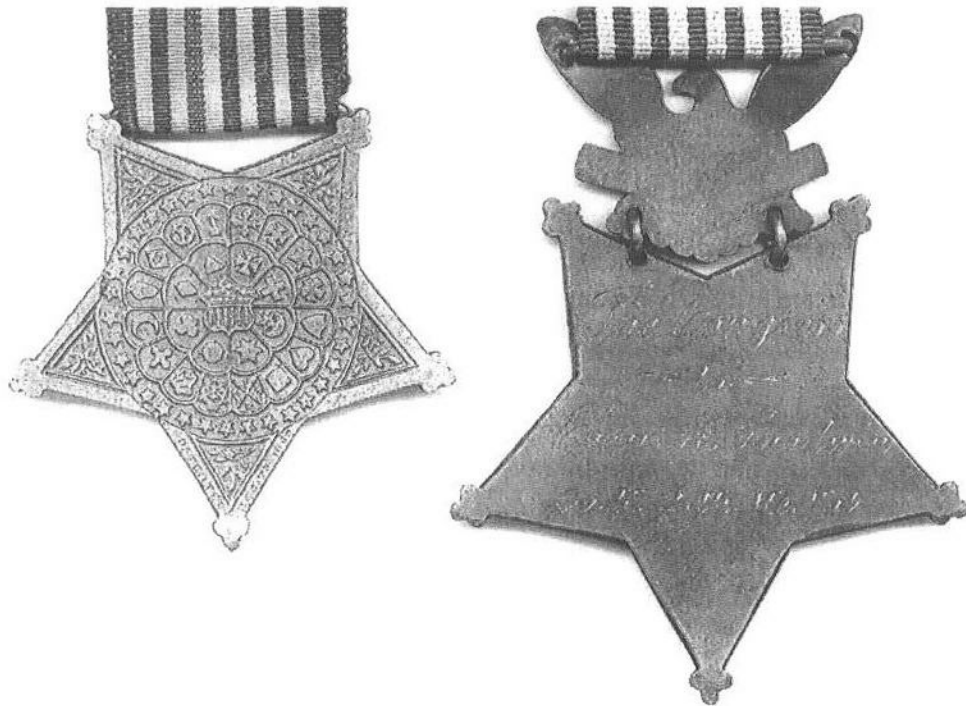
Tonight, we will be looking at the types and variations of the Membership Badge of the Grand Army of the Republic. More specifically we will be concentrating on the membership badges from 1869 to the end of the G.A.R. era. Badges introduced between the period 1866 to 1869 are quite rare and expensive. Two types of membership badges can be categorized in this early period, the 3BN badge and the ribbon badges. Although many of the 3BN badges of this period were manufactured by the Grand Army Badge Co., many were also made by local jewelers for a comrade or a post. Because of the number of variations and the large price tag of these badges there will only be a perfunctory discussion on these badges.



Basically, the main problem with these badges was that the Grand Army of the Republic did not have any control over the manufacture of these badges. In fact, the patent for the badge was controlled by the Grand Army Badge Co. An article by Roger Heiple is attached as Appendix A. The article was originally the feature article of *The Veteran* for Volume 14, No. 2 of Oct.-Dec. 2000. The article gives a short succinct history of the early G.A.R. badge.

The next few sections will deal with the Type III, Type IV, Type IVa, and Type V G.A.R. Membership Badges.

TYPE III (1869-1876) vs. MEDAL OF HONOR



(Enlarged)

At the 3rd G.A.R. National Encampment held in Cincinnati, Ohio the following Resolve was created

Resolved, that a committee of three (3) (of which the Adjutant General shall be a member) to be appointed to consult with experts, and design and on the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, adopt a suitable badge and ribbon; also a certificate of membership, the said badge and certificate to be issued only to comrades in good standing who have taken the obligation of the third grade, and have become veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic. The design and form when so adopted shall be considered final, unchangeable and alike for all members and all departments; and the Adjutant General shall have the authority to contract with one or more responsible parties to furnish the badge and ribbon and the certificate of membership at a fixed price; and the Commander in chief shall direct the manner of issuing the same to eligible comrades and the manner of payment therefor.

You'll notice the underlining in this paragraph. First, the G.A.R., at this point, was using the disastrous grade system. This would not only reduce the membership total, but consequently, the number of badges needed for the remaining members. Second, the phrase "unchangeable and alike" is to keep members from having their own style badge created by a jeweler. Third, "and all departments" was to keep individual departments from creating their own badges as Massachusetts and Pennsylvania had. The term "authority to contract" infers that the new badge would be patented. The new badge was patented on December 28, 1869. To emphasize this fact, the phrase "Patented, Dec. 28, 1869" was added to the reverse on the sides of the bottom arm.



A special meeting of the badge committee was held in New York City on October 27-28, 1870 to adopt the new membership badge. General Frederick Augustus Starring, Inspector-General of the order, designed the badge. The badge is sometimes referred to as the "69" style membership badge. It is also called the "Medal of Honor" style badge. This becomes obvious when comparing the two badges. The lower ribbon hanger of the Medal of Honor is identical to the G.A.R. badge hanger. The only difference is in the attachments on each reverse. In fact, the U.S. Mint provided the dies for this piece for the G.A.R.'s use. The angles of the two stars are identical, but the Medal of Honor star is about 20% larger. The arms of both stars have trefolds, the triple bump at the tip of the arm. The GAR trefolds have another small raised star within the trefolds; the Medal of Honor does not. On the GAR star, the obverse arms have the insignia of the five major services, the infantry, navy, marines, cavalry and the artillery. The MOH star has branches of laurel (victory) in all five arm positions. The central section of the GAR star has liberty, a soldier, a sailor, two children, an eagle, a *fasces* (an axe with a bundle of rods representing authority) and two angled flags in the background. The central section of the MOH star has "*Minerva Repulsing Discord*". Minerva is the Roman god of wisdom and war. Minerva carries a *fasces* and a shield. The GAR star has the central area surrounded by the phrase "Grand Army of the Republic / 1861 Veteran 1866". The date, 1861, represents the beginning of the civil war. The date, 1866, represents the beginning of the G.A.R. The second date is sometimes called an error, by those who think that the dates are the inclusive dates of the civil war, which they are not.

The star reverses of the G.A.R. badge and MOH are quite different. The MOH uses the back of the star for inscription purposes only. The recipient's name, the battle for which he was awarded the medal and the date of the action are engraved in a script font. The G.A.R. badge star reverse has branches of laurel in the arms (points). In the center is a U.S. Shield surrounded by two rows of corps badges and a row of stars. The 34 stars represents the states and G.A.R. departments. A variety exists which has duplicate 12th corps insignias (5-pointed star) and no 8th corps insignias (6-pointed star). The 12th corps insignia is usually in the outer row of corps badges at the 2 O'Clock position. The 8th corps is usually in the inner row of corps badges at the 5 O'Clock position. In this variety, the 12th corps badge is in both positions.

Another Type III variety deals with the maker's mark on the obverse. The maker, A. Demarest, placed his name and the city or state abbreviation "NY" in the niche under the center seal just below the kneeling children and just above the word "VETERAN" in the surrounding banderole.



In this variety, there is no maker's mark in the niche. Another similar variety, the niche is quite a bit smaller than the regular niche. The smaller niche might well be a contemporary counterfeit. The scene within the seal is poorly carved.



Small sized niche



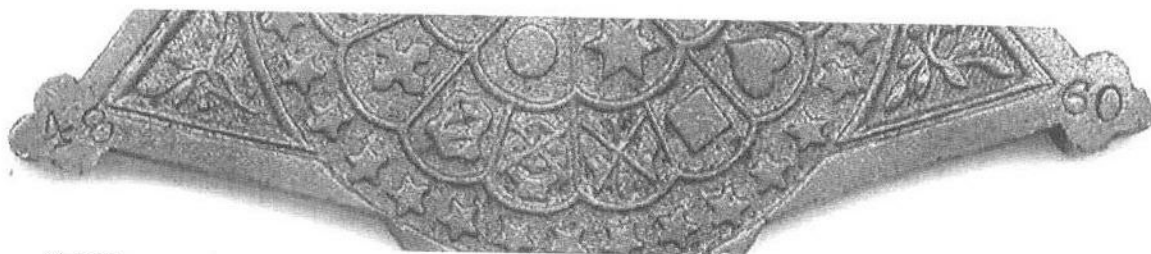
Regular sized niche

Note where the horizontal line at the top of the niche intersects with the word "Veteran". The small niche intersects with the higher serifs of the "V" and "N", while the regular niche intersects above all the letters of the word.

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In his speech before the 4th G.A.R. National Encampment at Washington, D.C., Commander-in-Chief John A. Logan stated that "At present, the badge is composed of bronze made from cannon captured during the war." In fact, the 25,000 badges manufactured by Demarest during the period 1869-1876 were made of bronze, but with a higher percentage of tin than is found in gunmetal used in cannon. Bronze in a cannon is usually ten percent tin and ninety percent copper, which is harder than iron. Demarest's alloy had a larger percentage of tin. The metal was not taken from a cannon. In 1876, Demarest stated, "*None of the badges were made of captured cannon, as no such material had been furnished (to) him*". Subsequently, the contract with Demarest was cancelled as he had not manufactured badges as prescribed in the contract.

Some Type III star pendants were serial numbered on the reverse with numbers being placed on one or more of the trefolds. An example is shown below.



"48"

"60"

Little is known about these numbers. It is not known whether these were serial numbers or workers' ID numbers. Because of the softness of the metal, many of these numbers were worn off.

TYPE IV (1877-1882)



In the latter years of the Demarest contract for the manufacture of G.A.R. Membership Badges, the National Offices had received many complaints about the quality of the badges. Badges made of cannon gunmetal should not wear or break as easily as the badges supplied by Demarest. In 1876, a Committee on Badges was created at the National Encampment in Philadelphia. The committee was empowered by the encampment to "...make the best possible contract, with sufficient guarantee, for the manufacture of badges of the present form, size and design to be made of bronze cannon captured during the Rebellion." Other sections of the 1876 National Encampment Journal stated that "the time has come for considering the practicality of having a smaller badge, of a different form." Other recommendations were to make the badge thinner and to change the color from dark-bronze to fire-gilt. It was at this point that Demarest told the committee that the badges were not made with captured cannon. This fact was not released to the general membership. In 1877, at the GAR National Encampment at Providence, RI, the committee presented its findings. Its first consideration was if badges could be struck from cannon metal. Several experts were of the opinion that "no such dies could be made that would withstand cannon metal." Test dies were created and stampings of cannon metal were tested at the U.S. Mint. The Mint, after a number of experiments,

announced that it was not possible to strike the badges from gunmetal. Joseph K. Davison, a GAR member and manufacturing jeweler from Philadelphia alloyed a piece of cannon metal and, using the old dies (Type III?), struck several badges with success. Several other test badges were struck by D. B. Howell & Co. of New York, all successfully. Two Confederate cannons (weighing 768 pounds) were eventually purchased from Morris J. Powers of New York for \$244.65. Dies for the eagle hanger and the star pendant were manufactured by John Gleaves, die-sinker of New York for \$315. Bids for the manufacture of the badges were sought through advertising in the *Grand Army Gazette* and the *Soldiers & Sailors Journal*. Few bids were received and the contract was offered to D. B. Howell & Co. The contract stipulated that the cost of the badges be "thirty-two cents each, the badge is to be finished in every particular, each one to be numbered on the edge and to be place in a small envelope". This statement is significant, in that it is the first time that the edge serial number is mentioned. As mentioned previously, some Type III badges had numbers stamped into the trefolds of the obverse, but it is not known whether this is a serial number or some ID from the manufacturing process. No reference to the significance of these numbers was ever mentioned. The 1877 Quartermaster General's Report lists a payment to Howell & Co. for 2,500 badges at a cost of \$800 (32 cents each). The 1876 report stated that the badges would have to be completed before the next Memorial Day (May 30, 1877). Soon after, Joseph K. Davison was awarded the membership badge contract. Were the badges that Howell manufactured Type III or Type IV badges? The Howell badges may be the variety without the Demarest maker's mark. Davison continued to manufacture GAR membership badges well into the twentieth century.

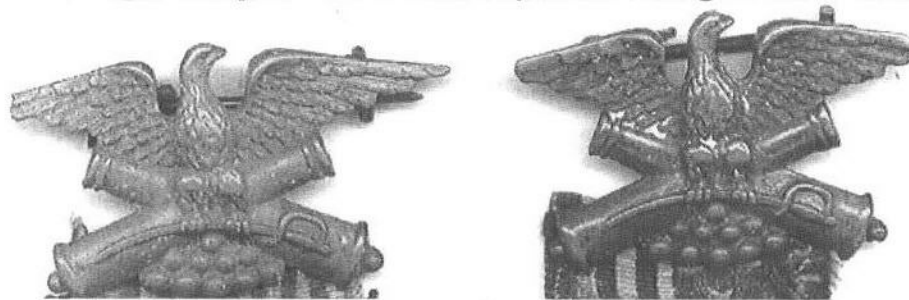
In June 1882, "The Veteran", a newspaper / magazine of the GAR Department of Ohio contained an article "Making of Grand Army Badges". The process of manufacturing GAR badges is discussed in detail.

"The process of manufacture of these badges is somewhat slow, although twenty thousand of them were made and issued last year (1881). The gunmetal from which they are made is first taken in the form of old cannon, and melted down into pigs. In its ordinary state, it is too hard for the good working of the dies, and it is, therefore, alloyed with twenty percent of copper and five of zinc. This alloy is added when it is melted the second time and run into sheets in moulds (sic) that cast the upper side of the star in the rough; that is, only the figures and some of the bolder portions of the design. The stars are now taken to the stamping-press, which Mr. Davison has erected in a carpenter-shop just off of Tenth Street (Philadelphia). Here, at one end, lit up by a single oil-lamp, and

overlooked by a lithograph of the late President Garfield, is the press. It is of iron, immensely strong, and capable of resisting the strain of a blow of eighty tons. The press consists of a solid cast iron base and frame, resting upon stones, timbers and the ground, thus avoiding vibration. Through the top of the frame passes a heavy steel screw. This bears on the end above the press a crossbar weighting three hundred and fifty pounds, on each end of which is an iron ball weighing two hundred pounds. The screw terminates in the block that takes the dies. One man superintends the placing of the stars in the dies and the dies beneath the steel screwhead that delivers the blow. This is administered by the rapid whirling of the heavy crossbar, propelled by a negro (sic) and an Italian. The weight that forces the screw downwards and the velocity combined, deliver a blow on the die equal to sixty tons pressure. Each star receives six blows, two at the time and is annealed three times. Two blows are given with rough dies and four with finished dies. The three workmen are able to finish two hundred stars a day, equal to twelve hundred blows.

From the stamping room, the stars are taken to Mr. Davison's factory, where the edges are cut off on a burring tool and then trimmed with a file. They are now ready for the clasps and attaching pins. The clasps having been finished in the same manner, though not requiring so many blows as the badges, the two metal parts are joined by the flag-ribbon, woven upon a Jaquard loom by Horstmann Brothers & Co., of Philadelphia. Each star is numbered and lettered with the initial letter of the surname of the G.A.R. Commander-in-Chief for the year. They are sent to headquarters, and issued only upon requisition, just as ordinary military supplies. They cannot be obtained by anyone not a member of the order and are sold for seventy-five cents. They are very artistic in appearance and are practically indestructible. They are worn on the left breast."

The two metal pieces of the Type IV badge are similar but different from the Type III badge. The GAR had received some criticism for the use of membership badge too similar to the Medal of Honor. Dropping the wings, slimming the wings and making the tips of the wings pointed were the main changes to the eagle hanger. Unfortunately, these wings tended to break off.



Type IV Eagle hangers with wing-tips broken off

The star pendant angles were adjusted to make it look less like the Medal of Honor star pendant.

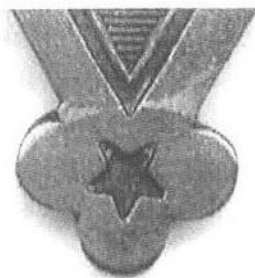


Type IV

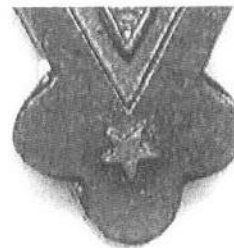


Type III

The change in the angles is slight but noticeable. The size of the trefolds on the arm tips were increased and the stars within the trefolds were reduced. The lower ribbon hanger bar was also changed. The bar was straightened. There is a one-year variety that involves the stars on the trefolds. The badges with an "H" prefix serial number have stars within the trefolds that are incused rather than raised.



Incused star, "H" serial number



Raised star, Type IV

The "H" on the prefix stood for General John F. Hartranft, Commander-in-Chief of the GAR. He was elected CIC in 1875 and 1876 and presided over

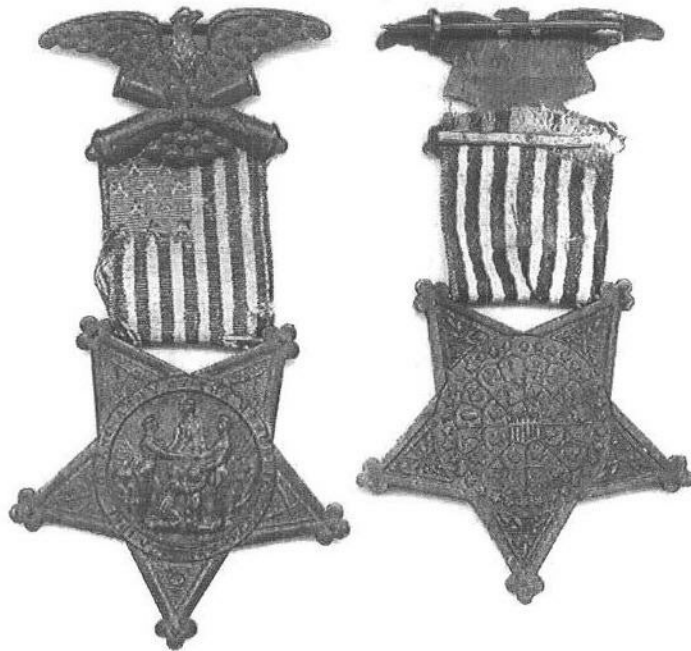
the National Encampments of 1876 and 1877. This incused variety occurs only in Type IV badges with "H" serial number prefixes. No Type IV badges with "H" s/n prefixes are found with a raised star.

Other Type IV Serial Numbers

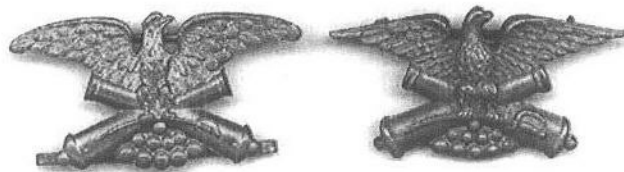
Letter	Years	CIC	State	Members
H	1875-77	John F. Hartranft	PA	27,079
R	1877-79	John C. Robinson	NY	44,752
E	1879-80	William Earnshaw	OH	60,654
W	1880-81	Louis Wagner	PA	87,176
M	1881-82	George C. Merrill	MA	131,900

The letter "B" is also found stamped on a Type IV star. This may be due to a supply of old stock pendants that were discovered. "B" would have been Robert Beath who was CIC in 1883-4.

TYPE IVa (1883-86)



With the continuing problem with the breakage of the Type IV eagle hanger wing tips, the GAR changed the hanger in 1882-3. The new hanger had rounded wings.



Type IVa

Type IV

The corps badges on the star pendant reverse were also changed. All the corps badges were recut, but one corps insignia change stands out.



Type IVa Recut 16th Corps



Type IV "X in O" 16th Corps

Type III and Type IV had a 16th corps badge on the reverse that looked like an "X in a O". The Type IVa changed the 16th corps badge to a more traditional Maltese cross with rounded arm outside edges.

Type IVa Serial Numbers

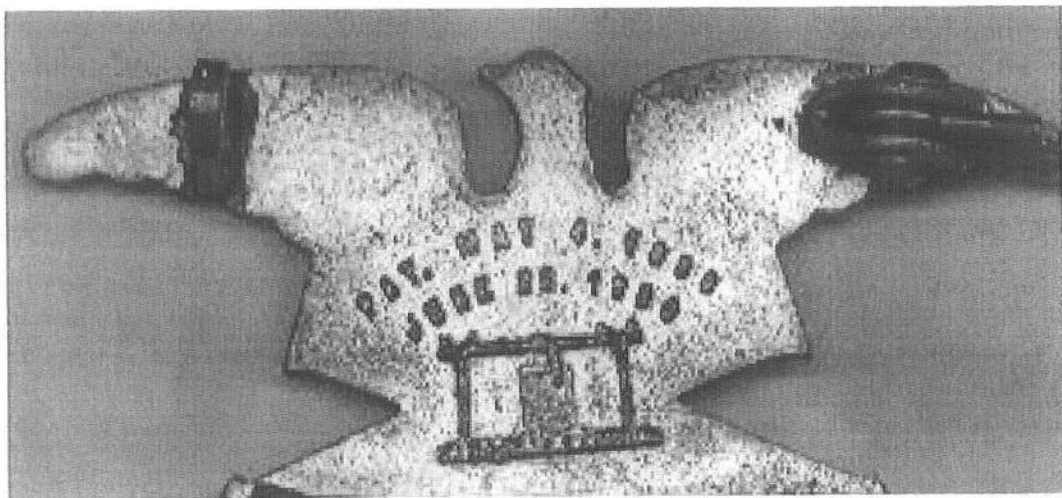
Letter	Years	CIC	State	Members
V	1882-83	Paul Vandervoort	NE	215,441
B	1883-84	Robert B. Beath	PA	273,174
K	1884-85	John S. Kountz	OH	294,787
B	1885-86	Samuel S. Burdett	DC	323,571

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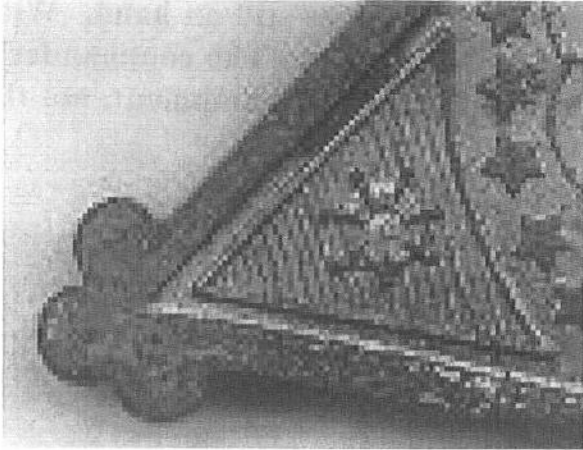
TYPE V (1886-1956)



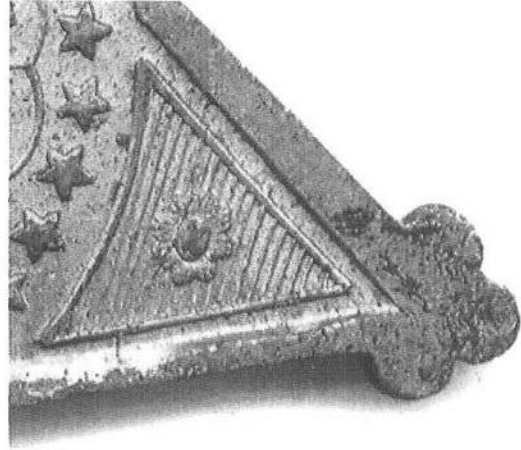
In 1886, the GAR made the last changes to its membership badge. The Eagle hanger was once again changed. This time a campfire scene was added to the reverse of the hanger. The Patent dates for this badge were also added and placed above the campfire scene.



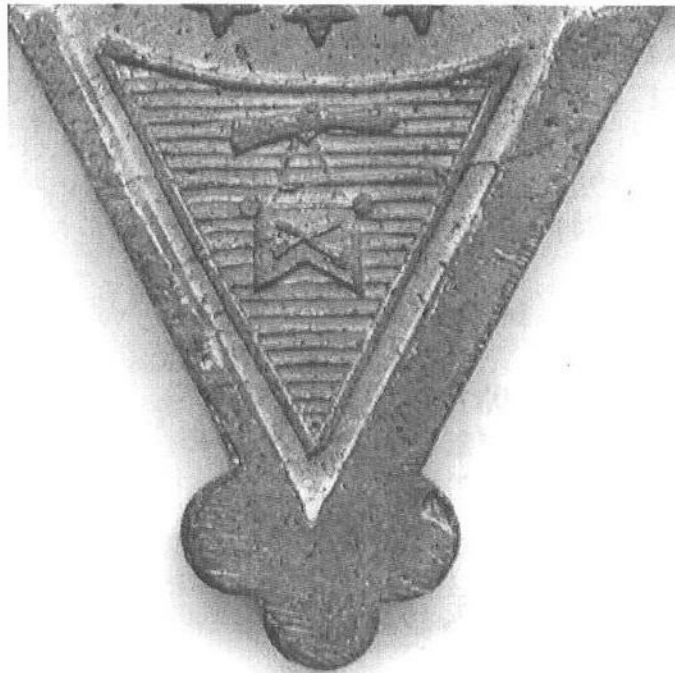
Changes were again made to the reverse of the star pendant. This time, three new corps badges were added. Instead of adding these corps badges to an already crowded center of the star, the laurel branches on the three lower star arms were replaced by the corps insignias of Hancock's Veteran Corp, Wilson's Cavalry and Sheridan's Cavalry.



Hancock's Veteran Corps



Sheridan's Cavalry



Wilson's Cavalry

Dating Type V GAR Membership Badges

Dating the Type V GAR Membership Badge has two major problems. First, the length of time that this badge was manufactured provides multiple years for some initials. Second, no definitive date can be shown to be the last year that badges were manufactured. It is doubtful that membership badges were made up to the last commander (1949). Many posts that closed after 1930 were found to have large supplies of membership badges still on hand. With that in mind, here is a list of CIC initials and their years. The commander's year in this list is the year that he fronted the National Encampment, not the year he was elected.

A	1890, 1894, 1919, 1925, 1940
B	1904, 1905, 1907, 1908, 1913, 1920
C	1897
D	1943
E	None
F	1887, 1930
G	1898, 1911, 1914, 1942, 1946, 1947
H	1920, 1928
I	1926
J	1931, 1944
K	1905, 1921
L	1895
M	1916, 1933, 1934, 1938
N	1909, 1936, 1941
O	None
P	1892, 1915, 1917, 1922, 1949
Q	None
R	1888, 1901, 1929, 1937, 1939, 1948
S	1899, 1900, 1903, 1918, 1924, 1935, 1945
T	1902, 1906, 1912, 1932
U	None
V	1891, 1910
W	1889, 1893, 1896, 1923, 1927, 1933
XYZ	None

There are two letters that a date of manufacture can absolutely be determined, "C" (1897) and "L" (1895). If you can assume that no badges

were produced after 1920, than you can add "F" (1887), "M" (1916) and "N" (1909) to this list. Were the badges made in every year from 1887 to the 1920's? Were there some years that there was an oversupply from previous years and no badges were manufactured? We'll probably never be able to answer these questions. A large majority of GAR members joined the organization between the years 1880 and 1900. If you have a letter that falls within these dates (1887-1900), statistically, you can state that there is a high probability that the badge you have is from that era and select a date from those years.

The major varieties for the Type V badge deal with the obverse insignias on the star arms. The top 4 insignias are found in reverse position on some badges. An article from *The Veteran* from October – December 2001 on these varieties is added as an appendix at the end of this booklet.

G.A.R. Membership Badge Variations

by George G. Kane

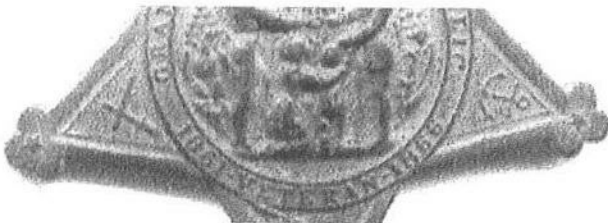
In the last few issues of *The Veteran*, I have discussed the differences between the G.A.R. membership badges from 1869 - 1956. During the research for these articles, I discovered a few variations in the membership badge, that could not be considered a new type.

The first variation deals with the branch insignias found on the obverse of the star pendant. The insignias are crossed swords, crossed rifles, crossed cannons, an anchor and a bugle. These insignias are located on the arms of the star. On most of the pendants the anchor is at the 8 O'clock position and the crossed cannons are at



Common anchor / cannon positioning

the 4 O'clock position. While checking for differences in the anchor, I noticed that one (out of 70+) of my Type V badges had these two insignias reversed.

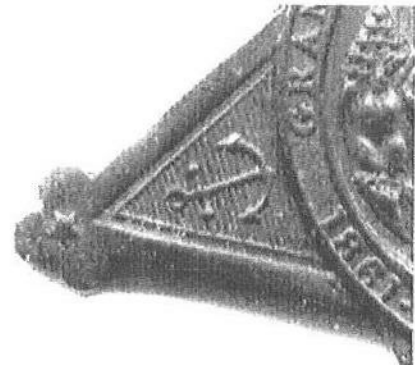


Reversed cannon / anchor positioning

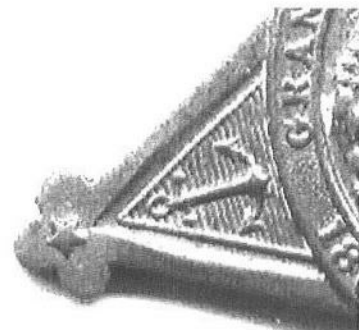
The serial number on the edge was P13277. I believe this was manufactured during the 1891-2 administration of Commander in Chief John Palmer. The next "P" commander in chief was not until 1914-5. At that time, I doubt the G.A.R. had 13,277 badges manufactured in any year after 1914. I have other high numbered "P" serial numbered badges, with the correct branch insignia positioning, so I have to believe that this phenomenon is

not found on all badges of that year. The top two branch insignias (crossed sabers and crossed muskets) are also switched.

Another peculiar variation is in the shape of the anchor branch insignia on the obverse. Two variations seem to be apparent. The first is an anchor with a rounded bottom. The size of the shaft, especially where it intersects the arms, is the same width as the arms.



The second type has the anchor arms at a slight angle at the intersection of the shaft. The width of the shaft



seems to expand, the closer it comes to the arms intersection. There seems to be a bump right at the intersection. There is no bump on the rounded version.

This phenomenon appears on the Type IV, IVa and V anchors. I only have seven Type III and none had the rounded bottom version. The rounded anchor seems to be rarer than the angled anchor. On the badges where the anchor is at the 4 O'clock position, the anchors all seem to be rounded.

What does this all mean? To tell you the truth, I don't know. Until I can look at a large number of membership badges and record the results, I doubt that any conclusions can be made. Some people have suggested that when a new die was created, it was done by hand and not all dies were alike. This still doesn't explain the reversed branch positions. At some time in the future, I'll return with my badge census results.



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C.W.V.H.A. Officers

President

Howard A. Hoffman
3491 Linden St.
Bethlehem, PA 18017-1922
choffman@enter.net

Recording Secretary

Dan M. Mitchell
874 S. Lakehurst Drive
Franklin, IN 46131
dmitch874@aol.com

Treasurer

Dave Aeberli
P. O. Box 811
Mars, PA 16046-0811
dla238@zbtzoom.net

Editor

George G. Kane
123 Springfield St
Chicopee, MA 01013-2627
gkane1@prodigy.net

Printing & Distribution

Harry A. Seifert
1928 Oak Tree Drive East
Kettering, OH 45440-2410

Contributors

Jack Kolleridge
Roger Heiple
Peter Bertram

**Early G.A.R. Badge Advertising
by Roger Heiple**

The first membership badge of the Grand Army is a most desirable piece, but because of its rarity, many collectors have a difficult time researching information about this badge. The following advertisements may help shed a little light on this subject.

The Grand Army Badge Company of Lafayette, Indiana, was formed specifically for the manufacture of this GAR membership badge. The design was developed in Indiana by those who would become the company, with Mr. A. Orth Behm as the primary contact. A search for any records of the company proved to be fruitless, but Mr. A. O. Behm and his brother were both listed in the city directories as attorneys. Ads were placed in the *Great Republic* as early as February

GRAND ARMY BADGE.



G. A. R. BADGE.—Electrotype cuts of the Badge of the Grand Army, similar to the one on this page, will be sent by mail, postage paid, to those who may desire one, on receipt of \$1.25.

of 1867. The *Great Republic* was promoting itself as the "official" newspaper of the GAR. Minutes from the first encampment do show that B. F. Stephenson moved that the newspaper was to be an "official" newspaper, but did not indicate that it was to become an exclusive one. So

these ads reflect the fact that the *Great Republic* was a primary source of information for veterans and one of the few newspapers operating in this early era.

The first ad was an announcement that the Grand Army Badge Company was the exclusive manufacturer of the 3BN design badge. The first badges were made in two sizes, one about 1/2 inch high and the other almost 1 inch. They were made with both t-hinge pins and straight pins that ran from the top to bottom.

An agreement had been made between B.F. Stephenson, acting as Commander of the GAR, and the Grand Army Badge Company. (continued on page 15)

Early G.A.R. Badge Advertising

(continued from page 13)

The National Encampment was to receive 10 per cent of the sales. Correspondence between the two parties indicates that there was a difference of opinion as to the basis of the 10 per cent. Stephenson said it was based on gross sales while the Badge Company claimed it was net sales. This may have been one of the factors in the adoption of a new style of membership badge in 1869. Add to this, the fact that the Grand Army Badge Company held the patent for the design and you can see that GAR had to control the design on their terms.

The next ad was placed in the following month of February 1867. The Grand Army Badge Company went on to state that not only are the members of the Company, members of the GAR, but also are crippled and disabled solders of the late war. They also were looking for members to act as agents for the company.

G. A. R. Badges! G. A. R. Badges!

The Grand Army of the Republic Badge Manufacturing Company, with headquarters at La Fayette, Indiana, are now prepared to furnish Badges of all kinds and qualities, at the shortest notice.

We have been designated by the Commander-in-Chief as the sole and exclusive manufacturers of Badges for the Grand Army. A caveat has been filed and a patent applied for, to protect us from the sharks who remained in the rear during the war, but are now anxious to step forward and reap the profits of our work.

All the members of the Badge Company are members of the G. A. R. in good standing.

A large per cent. of profits are paid to National Headquarters for charitable purposes.

We furnish Badges of the following kinds, and at the prices stated;

- Silver-plated Badges..... 50
- Genuine Silver Badges.....\$1.00
- Heavily Gold-plated Badges..... 2.50

Genuine Solid Gold Badges made to order from \$10 to \$25, according to fineness and enamel.

Liberal reduction to agents. Crippled soldiers should write, inclosing stamp for circular.

This is the only company authorized to make and sell Badges for the Grand Army.

Address,

A. ORTH BEHM,

Secretary G. A. R. Badge Company,

La Fayette, Indiana.

Jan 3-3m

The third ad placed in 1867, was the identical to the second ad, with the admonition added, that "measures have been taken by the G.A.R. Badge Company to secure a patent for their design, which is adopted as the Badge of the Order, which design is shown by a cut in this paper, and all persons are hereby forbidden to manufacture or sell any Badge, Pin, or other article of jewelry bearing such emblem, unless authorized by this Company.

The B.T. Hayward Company of New York had started making an enamel 3BN badge and advertising it widely. A 3BN ribbon was also being manufactured for Departments and Posts. A number of jewelers were making hand engraved copies of the badge. It is unknown if permission had been granted, but we have to assume that in the cases of the first two, where they advertised, that permission had been given.

Ads were placed into 1867, but they were just variations of the first three ads. From all indications, the G.A.R. Badge Company ceased to operate in 1868. A new membership badge was designed and manufactured in late 1869, but that's the next story.

Editors Message

George G. Kane

I apologize for the lateness of this issue. Computer problems have plagued me for the last two months. Hopefully, these problems are at an end.

In this issue, we have returned to the continuous page numbering of a few years ago. This issue will be numbered pages 13-24. Hopefully this will help to facilitate any future index project.

No sooner had I mailed my last copy of The Veteran, than I received a letter from Jack Kollodge with a history of the Defender of Fort Ridgely medal. His insights are on Page 17. This interaction is exactly what this association needs. If you see something in this publication to which you have more information, or to a theory to which you have a different opinion, by all means, send it to me. The purpose of this publication is to increase the knowledge of its readers so that they can make a better decision when confronting an unusual piece of memorabilia