

Benjamin F. McAlwee

(7 Jan 1838 – 28 Jun 1918)

McAlwee. On Friday, June 28, 1918, Benjamin F. McAlwee, beloved husband of Annie McAlwee, in his eightieth year. Funeral services at his late residence, 1122 Eye street southeast, on Monday morning, July 1, at 8:30 o'clock, thence to St. Peter's Church, 2d and C streets southeast, at 9 o'clock, where requiem mass will be said. Relatives and friends invited to attend. (Richmond, Va., papers please copy)

McAlwee. Members of the Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia are respectfully invited to attend the funeral services of our late associate, Benjamin F. McAlwee, at his late residence, 1122 I street southeast, on Monday, July 1, at 8:30 a.m.



B. F. McAlwee,
U. S. Treasury Watchman.

The Evening Star, April 6, 1898, p. 2

A Medal of Honor Man

Benj. F. McAlwee of This City Awarded the Distinction

The Secretary of War has awarded a medal of honor to Benj. F. McAlwee of this city for most distinguished gallantry in action near Petersburg, Va., July 20, 1864. This soldier, then a sergeant in Company D, 3d Maryland Veteran Volunteer Infantry, picked up a shell with a burning fuse, that had just been fired by the enemy and had fallen within the Union lines, and cast it over the parapet into the ditch, where it exploded, thereby probably saving the lives of his comrades at the very great risk of his own.

McAlwee, Benjamin F. At Petersburg, Va., July 20, 1864

Sgt. Co. D., 3d Maryland Infantry

Picked up a shell with burning fuse and threw it over the parapet into the ditch, where it exploded; by this act he probably saved the lives of comrades at the great peril of his own.

The Washington Post, April 7, 1898, p. 7

Reward for Soldier's Bravery

The Secretary of War has awarded a medal of honor to Benjamin F. McAlwee, of Washington, for most distinguished gallantry in action near Petersburg, Va., July 20, 1864. This soldier, then a Sergeant in Company D, Third Maryland Veteran Volunteer Infantry, picked up a shell with a burning fuse, that had just been fired by the enemy and had fallen within the Union lines, and cast it over the parapet into the ditch, where it exploded, thereby probably saving the lives of his comrades at the very great risk of his own.

The Washington Post, July 23, 1905, p. FP8

Daring Act That Won Him A Medal Of Honor

On the watch of the Treasury is Benjamin F. McAlwee, who wears a Congressional medal of honor for gallantry in action before Petersburg, Va., July 20, 1864. Mr. McAlwee was born in the District of

Columbia, January 7, 1838, and left lucrative employment in the Washington navy yard April 17, 1861, to enlist in Company B, First District of Columbia Volunteers, for three months. Upon the expiration of that time he enlisted in Company D, Third Maryland Volunteer Infantry, and at the end of three years he enlisted again, serving until July 31, 1865. He was awarded a special furlough of twenty-five days by Gen. Meade for soldierly conduct and bravery.

At the explosion of the mine in front of Petersburg, July 30, 1864, Mr. McAlwee, who was then a sergeant, was in command of his company. The color bearer, a soldier named McCabe, was killed. Sergt. McAlwee seized the colors and kept them, at the same time continuing his command of the company.

"At the battle of Cedar Mountain, August 9, 1862," said he, in recalling incidents of his soldiering, "a minnie-ball, fired by the enemy, struck my rifle at the middle band. A piece of it lodged between the band and barrel, and the other piece struck my right hand, and knocked the skin off.

"On the first of August, 1862, at Beverly Ford, a shell went through one of my comrades, Nealy Thomas, and burst. A piece of his flesh lodged in the break of my rifle, rendering the weapon useless."

On the 3d of May, 1863, at the battle of Chancellorsville, Gen. Hooker sent one of his staff with orders for the Third Regiment of Maryland Infantry, which was in line of battle and had been fighting for several hours, to support a battery near the Chancellorsville house. Col. Robinson, commanding the regiment had been carried from the field wounded, and there being no other officer in sight, he told McAlwee to take command of the regiment and support the battery, which at once commenced throwing grape and canister at the enemy, thereby checking their advance.

"At the siege of Petersburg, June 17, 1864," said Mr. McAlwee, "just before we charged the enemy's works, Capt. A.W. Huff, of Company G, was wounded. I took him to a place of safety without orders, returning to my command under a heavy fire. We then charged the enemy's works and carried them."

The particular service for which Mr. McAlwee was presented the Congressional medal of honor for "most distinguished gallantry in action," is stated in a letter dated March 22, 1898, and signed by R.A. Alger, Secretary of War, as follows:

"Near Petersburg, Va., July 20, 1864, this soldier, then a sergeant in Company D, Third Regiment Volunteers, picked up a shell with burning fuse that had just been fired by the enemy and had fallen within the Union lines and cast it over the parapet into the ditch, where it exploded, thereby probably saving the lives of his comrades at the very great peril of his own."

It is a matter of official record "that Sergt. Benjamin F. McAlwee was one of the best soldiers in the brigade, he having received a furlough from Gen. Meade for being the best at an inspection for deciding as to who deserved that title. His conduct at every battle proved his courage and bravery. His rifle was twice struck by the enemy while in battle, and at the explosion of the mine, July 30, 1864, while in command of the company, he saved the colors of the regiment and brought them off the field of battle."

Mr. McAlwee was in twenty-seven engagements during the civil war, participating in the following battles:

Cedar Mountain, Beverly Ford, Sulphur Springs, Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam, Chancellorsville, Kellys Ford, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Shady Grove, North Tuna River, Bethesda Church, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Weldon Railroad, Poplar Grove Church, Hatches Run, Fort Steadman and Petersburg.

For twenty-one years Mr. McAlwee has guarded the portals of the Treasury.

The Evening Star, June 29, 1918, p. 11

**Benjamin F. McAlwee Dies at Home in City
Civil War Veteran and Long a Watchman at Treasury Department**

Benjamin F. McAlwee, employed as watchman at the Treasury Department for the past thirty-five years, died yesterday at his home, 1122 I street southeast, following an illness of five months. Funeral services will be held at his home Monday at 8:30 a.m. High requiem mass will be said at St. Peter's Church. Interment will be at Congressional cemetery.

Mr. McAlwee was eighty years old, and was a veteran of the civil war, having been presented with the Congressional Medal for "most distinguished gallantry in action" in saving the lives of many of his comrades by picking up a bomb about to burst and casting it beyond the parapet of the trench where his company was lying.

As a young man he was an employee of the Navy Yard leaving the yard in 1861 to enlist in Company B, 1st District Volunteers. When his three months was up he re-enlisted in Company D, 3d Maryland Volunteers and at the end of three years he again enlisted, serving until July, 1865. He was awarded a furlough of twenty-five days by Gen. Meade for bravery. He participated in twenty-seven engagements during the war.

Mr. McAlwee was born in this city in 1838. He was a member of Rawlins Post, No. 1, G.A.R.; the Oldest Inhabitants' Association of the District of Columbia, and the Catholic Knights of America. He is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter.

The Washington Post, June 29, 1918, p. 14

Aged Federal Employe Dead

B.M. McAlwee, of Treasury, Wa Awarded Medal for Civil War Bravery

Benjamin F. McAlwee, known to everyone around the Treasury Department where he has been employed as watchman for the last 35 years, died yesterday at his home, 1122 I street southeast, after an illness of five months.

Mr. McAlwee was eighty years old and a veteran of the civil war. He was presented with the congressional medal of honor for "most distinguished gallantry in action." The act for which he received this honor consisted of picking up a shell with a burning fuse and casting it over a parapet into a ditch where it exploded, thereby saving the lives of many of his comrades. He was in twenty-seven engagements.

He left the navy yard in April, 1861, to enlist in Company B, First District volunteers, for three months. When his time was up he enlisted in Company D, Third Maryland volunteer infantry, and at the end of three years he enlisted again serving until July 3, 1865.

Mr. McAlwee was born in Washington in 1838 and was a member of Rawling Post, No. 1, G.A.R., Oldest Inhabitants Association and the Catholic Knights of America. He is survived by his wife, a son and daughter.