Samuel Wolfe: A Union Country Military Man

by Joshua Custer

Samuel Wolfe (1878-1962) of Lewisburg, PA, was a remarkable man who had a great impact on the US military and political scene. Wolfe served alongside many other Union County men throughout his many years of service. Wolfe began his recorded military career as a Corporal in the US army 12th regiment in the Spanish-American War.

The Spanish-American War began as a consequence of American intervention in Cuba's war for independence in 1898. The yellow journalism of Hearst and Pulitzer swayed the public opinion against Spanish rule in Cuba, beginning nearly 20 years before the conflict. After the American battleship, The Maine, was sunk near Havana under mysterious circumstances, US president William McKinley was pressured into war. The war ended with several important consequences: the Spanish ceded control of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, and Teddy Roosevelt gained national fame for his charge up San Juan Hill which would lead to his tenure as President.

Wolfe remained in the army through the respite up to the US involvement in World War I. The United States desperately needed troops to take its standing army of 200,000 to fighting size of over a million. Union County began its troop-raising effort by seeking to augment Troop M, an established local cavalry regiment. The company, made up of several thousand local men and commanded by Captain Wolfe, shipped out to Georgia to train in September 1917. Sadly, not long after their arrival, Troop M was disbanded due to a lack of need for cavalry. The men from Union County would never again be represented by a military organization. Captain Wolfe was reassigned to Fort Clark in Texas. On the way to the reassignment, Wolfe was married to his wife Bertha.

After WW1 ended, most of the fractionalized Troop M returned to Lewisburg and were greeted very warmly. Samuel Wolfe eventually returned to Union County after being promoted to Major, and after retiring from the military, began a career in politics.

Wolfe started as the Republican National Convention Delegate in 1940, and would go on to become a Pennsylvania State Senator beginning in 1947. In 1953, he served as the Chair of the Union County Republican Party. He remained a state senator until he died in office on December 12, 1962. Samuel and Bertha Wolfe (1877-1969) are buried in the Lewisburg Cemetery.

If you are interested in learning more about Samuel Wolfe or Union County's involvement in WWI, a full, in-depth article "Union County's Role in World War I" by Charles McCool Snyder, plus a WWI veteran list is in Heritage Volume XI, which is

available from the Union County Historical Society. Call 570-524-866 or email info@unioncountyhistoricalsociety.org for details.

103rd Motor Batallin
Leaving Lewisburg 1917
Old Cameron R.R. Station
North 2nd St