

#159 Partridge's Protégé and Rival: The Life of Truman Bishop Ransom



Truman Bishop Ransom

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

Past “200 Things About Norwich” features have highlighted the myth of Truman Ransom coining the Norwich University motto during the Battle of Chapultepec and the legacy of his three sons who attended Norwich in the 1840s, ’50s, and ’60s. Now we turn to the man himself—Truman Bishop Ransom, protégé of Captain Alden Partridge and the second president of Norwich University.

Full story:

Ransom was born in Woodstock, Vt., in December 1802. Little is known about his early life. He was one of the earliest students to enter the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy, becoming a student when Captain Partridge’s bold new undertaking was just two years old in 1822. He became one of Partridge’s favorite pupils.

After he completed his studies in 1825, Ransom became a professor at the Academy. He soon became a member of the inner circle that Partridge trusted to help him spread his “American System of Education” across the country, opening new schools and establishing military instruction at existing ones according to his vision. For example, when Partridge became president of Jefferson College in Washington, Miss., in 1831, he brought Ransom with him to teach mathematics and, one can only imagine, spread the “gospel of Partridge.”

Eager to take on a leadership role, Ransom became vice president of the newly chartered Norwich University in 1835, and served as major general of the Vermont State Militia from approximately 1836 to 1844. He ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 1840 and for lieutenant governor of Vermont in 1846.

By the 1840s, the university Partridge founded was growing under the leadership of a Board of Trustees as mandated by the Vermont state charter. Unhappy with the leadership of the board, Partridge resigned the presidency in 1843. He was none too pleased when his former right-hand man, Truman Ransom, took over his position. In fact, over the objections of the Norwich townspeople, Partridge opened a short-lived new school in the tiny town of Norwich to compete with what he now saw as Ransom’s Norwich University.

It is not known whether the two men ever resolved their differences. Ransom’s tenure as president turned out to be tragically brief. In 1846, he was called to the front lines by his country when the Mexican-American War broke out. He served as a recruiting officer before sailing for Veracruz in the summer of 1847. That September, he led an assault on the fortress at Chapultepec. In spite of an American victory, the 44-year-old Colonel Ransom met his untimely end when a musket ball met his head.

Ransom was originally buried in Mexico and moved in 1848 to his final resting place in Norwich, Vt. Six years later, he would be joined there by his visionary mentor and sometime rival, Captain Alden Partridge.

#160 History of Senior Mustache Privilege

Many rising seniors look forward to their return to the Hill in the fall for a variety of reasons. Among them is the opportunity to take advantage of a unique privilege granted to senior members of the Corps of Cadets: the right to grow a mustache.

Full story:

The U.S. Armed Forces have historically been friendly toward mustaches. In fact, the popularity of mustaches and other facial hair during the 19th century is often attributed to military fashions. Sideburns are even named after General Ambrose Burnside, who sported impressive mutton chops throughout his career as a Union general in the Civil War.

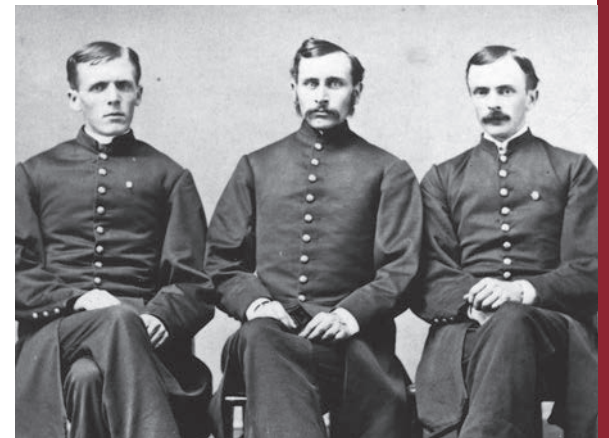
Apparently, the successors of Captain Alden Partridge had their own views. Whiskers of any kind were expressly prohibited in the cadet rules and regulations as early as 1869. Photographic evidence would indicate that some mustaches had been permitted before that date.

All of that changed in the winter of 1970. The previous year, in the summer of 1969, cadets had been allowed to wear neat mustaches conforming to Army regulations while training at the Indiantown Gap Military Reservation in Pennsylvania. The students wrote to President Hamlett urging him to extend the privilege permanently to the senior

class, asserting that the mustache prohibition was dogmatic with no basis in Army regulation.

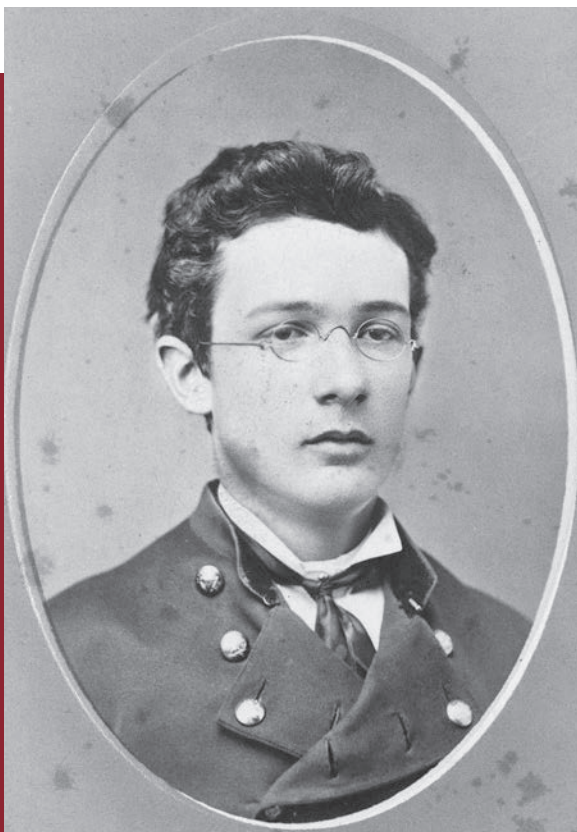
President Hamlett rejected the initial proposal. This was not the only student-administration disagreement around this time. Tensions over whether to fly the flag at half mast following the Kent State shootings in May 1970 prompted a dialog about students' role in campus governance. The newly formed student government finally succeeded at securing a provisional senior mustache policy in late 1970. A report in the *Guidon* that December 1970 noted that a few students were taking advantage of their newfound freedom, but none seemed to be abusing the privilege.

In recent years, seniors have been encouraged to use the mustache privilege to participate in the cancer awareness campaign "No Shave November." Sophomores and juniors have even been allowed to participate, sparking debate over whether the mustache privilege should extend beyond senior year.



Some of the great mustaches of NU.

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.



Harry Bates Thayer

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

#161 Harry Bates Thayer, Telecommunications Giant

The American Telephone and Telegraph Company—now known as AT&T—held a monopoly on American telecommunications for nearly a century. Established by Alexander Graham Bell in 1885, AT&T was essentially the only provider of phones and phone lines in the country until an anti-trust case broke it up in 1982.

Full story:

Harry Bates Thayer, a member of the Norwich class of 1877, once ruled this empire.

Thayer was a Northfield native, like many sons of Norwich. He attended Norwich for two years, from 1873 to 1875. During that time, he was a member of Alpha Sigma Pi fraternity and pursued the “Classical” curriculum, studying primarily Greek, Latin, and mathematics in addition to the drawing and military instruction that were universal to all courses of study.

Norwich University was very small in the 1870s, and relatively little is known about this period in our history. The class of 1877, of which Thayer was a member, had only three graduates. He would go on to graduate from Dartmouth in 1879.

Thayer then embarked on a career that showed the classic trajectory of the American dream: from shipping clerk to president and chairman of the board. After college, he started working for the Western Electric Company in Chicago, around the

same time that Alexander Graham Bell acquired a controlling interest in the company. Thayer worked his way up to branch manager and eventually became vice president of Western Electric, then president in 1908, making him a vice president of the parent company, AT&T.

In 1919, Thayer took the helm of AT&T, making him a telecommunications giant. He served in that post until 1925, then served as chairman of the board until he retired in 1928. His tenure at the company saw the sale of its broadcasting subsidiary to RCA, which paved the way for the formation of NBC, and the creation of Bell Labs, a research and development arm that would give rise to innovations like the transistor and the photovoltaic cell.

Thayer also served for many years on the board of trustees at his other alma mater, Dartmouth College. In 1937, the year after his passing, the main campus dining hall was dedicated in his honor.

#162 MG Jonas Platt, Class of 1940, Served in Three Wars

When Jonas Platt graduated high school at just 16, he was determined to be an officer in the military. Little did he know that 34 years later he would retire as a major general in the Marine Corps, having served through three wars.

Adapted from an article appearing in the April 1989 edition of the Norwich Record.

Full story:

The young Platt knew nothing about Norwich except that a great-great-grandfather had been a roommate of Admiral Dewey's. An uncle, for whom he was named, was a career Marine who had commanded a company at Belleau Wood during WWI.

During his sophomore year at NU, Platt received an appointment to Annapolis, but turned it down, preferring to finish his civil engineering degree. He was active as cadet captain of D troop and belonged to Skull and Swords, Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the *Guidon* staff, the *War Whoop*, Pegasus Players, and the Drill Team. He was also on the Dean's list all four years and earned his private pilot's license while at Norwich.

Graduating magna cum laude at 20, Platt had a choice between Army and Marine commissions. He took the Corps appointment and never regretted it.

Platt was promoted rapidly from lieutenant to major while serving in the Marine detachment aboard the battleship USS *Washington* during WWII. As a member of the 1st Marines, Platt participated in the assault landings on Peleiu and Okinawa.

Following the war, he earned a master's degree at Ohio State University in 1948 and taught infantry tactics at Quantico, among other postings. During the Korean War, he earned the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" as commanding officer, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, and Assistant G-3, 1st Marine Division.

Subsequent assignments included brief service in the Mediterranean during the Suez Crisis in 1956; holding the oldest post in the Corps as commander of the Marine Barracks, Washington D.C.; and deploying with the 2nd Marine Division for the Cuban Missile Crisis.

General Platt was promoted to brigadier general in 1965 while en route to Vietnam. In March 1966, he became chief of staff for Lieutenant General Walt—commander of the 50,000 Marines in Vietnam.

Upon his return, General Platt reported to Headquarters Marine Corps and was promoted to major general in 1968. He retired from the Corps in 1970 but stayed very busy. He spent seven years on the civilian side, working in the Department of Defense. Beginning in 1981, he served as an advisor on professional education for the Marine Air Ground Training and Education Center at Quantico, one of his favorite positions. From 1986 to 1987 he served on the board of the Vermont Veterans Home.

Platt's service to his alma mater was no less ambitious. He was a founding member of the NU Board of Fellows; a 1971 "Outstanding Alumnus"; recipient of an honorary Doctor of Military Science in 1982; co-chair of major gifts for the Norwich 2000 capital campaign; and a trustee from 1982 to 1993. He was also an avid sailor and canal enthusiast. General Platt passed away in 2000 and requested that donations be made in his name to his beloved NU.

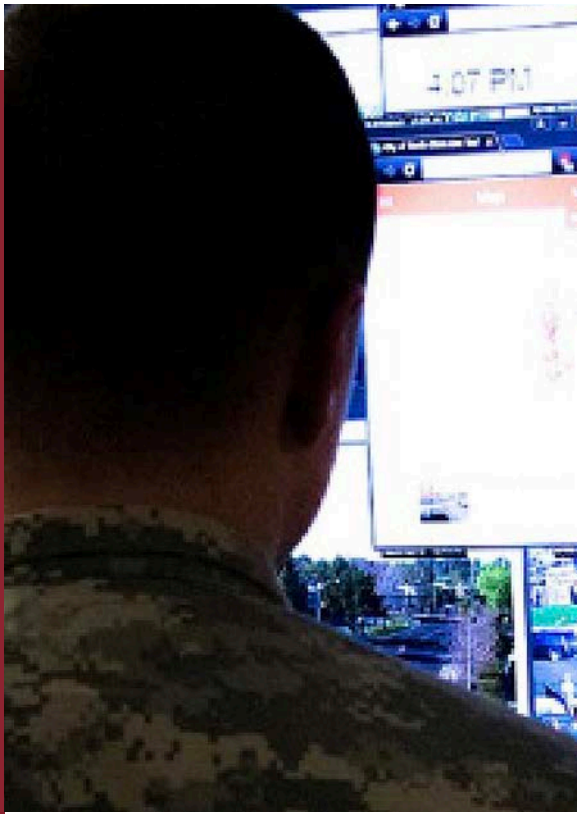


Top: MG Jonas Platt '40

Images courtesy of the Norwich Record.

185

200
THINGS
ABOUT NORWICH



*Observing Super Bowl 50 security.
Image courtesy of the Norwich University.*

#163 Norwich Cybersecurity Students Helped Keep Super Bowl 50 Safe

The Norwich University computer security and information assurance (CSIA) program, with students operating both onsite in California and on campus, supported Santa Clara Police Department, the lead law enforcement agency at Super Bowl 50, and the law enforcement and homeland security functions leading up to and during this international sporting event.

Full story:

Norwich University was the only educational institution invited to participate in support of the public safety team tasked with safeguarding Super Bowl 50. With support from over 60 students working at its campus based Global Threat Observatory, Norwich cybersecurity students and faculty collaborated with Levi's Stadium – the host for the event – and with the Super Bowl 50 Critical Infrastructure & Cyber Protection Sub Committee, the represented agencies and their personnel. This committee was led by Detective Sergeant Ray Carreira '96 of the Santa Clara Police Department, the lead law enforcement agency for the event.

Throughout 2015 CSIA students worked with this team in preparation for this globally televised event and formed partnerships with leading software developers to support their work.

Levi's Stadium, home of Super Bowl 50, is one of the most technologically capable stadiums in the world. In preparation, CSIA students attended Wrestlemania and a major soccer match for fact-finding and familiarization with the security environment.

Super Bowl 50 was broadcast in over 180 countries in 25 languages and was expected to reach over 115 million households in the USA, making it the most viewed event in history.

"I have been so impressed by these Norwich students and their professionalism, their ability to solve complex problems and the ease with which they have integrated into this intense law enforcement environment," said Captain Phil Cooke, Santa Clara Police Department Super Bowl 50 Commander.

The Norwich University cybersecurity program began in 1999. Our history of being on the cutting edge of computing technology dates back to the acquisition of a piano-sized IBM computer in 1962.

Norwich University programs are consistently ranked among the best in the nation for cybersecurity education. Norwich University is recognized as a National Center of Academic Excellence in both information assurance and cyber defense by the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and has received designation as a Center of Digital Forensics Academic Excellence (CDFAE) by the Defense Cyber Crime Center (DC3). Beginning in 2002, Norwich University became a member of what is now called National Science Foundation's Cyber Corps: Scholarship for Service program. Norwich is partnered with the United States Army Reserves (USAR) to develop cyber-education curricula that align with federal standards and cybersecurity needs.

#164 Frederick Lander, the “Great Natural American Soldier”

When Brigadier General Frederick William Lander died in 1862, his death was the occasion of national mourning. President Lincoln attended his funeral, and 20,000 spectators lined a two-mile section of Pennsylvania Avenue to pay their respects to the first Union general officer to die during the Civil War.

Contributed by Professor Emeritus Gary T. Lord, adapted from an article that appeared in the Summer 2002 edition of the Norwich Record.

Full story:

At the time of his death, Frederick Lander was one of the most celebrated personalities in the United States. General Winfield Scott called Lander the “Great Natural American Soldier,” but he was more widely known as “Old Grizzly” because of his epic encounter with a monstrous bear in the Rocky Mountains. Despite the fame he enjoyed, Lander was largely forgotten after the Civil War.

Lander graduated from Governor Dummer Academy in Byfield, Mass., in 1838. He worked for several years for railroads in Massachusetts and Maine before enrolling at Norwich University, one of the few institutions offering instruction in railroad construction. He attended from 1841 to 1842 and left before taking a degree in order to work for his brother’s ice business.

While engaged in the ice business, Lander took on a fourteen-year-old apprentice named Grenville Dodge. While mentoring Dodge, Lander recommended that he consider studying civil engineering at Norwich University. Dodge entered Norwich in 1848 and went on to become the preeminent American railroad engineer of the 19th century.

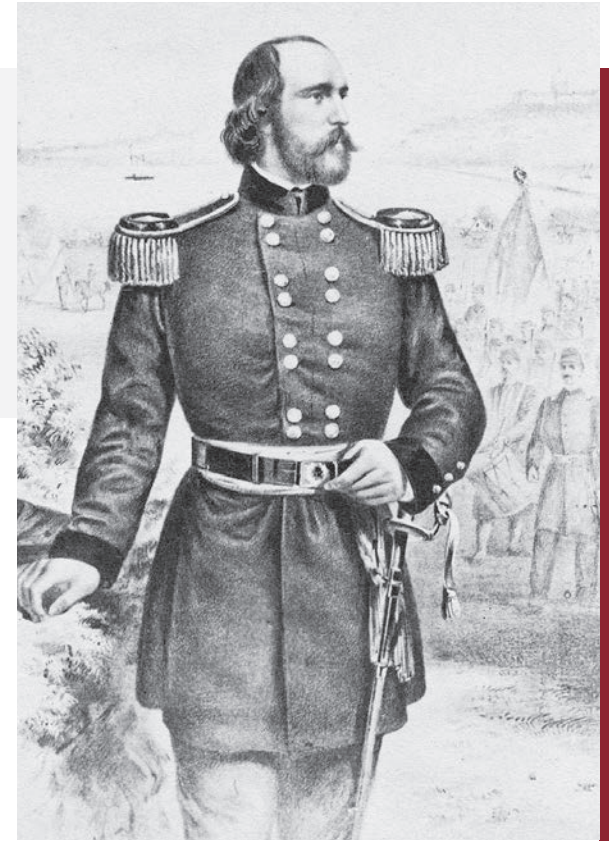
Early in Lander’s career, there was growing national

interest in surveying potential transcontinental railroad routes that could link the eastern states to the Pacific coast. That interest drew Lander to the West. Throughout the 1850s, he played a prominent role in conducting surveys on the Western frontier under often difficult and dangerous conditions.

In 1854, he had a chance encounter on the frontier with his former apprentice Grenville Dodge. Landers stumbled upon Dodge’s homestead when he desperately needed supplies, and the two engineers discussed the prospects of a transcontinental railroad. They agreed on the advantages of a central route to California that would run along the Platte River—the route Dodge would later use during the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad.

From 1857-58 Lander was first chief engineer and later superintendent of the construction of the Overland Wagon Road. The federally funded road, located north of the Great Salt Lake, was a 350-mile cut off from the Oregon Trail that significantly improved travel conditions for westward moving pioneers.

When Lander returned to the West in 1859 to make improvements to what had become known as



Brigadier General Frederick Lander

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

“Lander’s Road,” several artists were included in the expedition for promotional purposes. One of the artists was Albert Bierstadt, whose large, majestic Western scenes would become highly prized by collectors. Bierstadt was inspired to paint a six-by-ten foot landscape of an Indian encampment set before an imposing Rocky Mountain panorama in Wyoming. Bierstadt named the tallest peak in the center of the composition “Lander Peak.”

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Lander served as a volunteer aide on the staff of General George McClellan. In May 1861 he was commissioned a brigadier general and distinguished himself in the Union campaign in Western Virginia. Following the Union debacle in October at Ball’s Bluff, Lander intervened to assist forces retreating across the Potomac River by holding Edwards Ferry, where he received a leg wound that would eventually cost

him his life. Lander remained in the field during the winter of 1861-62, despite suffering chronic pain and recurring fevers brought on by his incurable leg infection.

In January Lander held the town of Hancock against the superior forces of General “Stonewall” Jackson, until ordered to withdraw. He finally succumbed to his infection in March, as he was preparing to attack Jackson at Winchester.

Frederick Lander’s achievements as an explorer, engineer, writer and soldier fell into obscurity by the end of the 19th century, as his exploits were overshadowed by events after his death. It wasn’t until 2000 that a biography illuminated his substance and significance of Lander—a figure his biographer describes as “the prototype of the 19th-century American hero.”

#165 The Story of the Spencer Memorial Mace

The installation on October 15th, 1982, of MG W. Russell Todd as Norwich University's 22nd president was the occasion of the premier appearance of the Spencer Memorial Mace in an academic ceremony.

Contributed by Professor Emeritus Gary T. Lord adapted from an article in the March 1983 edition of the Norwich Record.

Full story:

The ceremonial scepter or mace represents the academic authority of the University and is carried by the senior member of the faculty. Customarily a mace precedes an academic procession. At Norwich, it appears during Convocation and both the undergraduate at CGCS Commencement ceremonies. The rest of the year, it resides under the care of the Sullivan Museum and History Center.

The Spencer Mace is linked to a long tradition which stretches back to the Middle Ages, when academic maces were first carried in ceremonial processions as symbols of dignity and authority. The academic ceremonial mace evolved from both the royal scepter and the battle mace. It became an important insignia of European universities, and some American universities have followed suit.

The Norwich mace is named in honor of the late Dana Professor of Government Eber A. Spencer, Jr., and was given to the University by Richard S. King '68 and Dudley H. Willis '64, as a tribute to the teacher who served the University with great distinction for three decades.

About six months before Professor Spencer's death in 1982, the donors decided that they wished to sponsor a project to honor their former teacher. It was Professor Spencer himself who selected a mace

as his tribute. For many years he had discussed the need for an institutional mace. Professor Emeritus Gary Lord rendered a detailed design, which Professor Spencer approved. Unfortunately, he never saw the mace in its completed form.

The design of the Spencer Mace is rich in its symbolism. At the top of the mace is the head of a whitetail deer and at the foot is a cone from a red spruce, the quintessential Vermont evergreen. The stag trampling the serpent signifies the victory of good over evil. The wooden staff is fluted to give appearance of fasces, the ancient Roman symbol of authority. Other symbols include the seal of the University, the seal of the State of Vermont, and a decorative engraving from an 1867 Norwich diploma.

A New Hampshire goldsmith brought together a diverse team of craftsmen to undertake the challenging project. Fred Danforth of the renowned Danforth Pewter contributed the urn-shaped element near the head of the mace. An engraver, a sculptor, and a woodworker were among the others who lent their expertise.

The metal work in the three-foot-long mace is fabricated from sterling silver, except for the band twisted around the base of the laurel wreath. The band is fashioned from solid gold which was panned



Top: President Todd receiving the Spencer Mace.

Right: Detail of the Spencer Mace.

Images courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.



from streams in Central Vermont. The mace handle was turned from the wood of a sugar maple tree which had grown in Norwich, Vermont, the town in which Norwich University was first organized.

The Spencer Mace has become an important part of the academic ritual and tradition of the University. The mace is a meaningful object which lends dignity to ceremonial occasions, but it is also a fitting and proper tribute to a teacher who inspired the University with his intellect, eloquence, and humanity.



Top: Norwich University orchestra, circa 1900.

Bottom: Rhythm Kings, 1930.

Right: Norwich University "Grenadiers" 1987.

Images courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

#166 Musical Clubs, Another Historic Tradition

The Norwich Glee Club was founded sometime in the 1880s. College glee clubs, a type of a cappella singing group, rose to popularity across the country during the mid-to-late 19th century. By 1890, the Norwich club had gained a reputation in the university community and were traveling to gigs in Boston and elsewhere.

Full story:

This a cappella singing group was a popular feature at alumni club meetings, and eventually, a spring tour became a central tradition. Early on, their performances served as fundraisers for the Athletic Association. Indeed, athletics remained such a prevalent extracurricular activity (and the student body remained so small) that the Glee Club had to put off its practices until after football season so that its members would be available.

Early on in the life of jazz music, a short-lived student jazz band played at a few campus events during the late 1910s. The university then got its first dance orchestra in 1923. With a somewhat motley assortment of instruments including violin, piano, drums, trumpet, banjo, trombone, and saxophone, they played their first dance that October to the acclaim of both students and Northfield locals. The orchestra, sometimes styled as the Rhythm Kings, was a staple at campus events throughout the 1920s and 1930s, but seems to have been superseded after World War II by a more contemporary musical style: swing.

In 1938, keeping up with the times, Norwich debuted its first swing orchestra under the name of the Grenadiers. The 11-piece band first played at the "Tea Dance" following the Norwich-Middlebury

football game in October 1938. The musical cadets, under the baton of sophomore Robert Service '41, were met with great appreciation. The group was a fixture at dances and university events for decades. By the 1980s they evolved into a jazz ensemble that still performs today—making 2018 the 80th birthday of the Grenadiers!

Other groups have also come and gone over time. In recent years, the Grenadiers and the historic university band have been joined by newcomers such as the Pipes and Drums Band in bringing the magic of music to life on the Hill.



#167 Marine General Raymond Descheneaux Retires At Norwich

BGen Descheneaux graduated from Norwich University with a degree in electrical engineering and was commissioned into the Marine Corps in 1987. He first trained to fly KC-130 refueling aircraft and served with numerous Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadrons. He was the assistant air officer/forward air controller with 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) on board the USS Peleliu; the Commanding Officer of Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 41; the II Marine Expeditionary Force Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations (Individual Mobilized Augment); and Deputy Commander of Marine Aircraft Group 49. As a general officer, he served at Headquarters, Marine Corps as the Assistant Deputy Commandant for Aviation (Mobilization) from 2013-2016.

Full story:

During his career, he has engaged in Joint, Combined, NATO, and UN missions around the globe, including Central Command assault support missions during the First and Second Gulf Wars. He executed extensive United Nations joint famine relief missions in Somalia during the civil war of the 1990s. He served in the NATO peace keeping mission in Kosovo in 1998 in and combat search and rescue missions with Combined Task Force Northern Watch in Turkey. In addition, he participated in the non-combatant evacuation of the U.S. ambassador and over 240 American citizens from Rwandan genocide in Bujumbura, Burundi.

BGen Descheneaux has studied at the Harvard

Kennedy School's Executive Education, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, National Defense University, Air University, Marine Corps University, and the Army War College. He holds a Master's Degree in Business from Columbia College of Missouri, a Master's in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Air War College and is a graduate of the Joint Forces Staff College. He has flown over 300 combat missions while accumulating over 3,700 military flight hours.

His retirement ceremony and reception was held at Norwich on September 4, 2018, featuring a historical display of artifacts from Norwich Marines of the past.



BGen Raymond Descheneaux '87.



Leonard "Steamer" Nason

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

#168 Leonard "Steamer" Nason's War Stories

In the summer of 1995, the *Norwich Record* reprinted a short story by Leonard "Steamer" Nason, Class of 1920. The story, "Too Many Guns," had originally appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in April 1937.

Full story:

The *Record's* reprint was accompanied by this heartfelt editor's note:

Few Norwich cadets or alumni in the '20s and early '30s gained as much notoriety and universal appeal as Leonard Nason. "Steamer," as he was affectionately known by generations of classmates and friends, stands alone as a unique Norwich folk hero. It was Steamer Nason who fired the cannon from within Jackman Hall as an undergraduate. And it was Nason who led the New York alumni group in the '30s and '40s on a crusade to let the nation know that Norwich University produced graduates destined for greatness.

Through his hundreds of published stories, Nason, a veteran of both world wars, brought the foot soldier home to a new generation of readers who could only imagine the conditions brought on by war. In lighter moments, he recalled his days at Norwich University with great enthusiasm and humor.

Nason originally matriculated at Norwich in 1914 as a member of the class of 1918. His freshman roommate was another notable Norwich man, Bill Wilson, who went on to become a founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. He also attended at the same time as "Doc" Martin, Norwich's first African-American cadet, and I.D. White, who would command the 2nd

Armored Division in World War II.

Nason studied science and literature at NU and, among other activities like football and rifle team, contributed short stories to the *Reveille* (the student newspaper at the time) using the nickname Steamer, which would become his pen name as a professional writer. Like so many of his colleagues, his studies were interrupted, first by service in the 1916 Mexican border conflict and then by World War I. Determined to complete his degree, he graduated in 1920.

After finishing his studies, Nason became a prolific author. He published 17 books and over 90 short stories in the *Saturday Evening Post*, mostly during the 1920s and 1930s. Appropriately, his special topic of interest was war stories. He also went on to serve in World War II. He served for four years as a major and a colonel in the 2nd Armored Division, which was commanded by three Norwich men over the course of the war.

The course of "Steamer's" successful writing career was largely thanks to his experiences at Norwich and in service to his country, as well as his early start writing for a little student newspaper in rural Vermont. A Norwich man through and through, his son, Leonard Nason Jr., followed him to NU and graduated 1949.

#169 William H. Russell, Class of 1828, Founded an Infamous Society

William Huntington Russell was a native of Middletown, Conn., and the descendent of an old Connecticut family—his ancestor Noadiah Russell was a founding trustee of Yale College. Russell's life story reflects this family history as well as the influence of his mentor, Captain Alden Partridge. He studied at the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy between 1826 and 1828, when it was located in his hometown in Connecticut.

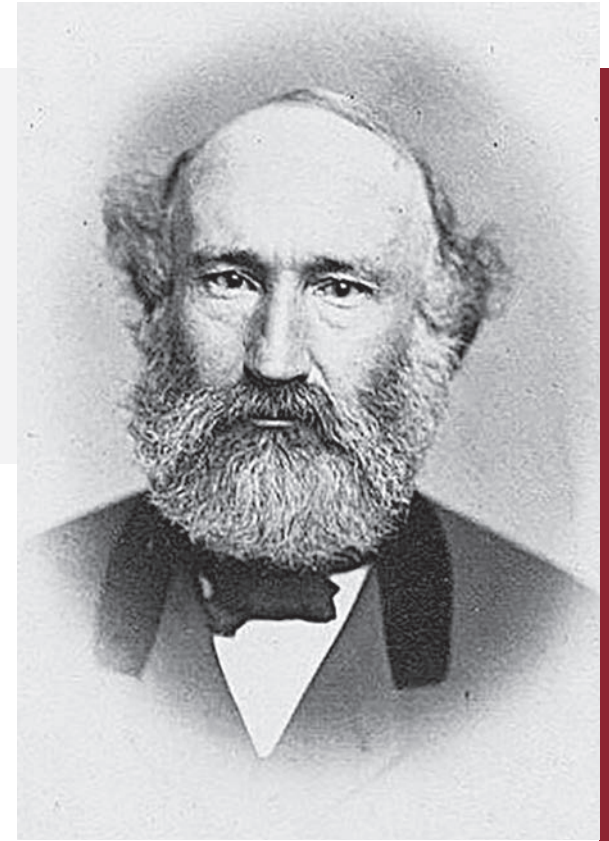
Full story:

After studying under Partridge, Russell went on to study for a bachelor's degree at Yale College. While there, he famously co-founded the Skull and Bones Society with Alphonso Taft in 1832. Taft and Russell decided to form their own society after Russell, the valedictorian of the senior class, was not selected for the academic society Phi Beta Kappa. Skull and Bones was the first of Yale's senior societies, which have since proliferated and became a cornerstone of campus life.

For much of its history, Skull and Bones' membership roster was not a secret, but rather its rituals and activities were kept from the world. Prominent members have included President William Howard Taft; Presidents George W. and George H.W. Bush; Harold Stanley of Morgan-Stanley Bank; and the founders of FedEx and *Time* magazine. When Skull and Bones formally incorporated its business and alumni organization in 1856, it was called the Russell Trust Association after the co-founder who hailed from NU.

After his history-making time as a student at Yale, Russell went on to a career that intertwined education, military service, and politics in a way that was reminiscent of Captain Alden Partridge himself. In 1836, he founded a school for young boys called the New Haven Collegiate and Commercial Institute. In 1840, he introduced military discipline to the curriculum, unknowingly preparing many of his students for service in the Civil War.

During the Civil War, Russell helped organize the Connecticut militia and served on the Board of Visitors to inspect and report on West Point for the Secretary of War. After the war, he entered politics. He served in the Connecticut legislature and was an early member of the Republican Party, which was founded by fellow Norwich alumnus Alvan Bovay. Russell lived out his days in his home state of Connecticut and passed away in New Haven in 1885.



William H. Russell, NU 1828

#170 This Beloved Professor and Coach Advanced PE at Norwich

Dr. Wallace “Wally” Baines was a native of Derby, Conn., and a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard (and would be referred to fondly as “The Maj” during his time at Norwich). Following his service, he earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education and became a public school teacher in Arizona. He was nearly finished with his doctorate in education from Boston University when he came to Norwich in 1960 and became a pioneer in the university’s commitment to physical fitness and health.

Full story:

President Harmon hired Baines to establish, for the first time, Norwich’s undergraduate curriculum in health, physical education, and recreation. He served as head of the physical education department for many years. In addition to establishing the undergraduate PE program, he created the graduate program in athletic administration in 1974.

His commitment to the “total man” extended beyond the classroom, too. Intramural sports such as boxing were an integral part of his vision for physical education beginning his first year on campus. In 1966, he took on the added responsibility of helping to run the boys’ summer camp that was conducted on campus. Donning an additional hat of “Coach,” he started the lacrosse program in 1969 and the cross-country program in 1974.

In partnership with legendary football coach Joe Sabol, Baines served as a major catalyst for the growth of NU athletics in the late 20th century, as well as a mentor to generations of Norwich students. Coaches Baines and Sabol also helmed efforts to

expand and improve the playing fields on campus.

“The Maj” was selected as a Charles A. Dana Professor in 1975 in recognition of his groundbreaking excellence, and in 1983, he became head of the Division of Education, what was an academic term for what is now known as College (i.e. College of Liberal Arts – COLA). He was inducted into the NU Athletic Hall of Fame in 1987 and retired a much beloved campus figure one year later. His 28-year career perfectly exemplified Norwich values. Wally Baines passed away in 2012.

Since his time, the programs that he instituted have only grown and become more successful. Norwich has won 10 GNAC men’s cross country team titles since 1999, including the last three. The women have won three of the last four GNAC team titles. In lacrosse, the Norwich women won four of the first five GNAC women’s lacrosse titles, including three straight from 2010-2012, and the men won the GNAC title in 2013.



Coach Wallace “Wally” Baines speaks with a player on the sidelines of a lacrosse game with Skidmore in 1985.

Images courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

#171 Looking Back at the Centennial Celebration

The Norwich community came together for a five-day celebration marking the 1919 centennial of Captain Alden Partridge's American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy. The festivities were attended by prominent alumni, former presidents, presidents of other esteemed universities, and government dignitaries, as well as the Corps of Cadets and Norwich's beloved alumni.

Full story:

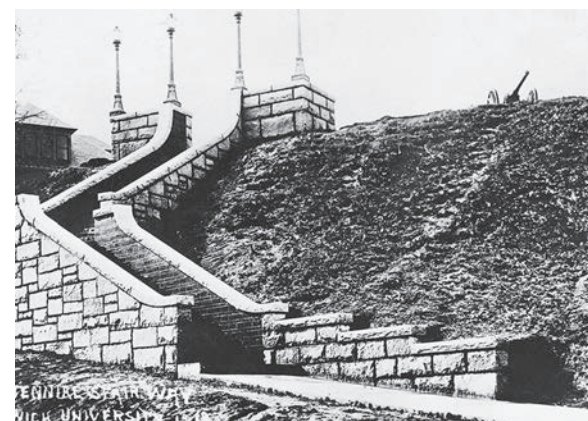
Partridge's Academy was founded in Norwich, Vt., and it's worth noting that while the first bricks were laid in August of 1819, no students were enrolled or classes taught until 1820. In fact, there is evidence that during his lifetime, Captain Partridge considered 1820 his founding date. But based on the scale of the 1919 centennial celebration, it's clear that the 1819 founding date has been canonical for several generations.

The five days of the centennial celebrations were divided into themes. The festivities kicked off on Friday, October 10, 1919, with Alumni Day, featuring the formal opening of the new cavalry stables, a review of the squadron by Governor Percival Clement, and an alumni banquet. Saturday was Undergraduates' Day and included morning drills and an afternoon football game against New Hampshire State College, followed by a dance in the armory.

On Sunday, October 12, a solemn Memorial Day was observed. The Corps of Cadets led a procession to Elmwood and Mount Hope cemeteries, where they paid tribute to former officials and alumni of the university. Later that afternoon, the university chaplain presided over a memorial service. Less than a year had passed since the signing of the Armistice, and many fallen heroes were doubtless on the hearts and minds of the university community.

Monday was Founders' Day, and the festivities were centered around the university's founding location—and Alden Partridge's hometown—of Norwich, Vt. Revelers gathered at 8:00 AM to make the pilgrimage south to Norwich, where they shared a luncheon and observed the ceremonial unveiling of a memorial monument in the town. In the exercises held on the parade ground of "Old Norwich," there were speeches by Rear Admiral George Partridge Colvocoresses '66, President Emeritus Charles Spooner, and Dr. John Lord of Dartmouth College, as well as a parade marshaled by Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Hiram Bearss '98. The party then processed to the cemetery and paid tribute to the Norwich dead who rest there, including Captain Alden Partridge and our second president, Colonel Truman Ransom. Back in Northfield, the fraternities and the Commons Club held open houses that evening.

The weekend's festivities culminated on "Centennial Day," Tuesday, October 14, 1919. The centerpiece of the day was the dedication of the Centennial Stairs. In a moving ceremony, the ribbons over the stairs were untied by the three young children of Captain Phillip Sherman '07, who was killed in the 1918 sinking of the *Tuscania*. The 40 names carved on the granite steps paid tribute to beloved and loyal supporters of the university—support that has allowed it to thrive for another 100 years.

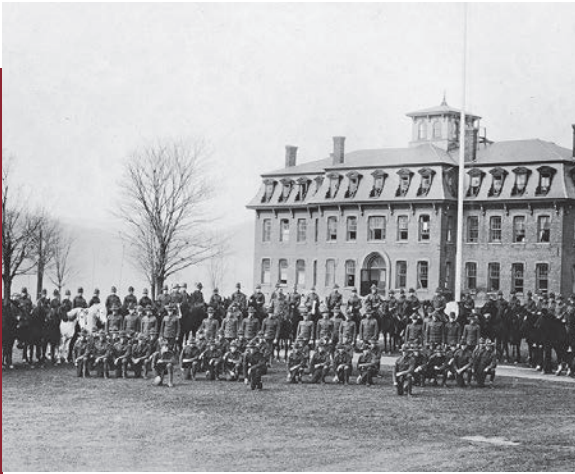


Top: Centennial Celebration in 1919.

Bottom: Dedication of the Centennial Stairs.

Images courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

Here on the Hill, things are winding down after an exciting Homecoming celebration. We hope you are all looking forward to observing our bicentennial with as much excitement and ceremony as was on display for our centennial in 1919.



Norwich University Students' Army Training Corps (SATC)
Commencement, December 1918.

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

#172 The Short-Lived WWI Student Army Training Corps

The United States entered World War I by declaring war on Germany in April 1917. The Reserve Officer Training Program was only a year old, and it soon became apparent that the U.S. forces had a great need for college-educated soldiers. In February 1918, after nearly a year of fighting, the War Department created the Committee on Education and Special Training. One result of this was the creation of the Student Army Training Corps.

Full story:

This 60-day, ROTC-like program was hosted at 525 different schools. It was designed to encourage voluntary military enlistment and to provide simultaneous military and academic training. The program launched nationwide on October 1, 1918—one hundred years ago this month.

Norwich was authorized to form a unit of 250 men, and the slots quickly filled with existing Norwich students who were eager for a fast track to the front lines. They were all enlisted as privates in the U.S. Army and had their school expenses paid, plus a \$30 monthly stipend. A ceremony took place in the Dewey Hall chapel during which the enlistees recited the relatively new Pledge of Allegiance and the General Order establishing the SATC was read aloud along with a message from the Secretary of War.

Though life on campus looked a little different, normal university operations remained continuous

throughout the war, unlike during World War II. For years to come, Norwich alumni would write in to the *Record* recalling their SATC days with fondness. As fate would have it, the Armistice was signed just six weeks after the program got underway. The demobilization of Norwich's SATC unit began a month later. One alum wrote at the time, "It is pleasant to think that the stern vigorous training which Norwich has given its men for a century will not pass with the SATC."

After the demobilization of the SATC unit, business as usual resumed on campus. But the indelible mark of classmates who never returned from the front remained.

As 200 Things About Norwich prepares to observe the 100th anniversary of the 1918 Armistice next month, keep an eye out for our post summarizing NU's participation in all major conflicts since its founding in 1819.

#173 Birthday of a Norwich Landmark

Today, the landscape of Norwich University is characterized by many cascading stairways that help us navigate our hilly terrain. Unmistakably, the multi-landing staircase that leads from the walkway near the newly finished Mack Hall to the Upper Parade and Jackman stands not only as a daily route for foot traffic but as a monument.

Full story:

But when planning got under way for the Centennial Stairway more than 100 years ago, there were no staircases leading from the bottom of the Hill to the top. So university leaders seized upon the opportunity to combine a practical need with a symbolic gesture.

Construction plans were announced in the February 1918 edition of the *Norwich Record*. The project quickly gained the enthusiasm of alumni, students, staff, and faculty, and by July, the university had raised approximately half of the estimated \$3,000 that would be required.

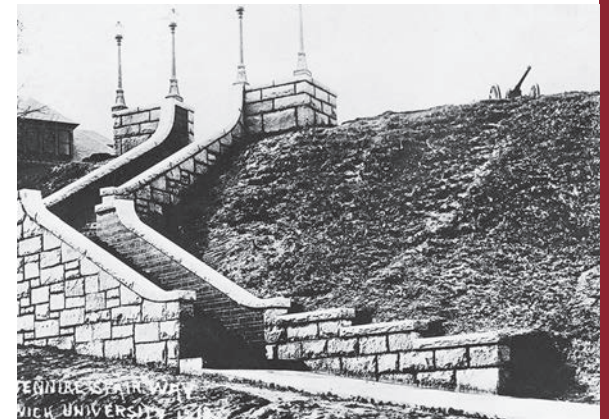
To encourage participation, each donation was reported in the *Record*. Gifts of \$50 secured the right to choose a name for a memorial step. The Class of 1905 funded a step for their classmate, Ernest Lawrence, who had recently been killed in World War I. A group of cadets tried unsuccessfully to raise funds for a step honoring Mary Gould, a local woman who was like a surrogate mother to many students.

The man behind the design was Elroy Chase, a member of the class of 1903 who found success in the granite industry. Materials were donated by Barclay Brothers, a granite firm in nearby Barre, Vt. The stairs were dedicated in 1919 during the five-day Centennial Celebration in October, as described in the *Record*:

While five hundred people looked on and lumps rose in many throats, three bright little lads, aged respectively 10, 7, and 4, stepped shyly forward and untied the long maroon and yellow ribbons that were stretched between two bared sabers across the top of the new centennial entrance to Norwich University that was dedicated today.

The children were Phillip, Randall, and Allan Sherman, sons of Capt. Phillip V. Sherman of Burlington, the first Norwich man to die at the hands of the enemy in the World War.

After decades of harsh Vermont winters, the steps were refurbished in 1962.



Top: President Russell Todd (center) and others dedicate the new Alumni Stairs in 1982.

Bottom: Dedication of the Centennial Stairs

Images courtesy of the Norwich University Archives



#174 Ten Years of the Todd Lecture Series

President Emeritus Major General W. Russell Todd '50 made a deep impact on Norwich during his time as president. His late wife, known affectionately as Carol, was also a beloved and influential figure during his tenure from 1982 to 1992. Her many contributions include the founding of the Peace Corps Preparatory Program, which became a model for similar programs at colleges and universities throughout the country.

Full story:

This 60-day, ROTC-like program was hosted at 5In 2008, the Todds' daughter, Ellen Drew, and son-in-law, John Drew, ensured that their legacy would continue enhancing the learning environment at Norwich for years to come. Through a generous gift from the Drew Foundation, the Todd Lecture Series was born.

Beginning in 2008, the Todd Lecture Series has brought provocative and surprising speakers to campus. With a single guest in the fall and a series of lectures in the spring—each selected and hosted by an academic college—the series annually covers a variety of themes while remaining free and open to the public and the students, faculty, and staff.

The first Todd Lecture was held 10 years ago this fall, on November 18, 2008. The speaker was Dean Kamen, a renowned inventor, entrepreneur, and advocate for science and technology. Kamen spent 90 minutes sharing his idea and passions with an audience of 1,100 Norwich students and Central Vermont residents. Kamen is widely known for inventing the Segway Human Transporter, but is most proud of his accomplishments in medical research and development. In his inaugural Todd Lecture, he shared his recent water purification project designed to bring clean drinking water to an estimated 1.1 billion people.

Since then, the Todd Lecture Series has featured

generals, MacArthur Fellows, CEOs, economists, engineers, and no fewer than three former secretaries of state. These diverse speakers bring new perspectives and challenging ideas to the Norwich community. Since 2012, the talks and panels have been recorded and are available to watch on the Todd Lecture Series website.

The 10th anniversary series kicked off with Sam Kass, a former White House policy advisor for nutrition, who gave a talk titled "Eat a Little Better: Great Flavor, Good Health, Better World." The keynote lecture streamed at tls.norwich.edu as part of a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) symposium on "Health & Humans: Shaping the Environment, Treating Disease, and Changing Culture through Science, Technology, and Communications."

The Todds made for an indelible presence at each lecture, seated down front, with Mrs. Todd's striking white hair a standout feature. Shortly after Carol Todd's death in December 2015, then-editor of the *Norwich Record*, Diana Weggler, wrote of her, "Carol's legacy of service to Norwich lives on in perpetuity—in the Kreitzberg Library, in the Center for Civic Engagement, in the Sullivan Museum, in the Todd Lecture Series, and in the countless programs, organizations, and initiatives she guided and supported."



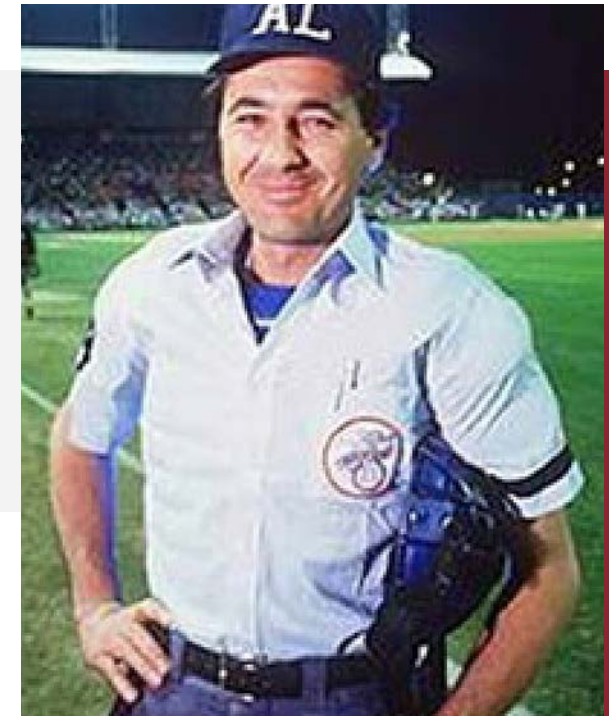
Top: Dean Kamen

Bottom: Sam Kass

Images courtesy of the Norwich Office of Communications.

#175 Steve Palermo, Class of 1971, a Hero and former MLB Umpire

Steve Palermo was a native of Worcester, Mass. who attended Norwich and two other institutions of higher education before finding his true calling at Major League Baseball's highly competitive umpiring school in Florida. He first discovered a love of umpiring when he umpired for local amateur leagues to pick up some extra cash during high school and college. After completing the MLB training, he started his career in the minor leagues and landed a full-time job with the American League in 1977.



Former umpire Steve Palermo, center, being recognized by Major League Baseball for his dedication and career as an umpire and battle against cancer. .

Full story:

Palermo was an American League umpire for nearly 15 years. He worked many notable games, including the 1983 World Series, the 1986 All-Star Game, four American League Championship Series, and Dave Righetti's Fourth of July no-hitter for the Yankees in 1983. Because he worked for the American League, the Massachusetts native sometimes umpired games between his family's beloved Red Sox and the rival Yankees, and took plenty of flak for his calls against the Red Sox.

Palermo's umpiring career came to a sudden end when tragedy struck in July of 1991. After umpiring a game between the California Angels and the Texas Rangers, he and some friends went out to dinner at a restaurant in Dallas. Palermo and a few others rushed out into the parking lot when they realized that two waitresses were being attacked by robbers. Palermo chased one of the assailants on foot while another fled by car, only to return and shoot at Palermo and his friends.

Palermo immediately fell to the pavement as a bullet struck his kidney and spinal cord. Doctors

believed he would never walk again. It took months of rehabilitation, but Palermo was able to regain the use of his legs with the aid of crutches and then a cane. In October 1991, just three months after the shooting, he threw the first pitch at Game 1 of the World Series in Minneapolis.

His umpiring career was over, but his passion for baseball never flagged. In the 1990s he worked as a network analyst as well as a special assistant to the chairman of the Major League Executive Council, studying the problematic length of MLB games. In 2000, he was hired as an MLB umpire supervisor, a role he would continue for the rest of his life. He also served as honorary commissioner for the White House Tee Ball Initiative, a program under President George W. Bush for children with disabilities.

Steve Palermo died of lung cancer in 2017 at the age of 67. His bravery and fierce dedication to the sport of baseball were eulogized across the country.



The Brainerd Daily Dispatch, November 11, 1918

Images courtesy of the Norwich Office of Communications.

#176 Armistice Centennial: 200 Years of Norwich Service in Conflict

Sunday, November 11, marks the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice that ended the bloody fighting of World War I. Many Norwich men, some of whom we have highlighted in this series, made brave sacrifices to serve in that conflict, some making the ultimate sacrifice.

Full story:

Service and sacrifice have always been watchwords of Norwich University. After Captain Partridge founded his academy, the first major conflict to affect our nation was the Mexican-American War from 1846 to 1848. Norwich history buffs may already know that this conflict claimed the life of our second president, Colonel Truman Ransom, during the Battle of Chapultapec. At least 73 Norwich men are believed to have served in the Mexican-American War, though it's a poorly documented period of the university's history.

Two decades later, the Civil War rocked the nation with four years of fighting and over a million casualties. At least 700 Norwich men served in the conflict, including an estimated 56 who fought for the Confederacy. Approximately 61 died from all causes related to their service, and five of Norwich's eight Medal of Honor recipients emerged from the Civil War.

The next major series of conflicts involved many fewer alumni, but resulted in some famous moments of Norwich heroism. The Spanish-American War was fought over just ten weeks in 1898 with the participation of at least 60 Norwich alumni. Admiral George Dewey, Class of 1855, famously led his fleet to victory at the Battle of Manila Bay, inflicting

major Spanish casualties and becoming a national celebrity overnight.

The Treaty of Paris ended the Spanish-American War and gave the U.S. control over Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. It also heralded the beginning of the Philippine-American War as the island nation struggled for independence. It was in this conflict, which saw just 14 Norwich alumni deployed, that Colonel Hiram Bearss of the class of 1898 earned his Medal of Honor.

The world wars of the 20th century were among those that had the greatest impact on both the alumni and the operations of Norwich University. Though the U.S. was involved in World War I for only 18 months, at least 660 of our alumni served in the bloody conflict. The spring of 1917 saw an air of change on campus. After the U.S. declared war on Germany in April, the Board of Trustees quickly voted to hold an early commencement ceremony so that the members of the senior class could serve their country. Fourteen Norwich men lost their lives in World War I, and countless others were recognized for their bravery and leadership.

World War II saw the greatest numbers deployed from the Norwich ranks: over 2,000, all told, with

approximately 73 lives lost. Many of these were veterans who took advantage of the G.I. Bill to pursue higher education at Norwich after the war. World War II arguably had the most visible impact on the Norwich campus of any conflict, as traditional operations ceased in 1943 and 1944 while the campus played host to a variety of training programs. Captain James Burt '39, received a medal of honor in 1945 for extraordinary heroism under fire during the Battle of Aachen.

In the decades following World War II, at least 600 Norwich alumni served in the Korean War; at least 760 in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s; and approximately 110 served in the First Gulf War. Many current and former students have served and continue to serve in the Global War on Terror. Among them is Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator Edward Byers, our eighth Medal of Honor recipient, who was honored with the decoration in 2016, a year before completing his master's degree through the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies.

Countless other conflicts and skirmishes have seen the leadership and heroism of Norwich alumni and cadets. As we remember the Armistice, which is marked every year by the modern holiday of Veterans Day, we remember those thousands of Norwich souls, both living and deceased, who have placed service before self.



Painting depicting the six signatories of the Armistice in the railway carriage with other participants. From left to right are German Admiral Ernst Vanselow, German Count Alfred von Oberndorff of the Foreign Ministry, German General Detlof von Winterfeldt (with helmet), British naval officer Captain Jack Marriott, and standing in front of the table, Matthias Erzberger, head of the German delegation. Behind the table are two British naval officers, Rear-Admiral George Hope, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, and the French representatives, Marshal Ferdinand Foch (standing), and General Maxime Weygand.



Members of the Norwich University polo team, indoors and on horseback, in 1975.

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

#177 High Goals: Polo on the Hill, 1909–1948

The first half of the 20th century was a different era, an era in which horsemanship was an essential military skill, and one in which, by 1914, Norwich University's Corps of Cadets was organized as a cavalry unit in the Vermont National Guard. Horses—provided at the courtesy and expense of the U.S. Army—were there to serve official duty as training animals; but they also proffered something else: the spark that ignited the flame of polo on the Hill.

Contributed by Andrew Nemethy, excerpted from Citizens & Soldiers: The First 200 Years of Norwich University.

Full story:

Commandant Frank Tompkins officially launched the sport in 1911, though photographs suggest that students were playing two years earlier, when the first horses arrived in Northfield. Open to any cadet participating in equestrian, that first season comprised a series of interclass competitions culminating in a Commencement Week tournament. Hotly contested between the sophomore and senior squads (captained by F. L. Loviet and H. J. M. Smith respectively), the seniors prevailed. “This was an innovation for NU, and the presence and applause of the spectators easily showed enthusiasm,” reported the *Norwich Record*.

Soon, the “Horsemen” were practicing daily on Howard Field. The following season, captained by senior John W. Slattery '12, they galloped onto the scene of intercollegiate competition—and straight into the record books. On May 15, 1912, NU's 3-0 victory at West Point over a team famed for its exceptional equestrian skills was the million-to-one shot that propelled polo to the forefront of weekly sports talk on the Hill.

Throughout the 1920s, with state-of-the-art stables and a brand-new riding arena, Norwich dominated the competition. A trick play, whereby one rider bearing down on the goal would fake the shot while yielding the ball to a trailing teammate who called for the maneuver by yelling “Hit it, Ben!”, allowed Norwich to earn victories over formidable Ivy League opponents. A handwritten report of the 1921–1922 season reflects an 8-1 record and a modest boast: “Norwich won 3 out of 5 with Yale.”

This 1922 squad, who edged out Chicago's famed Black Horse Troop—“one of the most exclusive military and social organizations in the country”—7-6, ranks among the greatest in Norwich sports history. Among a quartet comprising captain Ken G. Allen '22, Allen Plumley '23, Reginald Switzer '23 and Professor of Military Science Col. Frank B. Edwards, two—Plumley and Switzer—earned spots on the National Collegiate Team: an honor “which is to polo what the All-American team is to football,” argued a fan. After NU defeated a team led by the renowned Will Rogers, the actor recognized his opponents as “the best polo players [he'd] ever faced.”

The greatness persisted. In 1926, the Harvard Crimson dubbed team captain Roger W. Fisher '26 a “brilliant leader” after the Horsemen trampled the defending national champions 14 to 6. Fisher is the first, and only, polo player to be inducted into NU's Hall of Fame.

Throughout its nearly four halcyon decades on the Hill, players, coaches and devotees of polo clamored for its recognition as a varsity sport—and they just might have succeeded, had the Army's transition to Armored Cavalry not obliged the retirement of Norwich's beloved horses, and the program, in 1948.

Polo enjoyed a brief revival at Norwich from 1974 to 1977, after enthusiastic students organized a team and launched a campaign to “bring 'em back!” Riding borrowed ponies, the squad performed respectably for several seasons before the program faded away for good.