

# **SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR**

**Major General William T. Sherman Camp #93**

**Office of the Senior Vice Commander**

**5041 Strathaven Drive**

**Dayton, Ohio 45424**

**May 10, 2019**

**Honorable Rick Perales, Chair, and  
Members of the Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215**

**Dear Ohio Representatives:**

**Re: HB 155 Ohio Veterans' Heritage Protection Bill.**

**In 1898, Grand Army of the Republic Hiram Strong Post 79 in Dayton, Ohio, obtained through federal legislation a 13-inch seacoast mortar on long-term loan from the U.S. Navy for public use as a veterans' memorial. The Model 1861 mortar had seen combat service on a Mississippi River gunboat during the siege of Vicksburg in 1863. At a public ceremony, the mortar and 13 cannon balls were installed for display as part of the Post 79 burial section. As of 1997, it was one of 27 of 162 seacoast mortars built for the U.S. Army and Navy known to still exist. The cannon balls disappeared long ago.**

**Old Greencastle Cemetery, located along South Broadway St. in Dayton, is the final resting place for approximately 300 veterans. The site contains about 6,000 graves dating to 1817. The overall 5.5 acre cemetery was founded in 1849 by the United Brethren Church. Old Greencastle was operated and maintained actively into the 1990s by the Harrison Township Cemetery Association. About 1998, the last Old Greencastle Cemetery trustee sold the seacoast mortar to a private collector in Emmaus, Pennsylvania for about \$10,000 plus a representative, inert tube resembling a 19<sup>th</sup> century artillery piece. The cemetery itself was sold to commercial owners who focused attention on still active New Greencastle Cemetery located roughly a mile away on Nicholas Rd.**

**In 2011, Dayton's WRGT TV-45 aired a news story concerning the overgrown, abandoned cemetery. A SUVCW Sherman Camp 93 member observed that there were graves of veterans among waist-high weeds in Old Greencastle Cemetery. Shortly thereafter, the Camp initiated their ongoing, voluntary program to restore honor to, and maintain, the GAR section, all veterans' graves throughout the cemetery, and basically the overall property. As part of the effort, they confirmed burial locations for all Civil War veterans there, installed tombstones upon Civil War veterans' graves, and placed flag markers on veterans' graves throughout Old Greencastle. Research by Camp 93 documented graves at**

**OGC of soldiers and sailors who served in the American Revolution, War of 1812, Civil War, Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, and the Korean War.**

**I am a past member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War national Council of Administration, a Past Department of Ohio Commander, and Past Camp Commander of the Major General William T. Sherman Camp #93 in Dayton. I served three years on the Governor's Sesquicentennial of the Civil War Committee. I am a retired U.S. Air Force officer.**

**I very much hope for, and encourage, support of HB 155. Passage of the bill into law is urgently needed to safeguard our state's many monuments, memorials, and artifacts that honor all United States Armed Forces veterans and their service defending our nation. The law is an important step to prevent the loss and destruction of veterans' monuments and memorials as happened to Dayton's seacoast mortar at Old Greencastle Cemetery.**

## ***Fredric C. Lynch***

**FREDRIC C. LYNCH  
Senior Vice Commander**



**Dayton's Seacoast Mortar being removed by collector - 1998**



**GAR Post 79's Seacoast Mortar outside in Emmaus, Penn. - 2017**



**Solid metal fake cannon tube at Old Greencastle Cemetery - 2017**