

MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES



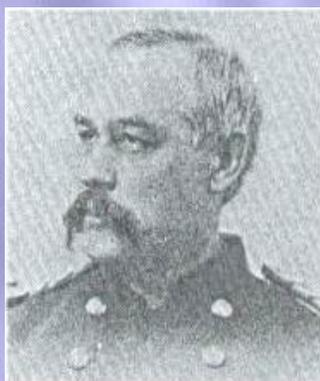
Loyal Legion Vignettes



**LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE AUGUSTUS PURINGTON, USA
(1838 Ohio - 1896 Illinois)**

**Original Member of the Missouri Commandery
Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States**

**By
Douglas Niermeyer, Commander-in-Chief
Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States
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Colonel George Augustus Purington, U.S. Army, was born at Athens, Ohio, July 21, 1838, and at the outbreak of the war was at the Western Reserve College in Hudson, Ohio. His entire class enlisted and he was appointed First Sergeant of Company G, 19th Ohio Volunteers (Three months' men). In May he acted as 1st Lieutenant, but was not mustered as such. The organization participated in the action at Rich Mountain, Virginia. After being mustered out in August 1861, he re-organized the company into a troop of cavalry, and August 16, 1861, was mustered in as Captain of Troop A, 2nd Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, at Cleveland and as Major September 10, 1861.

He was engaged in action at Independence; Lone Jack; Sarcoxie; Fort Wayne; Rhea's Mill, and Cane Hill, Missouri, and Mt. Sterling; Fishing Creek, and Steubenville, Kentucky; the pursuit of John Morgan and capture of him; Cumberland Gap, Waturga Bridge, Blountsville, Bristol, Siege of Knoxville, Bean's Station, Blue Springs, Walker's Ford, Clinch River, Cheek's Cross Roads,

Russellville, Burnt House, Blain's Cross Roads, and Mossy Creek, Tennessee.

He was commissioned as Lieutenant Colonel in the 2nd Ohio Volunteer Cavalry on June 25, 1863, and thereafter commanded the regiment or brigade until mustered out of service. He was commissioned as Colonel in June 1864, but was not mustered as such, the regiment being below the minimum, caused by casualties in the "Overland Campaign."

Colonel Purington commanded the 1st brigade, 3rd division of the Cavalry Corps at Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and in the actions of Lurray Valley, and at Waynesborough, Bridgewater, Beamstown, Charlestown and Berryville. He commanded his regiment at Cedar Creek and in the action of Back Road, Virginia. He was honorably mustered out in November 1864.

On July 28, 1866, he was commissioned Captain of 9th U.S. Cavalry and served at Fort Davis from July 1867 to May 1868 with Troop H of that regiment. He was with his troop in all the Indian campaigns in Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico from April 1867 to 1881, including the "Victoria War." During this campaign the battalion to which Colonel Purington belonged, consisting of less than 250 men, lost two officers and 16 men killed, and one officer and 64 men wounded.

In October 1883, he was promoted to be Major of the 3rd U.S. Cavalry and commanded the squadron in the field during the threatened hostilities in Indian Territory in 1885. In October 1892, he was promoted to be Lieutenant Colonel of the 3rd U.S. Cavalry and in July 1895, "For disability contracted in the line of duty," he was retired from active service while in command of his regiment at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.

Colonel Purington was brevetted for gallantry and meritorious service, as Major, USA, at the battle of The Wilderness, Virginia; as Lieutenant Colonel USA for the battle of Winchester, and as Colonel USA for the battle of Cedar Creek, Virginia.

The above record, merely mentioning names of places, brings to the minds of companions the stirring history of the days of the great Civil War. The fact that Colonel Purington, then a boy, but loyal and enthusiastic, took such local prominence in the organization of his company that although post of Orderly Sergeant in the first (three months) organization, indicates the reason for his rapid rise in rank, from 1st Sergeant of a company of Infantry to the command of a brigade of Cavalry under such an exacting leader as Philip Sheridan.

He was a very reticent man, except to his friends, and in his later years, a great sufferer, but his quaint, genial humor never left him. His power of description were unusually good, and when induced to describe some striking incident of the war, he made an impression upon the hearers not easily forgotten. It is a great loss to the Commandery, and to history, that he was not induced to describe at length some of the stirring cavalry actions in the "Valley," in which he was an actor, or some of the equally hazardous, if not so considered, encounters with the Western Indians.

After his retirement, he removed with his family to Metroplis, Illinois, and there, on May 21, 1896, he died. He was buried with military honors at the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

His son, 1st Lieutenant George A. Purington, was a Hereditary member of the Missouri Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, living in the Philippine Islands in 1901 and Fort Sill, Oklahoma in Indian Territory in 1908.

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Sources:

- 1) Missouri Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legions of the United States, Circular No. 149, 6Apr1897.
- 2) Membership Records of the Missouri Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legions of the United States
- 3) Webpage on Officers of Fort Davis 1854 - 1891

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