

# #178 This Montpelier Seminary Graduate Was FDR's Physical Therapist

When Alice Lou Plastridge-Converse celebrated her 100th birthday in 1989, she was the oldest living Vermont College alumna, having received her diploma from the college's predecessor institution Montpelier Seminary in 1908. She started working as a physical therapist in 1914, making valuable contributions in the treatment of polio in the days before vaccines were available. One of her patients in 1926 was a young man by the name of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. For much of her life, she wore a prized gold ring with a lapis stone that had been a gift from the future president.

*Adapted from an article that appeared in the Norwich Record in June 1989.*

## Full story:

Although she worked in the field for 75 years, Plastridge-Converse was not a graduate of any school of physical therapy. The reason was simple: she entered the field before there were such schools.

Born in Swanton, Vt., on June 20, 1889, Alice Lou graduated from Northfield (Vt.) High School in 1907, received her diploma from Montpelier Seminary in 1908, then continued her education at Mount Holyoke College. She went on to earn a degree from the New Haven (Conn.) Normal School of Gymnastics in 1913.

A summer course on the treatment of scoliosis at the Harvard Medical School and Children's Hospital in 1914 introduced her to the eminent orthopedic surgeon Dr. Robert W. Lovett. He was a mentor as she gained expertise in the treatment of polio patients. Starting as a junior gymnasium assistant in Dr. Lovett's Boston office, she left Boston in 1917 at his urging to establish a physical therapy practice in Chicago. It was Dr. Lovett's recommendation that brought her to FDR's Hyde Park home in 1926.

For two months, Plastridge-Converse had a special assignment as a physical therapist for FDR. The president-to-be had been stricken with polio

five years earlier and had lost the use of his legs. Plastridge-Converse was the first person to teach him to localize certain muscles.

Roosevelt spoke enthusiastically to Plastridge-Converse about the healing effects of the waters at the Georgia Warm Springs, and in 1927 he was instrumental in establishing the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation. It became a mecca for the treatment of polio patients. At FDR's urging, Plastridge-Converse gave up her Chicago practice in 1930 to serve as director of physical therapy at Warm Springs. Her 20-year affiliation with the foundation included nine years as director of the graduate school of physical therapy.

Meanwhile, Plastridge-Converse was gaining a reputation as a polio specialist and traveling in the U.S. and abroad to study various methods of treatment. In 1945 she was part of a three-person "special medical mission" to Belgium, where a polio epidemic was causing concern. The team spent three weeks in the country, observing and making recommendations. Later, in recognition of their service, they were awarded the Belgian Golden Palm of the Order of the Crown.

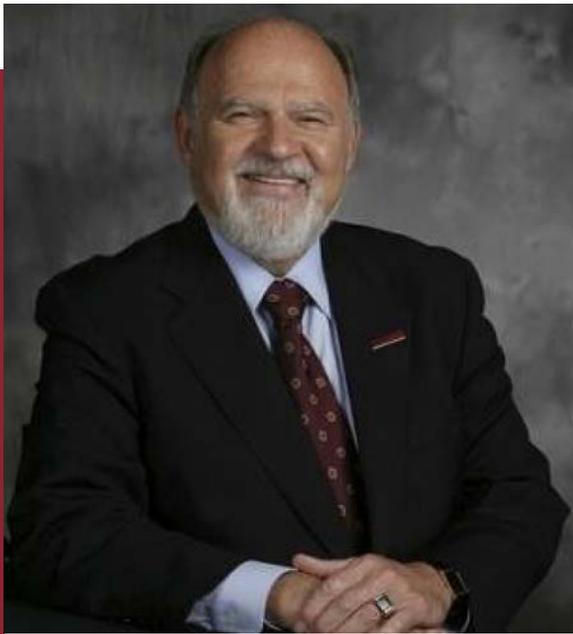


*Alice Lou Plastridge-Converse*

*Image courtesy of the Norwich Record.*

Atypically for her generation, Plastridge-Converse continued her work in physical therapy after marrying in 1950. Over the next decade she would serve as an instructor in physical therapy at universities and hospitals in Texas, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Florida. In 1953 she was made a life member of the American Physical Therapy Association, and in 1955 she treated patients during a polio outbreak on Cape Cod, Mass. She was also listed in the first edition (1958-59) of *Who's Who Among American Women*.

In 1985, at age 96, Plastridge-Converse was honored at Warm Springs for her "many contributions to [the] Georgia Warm Springs Foundation and the profession of physical therapy." She stayed active until the end of her life. When the *Record* interviewed her on the occasion of her 100th birthday, she was still weaving baskets and helping friends with their physical therapy. Alice Lou Plastridge-Converse passed away in 1993 at the age of 103.



John Walsh '72

Image courtesy of the Norwich Office of Communications.

# #179 John Walsh, Class of 1972, Established the COPD Foundation

Did you know about the former Army Ranger and Norwich alumnus who started a research foundation to cure the disease that took his mother at just 46 years old?

## Full story:

A natural leader, at Norwich, John Walsh majored in government, played lacrosse, and served as class president. He went on to serve as an Army Ranger.

In 1989, at age 40, he was enjoying life as a successful businessman and real-estate developer. But his life was about to change. He learned that he and his twin brother suffered from the same genetic disorder that claimed their mother at age 46: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) brought about by Antitrypsin Deficiency (Alpha-1). Their sister also received the same diagnosis.

When Walsh, who didn't smoke, sought treatment for his symptoms, he discovered that little was known about Alpha-1-related COPD. After participating in a National Institutes of Health study to help develop a protein therapy and producing a CD to raise awareness of Alpha-1, he joined forces with two others who also suffered from the disorder—they dubbed themselves, aptly, Alphas—to establish the Alpha-1 Foundation. To date, the organization has

donated over \$70 million to research. Walsh also established AlphaNet, a not-for-profit healthcare management company that helps people with Alpha-1 navigate their care.

In 2004, Walsh founded the COPD Foundation, and through that work he established screening and advocacy programs to improve the lives of those with COPD. He became a leading voice in the effort to empower patients.

When he died in 2017 due to complications from a brain injury after slipping and falling on ice, the *New York Times* published his obituary, in which Grace Anne Dorney Koppel, the foundation's president and wife to Ted Koppel, called Walsh "a giant in patient advocacy."

After his passing, the foundation established the JW Walsh Fund to Cure COPD to honor his memory by continuing the important work that he began, after his own diagnosis nearly three decades earlier.

# #180 The Story of the Alden Partridge Lithograph

In addition to depicting our founder, this unique color lithograph is an important artistic representation of our university's historic campus in Norwich, Vt.—even if it did include some artistic license. The lithographic plate was designed to illustrate a two-page biographical sketch of the captain that appeared in the *U.S. Military Magazine* in May of 1842.

*Contributed by Professor Emeritus Gary T. Lord, adapted from an article that appeared in the spring 1996 issue of the Norwich Record.*

## Full story:

At the time the Partridge print appeared, the art of lithography had been practiced for only about two decades in the United States. It was a process that involved drawing an image with a greasy crayon on a flat stone. The stone was inked and impressions were made on paper in the printing process as the stone was run through a press.

By 1842, when this lithograph appeared in print, Partridge was well known nationally for his achievements as an educational reformer and for his expertise in military affairs. Captain Partridge had acted as superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy from 1808 to 1817 and in 1819 he founded the American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy (reorganized as Norwich University in 1834) at Norwich, Vt. The Vermont institution, with its distinctive combination of military training with an academic program that was more practical and scientific, provided a model that was widely adopted by schools elsewhere.

The campus scene that constitutes the background of the Partridge portrait offers the viewer a rough draft of the two principal buildings of Norwich University. These structures were located on a five-acre plot which was surrounded by an eight-foot high enclosure.

Access to the compound was through a gate flanked by two guardhouses. The South Barracks (shown on the right), an unpretentious but impressive building, was the larger of the two structures. The four-story brick structure, completed in 1820, was one of the largest education buildings in Vermont. It contained 42 student rooms, two recitation rooms, a lecture hall and an armory. The three-story brick edifice called the North Barracks (1831-32) had a pitched roof and a square stair tower at the south end. The building contained a common room, recitation rooms, faculty offices and student quarters.

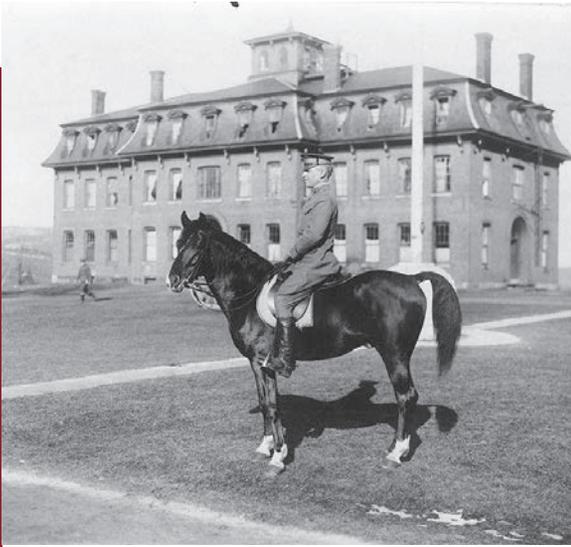
The paved platform with balustrade that Partridge is shown standing on adjacent to the parade ground did not actually exist; it is artistic license to improve the composition of the scene. Otherwise, the portrait is realistic. The distinctive officer's sword Partridge is holding is almost certainly the same sword that belonged to the captain and that is now held by the Sullivan Museum and History Center.

A picture is, proverbially, worth a thousand words. With much remaining unknown about our enigmatic founder, this impressive image certainly speaks volumes about his reputation and stature during his lifetime.



*Alden Partridge Lithograph.*

*Image courtesy of the Kreitzberg Library Special Collections.*



Frank Tompkins on his Stallion.

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

# #181 The International Conflict that Called Up Norwich Students Before WWI

What became known as the Mexican Border Crisis of the 1910s is often overshadowed by another massive international conflict—World War I. But at the time, more than half of the Norwich student body volunteered to serve in the campaign at the southern U.S. border.

## Full story:

A series of military engagements took place on the U.S.-Mexico border during the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920. The clashes reached their peak between 1914 and 1919 in a conflict known variously at the time as the Mexican Border War, Campaign, or Crisis.

In 1916, Pancho Villa's forces faced off with the American cavalry in the climactic Battle of Columbus near the New Mexico border. The American troops were led by none other than Colonel Frank Tompkins, a former Norwich commandant whom the cadets had nicknamed "Tommy." He was wounded in the battle and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his valor at Columbus. He served as commandant again shortly thereafter, and would later serve the university as a trustee until his death.

Tompkins was far from the only Norwich man called to the border. The Norwich University Archives has a record of 79 alumni who served in the Mexican Border War. In July 1916, as the conflict reached its peak, the *Record* reported that "at least 90 per cent of

the cadet corps has volunteered to serve with the 1st Vermont Cavalry at the border or in Mexico. Only a few under eighteen and some others whose parents objected have not joined." The article goes on to emphasize that such service was not compulsory as a result of their membership in the Corps of Cadets; all students over 18 reported to Fort Ethan Allen, where they were given honorable discharge from the Vermont National Guard if they did not wish to serve.

With a total student body of 145 in 1916, the figure of 90% may have been exaggerated, or there may be names missing from our roster of 79. Those that have been identified include Leonard "Steamer" Nason, a popular student and a prolific fiction author later in life; Harold "Soup" Campbell, who went on to a truly impressive career as a military aviator in both world wars; Edward Brooks, future three-star general and commander of the Second Armored Division during World War II; and Ernest Gibson, who served in the United States Senate and whose son, also a Norwich alum, was the 67th governor of Vermont.

*These students gamely interrupted their studies in order to serve at the border; many would also be called away just months later to serve in World War I. You can consult the Index to Norwich University Newspapers to uncover stories about NU service in the Mexican Border War.*

# #182 George Totten, Class of 1827, Built the Panama Railroad

George Muirson Totten attended Captain Partridge's American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy from 1824 to 1827. He was a native of nearby New Haven, Conn., and attended the prestigious Hopkins School before entering the Academy. Though Totten's hometown was very close to Middletown, Conn., where the Academy moved while he was a student, he initially traveled to Norwich, Vt., to attend at the original campus.

## Full story:

Totten completed his studies at the Academy, known for its engineering program, during the era of canal transportation. His first job was as an assistant engineer on the Farmington Canal in Massachusetts. He worked as a canal engineer in Delaware and Pennsylvania before transitioning to the railroad industry in the 1830s.

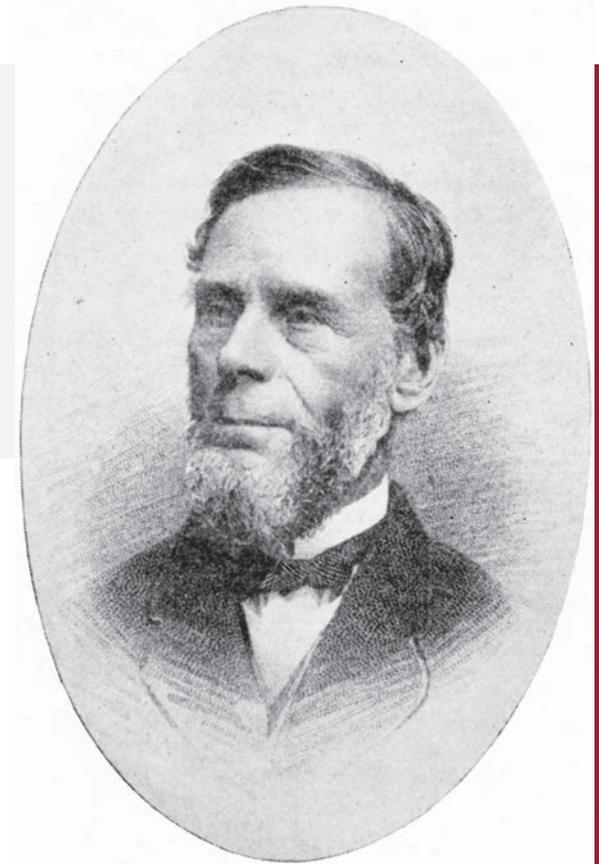
He rose through the ranks until 1843, when his career took a decidedly international turn: He was appointed chief engineer of the Canal de Dique in Colombia. From there, he embarked upon the most laborious and substantial project of his career. In 1850, Totten was appointed chief engineer of the Panama Railroad.

The railroad across the Panamanian isthmus would be completed a decade and a half before a transcontinental railroad was completed across the United States by another Norwich alum, Grenville Dodge. Totten's railroad was thus an essential component of 19th century trade and commerce, and remained the primary route across the isthmus

until the famous canal opened in 1914. While overseeing the project, Totten worked alongside William Parker, a colleague from the academy at Norwich. When the railroad was complete, Totten remained a consulting engineer for the Panama Railroad until his death in 1884.

While continuing to consult on his iconic Panamanian project, Totten led and consulted on both railroad and canal projects in Venezuela and around the United States. In 1879, he returned to Panama and served as chief of staff and the only American engineer advising the French diplomat Ferdinand de Lessep on his failed attempt to build a canal across Panama (de Lessep was later a key developer of the Suez Canal).

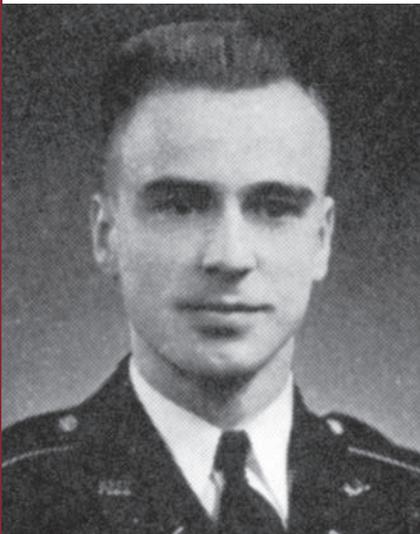
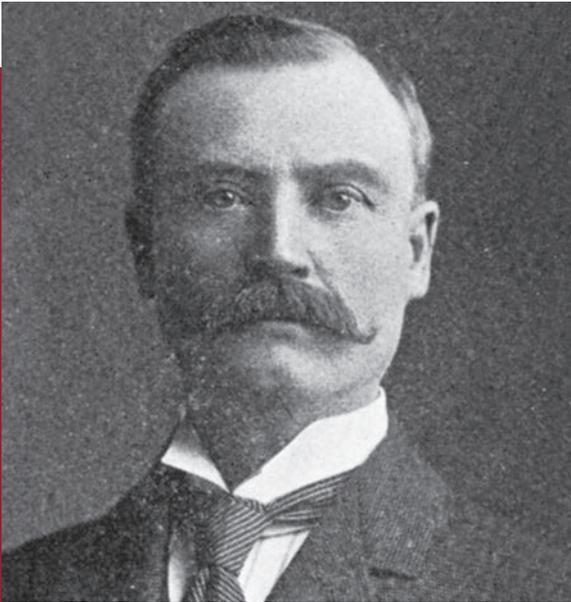
For his work abroad, Totten received commendations from both the French and Venezuelan governments. He had four children with his wife Harriet; one of his two daughters married the son of another Norwich man, Isaac Smith from the class of 1829.



*George Totten, NU 1827*

*Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.*

# #183 The Mayo Family of Northfield



Originally from nearby Moretown, Vt., Dr. William Mayo first opened a private medical practice in the village of Northfield, Vt., in 1877. He was only 23 years old and had just received his M.D. from the Homeopathic Medical College in New York City. These were the earliest years of medical education and professional practice as we think of them today; the American Medical Association was founded in 1847, and the Association of American Medical Colleges, which developed educational standards for its members, was formed in 1876.

## Full story:

Dr. Mayo built a successful medical career in Northfield, Vt., and became one of its most prominent citizens. He eventually served as president of the Northfield Trust Company and owned the town's four largest commercial buildings, making him Northfield's largest individual taxpayer. Upon his death in 1930, the Dr. William B. Mayo Hospital Fund raised \$500 from members of the public with the hope of someday honoring his legacy in Northfield by building a hospital in the town. Nine years later, that dream became a reality with the opening of the Mayo Memorial Hospital, which has evolved into the Mayo Healthcare residential home.

Dr. Mayo was also an engaged member of civic life from the time he began his practice in Northfield. He was elected to the state legislature representing the town no fewer than five times, the first when he was just 30 years old. He twice ran unsuccessfully for governor; his obituary attributed his lack of success to the impossibility of a Democrat being elected to the state's highest office.

In addition to serving his local community, Dr.

Mayo was an important advocate for Norwich University during his time at the State House. He helped to secure the university's first-ever state funding in 1884, when financial support was critical to the university's survival. He served as a trustee for an astounding 45 years, seeing the university through times of turmoil and dramatic change. He was granted an honorary degree in 1910 and is commemorated on one of the Centennial Stairs.

The Mayo family's ties to Norwich University hardly ended with Dr. William Mayo's death. His son Thomas was just ten years old when his father died, but he continued the family's affiliation with the university and attended Norwich with the class of 1943. He was just a sophomore when he left to serve in the Air Force during World War II. He was flying in a raid on a German U-boat base when his B-17 was shot down over St. Nazaire, France. He was thought dead, and a memorial service was held for him here in Northfield. Days after the service, the Mayo family learned that Thomas was alive after all. After a joyful reunion, he went on to a successful career as an engineer and passed away under the care of Mayo Healthcare in 2010.

Top: Dr. William Mayo

Bottom: Thomas Mayo

Images courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

# #184 The Military College of Vermont Turns 120

In 2018, Norwich celebrated 120 years of being the Military College of Vermont, a status bestowed by the Vermont State Legislature on November 29, 1898. That legislative action was, in part, a reflection of the pride Vermonters shared in the prominent roles played by native sons in the Spanish-American War, notably Henry Hersey and George Dewey, who were also both Norwich alumni. In another sense, the designation was simply a formal recognition of a role that the University had assumed well before 1898. In fact, the military association between the State of Vermont and the University extended back to the school's early years.

*Contributed by Professor Emeritus Gary Lord, adapted from an article that appeared in the Winter 1999 edition of the Norwich Record.*

## Full story:

Alden Partridge held a fundamental conviction about the importance of a citizen soldiery in sustaining a constitutional republic. Hence, military science was a vital part of the comprehensive curriculum that Partridge devised. He expected that his students would provide leadership as part of the officer corps of the national militia system. That expectation ultimately was realized in the various state militias.

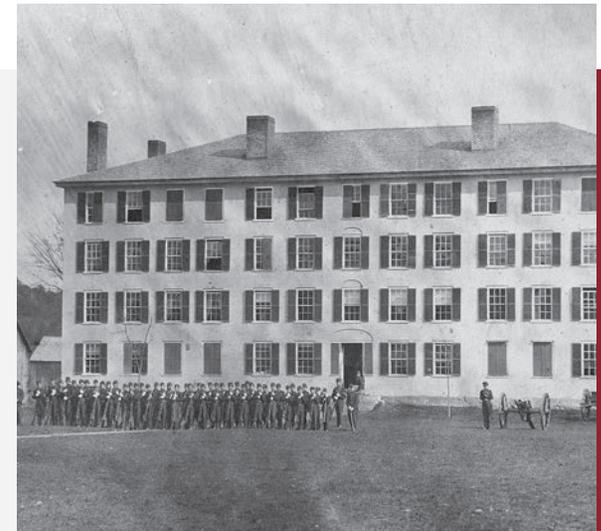
The transformation of Captain Partridge's American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy into Norwich University in 1834 was accomplished through a charter from the State of Vermont, which included a provision requiring that the University offer "military instruction, both theoretical and practical." Because University students were of militia age, they were enlisted by the early 1840s as a light infantry company in the Vermont Militia.

At that time, however, the traditional militia was in decline in Vermont and throughout the United States. Despite Partridge's effort to reinvigorate the institution, the compulsory enrolled militia was dissolved in 1844. It was replaced by a volunteer system that

was significantly strengthened by the leadership of Brigadier General Alonzo Jackman, a Norwich alum and faculty member, who became responsible for all of the state's militia units in 1859. After the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, General Jackman took charge of all military training in the state.

In 1864 the Cadet Corps was briefly called into voluntary service because of the Confederate raid on St. Albans, Vt. In 1870, the Corps was organized as a company of state militia infantry, along with an artillery battery that trained with the six-pound James cannon still used for ceremonial purposes today. The Norwich units functioned as independent units of the Vermont Militia through the end of the century. By then, the term "militia" had been replaced by the designation "National Guard."

By 1910 the Norwich Corps of Cadets, still an active component of the Vermont National Guard, was reorganized to include a cavalry troop. In 1914 the Corps was reconstituted entirely as a mounted cavalry unit with the designation Squadron One, First Vermont Cavalry—a highly proficient unit that



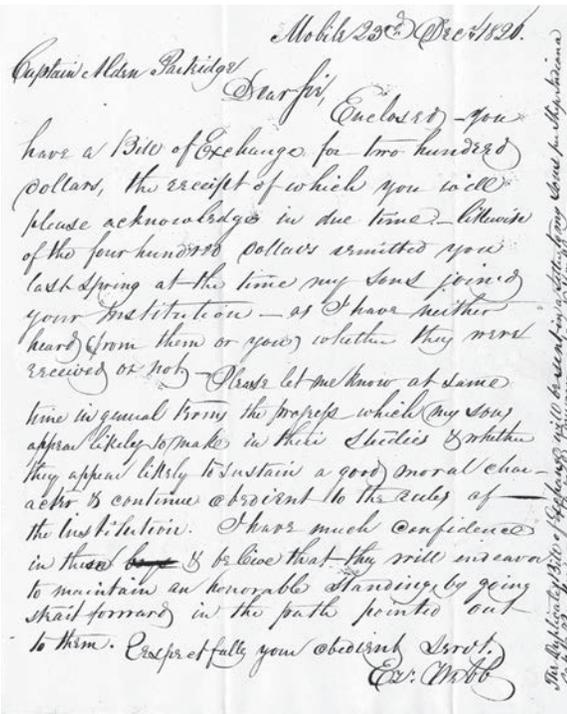
*South Barracks in Norwich, Vt.*

*Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.*

consistently earned superior ratings from federal inspectors.

Soon after the creation of the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1916, Norwich joined that program and had to withdraw from its role in the National Guard. However, from 1922 until World War II, Norwich was the site of a headquarters company of the 172nd Vermont National Guard Infantry Regiment. That unit was comprised exclusively of volunteer guardsmen who were Norwich students and faculty.

More than a century after it gained legislative recognition, the Military College of Vermont still does the name proud. Norwich students and alumni play a leading role in the Vermont National Guard, and the state-of-the-art Vermont National Guard Readiness and Regional Technology Center was built on campus in 2001. Norwich and the State of Vermont will doubtless continue to build on the long and productive collaboration forged over 120 years, anticipating new opportunities in the decades to come.



Letter to Alden Partridge  
Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

# #185 In Our Bicentennial Year, You Can Bring Norwich History to Life

Welcome to the bicentennial year! After much anticipation, 2019 is upon us. As we all reflect on the 200-year legacy of Captain Alden Partridge and the little academy he decided to build in Norwich, Vt., what better way to celebrate that legacy than to learn about Norwich history from its most foundational documents?

### Full story:

The Norwich University Archives is home to thousands of letters and documents that were received and written by Alden Partridge over the course of his lifetime. They date from our founder's youth to the final years of his life, their content documenting a vast array of topics and events. We are thrilled that over 5,000 of these manuscripts have been digitized and made available on our website—but there's a big catch. The vast majority of the documents—nearly 90%—are not transcribed, meaning that the treasure trove of information they contain is not searchable, and the content is largely inaccessible.

In preparation for the university's bicentennial, the Norwich University Archives launched an innovative project to make the early handwritten records of Norwich history more accessible than

ever. Cursive to Keyword is a crowdsourcing transcription website that can be found at [transcribe.norwich.edu](http://transcribe.norwich.edu). It invites volunteers to help transcribe over 1,000 handwritten documents from the papers of our founder Captain Alden Partridge.

The NU Archives has been working with students and volunteers to transcribe documents one at a time since 2014. Transcription can help students engage deeply with historical documents and think critically about their role in shaping our understanding of the past. The new crowdsourcing website allows us to invite our students, alumni, and friends to participate from around the globe. We hope that with your help, we can accelerate the project to spread the word about Norwich's storied history now that the bicentennial year has arrived.

# #186 The Alden Partridge Stamp was Issued on the Wrong Date

Norwich University celebrated another bicentennial milestone on a national scale in 1985 marking the 200th anniversary of our founder's birth in the town of Norwich, Vt. For those following along at home, this means he was just 34 years old when he founded the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy. In honor of his 200th birthday, the U.S. Postal Service honored Partridge with an 11-cent stamp. The commemorative issue marked Partridge's role as the spiritual father of ROTC and his profound influence on American higher education.

## Full story:

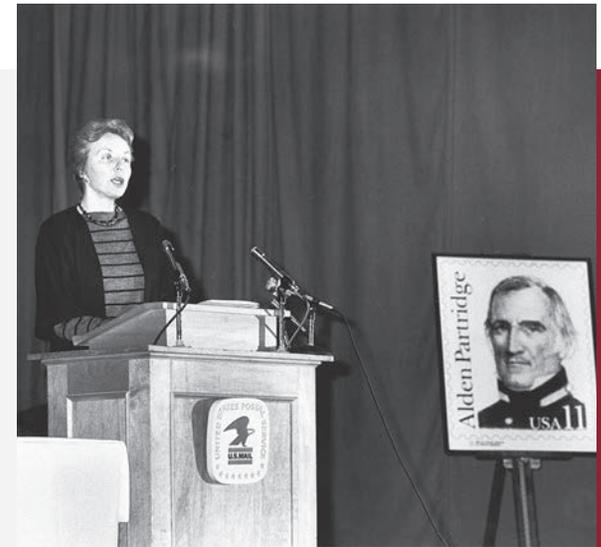
The stamp's image was based on a lithographic likeness of Partridge. The image first appeared in print in 1842, and its history was recently detailed in another post from this series. Robert Anderson translated the lithograph into a design for a stamp. The design was unveiled by Postmaster General William Bolger in October 1984.

In 1985, first class postage was 22 cents. The 11-cent Partridge stamp was part of the Great Americans series, which featured stamps of various values to be used for supplemental postage. Other individuals featured in the series include Rachel Carson, Pearl S. Buck, and—coincidentally—Sylvanus Thayer, the rival who succeeded Partridge as superintendent of West Point.

The first day of issue for the stamp was February 12, 1985. A ceremony was held in Northfield with

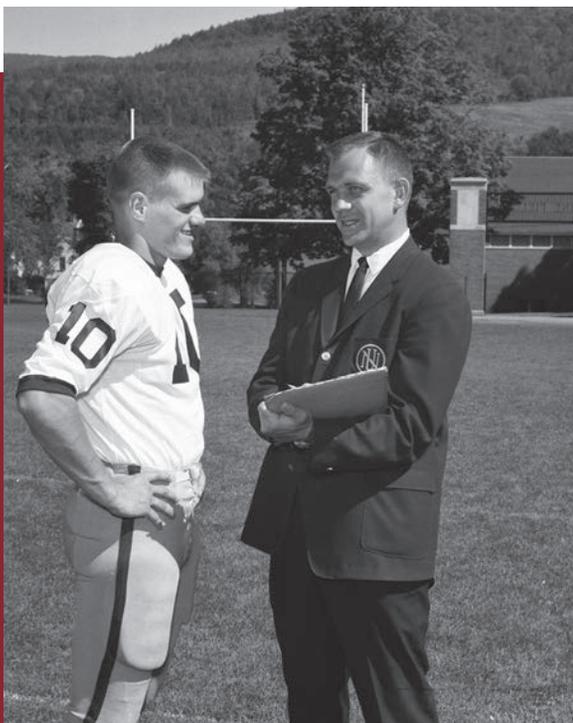
Governor Madeleine Kunin and other dignitaries in attendance. Norwich President Russell Todd was presented with a framed commemorative sheet of the stamps, marked with a postmark from the date of issue. There was just one problem with the first date of issue for the stamp: it was not Alden Partridge's birthday. Vital records show that he was born on January 12, 1785, but the date was erroneously stated as February in William Arba Ellis' history of the university, and the misconception stuck.

The stamp was also feted in second day of issue ceremonies in Washington, D.C. and Boston, where the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company hosted a ceremony at Faneuil Hall. Along with other festivities during Partridge's bicentennial year, this commemoration marked the impact that our founder had on the landscape of America today.



*Alden Partridge stamp dedications.*

*Images courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.*



Coach Joe Sabol

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

# #187 Coach Sabol Shaped Norwich Athletics for 30 Years

Joe Sabol was born and raised in Pennsylvania. Captain of his high school football team and an all-state fullback, he earned his undergraduate degree from Penn State in 1958 and a master's degree in education from Bucknell in 1962. His first taste of Vermont was in 1963, when he first arrived in Northfield to serve as an assistant football coach. He was named head coach in 1965 and served in that capacity for a decade. His overall record as head coach was an impressive 48-33-1. After a brief stint coaching at Gettysburg College in his native Pennsylvania, Coach Sabol returned to serve Norwich as athletic director from 1978 until he retired in 1992.

## Full story:

In his nearly 25 years at the helm of the Norwich athletic organization, Coach Sabol shaped many of the facilities and programs that student-athletes are able to enjoy today. His tenure was contemporaneous with that of the legendary Coach Wally Baines, who pioneered Norwich's physical education program in the classroom and on the field. Their joint tenure saw such improvements as the renovation of Plumley Armory and the construction of Andrews Hall and Shapiro Field House.

In the spring of 1983, Coach Sabol helped the new Norwich president, Russell Todd, establish the Norwich University Athletic Hall of Fame. The first class of inductees honored individuals whose athletic achievements were recognized in the trophy room of Plumley Armory. The Hall of Fame, now located in Andrews Hall, inducts a new class at Homecoming each year. Coach Sabol himself was

inducted as an honorary member in 1992, as was his wife Ruth in 2011 for her service on the Hall of Fame committee among other contributions during her husband's tenure.

Today, Coach Sabol's memory is honored in numerous ways both on and off the field. The Joe Sabol Most Improved Player Award is bestowed upon a member of the football team at each end-of-season banquet. In 2013, the newly renovated Sabine Field was dedicated in his honor. Alumni raise funds to support the football program and the Joe Sabol Memorial Scholarship every year at Homecoming in the Joe Sabol Memorial Golf Tournament.

After retiring in 1992, Joe Sabol passed away in 1998 at the too-young age of 62. He is buried in Northfield with his wife Ruth, who passed away in 2017.

# #188 Alden Partridge's Nephew Carried On the Family Legacy at Norwich

Alden Partridge does not have any living biological descendants. One of his sons died as a teenager, and the other never married. However, the Partridge family was sprawling and influential in the region of Norwich, Vt. Our founder was one of seven children, and a number of his many relatives were involved with the affairs of the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy and Norwich University.

## Full story:

One such relative was Partridge's nephew, Lewis S. Partridge. He was born to Alden Partridge's younger brother Abel in 1818, the year before the founding of the Academy. Born and raised in the shadow of his uncle's visionary project, Lewis was one of the first students to attend the degree-granting institution called Norwich University—the school received its charter from the Vermont legislature the year after Lewis matriculated.

He remained at the university until 1837, after which he embarked upon a wide-ranging career as a businessman and local political figure in Norwich and the state of Vermont. He served in the Vermont State House from 1852-53; represented Vermont in the Democratic National Convention of 1864; served as a U.S. Marshal for the state from 1857-61; held several commissions in the state militia; and held the coveted position of postmaster in the town of Norwich on three separate occasions. (In the 19th century, postmaster was a political appointment

often granted to favored allies of the top leaders.) His final stint as postmaster came near the end of his life, in the 1880s, when Grover Cleveland's election to the presidency brought favor once more to local Democratic officials.

Lewis Partridge's political career was not without controversy. In 1862, during the Civil War, he was arrested and charged with treason for cutting down the flagpole at a Union recruiting office. After a trial in 1864, he was acquitted of the charge of obstructing the draft.

In spite of these ups and downs, Lewis Partridge remained active with his alma mater—his uncle's beloved university—for many years. He served as marshal at numerous Norwich University commencements. The eldest of his 11 children, Lewis Baxter Partridge, also attended Norwich, graduating in 1868.



*Alden Partridge's Nephew, Lewis S. Partridge  
Image courtesy of the Norwich Office of Communications.*



Honor Tank Platoon

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

# #189 Remembering Honor Tank Platoon

The 1940s were a time of transition in the landscape of military training at Norwich. In addition to the mountain and winter warfare training program getting its start in 1947, the decade also saw the transition from mounted to armored cavalry training—and the arrival of tanks on campus. Following the end of World War II, mounted cavalry training was initially revived with much enthusiasm. After all, Norwich had been a cavalry school for more than a generation.

## Full story:

But armored cavalry had clearly demonstrated itself to be the cornerstone of 20th century warfare. Before the last horses had left the stables, the university had begun to acquire armored vehicles and arrange for their use in cadets' training as future military leaders. In 1947, an article in the *Record* touted the acquisition of a new prefabricated garage building to house a growing collection of three armored cars, two cargo trucks, one jeep, one weapons carrier, and three light tanks that were soon to be acquired.

Not long after this report, in 1949, the Corps of Cadets formed the Honor Tank Platoon. This special unit of the Corps was originally created with 25 members of the Cavalry Unit—an echo of the evolving relationship between mounted and armored cavalry in the military landscape. Its purpose was to participate in ceremonies and formations where tanks were needed, and to recognize cadets who demonstrated particular aptitude and interest in armor training. Members were hand-selected based on rigorous criteria that included GPA and a character reference.

Honor Tank Platoon was an integral part of the Corps of Cadets for many years. They participated in countless parades and ceremonies, including the parade through the town of Northfield to celebrate the Grenville Dodge centennial in 1951. One of the more unique and memorable activities of Honor Tank Platoon was giving tank rides to visitors and guests on campus during events such as Winter Carnival and Regimental Ball.

The Honor Tank Platoon era ended in the 1970s. Today, Sabine Sally—an M4 Sherman tank acquired in 1958—serves as a reminder of this period in our history, and of the many contributions made to American military history by the men and women who trained in Norwich tanks. Notable among them are the no fewer than three Norwich generals who commanded the 2nd Armored Division during World War II.

# #190 Norwich's Elusive Edison Connection

The 1880s are a somewhat mysterious and poorly documented period in Norwich history. It was during this time period that the university was temporarily renamed Lewis College after being saved from financial distress by Charles Lewis, Class of 1855.

## Full story:

It's a shame that we know so little about Norwich in the 1880s, because that decade holds a little-known gem: Thomas Edison, inventor of the phonograph and the lightbulb, was (briefly, it would seem) a faculty member and honorary degree recipient at Norwich.

There are only a few small traces of Edison's connection with our university. He is listed as a lecturer on electricity and sound in the catalog for the 1881-82 academic year. He is also listed in the handwritten *Register of Degrees* as having received an honorary Ph.D. from Norwich in 1881. Both of these documents are available in the Norwich University Archives. They were presumably the source for the university historian, William Arba Ellis, who cited the same two connections between Edison and Norwich in his 1911 university history.

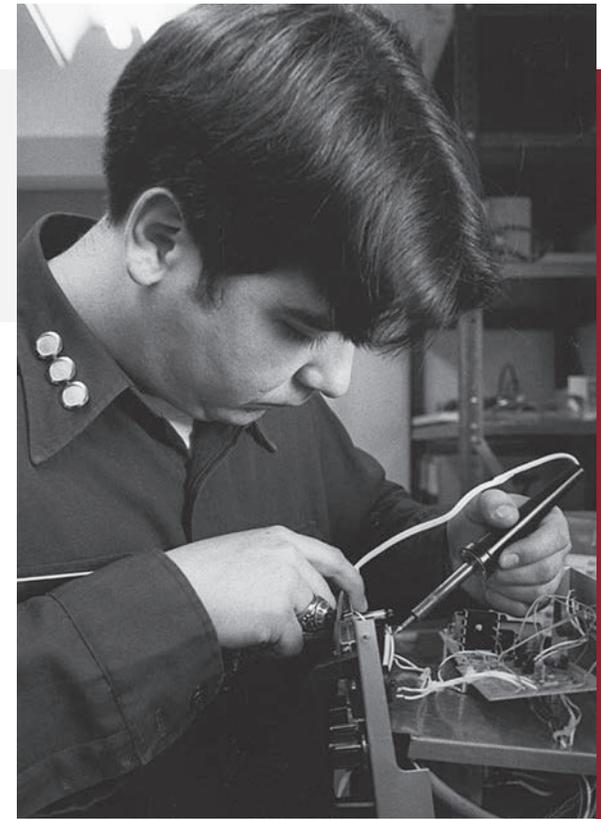
Edison's name does appear a third time in Ellis' work. In the section of Volume I that describes the Lewis College years (p. 177), this tidbit is thrown in with no other context: "Thomas A. Edison became interested in the proposition of founding an Electrical Department." Electrical engineering would be added as a course of study some 30 years after the time Ellis is describing—coincidentally, around the same time that Ellis' work was published.

A handful of 1883 articles in the *Reveille*, one of

our earliest student newspapers, shed a bit more light on this intriguing episode. It appears that Thomas Edison expressed willingness contribute \$10,000 toward an institution that would establish a school of electrical engineering. Through Grenville Dodge's connection with Western Union Telegraph Company, he was introduced to Lewis College, which was understandably eager to take him up on the offer.

The timing was fortuitous; a movement to seek a new location was afoot in tandem with the campaign (which would eventually succeed) to change its name back to Norwich University. The \$10,000 from Edison would provide the funds needed for such a move, and Brattleboro was fixed on as an ideal location. But for reasons we may never know, the idea never came to fruition.

Apparently, we are not alone in being fascinated by this chapter in Norwich history. A 1929 *Guidon* article described a speech given by President Plumley honoring the 50th anniversary of the incandescent lightbulb, in which he wowed the crowd by sharing that Edison once appeared on the NU faculty roster. He made no mention of the proposed move to Brattleboro or the \$10,000 gift that never happened. Clearly, despite the ups and downs of the 1880s, Norwich did not need Thomas Edison to carry on its sterling legacy as an engineering powerhouse.



*Electrical Engineering at Norwich.*

*Image courtesy of the Norwich Office of Communications.*

# #191 200 Years, 23 Presidents

It's hard to believe that the 200th year is upon us and our celebration of the most interesting and unique facts about Norwich at 200 will soon come to a close. As we prepare to look to the future and the next 200 years of legacy building, we thought that readers might be interested in seeing the bird's eye view of Norwich history from a few different angle.



Alden Partridge Lithograph.

Image courtesy of the Kreitzberg Library Special Collections.

## Full story:

Here we offer an overview of the presidents of Norwich. Leadership defines Norwich in so many ways, and these are the leaders who have grown this institution to the stature it has today. Some of these are household names. Others sometimes fade into the background, but are no less a part of our 200-year story.

Many of our 23 presidents (of whom 12 were also Norwich alumni) have been featured in their own 200 Things About Norwich pieces, which are linked below. You can find an even more in-depth version of this timeline in the recently published *Citizens & Soldiers: The First 200 Years of Norwich University* by Alex Kershaw.

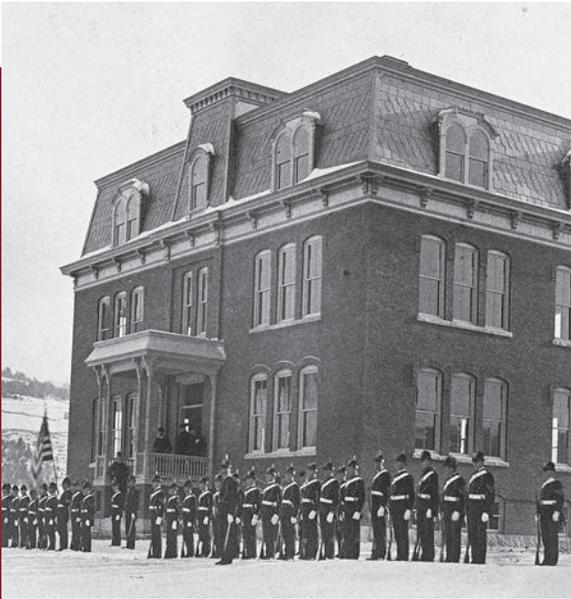
## Presidents of Norwich University

1. **Alden Partridge**, 1819-1843: Our founder, first president, and educational visionary. *200 Things About Norwich* has featured pieces on Partridge's hiking, his West Point years, his educational philosophy, and the other academies and schools he established to further his system of education.
2. **Truman Ransom**, Class of 1825, 1844-1847: Alden Partridge's protégé, an early graduate of the Academy, whose presidency and life were both cut all too short by his service and death in the Battle of Chapultepec during the Mexican-American War
3. **James Butler**, 1847-1848: Butler and his successor, Henry Wheaton, each served brief terms as the university sought new leadership with the loss of Truman Ransom.
4. **Henry Wheaton**, Class of 1841, 1848-1849
5. **Edward Bourns**, 1850-1865: Bourns' 15-year term was the first long-serving presidency that the university had seen since Alden Partridge. He saw the university through the Civil War and went on to found Northfield Savings Bank.
6. **Samuel Shattuck**, Class of 1860), Acting President 1866-1867: The beginning of Shattuck's acting presidency was the beginning of an era of uncertainty as the university dealt with the repercussions of the South Barracks fire and struggled to find stable footing in its new location of Northfield, Vt. The 1860s and 1870s saw a series of brief presidencies.

7. **Thomas Walker:** 1867-1868
8. **Roger Howard:** 1869-1871
9. **Malcolm Douglass:** 1871-1875
10. **Charles Curtis,** Class of 1837, 1875
11. **Josiah Swett,** Class of 1837, 1875-1877
12. **Charles Curtis,** Class of 1861, 1877-1880: As the only Norwich president to serve two non-consecutive terms, one might call Curtis the Grover Cleveland of NU.
13. **Charles Lewis,** Class of 1855, 1880-1892: Over his own objections, Lewis was made president and had the university renamed in his honor after he saved Norwich from financial ruin. The post seems to have been mostly honorary.
14. **George Nichols,** Acting President 1892-1893
15. **Charles Dole,** Class of 1869, Acting President 1894-1895
16. **Allan Brown,** 1896-1904
17. **Charles Spooner,** Class of 1878, 1904-1915: Spooner saw Norwich through the controversy of the “College Wars,” when the state of Vermont threatened to withdraw all funding and scholarships from the university.
18. **Ira Reeves,** 1915-1917: Like Truman Ransom, Reeves’ service to the university was cut short by his service to country in World War I.
19. **Herbert Roberts,** Acting President 1917-1920: Though he was officially only the acting president, Roberts saw Norwich through the trying period of World War I.
20. **Charles Plumley,** Class of 1896, 1920-1934: Plumley was another one of our long serving presidents, whose term spanned the years of the Great Depression.
21. **Porter Adams,** 1934-1939: Adams was an avid aviator (and personal friend of Amelia Earhart) who worked to bring aeronautical engineering to Norwich.
22. **John Thomas,** 1939-1944: Our president for most of World War II, Thomas was a seasoned educator who had previously served as president of Middlebury.
23. **Homer Dodge,** 1944-1950: The immediate postwar years at Norwich were a time of upheaval and adjustment to a new normal, and Dodge’s leadership paved the way for one of the biggest growth periods in NU history.
24. **Ernest Harmon,** Class of 1916, 1950-1965: General Harmon was one of our longest-serving and most iconic presidents, overseeing huge growth as the Norwich campus transformed during the 1950s and 1960s.
25. **Barksdale Hamlett,** 1965-1972: Hamlett was president during the Vietnam era and the merger with Vermont College that led Norwich to admit women and civilians for the first time.
26. **Loring Hart,** 1972-1982: It was President Hart who made the groundbreaking decision to allow women to join the Corps of Cadets in 1974.
27. **Russell Todd,** Class of 1950, 1982-1992: President Todd’s term saw the development of some of Norwich’s alternative education offerings, which would become a signature in the 21st
28. **Richard Schneider,** 1992-present: President Schneider became our longest serving president in 2016, with a term spanning unprecedented changes in the landscape of American education.

# #192 Norwich University in Brick and Stone

As we continue to wend our way toward the 200th of our “200 Things,” we tackle one of the topics that we get asked about: the (very brief) history of the university’s oldest and most notable buildings.



*Cadets line up in front of “Old” Dodge Hall on the Norwich University campus in Northfield, Vermont, approximately 1892-1899.*

*Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.*

## Full story:

As Norwich University has grown and evolved over the years, its physical presence has included an impressive sprawl of facilities throughout the towns of Norwich, Vt.; Middletown, Conn.; and Northfield, Vt. Here we focus on a few of the most iconic, historic buildings that have shaped NU as we know it today.

### Buildings in Norwich, Vt.

**South Barracks, completed 1820:** You may not realize that while the year 1819 saw the groundbreaking for the first building of the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy, Captain Partridge’s school had no working facilities or enrolled students until the following year, 1820. The South Barracks famously burned nearly to the ground in 1866. There were no known injuries or deaths as a result of the fire, nor is there any proof of foul play.

**North Barracks, constructed circa 1830-1832:** The less mythologized of the two buildings erected on our original campus, the North Barracks was built after the Academy returned from its brief sojourn in Middletown, Ct. It was untouched by the South Barracks fire, but in a dark coincidence, it also burned down many years later, in 1897.

### Buildings in Northfield, Vt.

**“Old” Jackman Hall, completed circa 1868:** For nearly 25 years, the original Jackman Hall was the only building on the relocated and rebuilt campus of Norwich University. It served as barracks, classrooms, administration, and more. After falling into disrepair, “Old” Jackman was demolished in 1964 to make way for “New” Jackman in 1965.

**“Old” Dodge Hall, completed 1892:** As the turbulent 19th century came to a close, Norwich began to outgrow the original Jackman Hall, and Dodge was built to accommodate classrooms and offices. Like its predecessor and neighbor, Dodge was demolished in 1964 to make way for the “New” Jackman Hall in 1965.

**Dewey Hall, completed 1902:** The cornerstone was laid for this new administration building amid much fanfare when Admiral George Dewey, Class of 1855, visited campus in 1899. Completed three years later, Dewey Hall is the oldest of the major buildings on campus still standing.

**Alumni Hall, completed 1906:** When it became clear that a second barracks building was needed, the university raised the funds from its grateful alumni with the original idea of naming it Partridge Hall after our founder. It was eventually decided to instead commemorate the faithful sons of Norwich who had made the building possible. Evidence has yet to surface of the rumored deaths in the basement of Alumni Hall, though they remain an iconic part of the building's lore.

**Carnegie Library/Chaplin Hall, completed 1908:** Funds for the university's first dedicated library building were furnished by famed businessman and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who was a personal acquaintance of Grenville Dodge, Class of 1851. The building was renovated and renamed Chaplin Library in 1953 in honor of trustee Henry Chaplin, and converted to a classroom building when Kreitzberg Library opened in 1993.

**Ainsworth Hall, completed 1910:** Ainsworth was originally built as a station for the U.S. Weather Bureau. The university acquired it in 1955 and initially dedicated it as a replacement for the original Ainsworth Infirmary.

**Stables and Riding Hall, 1919-1920:** After World War I, NU invested in infrastructure to house its robust mounted cavalry program. The stables that were

constructed in 1919 are still standing today, now known as the Student Services Center. The riding hall—named after Moses Taylor, a student who was killed in World War I—was later converted to a hockey arena and eventually taken down when Kreitzberg Arena was built.

**Plumley Armory, completed 1929:** The new armory provided needed space for drills, athletic contests, dances, and other events. It was constructed during the presidency of Charles Plumley, Class of 1896 and dedicated in his honor in 1962.

**White Chapel, completed 1941:** This building was originally called White Hall and served as the mess hall until Harmon Hall was constructed in 1955, at which point White was converted to its current use as a chapel. The renovation included the addition of a steeple.

The second half of the 20th century saw an explosion of growth on campus during the presidency of Ernest Harmon, with the construction of over a dozen new buildings including several of the barracks that grace the Upper Parade Ground. The Harmon era concluded with the demolition of Old Jackman and Old Dodge in 1964 to make way for the construction of “New” Jackman Hall in 1965.

Of course Norwich has only continued to grow since this time. These are just a few highlights of the evolution of Norwich's iconic campus as the university has matured and expanded over its first 200 years.

*A complete timeline of Norwich's buildings can be found in the appendices of Citizens and Soldiers: The First 200 Years of Norwich University.*



Baseball team of 1910.

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

# #193 “Numeral Hill” Commemorated Victories—and Spelled Defeat

This series has covered the early history of some of Norwich’s most popular sports, including football and baseball. In the early years of the 20th century, while cadets loved to pass the time by playing and watching these athletic contests, there was a conspicuous lack of other teams to play in rural Vermont. Intramural games played between groups of Norwich players became an essential part of the athletic and social calendar.

## Full story:

The multi-sport intramural rivalry between the freshmen—the Rooks—and the sophomores was usually friendly, if hotly contested. When it came to the annual baseball matchup between the teams, the victorious class earned the right to display their class year on the mountain slope we know as Paine Mountain. Because of this tradition, for some years it also went by the nickname Numeral Hill.

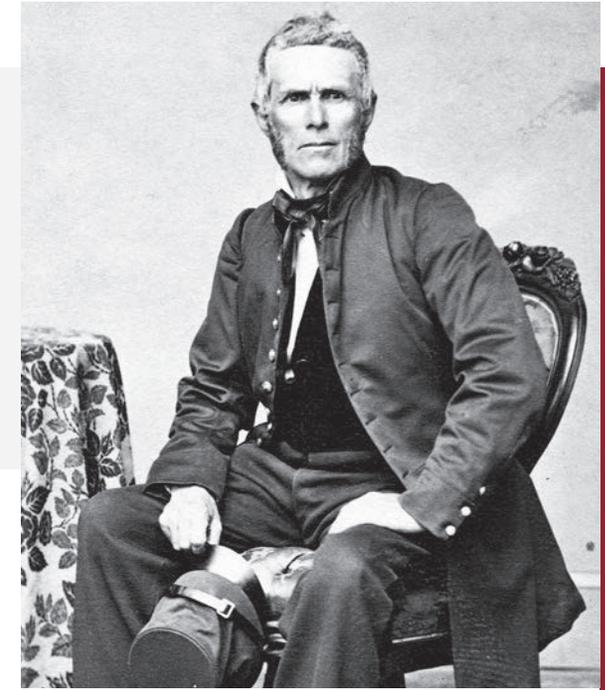
The rook-sophomore rivalry and the Numeral Hill tradition took an uglier turn in the spring of 1916. The sophomore class of 1918 trounced the freshmen class of 1919 in their annual baseball contest. The score was 17-1. In accordance with tradition, the sophomores displayed their class year, 18, on Numeral Hill to celebrate their victory. The mischievous Rooks snuck up the hill later that night and changed the displayed numerals from 18 to 19—their own class year.

The sophomores were understandably rankled, but their reaction got them into serious hot water. They retaliated against the Rooks with force, with at least six freshmen receiving brutal beatings and one requiring major medical attention.

As a result of the serious incident, which even at the time was recognized as a clear and disturbing case of hazing, the university president and the faculty made the decision to suspend or dismiss the entire sophomore class. They were to be reinstated on a case by case basis if they submitted an application and demonstrated sufficient character and remorse. For three members of the class, those applications were in fact denied. The Numeral Hill tradition seems to have carried on through the 1920s, but eventually faded from memory.

# #194 The Life of Alonzo Jackman, Our Charter Graduate

Alonzo Jackman was born in Thetford, Vt., in 1809, when Alden Partridge was already 24 years old. His father died of an injury working on his farm when Jackman was not even three years old, and his mother struggled to support the family. Young Alonzo spent time away at school and in the care of neighbors, including the Smith family of Thetford. Their son Joseph was four years older than Alonzo Jackman, and he would go on to found the Mormon religious movement.



Alonzo Jackman

## Full story:

When Jackman was only 11 years old, he and his older brother Enoch left home for good, first working on a farm in Thetford, then at a quarry in Connecticut, and eventually making their way west to labor on steamboats on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Throughout this time, Alonzo demonstrated a thirst for knowledge. He studied privately whenever he could, and sometimes attended school when work was slow in the winter months.

After making his way by steamboat to New Orleans, Alonzo Jackman had proved himself a capable sailor and was offered a job in the business office of his shipping company. But the young man of 23 desired more education, so he returned to New England in 1833 and enrolled in the Franklin Seminary in Norwich, Vt.

As fate would have it, this was around the same time that neighboring Norwich University received its state charter as a degree granting institution. Having completed several years of academic study, Jackman was able to pass an examination to enter Norwich as a senior in 1835 and receive his diploma in 1836—the first bachelor's degree ever granted by the newly chartered university.

After only attending the university for a year, Jackman must have been powerfully influenced by Alden Partridge's philosophy and personality, because he dedicated the rest of his life to serving the university and its mission. He started teaching mathematics shortly after his graduation. At various times he also taught civil engineering, natural philosophy (science), topographical drawing, military science and tactics, and even served two stints as the university's librarian.

Jackman also assisted Captain Alden Partridge with his goal of spreading a new educational philosophy rooted in the concept of the citizen soldier. In 1840 and 1841, he and future NU president Josiah Swett edited and published a newspaper called the *Citizen Soldier* all about the state militia and military education. Shortly after the paper folded, Jackman and Swett attempted to establish a school in the image of Norwich in Windsor, Vt., but were also unsuccessful in that endeavor. They both returned to faculty positions at NU.

In the early 1850s, Professor Jackman took a leave of absence from the university to travel out west with Stillman Dana, another Norwich alumnus, and then-University President Henry Wheaton. It's

possible that the trip was motivated by the California Gold Rush. Though Wheaton never returned to the university, Jackman once again answered the call of his alma mater, returning in 1852 and remaining until his death in 1879.

He had an active intellectual life; his papers include many writings and inventions, including evidence that he invented the concept of a sub-oceanic telegraph. During the Civil War, he remained at NU to train citizen soldiers at the express request of the governor of Vermont.

Jackman died suddenly at his home in Northfield in 1879 and was buried with great honor by the sons of Norwich in Northfield's Elmwood Cemetery. He was also memorialized by the cadets with a stained glass window that still hangs in St. Mary's Episcopal Church.



Cadet and horse jumping, approximately 1938-1943.  
Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

# #195 Stories of the Senior Night Ride

Horse mounted Cavalry was an integral part of Military training at Norwich from 1909 through 1943, at which time the Cadets and the horses went off to WWII. By that time the cavalry had basically transitioned to tanks and Armored warfare, the last US Cavalry unit was deactivated in 1944. The Norwich horsemen went on to ride across Europe leading units of tanks not horses.

*Contributed by William S. Crittendon '65*

## Full story:

However, while at Norwich the horses played a big part in the training and other events during the school year. The horse stables were in the building just south of the present hockey arena (now Student Service Center) and ridden in Taylor Riding Hall just to the North. Taylor Riding Hall later became Taylor Arena, the hockey rink, later replaced with Kreitzberg Arena.

Of course, as Norwich tends to bring out the competitiveness of the cadets, there naturally had to be some event or challenge created to reward the horsemanship and orienteering skills of the students.

The "Senior Night Ride" was initiated in 1927 as such a test. This ride was held in November each year and was made up of two man teams. A brief description follows from the *Norwich Guidon*, November 15, 1935. "Each year this event is sponsored by the Army officers attached here at Norwich. As in years past, headquarters for the event was the riding hall, where a large blackboard was mounted, with the names of the entries, their times for starting, and names of mounts, etc. Entries, again rode in pairs. Equipment allowed included flashlight, maps, dividers, watches, etc. for estimating distances and times."

My father, William S. Crittendon '37, told me the story of his Senior Night Ride and left me his Silver Cup which I've donated to the Sullivan Museum. Following is the article describing the event, excerpts quoted from the *Norwich Guidon*, November 13, 1936.

*"Last Tuesday night the trails and bypaths in the vicinity of Northfield were the scene of the annual Senior Night Ride. Major Hayden laid out the course. Some of the nightriders never reached the first station. There were four stations in all; the first being at the Brooks School, which is just a mile or so from the base of Scrag Mountain; the second station was at the Roxbury Railroad Station; the third at the Bull Run School; and the fourth and last station at the stables. The ride covered about nineteen miles.*

*The object of the ride was to get from one station to another as close to the correct time as possible...Points were counted against teams for getting there too soon as well as too late...Two teams tied for first place with a total of seven points against them. Loheed and Tranfaglia, and Howard and Crittendon were the collective victors. Goblets are going to be awarded to each of the winners.*

*It was an ideal night for such a ride, cold and dark. The roads were so hard and icy that, it made it practically impossible for teams to follow each other. Coming out of Roxbury toward Bull Run it was necessary to lead the horses over the mountain."*

According to my father's recollection, the key to victory was that he and his partner had a flask of whiskey with them. Most likely this was not officially countenanced but probably was part of the tradition.

# #196 The Eight Board Chairs that have Shaped NU

You may not realize that our fine institution has not always had a board of trustees. When Alden Partridge established the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy, it had no formal charter that dictated a governance structure. Some early manuscripts held by the University Archives indicate that there may have been a governing board sometime in the 1820s, perhaps established in connection with Partridge's attempts to obtain a charter from the State of Connecticut during the Middletown years.



*The signing of the merger of Norwich University and Vermont College.*

*Images courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.*

## Full story:

The Board as we know it today received its charge when the State of Vermont granted us a degree-granting charter, along with the name Norwich University, in 1834. With handwritten minutes recorded in a leatherbound book, the Board met in a variety of locations, sometimes the president's own office or home, to approve the granting of degrees and vote on major changes like the naming of Lewis College, the move to Northfield, and much later, the merger with Vermont College.

For over 100 years, the Board of Trustees had no permanent chair. Nineteenth-century meeting minutes show that a board member was elected as chair at the start of each meeting. Later on, the tradition was for the president or vice president of the university to chair the board meetings. The practice of appointing a single, long-serving, visionary person to chair the Board of Trustees began in 1946 with the election of former Vermont governor Stanley C. Wilson to the post. Wilson was the only board chair not to have graduated from Norwich.

Since the position was created, Norwich has had eight board chairs. The shortest term length was

Charles Adams, who served from 1993 to 1995, but most have served for over a decade. The longest serving chair was Philip Marsilius, class of 1943, whose 17-year term lasted from 1970 to 1987—a time of pivotal change in Norwich history. Here are the luminaries who have overseen the direction of Norwich University since 1946:

1. **Stanley Wilson**, served 1946-1960
2. **William Adams**, Class of 1921, served 1960-1970
3. **Philip Marsilius**, Class of 1943, served 1970-1987
4. **Rollin Reiter**, Class of 1950, served 1988-1993
5. **Charles Adams**, Class of 1940, served 1993-1995
6. **Fred Kreitzberg**, Class of 1957, served 1995-2003
7. **Gordon Sullivan**, Class of 1959, served 2003-2016
8. **Alan DeForest**, Class of 1975, served 2016-present

The records of the Board of Trustees dating back to 1834 are available for research in the Norwich University Archives and Special Collections on the 5th floor of the Kreitzberg Library.

# #197 The History of Our History



Visitors to the Norwich University museum, 1957.  
Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

Norwich University has curated a collection of documents and objects that honor our heritage and tell our story since at least 1902 and likely earlier. When Dewey Hall opened in 1902, it included space for museum cases to display “geological specimens, etc.” and “relics of various descriptions.” The Hotchkiss Revolving cannon that stands outside of Dewey Hall today is an example of an item we know was in the collection at that time. By 1928, the museum had moved to the top floor of Chaplin (then called Carnegie) Hall. A *Guidon* feature on the museum highlighted historic flags, uniforms, and weaponry as some of the most interesting elements of the collection. And many readers may remember the decades-long period when the NU museum resided in the basement of White Chapel.

## Full story:

During this time, the NU library was also home to many historical collections, including the papers of our presidents and notable alumni and rare books from the university’s past. When the Kreitzberg Library opened in 1993, it included a small Special Collections reading room and storage space on the 5th floor. There, the special collections librarian curated and provided access to the university’s oldest manuscripts, rare books, and historical records. The space was soon bursting at the seams, with a mashup of cataloging systems inherited from the many former keepers of Norwich’s past.

Faculty and library and museum staff have collaborated over the years to organize the historical collections and make sense of our rich heritage. William Arba Ellis, an 1897 graduate who also served as librarian for a time, worked for over a decade to produce the monumental three-volume *Norwich University: Her History, Her Graduates, Her Roll of Honor*, published in 1911. Professor Robert Guinn took up his mantle 50 years later; after teaching modern languages for 35

years, he assumed the role of historian in 1960 and penned *Volume IV* of the university’s history, released in 1965. It was also around this time that Vernon Pinkham, a retired business and economics professor, served as museum director. Professor Sidney Morse then held the position of historian and archivist from 1969 to 1983 following a 23-year career on the history faculty. And who could forget the tireless Professor Gary Lord, who retired from his post as university historian in 2017 and is truly the living expert on all things Norwich.

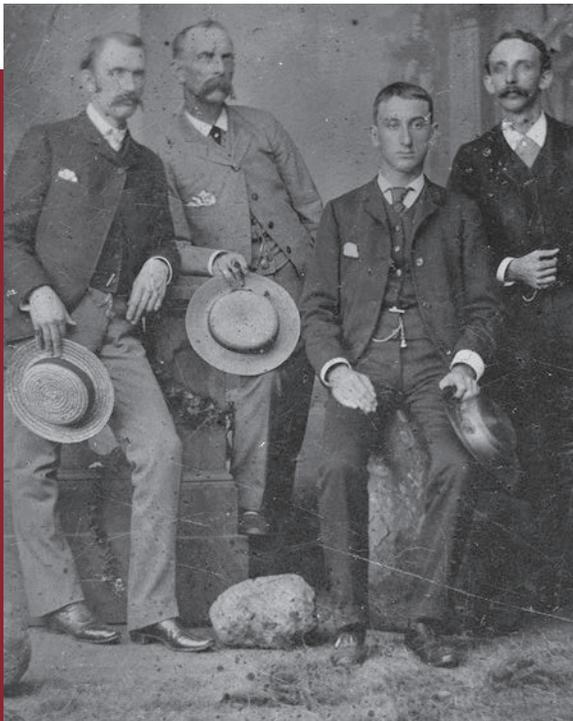
These individuals and countless others (notably including librarians Krista Ainsworth and Jacqueline Painter) helped curate, preserve, and disseminate the manuscripts, documents, and artifacts that were discovered in basements, donated by family members, and passed on by retiring employees over the decades of the university’s history.

In the early 2000s, a series of developments prepared Norwich’s historical collections to take on a new

life in the 21st century. The library's small Special Collections department hired Kelly Nolin in 2003. With the enthusiastic support of President Schneider, she grew the department from a few cramped rooms to an entire floor with a staff of three trained archivists who use the unique manuscript collections to facilitate in-depth research and teach critical thinking and historical empathy using hands-on learning that cuts across curricular divides.

At the same time, plans were being made to construct the state-of-the-art Sullivan Museum and History Center. The new museum was endowed by Colonel Jennifer Pritzker to house artifacts and mount interpretive exhibits that showcase our legacy for the community and the world to see. The collections moved out of the White Chapel basement—with manuscripts and other documentation transferred to the new Archives and Special Collections—and the museum opened to the public in 2007. In 2014, the museum became a Smithsonian Affiliate, opening new pathways to create a powerful educational experience while sharing our history with the world.

Today, the two historical departments reside under a single executive director and work together to ensure that our university's heritage continues to come alive for present and future generations of Norwich alumni, faculty, staff, students, and friends. The staff of the NU Archives has been honored to bring you this 200 Things About Norwich series to celebrate our bicentennial!



Group portrait including William Munson, approximately 1860s-1880s.

Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.

# #198 And Another Thing...

It has been an honor to select the 200 topics to highlight in this series over the past four years. We are grateful to the many Norwich history buffs and enthusiasts who have illuminated new facets of our institution's story for us along the way, either by suggesting topics or writing guest posts.

## Full story:

Norwich's 200-year story is vast and rich, and it's been difficult at times to make the call of which topics will be featured. We are so excited for you to see what comes next on this platform, but as a parting gift, we thought we'd pique your interest by briefly sharing some of the topics from our list that we missed the opportunity to share with you as the "200 Things" come to a close.

- Horatio Seymour, Class of 1831, governor of New York and 1868 presidential nominee.
- Norwich's history with the Republic of China Military Academy, whose predecessor institution was founded by George Bow, Class of 1914.
- Kurtis McLean, Class of 2005, professional hockey player.
- Colonel William McCollough, Class of 1991, a Marine officer decorated for his leadership in the War on Terror.
- The story and evolution of the campus newspapers—the *Reveille*, *Guidon*, and *Record* (many of which are digitized on the NU Archives website).
- Brent Thompson, Class of 1998, and Don Brown, Class of 1977, both accomplished Division I college football coaches.
- The College Television Awards (Emmys) that have been awarded to the Communications department.
- Thomas Bragg, Class of 1828 or 1830, governor of North Carolina and attorney general of the Confederate States of America.
- The history of student theater groups at Norwich

Each 200 Things About Norwich piece represents a mini-research project that is undertaken using the collections of the Norwich University Archives—piecing together information from yearbooks, newspapers, reports, memos, photographs, and more. If any of the topics named above sound interesting to you, feel free to reach out and begin a research project of your own!

# #199 The Story of General Sullivan

When this series began General Gordon R. Sullivan was the chair of the Norwich board of trustees, and he shared a video message with you introducing our ambitious project. Today, we turn our attention to his life and accomplishments.

## Full story:

General Sullivan was born in Boston, Massachusetts and raised in Quincy. He entered Norwich as a Rook in 1955. During his time at Norwich, he was a history major, a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity, and served on the Junior Week and Winter Carnival committees. He was also on the *Guidon* staff and penned a regular column titled “Sully’s Scratchings.”

General Sullivan completed his bachelor’s degree from Norwich in 1959 and was commissioned a second lieutenant of Armor in the same year. He retired from the Army on July 31, 1995, after more than 36 years of active service. He culminated his uniformed service as the 32nd Chief of Staff—the Army’s senior general officer—and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

Gordon Sullivan served overseas in Korea, two tours in Vietnam, and for 12 years in West Germany. His service involved commands from platoon to Division, as well as staff duty from battalion to the Department of the Army. He also had a role as a combat advisor.

An active member of the alumni community since his graduation, General Sullivan first joined the Norwich Board of Trustees in 1995, shortly after his retirement from the Army. He was elected chair in 2003 and served in that capacity for 13 years, retiring in 2016 to become Norwich’s Distinguished

Leader-in-Residence. His leadership on the Board saw Norwich into the 21st century, with growth on our physical campus as well as our innovative online learning programs.

General Sullivan currently serves as the Chairman of the Board at the Marshall Legacy Institute and is also a member of the Mitre Army Advisory Board, the MIT Lincoln Labs Advisory Board, and a Life Trustee of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. He also serves as the Chairman of the Board of the Army Historical Foundation in Arlington, Virginia. In this capacity, he leads the Capital Campaign to construct the National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. A tireless advocate for Soldiers and their families, the Museum project remains consistent with General Sullivan’s priorities—to recognize the contributions of over 30 million American men and women who have served in our Army.

For many years, General Sullivan was the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Association of the United States Army, where he oversaw the transformation of the association into a dynamic, member-based organization that continues to represent Soldiers, Army families, and the defense industry.

In addition to his numerous military awards and decorations, he is also the recipient of the AUSA



*Gordon R. Sullivan '59*

*Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.*

2016 Marshall Award, the West Point Association of Graduates’ Sylvanus Thayer Award and a member of the Sergeants Major Academy’s Hall of Honor. He was granted an honorary Doctor of Military Science degree from Norwich in 1991.

General Sullivan currently resides in Falmouth, Massachusetts with his wife Lori. He has three children and three grandchildren. He is an avid reader, amateur historian, and active sailor and sport fishing enthusiast.



*Doug McCracken '70*

*Image courtesy of the Norwich University Archives.*

# #200 “200 Things About Norwich University”

In 2014 President Schneider asked Diane Scolaro and I to develop a plan to commemorate Norwich’s 200th birthday and to celebrate our school’s many accomplishments and contributions to America. Hundreds of alumni and staff contributed their time and ideas to the bicentennial commemoration. Diane and I are forever grateful to every one of you.

*Contributed by Doug McCracken '70, Chair, Bicentennial Commemoration*

## Full story:

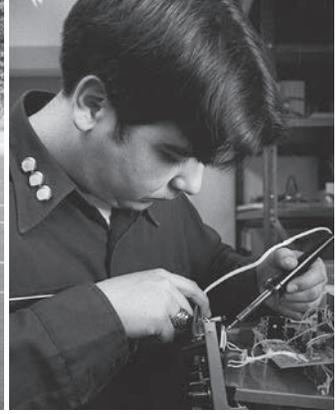
One of our key goals for the bicentennial was to tell the story of Norwich. One of the most successful projects has been this series, “200 Things About Norwich.” It’s hard to believe that this project is coming to an end! We have found that after four years and 200 ‘things,’ we have only scratched the surface. We decided to extend the series to 220 Things so that the final installment would bring our readers to the biggest week in Norwich history, our bicentennial homecoming.

We hope you have enjoyed learning about Norwich history, Norwich ‘firsts,’ and Norwich heroes. You

can help keep Norwich’s legacy alive by sharing our history with others. We encourage you to take advantage of the fabulous resources we have in Norwich University’s Archives and the Sullivan Museum & History Center. They have been invaluable partners in bringing Norwich’s story to light through many bicentennial projects. Special thanks to Mary Margaret Groberg for her heroic work to research and write the 200 Things posts. We are sincerely grateful.

Norwich Forever!





Regular Edition! 3:45 p. m. Third Edition!

**THE BRAINERD DAILY DISPATCH**

**ARMISTICE IS SIGNED  
GERMANY SURRENDERS**

Washington, Nov. 11, 2:30 a. m.—  
Government at Washington officially  
announced the signing of the armistice  
by Germany, which occurred at 5:00 a. m. Paris time.  
Hostilities ceased at 11 a. m. News from Washington reached us in 28  
seconds after announcement was made.

**"America Gains All She Fought For."**

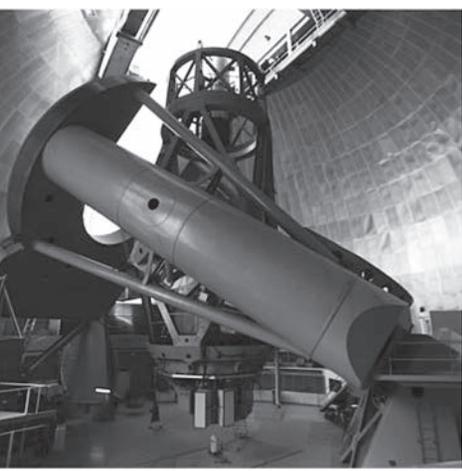
Washington—President Wilson today issued the following procla-  
mation: "The great armistice which has ended the war which  
has cost so many lives and so much treasure, and which has  
brought us peace and freedom, is a day which will live in the  
history of our people. It is a day which will be remembered  
as the day when the world was made safe for democracy."  
The German  
surrender was announced at 5:00 a. m. Paris time.

**PRES. CANCELS OUTSTANDING DRAFT CALLS**

Washington, Nov. 11—Robert I. Doolittle, 41st  
senior senator from the United States today announced  
that he would support a bill to cancel all outstanding  
draft calls for the remainder of the war.

**Kaiser Bill Flees to Holland**

London, Nov. 11, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm fled to  
Holland today.



A project of the Norwich University Bicentennial Committee  
Made possible with assistance from the Norwich University Archives