

## Waltham's Memorial Day begins with honor for a hero

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A congregation of seven veterans stood over the grave of Waltham's George H. Maynard at Mount Feake Cemetery on Tuesday morning, paying their yearly respects to the "Grand Old Man" of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company (AHAC).

**By Ignacio Laguarda**

Wicked Local Waltham

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WALTHAM —

A congregation of seven veterans stood over the grave of Waltham's George H. Maynard at Mount Feake Cemetery on Thursday morning, paying their yearly respects to the "Grand Old Man" of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company (AHAC).

Maynard, who was born in Waltham in 1836, was the first Congressional Medal of Honor recipient from the AHAC, earning the medal for his service during the Civil War.

He was awarded the medal by President William McKinley for his bravery at the Battle of Fredericksburg, where he saved a comrade's life by applying a tourniquet to his wounds and carrying him away from the battlefield. Maynard was also recognized for carrying two wounded soldiers to safety in the Battle of Antietam, and for preventing the massacre of Confederate soldiers who had already surrendered at the Battle of Marianna in Florida.

According to archives from the United States government, Maynard dismounted from his horse and arrived just in time to knock away a musket pointed at the head of a Confederate prisoner and threatened to shoot any Union soldier that killed a prisoner.

Maynard attended public schools in Waltham and entered the Boston jewelry business at the age of 15. Once the Civil War broke out, Maynard enlisted as a private of the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment on the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in 1861. Two years later, he was named the captain of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the United States Colored Infantry. The highest rank he achieved was Brevet Major of the United States Volunteers.

After serving in the Civil War, Maynard returned to Waltham, where he continued in the jewelry business as a watchmaker until he died in Waltham in 1927, at the age of 91.

Paul M. Colella of Winchester, the current officer in charge of the AHAC, has been coming out to Maynard's grave for the past 20 years and the AHAC has memorialized Maynard ever since his death thanks to an endowment he left.

"It's a suitable showing of respect for the first Medal of Honor recipient," said Colella, who attended the wreath-laying ceremony along with Leon LeBlanc of Wells, Maine, Domenic Previte of Lexington, Lawrence Willwerth of Somerville, Eric Sigillo of Marlborough, Gerald Davidson of Melrose and Donald Phillips of Lynn.

The AHAC has seven Medal of Honor recipients within their ranks, two of which are still living.

Maynard is also honored at the AHAC anniversary celebration each June, when the group holds the election of officers at Boston Common. They also hold a parade and celebrate some of the famous figures that have been part of the group, such as John F. Kennedy.

The AHAC was formed in 1638, making it the oldest military company in the western world.

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