Woodford Descendents to Mark Their Civil War Ancestor’s Graves
GAR Medallion and Flag Placement on May 13th

At the invitation of the Avon Historical Society and Avon’s VFW Post 3272, descendents of two Civil War veterans buried in West Avon Cemetery, members of the Woodford families, will be placing an American flag and GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) medallion on their ancestor’s grave on Friday, May 13 at 6pm in West Avon Cemetery, 280 Country Club Road. The public is invited to attend. This event will be held rain or shine.

In the summer of 1862, one year after the start of the Civil War, seven members of several Woodford families in Avon sent their sons to fight for the Union. One of them was Harrison Woodford, Corporal, of the 16th CT Regiment Volunteer Infantry. The Marion Hunter History Room at the Avon Free Public Library has transcribed copies of his 31 letters he sent back to his family in Avon from September 1862-December 1864 describing a variety of living conditions, supplies needed, battles fought, etc. They give a personal and vivid description of what a soldier’s life was like during those three years. Harrison was captured in April 1864 and spent time in the now infamous Andersonville Prison in Georgia, only to leave very weak and ill but survived to return to Avon and live out his life here. Sheldon Sylvester Woodford, Wagoner, also of the 16th CT Regiment Volunteer Infantry, wasn’t so lucky. He was captured and died in a prison in Charleston, SC in Sept. 1864 at the age of 25. Five Civil War soldiers from the Woodford families are buried in West Avon Cemetery.

According to records, Avon’s quota for the enlistment in the Civil War in 1862 was 83 men. A total of 96 volunteered (8% of the population according to the 1860 census) and many served in the ill-fated 16th CT Regiment Volunteer Infantry which saw some of the bloodiest battles in the War.

In all, Avon’s VFW Post 3272 purchased and will place 85 GAR medallions with flags on Civil War soldier graves in four cemeteries in Avon before Memorial Day. As is the annual custom of the Post, American flags will be placed on all military veterans graves in the town’s cemeteries and will honor them on the morning of Memorial Day with a ceremonial wreath laying.
The Avon Historical Society and the Avon VFW Post 3272 are participating under the direction of the Avon Free Public Library, which formed a Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee six months ago, to mount exhibits, present programs, and plan future events, thanks to funding from the Avon Education Foundation.

For more information on the Avon Historical Society visit:  www.avonhistoricalsociety.org

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**AVON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MISSION:** to identify, collect, utilize, publish, display, promote and preserve the history and heritage of Avon. (approved by the AHS Board, Jan. 10, 2001)