Last week the nation celebrated Veteran's Day. For Stan Cross of Lamar, it had a special meaning.

Last fall, after a reunion with some cousins in Branson, Mo., Cross found out that his great-great-grandfather, Shaffer B. Cross, had a special assignment with six other men in 1865.

After President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in April of that year, Shaffer was on special detail to help drape the statehouse and grounds in Indianapolis for the return of Lincoln's remains.

Then, as the body was placed in the rotunda to give people the opportunity for one final look at their president, Shaffer Cross and six others from his company stood guard and kept the crowd moving.

Cross said he was unaware of the role his great, great grandfather had in 1865, until his cousins sent a 1910 newspaper story from Missouri, that included his obituary.

It is especially interesting that Shaffer Cross' special service to President Lincoln was somewhat unknown years later, until he handed the editor of a Bethany, Mo., newspaper a sealed envelope. He asked the newspaperman to open it after he died and publish it.

Before Shaffer Cross enlisted with Company F, 93rd Regiment in the Illinois Volunteer Infantry in 1862, he had spent his early years in Pennsylvania, then when older, moved to New York, where he married and had two sons.

From there, he moved to Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa, before returning to Illinois to enlist.

Stan Cross believes his great-great-grandfather was a carpenter by trade.

History is important to Stan Cross. His grandparents and great grandparents settled in Chase County more than 90 years ago. Stan currently lives in Lamar, less than a mile from where his father lived most of his life.

With this article are excerpts from Shaffer Cross' letter printed by the Missouri newspaper, telling of his life and the special duty he was assigned after President Lincoln's death.

The Story As Written By Cross

I enlisted Aug. 1, 1862, in Co., F, 93rd Regt. Ill. Vol. Inf., for three years. We were sent to Chicago, then to Memphis, Tenn., then to Helena, Ark.; from there we went through the death trap—the famous Yazoo Pass; received an injury there.

Took typhoid shortly after, was sent to my regiment and taken to Millikens Bend, seven miles above Vicksburg, when I was transferred to the hospital and remained there until Feb. 22, 1863, when I was transferred to Co. C, 1st Battalion Veteran Reserve Corps and sent to Indianapolis, Ind., in February, 1865, was detailed with 150 soldiers to take 500 prisoners to Richmond, Va., for exchange.

We cast anchor in the James river, seven miles below Richmond to await orders.

Next day a Confederate steamer brought 500 of our men, when the exchange was made. On returning to Richmond and just below Fort Darling, the Confederate steamer ran on to one of their own torpedoes and blew up.

Only five men were saved from this disaster, which put a stop to the exchange of prisoners from that point, and we were ordered back to Indianapolis, where I remained until mustered out in 1865.

When President Lincoln was assassinated, I, with six other men of our company, was detailed to report to Col. Frybarder for duty, which was to assist in draping the state house and grounds for the remains.

When the body came it was placed in the center of the rotunda to give the people an opportunity to take a last look at their president. We were stationed so as to keep the crowd moving, and all day long the people came.

It was estimated how many passed through the state capitol that day, but I do not remember the number, but I do know that was the hardest day's service I ever put in.

During the time I was at Indianapolis, I filled every official position from corporal to captain. During my whole term of enlistment, I never missed duty but one day, except when I was in the hospital as stated. And while in Indianapolis, was on daily duty three-fourths of the time.

I was mustered out July 10, 1865, went home to Morristown, Ill.; and followed my business until September, 1870, when I sold out and went to Kansas, and settled on a farm two and one-half miles northwest of Ottawa, and farmed in connection with my trade.

In August, 1875, the grasshoppers came in droves and harvested my crops. They took the crops for pay for their labor. I put in 100 acres of crops in 1876, and that went the same way.

Moved to Osage county in 1877, where I took a big contract, and in addition put in 40 acres of corn. Took sick and was unable to fulfill the contract, and for the third time the grasshoppers harvested my crops for me.

Having become tired of feeding Kansas grasshoppers, I started for Illinois in the spring of 1878. Came by way of Bethany, Mo. to see Mrs. Hildebrand, our oldest daughter. We crossed Big Creek and stopped to take a drink of Big Creek water, and was never able to get away since to stay any length of time.

I have lived in Bethany 32 years, and have always tried to do all I could to support the city and defend the ordinances and laws, though some of them did not exactly suit me.

—Shaffer B. Cross