

Supplina Hamilton's Indian War Medal

Glen shared with me this photo several times which shows the individual in the middle (Supplina Hamilton) wearing a silver badge that is in the shape of a maltese cross.



There were several variations of the caption associated with the photo but they all basically said that it is from 1898 and is of three Christian Ministers from Eastern Washington. One caption said “Supplina Hamilton is in the middle and is wearing his “National Indian War Veterans” medal. He likely recently received it or had come from one of their periodic veteran reunions. “

1. I believe the silver badge that Supplina Hamilton is wearing is like this one (Glen discovered it on E-bay selling for \$750):



The badge is for membership in the “Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast”. Note: more about this organization is provided later.

2. There are a couple of key entries in Supplina's life (from

<https://myhamiltonfamily.org/hamiltontdocuments/chronological-outline-of-the-life-of-Supplina-P-Hamilton.pdf>)

- **He was a veteran of the Yakima (also spelled Yakama) Indian War of 1855/56:**

Oct. 17: Supplina answered the call from Oregon Territorial Governor George Law Curry for volunteers to help put down an Indian rebellion, in what would be called the Yakima Indian War of 1855/56. On that day Supplina enlisted as a private with other Linn County men in Captain Davis Layton's Company H, 1st Regiment of the Oregon Mounted Volunteers. Supplina described himself as "blacksmith" that was "5' 10" tall light blue eyes, brown hair and fair complexion." He enlisted for the duration of the war and brought his own mount, rifle and equipment. Twenty-three year old Supplina was known to the volunteers as 'Doc Hamilton.' [19]

Winter 1855/56: The mounted volunteers spent the winter out in the field in the Walla Walla Valley in deep snow and difficult conditions. [22]

Dec. 7 ~ 10: Supplina fought in the epic Battle of Walla Walla near the current community of Frenchtown south of present day Walla Walla, WA. It was the longest battle of any Indian war in Washington Territory. It resulted in the death of Chief Peo-Peo-Mox-Mox. [20, 21]

1856

Feb. 16: Supplina was discharged at Mill Creek Camp, Walla Walla, Washington Territory at the end of the War and returned to Linn County, Oregon.

- **Supplina was involved in politics** (note that in 1898, he ran for Washington State Representative on the Populist ticket).

Supplina Hamilton was no stranger to local political leadership or public service. Over the years Supplina had been a volunteer soldier in the 1st Regiment of Oregon Mounted Volunteers during the Yakima Indian War of 1855/56; was the second county commissioner of Umatilla County, Oregon Territory (appointed in May of 1863 to fill a vacancy); ran for county commissioner of Walla Walla County, Washington Territory on the Union Party ticket in May of 1867 and lost; ran for Washington State Representative for the 7th District on the Populist Ticket in 1898 and lost; served as a School Board Director for the Endicott School District #111 in 1898 (likely for other years also).

- **Supplina died on February 9, 1905.**

Feb. 9, 7:15AM: Though having been lively and in relative good health and sound mind, Supplina apparently suffered a stroke ('stricken with paralysis') on Saturday Feb. 4th and lost the ability to speak. After five days in this state, Supplina died at home near St. John the morning of Thursday, Feb. 9th. Supplina's funeral was the next day Friday Feb 10th at 11AM in their home south of St. John. The following day, Saturday February 11th, Supplina was buried in the Pleasant Valley Cemetery, just east of St. John, Whitman County, WA.

3. Why in this photo of three ministers was Supplina wearing the badge for "Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast"? I think it was one or more of these reasons:

- The caption with the photo mentioned that he may have just received it or come from a veteran's reunion. The badge was worn at meetings just like today's members of the American Legion or Veteran's of Foreign Wars wear a hat at meetings.

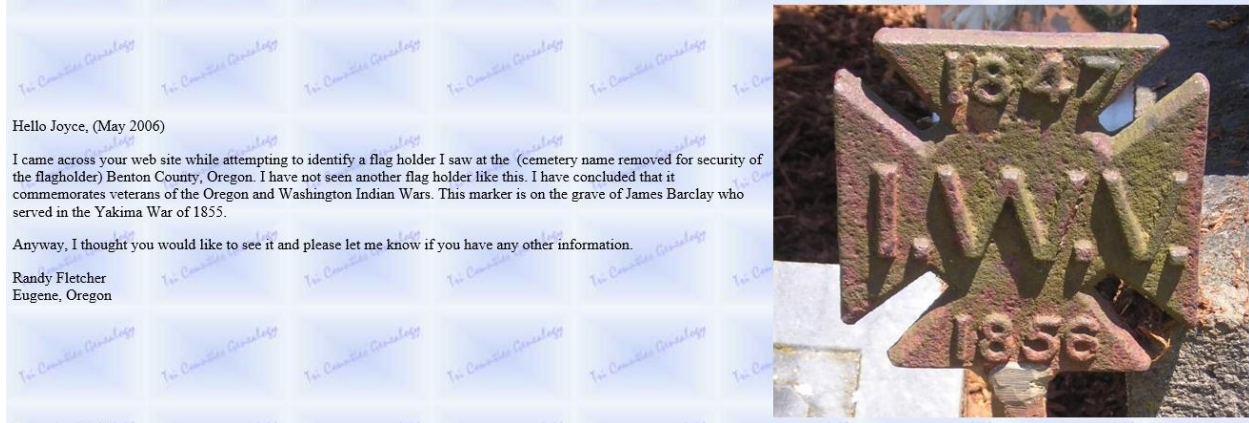
- Supplina was proud of his military service and wore the badge for the same reasons that my father wears a WWII baseball hat. During that era, Civil War Veterans of the Union Army would usually wear something to indicate that they were a member of the Grand Army of the Republic. Supplina was not a Civil War Veteran but his badge indicated he also had military service.
- Political candidates during that era emphasized their service during the Civil War (they had “helped save the nation”) or their opponent’s lack of service. By wearing this badge, Supplina was emphasizing that he also had served (he “helped win the west”).
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- The United States was fighting the War with Spain in 1898 from April 25 – December 10. Supplina may have been wearing the badge as a symbol of his patriotism and/or his support for the military fighting this war.
- The back of the badge had a pin on it to make it easy to take on and off. The pin also made it easy to fall off and become lost. Supplina may have simply modified the badge so that it would not easily come off.

4. Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast (NPC)

- The association was established on September 25, 1885, by veterans who had fought in the Indian Wars in the Pacific Northwest prior to 1860. The Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast stated its objective as follows: "To keep alive the memories of trials of pioneer life, to encourage friendship and benevolence among those who have acted as the vanguard of civilization, to transmit a true history of the Indian wars of the North Pacific Coast, and to impress ourselves and our posterity with that true patriotism which protects our homes free from all evils both by war and peace."
- One of the main goals of the organization was to secure government pensions for men who had fought in the Indian wars. The culmination of this effort came in February of 1913 when President Taft signed a bill giving the veterans a pension of \$20 per month. The organization continued until circa 1941, by which time most of the original Indian war veterans had died. An associated organization, the Sons and Daughters of Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast, continued in existence until 1972.
- A newspaper article that Glen has shared indicate that Supplina was present when the pioneers of Eastern Washington met on June 11, 1887, at the courthouse in Walla Walla, WA. After the meeting, the Indian War Veterans organized a camp and adopted a constitution and bylaws.

Note: The “Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast” was the larger organization and subordinate camps were established across the area. I have not found any mention on the internet that there was a formal organization named “Pioneers of Eastern Washington”. I assume the newspaper article was referring to a meeting of members of the Oregon Pioneer Association who lived in the Walla Walla area.

I read one report that indicated that the Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast had approved a grave marker. I found this posted on the internet:



Note: Other grave markers, similar to this one, may be found in some of the Pioneer Cemeteries in Oregon and Washington.

5. Oregon Pioneer Association

- The annual Grand Encampments of Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast (usually held in Portland, Oregon) were held in conjunction with the Reunions of the Oregon Pioneer Association.
- The Oregon Pioneer Association (OPA) (originally known as the Oregon Pioneer Society), first established in October 1867, was a fraternal and lineage society and historical organization for early American settlers of the Oregon Territory.
- Membership in the Oregon Pioneer Society was open to any individual who came to Oregon during the period that the Oregon Territory was under joint occupancy of the United States and Great Britain, or who had been born in or settled in the Oregon Territory prior to January 1, 1854.
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- The OPS held annual gatherings, typically in approximate conjunction with the June 15 anniversary of the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which formally ended the Oregon boundary dispute between the United States and Great Britain.
- The Association, a non-governmental organization, had both fraternal and academic aspects. Its members gathered at conventions and published annual addresses dealing with pioneer life. The group thrived throughout the decades of the 1870s and 1880s. Due to its declining numbers inevitably resulting from the deaths of eligible members, the Oregon Pioneer Association was largely supplanted in 1901 by the Sons and Daughters of Oregon Pioneers, a new fraternal and historical association with less stringent eligibility requirements for its members. The OPA proper continued in existence, holding annual meetings through 1928

Other Veterans Groups

1. Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)

- The GAR was the inspiration for creating the Indian War Veterans of the Pacific North Coast and other veterans groups. Of particular interest to the Indian War Veterans was the successful efforts of the GAR to obtain payments for seriously wounded war veterans and pensions for veterans and widows. These benefits were available for the Civil War Veterans but not them.
- The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was a fraternal organization composed of veterans of the Union Army (United States Army), Union Navy (U.S. Navy), Marines and the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service who served in the American Civil War for the United States forces. Founded in 1866 in Decatur, Illinois, and growing to include hundreds of posts (local community units) across the nation (predominately in the North, but also a few in the South and West), it was dissolved in 1956 at the death of its last member, Albert Woolson (1850–1956) of Duluth, Minnesota. Linking men through their experience of the war, the G.A.R. became among the first organized advocacy groups in American politics, supporting voting rights for black veterans, promoting patriotic education, helping to make Memorial Day a national holiday, lobbying the United States Congress to establish regular veterans' pensions, and supporting Republican political candidates. Its peak membership, at more than 490,000, was in 1890, a high point of various Civil War commemorative and monument dedication ceremonies.
- In the 1880s, the GAR had a platform that advocated Federal pensions for Civil War veterans. In 1890, 37 percent of the entire Federal budget was in direct payments to veterans or their widows.

2. National Indian War Veterans (NIWV) Association of the United States

- The preeminent national organization was first called the National Indian Wars Veterans Organization when founded in Denver, CO, in April 1909. Later its name changed to the NIWV Association.
- Membership was veterans of the Regular Army who had fought in the post-Civil War Indian Wars.
- The NIWV gave veterans a venue for meetings, publicized their service, and above all lobbied for their pension rights. One of the primary goals of the NIWV was for veterans of the Indian Wars and their widows to receive the same benefits as veterans of the Civil War and the Spanish American War.
- The NIWV ceased existence in 1944.



The medal for membership in the National Indian War Veterans Association was inspired by the **Indian Campaign Medal**. The Indian Campaign Medal is a decoration established by War Department General Orders 12, 1907. The medal was retroactively awarded to any soldier of the U.S. Army who had participated in the American Indian Wars against the Native Americans between 1865 to 1891. Note the Civil War Campaign Medal was established at the same time.



Note the the medal originally had a solid red ribbon. The two black stripes were added in December 1917 because of the similarity to a ribbon used by the French for the French Legion of Honor.

3. United Indian War Veterans (UIWV) of the United States.

- In 1928, at the eighteenth annual National Indian War Veterans (NIWV) convention in St Joseph, MO, there was a dispute over George Webb's dominance of the organization as the National Commander. On October 10, delegates from six camps left the meeting and convened nearby where they drafted their own constitution and by-laws and elected officers. The former National Senior Vice Commander of the NIWV became the Commander of the new United Indian War Veterans of the United States.
- By the time of the UIWV Convention in 1931, the Indian War Veterans of the North Pacific Coast had merged into the UIWV.
- Like the NIWV, the UIWV promoted pension legislation favorable to the Indian Wars veterans and providing fellowship among its members. The final assembly was in November 1968 in San Francisco.

