

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

COL. HANS C. HEG CAMP #15
WIND LAKE, WIS. MARCH 2019

Last Soldier Goal – by Year’s End, Honor Last Union Veteran Buried in All of Wisconsin’s 72 Counties



Last Soldier Marker installed in front of tombstone of Lawrence Snyder, the last Union veteran buried in Juneau County.

INSIDE
Brother Brian
McManus Elected
State Commander
p. 4

Get ready for road trips this spring and summer, Brothers – Camp #15’s campaign to install Last Soldier Markers in all 72 Wisconsin counties by year’s end is shifting into high gear.

Spearheaded by past camp commander Bob Koenecke, our camp now has pledges from a dozen groups across the state to buy and install markers for the grave of the last Union veteran buried in their county.

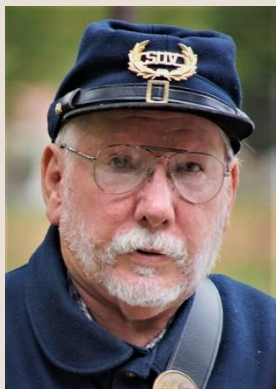
Our caps are off to Brother Koenecke who has led the way in both designing our Last Soldier Marker and getting commitments from county historical societies around Wisconsin to plant the markers.

In November, Brother Bob finished mailing letters to all county historical societies in the state, asking if the groups wanted to purchase a Last Soldier Marker and take part in a dedication ceremony with Camp #15 when the markers were installed.

“Responses have been good,” Bob reports. “A lot of counties are going to order markers in the spring.”

Typical is the response from Ashland County’s Sam Solberg. “He and the entire area are excited about the project,” Bob says. “He is in contact with counties

(Last Soldier continued on next page)



Camp Commander's Column

By Camp Commander Dave Daley

I am honored that the members of Camp #15 have elected me the new commander of the camp. I have some big shoes to fill – those size 15 boots Brother Bob Koenecke wears left some big tracks over the last two years. I hope to use Bob as my example to follow.

We've finished up a busy year and have another busy year coming up. Under Brother Bob's leadership, we are preparing for half a dozen or more road trips this spring and summer as we dedicate Last Soldier Markers in counties across the state.

We have a great camp – as one of our members likes to say, “The best freaking camp in the state.” Together, we can continue to do the good work of the Sons of Union Veterans – honoring the graves, monuments and memorials of our ancestors who fought a momentous Civil War 160 years ago to preserve the freedoms we enjoy today. We are the proud descendants of those soldiers. We should never forget what those men did for us.

(LAST SOLDIER continued *from page 1*)
around him and he thinks we can do all of them in the same day this summer.”

Florence and Forest counties in northeastern Wisconsin say they hope to hold installation ceremonies on the same day – one in the morning, the other in the afternoon – so that Camp #15 can attend both in a weekend trip.

“This is a wonderful project,” wrote Debbie DeMuri of the Florence Historical Society.

DeMuri added that her historical society was hoping to use the Last Soldier Marker dedication in conjunction with the opening of the society's museum and inviting local VFW and American Legion posts to participate.

Ron Krueger, Forest County, says that he is “thrilled” with the last marker project.

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The Last Soldier Marker that we are installing on Union veterans' graves. The design is modeled on the insignia of the Grand Army of the Republic, the predecessor to the SUVCW.



Our Fight to Clean Up Luther Parker Cemetery Goes On – But Now Down A Different Path

Our hopes of getting the city of Muskego to do the right thing and clean up weed-choked Luther Parker Cemetery ran into a roadblock in November when a Waukesha County judge ruled the city was immune from lawsuits like the one we filed against Muskego. But our fight continues to see that the graves of the three Civil War soldiers buried there are honored. Milwaukee attorney Frank Gimbel, who represented us in the lawsuit free of charge, advised that our best strategy now was to lobby the Wisconsin Legislature to get stronger “proper and decent care” language in the state law protecting the graves of veterans.

We are now shifting to that legislative remedy. Past Camp Commander Bob Koenecke has already talked to a key state official, Assembly Speaker Robin Voss, about a stronger law, and is now in talks with Voss’ staff on the wording of that tougher law.

With the help of Camp #15’s Patriotic Instructor, Rich Kallan, the camp’s top officers met with State Representative Chuck Wichgers at Luther Parker Cemetery in early January. A Republican who represents Muskego, Wichgers took one look at the withered weeds and matted grass covering the graves there and said grimly: “It’s a disgrace.” Wichgers is seeing what help his office and the Legislature’s lawyers can give us.

The judge’s ruling was disappointing, to say the least. But our fight is in a good cause. The SUVCW’s commander-in-chief, Don Shaw, emphasized that to Camp #15’s officers last month. “You saw a disrespectful situation being done to the graves of United States veterans, Union soldiers,” Shaw told us. “You stood up and tried to do something about it. You raised public awareness of the problem, and put our Order on the correct side of the issue.”

Commander Shaw ended with: “I’m proud to call guys like you my brothers.” ‘Nuff said.



Weeds in Luther Parker Cemetery so high, most of the tombstones cannot be seen.

Our Brian McManus, Camp #15's Steady, Sure Hand on the Tiller, is Now Wisconsin's Top Son

Brother Brian McManus, the sure and steady hand on the tiller of Camp #15 since the camp's formation in 2015, is now also serving as the firm hand at the wheel of the SUVCW's Wisconsin Department.

Elected Department Commander at the summer encampment last year in King, Wis., Commander McManus immediately took steps to make improvements in the Department.

In quick order, Commander McManus issued a directive setting out his goals for Wisconsin camps, made multiple trips to Camp #49 in Boscobel to help get that camp back on its feet, and met head-on the thorny issue of Confederate monuments.

Commander McManus made it clear from the start that communications are a key issue. "We must be able to effectively communicate within the Department," he emphasized. "That means keeping the webpages, and Camp and Department directories up to date."

The new commander also made a personal commitment to answer all e-mails sent to him within 48 hours.

Over the last ten years, Brother Brian rose through the ranks before assuming the top job in the Wisconsin SUVCW - ten years in which he served in almost every leadership position in the Sons, from Junior Vice Commander at the camp level to National Color Bearer at the national level.

Commander McManus' work with Camp #49 has led to the camp's reinstatement for tax purposes with the IRS. Typical was Commander McManus' refusal to take credit for that turn-around, giving credit instead to Camp #49's treasurer.

"All I did was give him some guid-
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Department Commander **Brian McManus** - then Senior Vice Commander of Camp #1 - at the 100th year anniversary of the Civil War monument at Cutler Park in Waukesha in 2011.



Department Commander Brian McManus, holding the flag, at an induction ceremony at the SUVCW National Encampment in Framingham, Massachusetts in August 2018. Commander McManus served as the National Color Bearer at the Encampment. The tall fella on the left is Camp #15 Commander Bob Koenecke, serving as National Guide.

ance and a lot of encouragement – and maybe a few trips to Boscobel,” Brother Brian explained.

Brother Brian also currently serves as the secretary-treasurer of Camp #15 and is a member of Camp #4 in Waukesha, Wis., as well.

After becoming Department Commander, Brother Brian immediately tackled an issue that has roiled Civil War groups nationally the past two years – the removal of Confederate monuments.

Last year, the city of Madison voted to take down in a city cemetery a marker with the names of Confederate prisoners-of-war who died in a Madison prison during the Civil War.

After consulting with National Com-

mander-in-Chief Don Shaw, McManus forwarded material on the issue to the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the groups which originally installed the marker.

“Although this is not directly our fight, it speaks to the modern tendency to remove any historical markers that have the potential to offend someone,” McManus explained.

“These are not markers glorifying a General, a battle, or the “Confederate cause”,” McManus noted but simply markers for the dead. “If they choose to fight the removal of the markers, I believe it is in our best interests to support the effort.”

Once again, Department Commander Brian McManus is not shying away from a tough fight but is leading the way.

Commander Bob Koenecke

– “Get It Done Bob”

Camp Commander Bob Koenecke stepped down as Camp #15’s top dog in December last year, leaving behind a sterling record of getting the job done. Under Brother Bob’s tenure, Camp #15 launched an ambitious program to install a Last Soldier Marker on the graves of the last Civil War veteran buried in every one of Wisconsin’s 72 counties. As the Wisconsin SUVCW’s Iron Brigade Memorial Highway officer, Bob also took charge of the project to design and install a plaque honoring the famed Iron Brigade. Last July, at a veterans memorial outside Sauk City, Wis., the plaque was officially dedicated with Bob doing the honors.

Bob is also utilizing his personal acquaintance with State Representative Robin Voss, the leader of the house in the Wisconsin Legislature, to lobby for a stronger law to protect the graves of veterans like the three Civil War soldiers buried in Luther Parker Cemetery.

Brother Bob’s unofficial motto during the two years he served as commander was “get it done.” Bob did just that, from spearheading the Iron Brigade Memorial Highway plaque project to ramrodding the drive to install a Last Soldier Marker on the graves of Union veter-

ans buried in Wisconsin’s counties.

Bob, 65, retired last year after working 45 years as a line-man, the last 33 years at We Energies. Bob lives with his wife Marge on a small farm just south of Burlington.

Bob may have stepped down as camp commander but he is not slowing down – Bob is now laying plans for a second Iron Brigade Memorial Highway plaque somewhere on U.S. Highway 12 as it crosses the state from Illinois to Minnesota. That’s Brother Bob Koenecke, getting the job done.



Camp Commander Bob Koenecke, the driving force behind the new Iron Brigade Memorial Highway plaque, unveiling the 90-pound bronze plaque at the dedication ceremony on July 14, 2018 at Sauk City, Wis.

Camp #15 Members in the Spotlight

Camp #15's three dozen members are actively involved in their communities. Here are a few community events involving our members over the past half year.



Mike Wozny in his Grand Army of the Republic uniform.

In mid-December, Camp #15's Senior Vice Commander, **Gerry Drought** (right), Norway, laid a wreath on the grave of his cousin, Jonathan Smiley, at Luther Parker Cemetery as part of the Wreaths Across America event.



Gerry Drought, Luther Parker Cemetery.

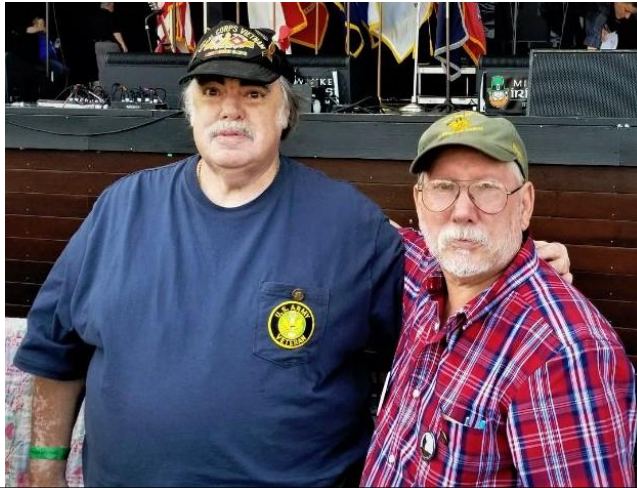
Mike Wozny (above), East Troy, a member of the camp's Council, spoke in November to the Prairieville Irregulars, a Civil War group in Waukesha, on the common Union soldier in the Civil War.

Rich Kallan (right), Muskego, the camp's Patriotic Instructor, toured the Chickamauga battlefield last year where our Col. Heg was killed.



Rich Kallan at the Col. Heg memorial at Chickamauga.

Camp #15's two Vietnam veterans, **John Gillless** and **Dave Daley**, were awarded pins denoting the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. The two received the pins from members of the U.S. military at the Irishfest celebration in Milwaukee in August last year.



John Gillless, Mukwonago, Camp #15's Guide, and **Dave Daley**, Waterford, Commander.

In Vietnam, **Gillless** served as a radio communications sergeant in the U.S. Army's Signal Corps. **Daley** served as an infantryman in the U.S. Army's 25th Infantry Division. Both proudly wear their Vietnam War anniversary pins.

CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, April 13, 2019

(in the morning)

Lincoln Tomb Ceremony,

Oak Ridge Cemetery

Springfield, Ill.

(in the afternoon)

Dr. B.F. Stephenson Ceremony

Petersburg, Illinois (Dr. Stephenson

founded the Grand Army of the

Republic (G.A.R.)

Monday, May 27, 2019

Memorial Day (observed)

Thursday, May 30, 2019

Memorial Day (traditional)

Saturday, June 8, 2019

Wisconsin SUVCW

Department Encampment,

at the G.A.R. Hall,

Boscobel, Wisconsin

Aug. 8 through Aug. 11, 2019

SUVCW National Encampment

Cleveland, Ohio

(Last Soldier continued from page 2)

So far, thirty-two of Wisconsin's 72 counties have Last Soldier Markers either installed or ordered. Brother Bob Koenecke, who has a cabin in Wonewoc, Wis., in Sauk County, has already installed markers in that county and five adjacent counties. The Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War in Delavan plans to install markers in Jefferson and Rock counties, and has already placed one in Brown County.

Other camps in Wisconsin are ordering markers, as well as camps around the country. Camp #8 in the Fox Cities-Oshkosh area just ordered eight markers.

Another 21 markers have been sold to camps or departments in other states across the U.S., according to Brian McManus, who as Camp #15's secretary-treasurer, is administering marker sales.

As Brother Bob Koenecke would say, "We're getting it done."

Col. Hans C. Heg
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 Editor
 Dave Daley

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 picture?

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