

BACK IN TIME

WAR VET RE-ENLISTED AT 77

By DICK SHEARER

He came to Lansdale late in life but what a life he lived and what wonderful stories he must have been able to tell.

His name was Adolph Lowe an elderly gentleman who settled at 219 E. Second St. shortly after the end of World War I. His claim to fame is clearly remarkable: Lowe was a veteran of both the Civil War and World War I. He is believed to be one of only two men who achieved that distinction.

If living life to the fullest is your goal, Mr. Lowe is your idol. He summarized all he had done during his first 80 years in an interview with the *Lansdale Republican and Review* in 1919. Just reading a list of his accomplishments can be exhausting.

So let's start with last things first: How did this guy manage to serve in two wars 50 years apart? According to the newspaper's story, Lowe enlisted in World War I at Lynn Haven, Va. at the age of 77. He walked into the recruiting station with his 1865 discharge papers in hand from the Union. "I'm still a man and I want to enlist," he declared.

The recruiting officer took a good look at the old fellow, saw that he appeared to be in excellent condition and didn't have the heart to reject him because of age. So he passed the buck to a surgeon who could properly evaluate Lowe's physical shape. The doctor put Lowe through his paces and reported to the recruiter that the old guy was "a perfect specimen. I wish all our Americans were as good."

Left with a predicament, the recruiter allowed Lowe to enlist for what turned out to be a year's stateside service at Norfolk. And he was not alone in service to his country: His son and two grandsons were also in the military during the First World War.

But Adolph's personal story had many more twists and turns. He was a native German who developed his love for the sea early in life. He joined the merchant marine and was in South America when he experienced a civil revolt there. At about the same time he heard of war brewing in America and headed here to join the Union Navy in search of new adventures.

Lowe served with distinction on four naval ships, one of them the ironclad *USS Monitor*. At the end of the war, he settled in Kansas City, Mo., became a skilled cabinet maker, opened a shop, married and started a family that yielded eight children.

The Lowes eventually moved to Virginia, not far



ADOLPH LOWE WITH HIS GRANDSON.

from where he served on those Civil War ships. They later turned up in Sellersville- why, we don't know - and came to Lansdale in 1919.

He proudly wore his Union Army insignia side by side with his American Legion button on his lapel, something only two veterans could do.

He also could laugh about the fact that he tried to enlist in the 1898 Spanish-American War but was rejected because his teeth were bad. Apparently deficient choppers weren't an issue in World War I.

Lowe lived but two years in Lansdale where he became one of the first members of the William E. Hare American Legion Post. He moved briefly to Philadelphia where he died in 1922. His funeral was organized by the Hare Post.