



Wisconsin Department Dispatch



Fall 2023

Inside —

<i>Wisconsin at the National Encampment.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Department Pioneers.....</i>	<i>3-4</i>
<i>From the Department GRO.....</i>	<i>4-6</i>
<i>Events Calendar.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Department Officers.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Col. Colwert Pier's Last Soldier.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Camp News and Activities.....</i>	<i>9-17</i>
<i>SUVCW Member Orientation Course.....</i>	<i>18</i>

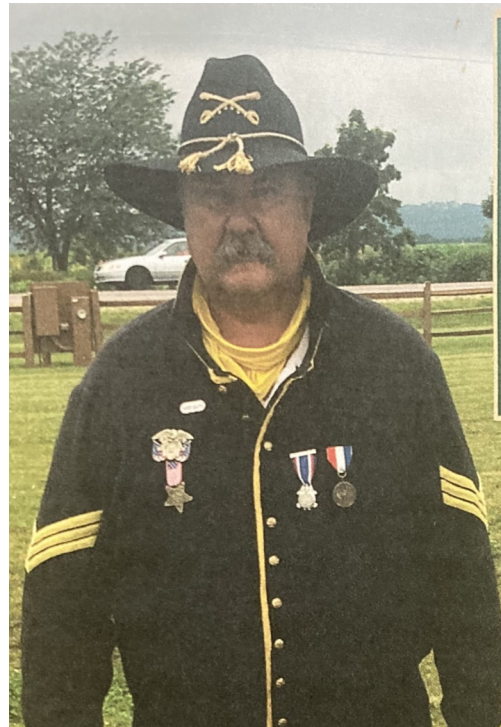
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

SUVCW

A Message from the Department Commander

Greetings Brothers,

I was reelected as Department Commander at the 140th Department of Wisconsin Encampment at the Lions Club in Wauwatosa on June 13th. We have been working with Colonel William Colvill Camp #56 in Minnesota to complete their Last soldier project. I attended the Lincoln Tomb ceremony at Springfield with other brothers from our department in April. We continue to clean and straighten veterans headstones in various cemeteries throughout Wisconsin. I volunteered at Walworth county fair for the historical society book sale. I am working with the Walworth county Veterans museum gathering info on the Walworth county Plow boys. It was the 13th Wisconsin Company I. The regiment my Great Great Grandfather served in during the Civil War. I participated in the Loganville cemetery walk at the American cemetery where 67 civil war soldiers are buried. I've been working with the SAR to place a plaque at the final resting place for Aaron Smith and his wife in Burlington. We are still in the process of restoration of the Lafayette church, getting it ready for a community event in October. I will be giving a talk at St. Johns grade school about the Civil War this winter. I've already been asked, they will set a date soon. I continue to do the work of the order with the help of my chief of staff and other brothers in our department.



Yours in Fraternity, Charity & Loyalty,

Department Commander Robert Koenecke
Department of Wisconsin and Minnesota



"PRESERVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD"

Wisconsin at the National Encampment in Nashua, NH



The Wisconsin Delegation with newly elected Commander in Chief, Peter J Hritsko .
Front row: (Left to Right) PDC Kim Heltemes, PCinC Steve Michaels, Dept JVC Patrick Fallon, CinC Peter Hritsko, PDC Tom Brown, Dept Chaplain Gerry Drought, Back row: (Left to Right) PDC Brian McManus, Jerry Coveney, DC Bob Koenecke, CC Grant Johnson.



Left: PDC Brian McManus receives a certificate of appreciation from Commander in Chief Frail, for serving as National Guide during his Administration.



Right: PDC Kent Peterson was unable to attend the National Encampment, but was awarded a Meritorious Service Award from CinC Bruce Frail. At a recent Camp #1, PCinC Steve Michaels presented the certificate to him.

Albert Huelsman



A. Huelsman

The 38th annual Wisconsin Dept. Encampment was held June 6-9, 1921, in Antigo. Albert Huelsman, a 51-year-old real estate agent from Fond du Lac was elected Department Commander.

Huelsman was born in 1870, the son of German immigrants George Adelbert and Emilie Huelsman. George had served as a private in Company I, 20th New York Infantry, "United Turner Rifles," from May 1861 to June 1863. He had survived the battles of South Mountain, Antietam and Fredericksburg. After the war, George and Emilie moved to Fond du Lac, where George was the city's pioneer jeweler. Albert continued the business for a number of years.

On October 10, 1901, Albert married Alvina Ida Rueping (11 Jan 1876-2 Sep 1969). They had four children: Louise Antoinette (1904-2000), Florence Laura (1905-), Albert Rueping (1911-1992), and Eleanor (1914-2017). Seeking bigger opportunities and better

income for a growing family, Albert turned his attention toward managing business and residential properties.

In 1918, Albert served as commander of Fond du Lac's five-year-old Edward S. Bragg Camp #41. He continued to serve as Camp Secretary/Treasurer afterwards.

At the 1920 Dept. Encampment in Baraboo, he was elected to the Dept. Council.

By 1921, Wisconsin Dept. membership had shrunk to 1,008 brothers in 31 Camps. The membership resolved to heartily endorse and approve the Wisconsin Dept. of the Grand Army of the Republic's recommendation that our Order's name be changed to Sons of the Grand Army or the Republic. The current name, Sons of Veterans, USA, might be understood to mean sons of the veterans of any war. Nationally, that move would be defeated, brought up again and tabled.

The Sons also went on record as favoring the holding of the 1922 GAR National Encampment in Milwaukee. The National Encampment did come to Milwaukee, but a year later, having a positive effect on membership. Dropped two years earlier, Soldiers Grove Camp # 8 was reorganized on April 27, 1922. Prospects for other camps grew.

After his term as Dept Commander, DC Huelsman was returned to the Dept. Council, serving until 1928.

By late 1926, Bragg Camp #41 began floundering; it disbanded in early 1928. Br. Huelsman had already joined Sheboygan's Carl Witte Camp #37 in April 1927.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Br. Huelsman was also a member of the B.P.O. Elks and at one time served as exalted ruler. He was a member of Lodge 141, AF & AM, the Wisconsin Consistory, Tripoli Temple Mystic Shrine, and Fidelity Lodge—Knights of Pythias.

Alvina Huelsman was a member of the 1st United Presbyterian Church, the Woman's Association, past chief of Pythian Sisters, member of the Academy Club, the Federated Women's Club, and the Utopia Club.

In April 1931, Albert was elected city council member, defeating a field of thirteen candidates and a libel suit. As such, he served as vice-mayor and was head of the water department. He served on the planning commission, the health and street department units, and had supervision over storm and sanitary sewers, bridges, sidewalks, and street lighting. He was a staunch advocate of tax reduction, street improvement, and adoption of flood relief programs.

Brother Albert Huelsman died on March 12, 1936, after a brief illness. He was 66 years old and was buried in Fond du Lac's Rienzi Cemetery.

By PCinC Steve Michaels with research assistance from PDC Kent Peterson

Sources:

Press Forward the Good Work, the History of the Wisconsin Department, SUVCW by PCinC Stephen A. Michaels

LaCrosse Tribune, April 8, 1931

Sheboygan Press, 13 Mar 1936



By Tom Mueller, PCC

Department GRO

As part of our eternal mission to honor Civil War veterans, two new Last Soldiers were crowned this summer after information was discovered about them.

The changes were made for Fond du Lac and Iron Counties. Because the SUVCW is always keeping its eyes open for new information, a change technically could come in any of the state's counties, even for someone who has been regarded as the Last Soldier for decades.

PDC John Decker, right, and GRO Tom Mueller, PCC, honored Sgt. Charles Cowan in Ripon in September.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

The previous Last Soldier in Fond du Lac County was Albert Pride, who had died on Jan. 25, 1941, at age 93.

The new honoree there is Sgt. Charles Cowan, who died in a different county on May 29, 1943, was taken back to his native Ripon for burial.

Cowan was 97, several days short of another birthday, and died 79 years after enlisting in the war. He lived in Waupaca County, and had been mentioned in the 1941 obituary of Israel Cannon, who died at what today is the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. Cannon was the last Civil War burial in Waupaca County. His obituary, posted on Find a Grave, included, "Although Mr. Cannon was the last Civil War veteran at the home, Charles Cowan, another veteran, lives in Waupaca County."

A search of Find a Grave found that Cowan is buried with a military tombstone in Hillside Cemetery at Ripon. So the Last Soldier marker was moved there in September.

Cowan enlisted in Ripon and was a sergeant in the 41st Wisconsin Infantry, Co. B, serving from May 7, 1864, to Sept. 23 of that year. He began as a corporal, and was elevated at some point.

The 41st was a 100-day unit, one of three such regiments from the state; all created in 1864.

Pride, who is buried at Rienzi Cemetery in Fond du Lac, was a 15-year-old replacement in the 12th Wisconsin Infantry, Co. D, enlisting on Oct. 4, 1864. He received the Last Soldier marker a few years ago.

In Iron County, the new Last Soldier has been determined as Cpl. John B. Lewis of the 12th Wisconsin, Co. K.

Lewis died in 1916, according to new research by PDC Jeff Graf for the Last Soldier project. He is buried at Lake View Cemetery at Saxon, the same place as the man previously figured to be the Last Soldier, Pvt. Chester H. Huntsinger, who died on Jan. 22, 1914. Because Huntsinger's death is very early relative to other counties, Graf was asked to look into Lewis' military tombstone.

Those deaths were 20 to 30 years before virtually all other Last Soldiers in the state's other counties. Why? Starting in the 1880s, the Gogebic Range (the heart of which is in Iron County) was one of the nation's main sources of iron, but the mines began closing in the Depression, and the population tumbled.

Iron County has a population of only 6,000 today, one of the least-populated in Wisconsin, and only five Civil War graves are known to exist there. It has few cemeteries.

Graf has researched for years in his SUVCW duties, especially for helping applicants prove their relative's service. He says that according to pension records, Lewis died on Aug. 11, 1916; "no later, or slightly before, depending on when the widow filed application for death benefit."

(Continued on page 6)

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Lewis served from Oct. 1, 1861, to Oct. 30, 1864. In his time, the 12th Wisconsin was at Vicksburg, Miss., from May 22, 1863, until the city surrendered on July 4. The 12th then was in the Atlanta Campaign from May 8, 1864, to Sept. 8 of that year.

Huntsinger was a 17-year-old in the 37th Wisconsin Infantry, Company E.

He and his brother Jared enlisted on March 31, 1864, and were from Waubek, which is in Ozaukee County and known today as Waubeka. Jared became a sergeant.

Both brothers were wounded on June 18, 1864, in the third day of the regiment's fighting at Petersburg, Va. Because of his wounds, Chester transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps on Sept. 1, and was mustered out on Aug. 8, 1865. Jared served to July 27.

Department Events Calendar

October 22 ~ Member Orientation via Zoom, presented by the Dept. of Wisconsin

November 18 ~ Remembrance Day parade and ceremony ~ Gettysburg, PA

December 17 ~ Wreaths Across America



The *Wisconsin Department Dispatch* is published four times per year for members of the Wisconsin Department, SUVCW. Articles, photos and news items may be submitted to PDC Bruce Laine at brucelaine@gmail.com. Editorial deadlines are the 1st of April, July, October and January.

Visit us on the Web at

<http://www.suvcw-wi.org>

Thank you to everyone that contributed to this Edition!





Department of Wisconsin 2023-24 Officers

Department Commander :

Robert F. Koenecke, PCC commander@suvcw-wi.org

Department Senior Vice Commander:

Samuel M. Keith svc@suvcw-wi.org

Junior Vice Commander:

Patrick Fallon, PCC jvc@suvcw-wi.org

Council #1:

John R. Decker, PDC council1@suvcw-wi.org

Council #2:

Thomas J. Brown, PDC council2@suvcw-wi.org

Council #3:

Jerome Coveney council3@suvcw-wi.org

Secretary:

Brian G. Peters, PDC secretary@suvcw-wi.org

Assistant Secretary:

Fred J. Campbell, PCC secretary2@suvcw-wi.org

Treasurer:

Kurt Kirk treasurer@suvcw-wi.org

Assistant Treasurer:

Brian G. Peters, PDC treasurer2@suvcw-wi.org

Patriotic Instructor:

Richard A. Kallan pi@suvcw-wi.org

Chaplain:

Gerald W. Drought, PCC chaplain@suvcw-wi.org

Graves Registration Officer:

Thomas S. Mueller, PCC gro@suvcw-wi.org

Historian:

Scott Schable historian@suvcw-wi.org

GAR Records Officer:

John R. Decker, PDC gar@suvcw-wi.org

Counselor:

Kent A. Peterson, PDC counselor@suvcw-wi.org

Eagle Scout Coordinator:

Samuel M. Keith scouts@suvcw-wi.org

Iron Brigade Highway Coordinator:

Robert F. Koenecke, DC highway@suvcw-wi.org

Civil War Memorials:

Gerald W. Drought, PCC memorials@suvcw-wi.org

ROTC Award Coordinator:

David D. Daley, PCC rotc@suvcw-wi.org

Last Soldier Project Officer:

Gary Carlberg lastsoldier@suvcw-wi.org

Recruiting Officer:

James B. Hobbins recruiting@suvcw-wi.org

Department Genealogist:

Jeffrey M. Graf, PDC genealogy@suvcw-wi.org

Camp Organizer:

Kim J. Heltemes, PDC organizer@suvcw-wi.org

Guard:

Thomas S. Mueller, PCC guard@suvcw-wi.org

Color Bearer:

Jeffrey M. Graf, PDC colorbearer@suvcw-wi.org

Signals Officer:

Kent A. Peterson, PDC webmaster@suvcw-wi.org

IRS Compliance Officer:

Brian D. McManus, PDC compliance@suvcw-wi.org

Chief of Staff:

Brian D. McManus, PDC chiefofstaff@suvcw-wi.org

Col. Colwert Pier's Last Soldier?

By Tom Mueller

PCC, C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1

A 1943 death in South Dakota is the last known member of Col. C.K. Pier's 38th Wisconsin Infantry, according to a check of the 500 listings for the regiment in the SUVCW national graves database.

Pvt. William J. Grace died on Dec. 31, 1943, at age 97, and is buried at Rest Haven Cemetery at Alpena in Jerauld County, which is in east-central South Dakota.

Jerauld County has a population of only about 1,700, and Alpena 300. Alpena is about 50 miles from Mitchell, S.D., which is well-known to travelers for the Corn Palace.

Grace was from Monroe, Wis., and served in the 38th's Company D, from March 12, 1864, to July 26, 1865, when the 38th was mustered out.

His grave was submitted this spring to the national SUVCW graves database by John Surman, PDC of the Department of Nebraska and the Dakotas. Surman is its current Department GRO.

Camp 1 PCC Tom Mueller serves on the national graves registration committee and handles submittals every day – and could not help but notice the man from the 38th and then the eye-popping year of death.

Surman provided Grace's obit from the Argus-Leader newspaper from Jan. 5, 1944, which said this "was one of the last three Civil War veterans in the state." It also said he "came to the Dakota territory in 1883, and lived in Jerauld and Sanborn counties most of his life after that time."

Grace's stone says 1944, but "my date of 1943 is based upon the South Dakota death certificate index and obituaries," Surman says. The newspaper said he was 98, but Surman's data means he was 97.

Surman has submitted about 2,000 graves in the past year and a half from his region, with some who had lived in South Dakota for years but are buried in other states.

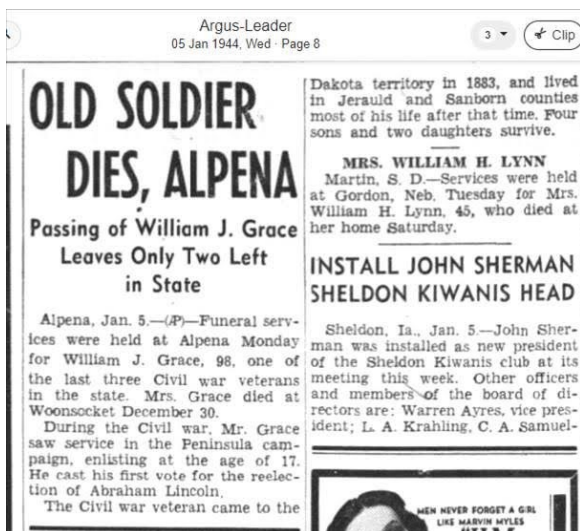
It is technically possible that a later man for the 38th can emerge anywhere. While more than 500 of Pier's vets are in the national database, that still leaves 300 or more out there somewhere. Thus we can say only that Grace is the last KNOWN one. Still, by the end of 1943, he did not have a whole lot of war colleagues left.

Of the men in the database, Grace easily beats two men (buried in Trempealeau County, Wis., and in Michigan) who died in 1941 and another who died in 1940 (buried in California).

The captains of Grace's Co. D were James Woodford (likely from Dodge County) until Aug. 1, 1864; William H. Foster of Monroe until April 17, 1865, and then Benjamin S. Kerr of Monroe to the end of its service.



William Grace is in a family plot at Alpena, S.D. The date on his tombstone is wrong; it should be 1943. Photos from Find a Grave.



A newspaper in South Dakota reported only two other known Civil War veterans remained after Grace's death.

CK Pier Badger Camp #1 - Milwaukee



Left to Right, PDC Tom Brown, PCinC Steve Michaels, Camp Commander Grant Johnson, Brothers Bill Seaman and Skylar Brown after marching in the St. Francis Day parade on a hot July day..



On Oct. 1, the Camp and Auxiliary 4 teamed up with the 29th Colored Infantry, Company F, to dedicate three tombstones at Forest Home Cemetery in Milwaukee.

Two of them were for members of the 16th Wisconsin Infantry, who fought at Shiloh (they became brothers-in-law after the war). The third was Pvt. Martin Smith of the 49th Colored Infantry, Company F. He was murdered by a family member in 1874.

Auxiliary #1 participated in the South Milwaukee Heritage Days parade along with Camp #1. On the right, (L to R) PNP Daniel Michaels, Brothers Bill Seaman, Skylar Brown, PDC Tom Brown, Brother Patrick Kulas, Sister Lisa Avila and PCinC Steve Michaels.

Photo by Kent Peterson, PDC



CK Pier Badger Camp #1 - Milwaukee continued



PDC Tom Brown and PCinC Steve Michaels traveled to Duluth, MN to participate in the Last Soldier dedication for Albert Woolson conducted by Camp #56.

PCC Tom Mueller (left) and Brother John Thielmann (right) manned the Civil War booth at Germanfest.



MG John Gibbon Camp #4– Waukesha

William Stickles: Woodsman, Marksman, Civil War Union Soldier

Brother Bob Bartelt, Camp #4, did a presentation at Mukwonago's Red Brick Museum on Sunday, July 23rd, "in character" and spoke in the first person while dressed as the "woodsman/hunter" persona of William Stickles. In general, there were 2 parts to the presentation. One part was about Mr. Stickles



life before and after his service in the Civil War. He and his family had moved to Wisconsin only a year or two prior to Fort Sumter. As a teenager in Pennsylvania, he had first honed his skills as a lumberjack/woodcutter and as a hunter. The other and more detailed portion of the presentation had to do with the exploits of the 5th Wisconsin Infantry regiment. I decided to highlight four of the battles in which the 5th Wisconsin played a key role. These were 2nd Fredericksburg (the "Forgotten Front" of the battle of Chancellorsville); Rappahannock Station; The Wilderness; and Spotsylvania Court House.

Stickles was assigned to Company F. Company F was one of the five companies of the 5th that was put in the front line at 2nd Fredericksburg when the union forces attacked the wall at the "sunken road" at the base of Marye's Heights on May 3, 1863 subsequently overran the rebel forces behind that wall and those defending the Heights. The 5th was part of the so-called "Light Division" which had the unenviable task of taking that

ground. While the 5th was not a part of any of the ill-fated 7 charges Burnside had ordered 5 months earlier, in December 1862, at the battle of Fredericksburg, those men were all well-aware of the loss of life and the carnage the Army of the Potomac had suffered back then. Companies of the 5th were credited with being the first regiment to get over the wall and the first wave, along with their "sister" regiment, the 6th Maine, to reach the top of Marye's Heights, capturing a battery of the vaunted Washington Artillery.

Along with the 6th Maine, the 5th Wisconsin was the group that overran key rebel defenses on the north bank of the Rappahannock which broke the Confederate line. The result of this battle in November 1863 was that Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was forced to withdraw off the Rappahannock and to retreat to the Rapidan River.

At the Wilderness the, 5th Wisconsin managed to capture virtually an entire Confederate regiment, the 25th Virginia.

Stickles's regiment also distinguished itself twice at Spotsylvania Court House. On May 10th the 5th Wisconsin (along with 11 other infantry units) was specifically selected by Col. Emory Upton to participate in his concentrated assault that day on the western side of the "Muleshoe." While quite

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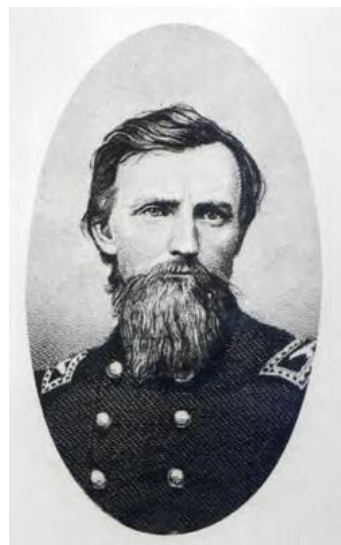
successful at first, that attack ran out of steam due to lack of coordinated support from other troops that had been expected as part of the overall plan. On May 12th the 5th Wisconsin was deployed as a part of the second wave of attack on the Muleshoe, eventually being situated with its flank just a few yards from the rebel entrenchments. The fire from the 5th's rifles eventually was responsible for the downing of the famous 22-inch diameter tree which now is on display in the Smithsonian.

Above, Brother Bob at Stickles grave in Mukwonago's Oak Know Cemetery, after replacing the GAR flag holder.

Colonel Hans C. Heg, Camp #15- Wind Lake



Brothers from Camp #15 and the Iron Brigade Guard SVR unit, fire a salute at the grave of Colonel Hans C. Heg, on the anniversary of his death in Wind Lake, WI.



Colonel Hans C. Heg

Old Abe Camp #8 - Fox Valley



Old Abe Camp members held a grave dedication service for Old Abe Camp 8 PDC Alan Petit who passed away July 14, 2022. The weather was 89 degrees and very humid in our wool uniforms at Most Precious Blood Cemetery in New London, Wisconsin. A few of Alan Petit's relatives were able to attend.



Old Abe Camp #8 ~ Fox Valley continued

Camp #8 recently received word of the passing of Brother Dan Wilson. He was a member from 199 to 2014, and served as Camp Chaplain for many years.



Old Abe Camp 8 members conducted a re-dedication service at Gage Cemetery, New Fane Township, Fond du Lac County Wisconsin for Seth Porter Church, January 29, 1820 ~ February 3, 1901, Serg. Company 2nd Wisconsin Cavalry.

Camp #49 Celebrates 20 Years!



On July 4th 2023, members of LG Armstrong Camp #49 located at the GAR Hall in Boscobel, (last active hall in Wisconsin), celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Camp, it was re-chartered in 2003 after being disbanded for many years.

Camp #49 held their annual brat feed fund raiser on the 4th.

At the event the brothers honored Gary Young with a plaque and photo of the re-chartering, Gary was instrumental in the rechartering and preserving and restoring the GAR Hall.

Brothers attending the ceremony where Dan Griesel, Chuck Griesel, Garret Reynolds, Rod Dary, Greg Pomerening, Steve Woodhouse, Jim Griesel, with Commander Dan Chroninger, presenting Gary Young with the photo and Plaque. Also attending where members of the public and ladies of the Women's Relief Corp, Sally Achenbach and Jill Vestuto.

Col. William Colvill Camp #56 - Minnesota

Camp 56 endured hot weather and lengthy travel to complete another nine Last Union Veteran (LUV) ceremonies by the end of August. Added to the twelve completed by June 30, the camp has officially completed twenty-one in 2023. The camp completed the following counties in July and August: Nobles, Stearns, Koochiching, Itasca, Lake, Cook, Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, and St. Louis County. Not content with a goal of twenty Last Union Veteran ceremonies for 2023, the camp has two more scheduled ceremonies in September, making twenty-three for the year and breaking all of our previous year's records.

Quite a few camp members have participated in the LUV Projects during the summer. Commander Gary Carlberg and Chaplain Chuck Lursen led the ceremony at Nobles County. Skip Parson did the research and Gary handled the ceremony duties at Stearns County with Steve Blankenberg and Matt Nyquist. Sgt. James Johnson, with support from Vern Barker, completed the ceremonies Koochiching, Itasca, Lake, Cook, Lake of the Woods, and Beltrami Counties. Often,

(Continued on page 16)

Col. William Colvill Camp #56 - Minnesota continued

(Continued from page 15)

Jimmy had more than one county on the same day, and given the distance between some counties, he endured a lot of seat time as he crisscrossed the state to conduct each ceremony.

However, without any impudence to the other LUV ceremonies, the ceremony for Pvt. Albert Woolson, 1st Minnesota Heavy Artillery, in Saint Louis County (Duluth), on August 12, 2023, was special. Woolson is considered the Last Union Veteran in the United States. Battery I, 1st US Artillery, commenced the ceremonies with a blast at 1058 from their original 12 lb Napoleon cannon. Carlberg led the ceremony with keynote addresses delivered by Brig. Gen. (Bvt) Ronald Hein and SUVCW Past National Commander-in-Chief Steve Michaels. A large contingent, including members from Camp 56, Battery I, US Light Artillery, many re-enactors, the Sons of the Veterans Reserve (SVR), the Saint Louis County Historical Society, the Department of WI SUVCW, Bryce Stenzel as Abraham Lincoln, and the American Legion Post 28 (Woolson was a charter member), provided support for this LUV ceremony. A wreath laying ceremony led by Jay Hagen from the St. Louis County Historical Society followed the ceremony at the site of Woolson's statue at the Depot in Duluth.

The camp plans to complete two more LUV ceremonies this year, Pvt. Joseph Uebersetzig (Clay County), and Pvt. Horace Eaton Davis (Wilkin County), on September 23, 2023. Uebersetzig's ceremony is at St. Joseph's Cemetery in Moorehead, while Davis's is earlier in the day at the

Riverside Cemetery in Breckinridge. The camp also conducted cemetery work at Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul on July 15, and August 19, and is scheduled to do the same on September 16 and October 21. Hopefully, the God of Weather is judicious to allow this work to continue into the fall. The camp will meet on September 9th and November 4, 2023, at the Scottish Rite Temple in Minneapolis at 1000 hours.



Brothers and Dignitaries at the Albert Woolson Last Veteran Ceremony in Duluth.

(Continued on page 17)



(Continued from page 16)

Camp #56 Commander Cary Carlsberg and PCC Mark Campbell at a Last Veteran Ceremony .



At the Right ~ Brothers Vern Barker and James Johnson at the Last Veteran ceremony for Horace Eaton Davis, the Last Civil War Veteran buried in Wilkin County, MN.





SUVCW MEMBER ORIENTATION COURSE

A MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY COURSE PRESENTED VIA ZOOM

Have you ever sat in one of our Sons meetings and wondered how some of our traditions began, or thought about the many Sons before us who kept the organization going for 140 years? Have you wondered where to buy a kepi, or even whether you must have one, or whether you're supposed to salute your Camp commander? Why do we sponsor all these different activities, anyway, and if I volunteer for something just how much work will I take on?

These orientations are open to ANY member or prospective member wishing a deeper understanding of Son's history, purpose, protocol, and projects. New members are encouraged to attend but long-time members will learn a few new things as well. The material presented will be from an online course in SUVCW Memorial University. After taking this online course you'll be able to go to the Memorial University website, take the online exam, and earn credit for your work.



Above: Newly elected officers take the oath of office as they prepare to take on their duties.



After attending this online program, members should:

- know the SUVCW mission, purpose and programs
- understand the SUVCW organization and structure
- recognize and wear SUVCW insignia properly
- observe correct SUVCW customs and protocol
- demonstrate basic knowledge of SUVCW values, the history of the SUVCW and local Camp, the role of the Auxiliary, members' responsibilities, membership benefits, and more.

Presentations will be provided by experienced officers from the Dept. of Wisconsin. There is no cost for you to attend. You will need access to a computer with an Internet connection and the free Zoom software installed. Please pre-register so we can send Zoom login information and track course completions.

The next SUVCW Member Orientation Course to be presented via Zoom:
Sunday, October 22, 2023 from 1 – 4 p.m.

Registration: Please pre-register with PDC Kent Peterson by October 8
kapeterson0681@gmail.com / (414) 614-3690
(Please provide your name, email and Camp)