



# Wisconsin Department Dispatch



Summer 2002

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## Dept. General Orders 2002-02

**Availability** - For this term the Dept. Orders will be furnished with the Dept. Dispatch, or as a separate mailing to Camp Commanders, depending on the circumstances. These General Orders will also be available on the Department website at [suvcw-wi.org](http://suvcw-wi.org).

**Cooperation** - This Department acknowledges that ours is not an independent mission, and recognizes that when all are unified through a common purpose, we are more effective than when acting alone. To that end we pledge support to our Camps within the Department, to our sisters in the Auxiliary to the SUVCW and also to the other G.A.R. Allied Orders; the Women's Relief Corps, the Daughters of Union Veterans, and the Ladies of the G. A.R..

**Department Officers** – are as listed elsewhere in the *Dispatch*. Those Officers continuing from the previous term are requested to continue with their projects. Those Officers new to their positions have been, or will be contacted independently regarding this upcoming year.

**Growth** - As reported at the 119<sup>th</sup> Department Encampment, there continues to be a need for improvement in a key area, that being membership –for both enlistment of new members and retention of existing members. Over the past several years, most Camps have seen little growth, yet the potential for growth is there as evidenced by the continuing interest in genealogy, heritage groups, and Civil War history and re-enacting. Since the SUVCW offers all of those benefits, we should have ample opportunity.

Many re-enactors and other individuals interested in the Civil War are either not aware that our organization exists, or do not understand the true purpose of it. Encourage your friends with similar interests to visit your Camp and learn more about the "Sons". Remind them that this is "the real thing" – a continuation of

our countries Civil War history and heritage. More than a social group, we are active in our Patriotic Mission. More than a heritage group, we were created for the purpose of supporting the Civil War veterans, the Grand Army of the Republic and their Patriotic Mission. Our Veteran ancestors in the G.A.R. prescribed how they wished to be honored and remembered by creating our organization to continue their work and perpetuate their memory. As "Sons" we are not portraying history, we are part of it. Evidence of this is the fact that artifacts from the G.A.R. and of our own Order of earlier generations are sought out by collectors of Civil War related artifacts or are in museum collections. Encourage your friends to join you at the next level.

Likewise, heritage alone does not make our Order successful. Some of our most dedicated members are associate members, who prove to the rest of us that commitment and the desire to get involved are more important for the health and future of an organization.

**History** – To better understand our SUVCW history, I encourage you to help Dept. Historian Bro. Jim Benware in developing a database regarding the location of various records and artifacts. To understand the scope and purpose of this project, you will need to refer to the excellent article Bro. Benware wrote for a previous *Department Dispatch*. In this article Jim explains how this project covers preservation and location.

*Heritage alone does not make our Order successful.*

*(Continued on page 6)*

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War  
**SUVCW**

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## SUVCW E-Mail Addresses - FREE -

Now available for Department of Wisconsin members of the SUVCW ... an e-mail address identifying you as a member. Our domain name service provider allows us to create e-mail "aliases" or forwarding addresses. You can have, for example, yourname@suvcw-wi.org. These addresses must be "re-directed" to your existing e-mail address. Department officers already have addresses reflecting their Department role, such as [historian@suvcw-wi.org](mailto:historian@suvcw-wi.org). If you're interested, please e-mail your request to SVC Kent Peterson at [svc@suvcw-wi.org](mailto:svc@suvcw-wi.org) and be sure to specify the "yourname" part of the address you would like.

This offer is open to Wisconsin Auxiliary members as well.

## The First Hand Grenades

During the Civil War, two kinds of hand grenades were made, but they saw little use in combat. One of them, patented in August 1861, carried a percussion cap and an activating "plunger" that was not inserted until it was about to be thrown. Rated as effective at a distance of about twenty-six yards, this explosive piece was known by the name of its inventor, Ketchum.

A more sophisticated grenade, "the Excelsior," was developed in 1862 by W. W. Hanes. Its cast-iron shell held fourteen nipples, to each of which a percussion cap was attached before it was thrown. Hanes insisted, correctly, that at least one cap was sure to trigger an explosion. In practice, men trying to use his device often hit a cap accidentally and had a hand or arm blown off. As a result, it seems never to have been used in battle.

Soldiers who may or may not have heard of the Ketchum grenade or the Excelsior sometimes improvised similar weapons. At Vicksburg, Confederates in Louisiana units stuck short, lighted fuses into 6 and 12-pounder shells, then rolled them into ranks of Union sappers.

One demonstration of this weapon was enough to make believers of opponents. Confederate Captain John M. Hickey said that when one of the city's forts was stormed, "the air was

made black with hand grenades which were thrown at us by every Federal soldier who got inside the works." Similar explosive devices were made on the spot by Federals at Knoxville.

Describing some of the action near Chattanooga, Union Colonel P. C. Hayes said an assault by troops under Confederate Lieutenant General James Longstreet reached a deep ditch dug by Federals. Confederates, he said, jumped into the ditch in order to raise scaling ladders. According to him, "This action was fatal to them. Our men, being unable to reach them with their heavy guns, lit

the fuse of the shells, which they threw by hand into the ditch, where they exploded, slaughtering the helpless occupants by the wholesale."

Records do not indicate the number of engagements in which improvised explosives were rolled or thrown against foes.

Nevertheless, they were employed frequently enough to show that although technology to produce suitable hand grenades did not yet exist, the concept behind these weapons was fully developed by men in both gray and blue.

*From eHistory Newsletter June 19, 2002*



## Members in the News

*Waupaca County Post*

### Reenactors follow Civil War through family roots

By ROBERT CLOUD  
Post Editor

For nearly a century after the Civil War a slogan often heard below the Mason-Dixon line was "The South will never forget!"

Here in Wisconsin, hundreds of amateur historians and reenactors also hope the nation never forgets this critical moment in its history.

They collect letters and diaries from Civil War soldiers, buy – sometimes make – uniforms that are authentic down to the most minute detail, participate in battle reenactments and artillery drills, and assemble massive personal libraries on the history of the Civil War.

Locally, members of the King Civil War Round Table and the Omro chap-

ter of Sons of Union Veterans, are instrumental in organizing a Living History Festival the week of May 13-19 in Waupaca. They will make it possible to experience the Civil War as seen through the eyes of the area volunteers and their families.

For some of the members of these two groups, the Civil War has been a passion since their early teens.

"I remember going through the Oshkosh museum and seeing a piece of 100-year-old hardtack and that really impressed me," according to Kim Heltemes of Pine River, a member of the SUV and the round table. "By the time I was done being 12 I had read every book on the Civil War in the Neenah library."

About eight years ago, Heltemes learned that he had a great-great-

grandfather, Chester Augustus Wyman, who had served in the famous Iron Brigade, which had been a predominately Wisconsin infantry unit.

A short time later Heltemes became a founding member of the King Civil War Round Table. He joined the SUV about two years ago. He is also a member of McAllister's Battery, which will be providing cannon demonstrations during the Living History Festival.

Heltemes also collects copies of diaries from the Civil War era, photos, enlistment records, regimental reunion programs, photos, "and just about anything else I can find."

He said he has about 160 books on

*Continued on page 4*



the Civil War and considers his personal library a better selection than what can be found in most public libraries.

Heltemes has focused much of his research on the 21st Wisconsin Regiment, which included a company of Waupaca County volunteers. Heltemes' historical collection includes a war diary written by Capt. James Randall, who led the company shortly after its first battle.

Randy and Teresa Novak of Oshkosh are active members of the Sons of Union Veterans and the SUV Auxiliary. They view themselves as links in a living chain that stretches back to the Civil War.

Both had great-great-grandfathers who served in the Union Army. Randy's ancestor, John William Weidner, was a German immigrant who enlisted in the 4th Illinois Calvary, while Teresa's ancestor, John Henry Stevens, served in the 1st Illinois in light artillery.

"I didn't like history when I was younger, so I didn't come to appreciate the Civil War until I was an adult, when my mother gave me the muster discharge papers of my great-great-grandfather," Randy said.

Novak stressed the SUV's role in preserving Civil War monuments and registering the graves of veterans.

"The organization is really a veterans organization," he said. "We're just several generations replaced."

In 1881, the SUV of the Civil War began as an auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic, a Union veterans group that promoted patriotism and the political interests of veterans. GAR members campaigned for their former commander, and in 1868 Ulysses S. Grant was elected president.

GAR members also began gathering on May 30 each year to commemorate their time in service and their fallen comrades. Eventually, the day became nationally recognized as Memorial Day.

The GAR, along with the Women's Relief Corps, was also responsible for establishing the Veterans Home in King. They raised \$5,388 to establish a home for indigent veterans and their wives and widows in 1887, purchased the Greenwood Park Hotel and 78 acres west of the city of Waupaca and lobbied the state Legislature to enact a bill that provided \$3 a week for residents of the home.

Lansing A. Wilcox was the last sur-

tration and other historical projects.

Some of the reenactors at Waupaca's Living History Festival trace their heritage back to Confederate, as well as Union, veterans.

Vince Barker of Saxeville said the Civil War divided his ancestors, who were from the border state of Kentucky. When he began researching his roots, he found three families where brothers were fighting on opposite sides of the conflict.

"One of my Confederate ancestors is buried in Crandon," Barker said. "A lot of Kentuckians settled up there to work in the logging camps."

Barker belongs not only to the SUV 'Old Abe' Camp 8 in Omro, he is also a member of the Company D, 10th Tennessee reenactors and has participated in battle reenactments at Chickamauga and Wade House in Wisconsin.

During the Living History Festival, Barker will portray a Confederate P.O.W.

"I prefer the term parolee," Barker said. "I won't be walking around in chains. And I'll be dressed as a Union soldier at the grave dedication."

Barker, who is a former Marine and a major in the Guard Reserve, said he was especially interested in studying the military aspects of the Civil War.

"There are a lot of leadership lessons to be learned from Civil War battles and tactics," Barker said.

Jim Waid of Scandinavia also noted that the Civil War provided important lessons.

"Today, we tend to think of the people who lived back then as uneducated and uninformed, but they were very aware of the issues that caused the war and what was going on in their country," Waid said. "There are lessons in the hardships they endured and in their commitment to their country. These are people who would charge across open fields into the face of fire."

"People living then weren't afraid to commit," Novak added.

"Nowadays, they'd be committed," Heltemes said.

Waid said he became interested in the Civil War after watching the Ken Burns special on public TV.

"My wife and I had vague ideas that we had relatives who fought in the Civil War," Waid said. "We went to the Historical Society in Madison and looked up our relatives on the rosters. I spent a lot of time in the Civil

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Lansing A. Wilcox was the last surviving Wisconsin Civil War veteran. He died at King in 1951.

Before the death of its last member, the GAR designated the SUV as the legal heir to its property. Originally, the SUV not only promoted patriotism, it served as militia training units, receiving state funding for arms and equipment. SUV companies were raised in some states to serve in the Spanish-American War.

Today, SUV members are involved in Civil War reenactments, battlefield preservation, veterans' graves regis-

tration and other historical projects. . . . lessons in the hardships they endured and in their commitment to their country. These are people who would charge across open fields into the face of fire."

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Sue Waid's great-grandfather, B.A. Wilms, had been a Waupaca barber who served in the 21st Wisconsin Regiment, while Jim Waid had three great-grandfathers - Joe Waid of Saxeville, Adam Ballard of Royalton and David Axtell of Ogdensburg - who served in Wisconsin regiments. He also had a great-great-grandfather, Thomas Court, who served in the 22nd Wisconsin Regiment.

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### **The Wisconsin Department has an Official Flower?**

Seventy-one years ago, the Wisconsin Department adopted an official flower. The "Bleeding Heart" was made the Department's official flower at its 1931 Encampment in LaCrosse. While no specific variety of this perennial was mentioned in historical records, it's believed that the "Old-fashioned" variety with fern-shaped leaves and heart-shaped, deep pink blossoms, was probably what was intended.

The idea of an official flower originated with Brothers Jac Johannes and Bill Bretz of C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1. At the camp's meeting on Friday, June 12th, 1931, they offered a resolution in regard to adoption of the official flower by the SUVCW and designating the "Bleeding Heart" as that flower. So many at the meeting desired to second the resolution, a recess was taken so all could sign.

Four days later, the resolution was enthusiastically and unanimously adopted by the Department Encampment. The resolution said in part..."(It is by) wearing of this flower on special occasions that we best show the world our pride in being a descendent of one who served this country in the darkest period of its history."

*from Meeting Minutes of C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1, June 12th and 26th, 1931.*

### **Living the Mission**

In Clintonville, Richard Beggs of Old Abe Camp #8 continues to do his part in being very active in the local ceremony. He continues to serve as the city appointed chairman (12 years) of the Memorial Day Committee. This keeps him busy organizing the parade, coordinating all of the veterans units, floats and bands, arranging the site, and guest speakers for the ceremony, at which he acts as MC. Prior to that he is writing patriotic articles for the newspapers. Richard and his wife Anne also organize a "Reunion Dinner", a sort of homecoming opportunity for those returning to Clintonville to visit the graves of departed family members. This gives Rich plenty of opportunity to mention Commander Logan, the GAR, and the origins of "Decoration Day".

*From the Camp 8 newsletter, July 2002*

### **Memorial Day in Mississippi**

Brother Duffy Neubauer of MG John Gibbon Camp #4 resides in Starkville, Mississippi. He is a reenactor with the 3rd U.S. Artillery Company C. This past Memorial Day, Co. C participated in a Memorial Day observance at Odd Fellows Cemetery in Macon, Mississippi. The cemetery is the final resting place of over 200 Union soldiers, as well as more than 200 Confederates. Odd Fellows Cemetery is said to have more Union soldiers buried there than any other cemetery south of the Mason-Dixon Line. A crowd of about 50 people witnessed the salute by the 3rd U.S. Artillery's salute.

*From the Camp 4 newsletter, July 2002*

### **Circus Train Fundraiser**

Camp #4 held a fundraiser on July 7 when the Circus Train stopped at Eagle, Wis. Camp members sold baked goods and juice on a hot Sunday morning to a crowd of hungry spectators. Brothers George Gregoire, Bruce Laine and Tom Sobottke and their families contributed their time and baking skills!!

*From the Camp 4 newsletter, July 2002*



guest speakers at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 1, at Chez Marché Cafe in downtown Waupaca.

The event marks what the sponsor hopes is the first in a series of forums at the cafe and is free and open to the public.

"We're very happy to be able to provide a forum for these speakers. Central Wisconsin is home to a growing progressive community and we hope that sponsoring these events encourages that movement, said Bonni Miller, owner of the year-old cafe. "I'd like future forums to cover peace activism and small-farm advocacy in Wisconsin

Young, 41, is the assistant assessor for the city of Sun Prairie and a former high school coach. He was one of the founding members of Witness for NonViolence, which traveled throughout northern Wisconsin during the 1980s to observe the Indian spearfishing season and the sometimes hostile response at the lakeshores.



## Upcoming Civil War Events in Wisconsin

### *From the Manitowoc Civil War Roundtable*

#### **August 9-11**

Annual CW Living History Weekend, Broadhead, WI

#### **August 9-11**

Annual Eagle Ridge Reenactment, Galena, IL

#### **August 11**

Octagon House Ice Cream Social, Watertown, WI

#### **August 17-18**

Civil War Encampment, Olen Park, Clintonville, WI

#### **August 31-September 1**

Civil War Encampment, Old World Wisconsin, Eagle, WI

#### **September 7-8**

Civil War Reenactment, Black River Falls, WI

#### **September 21**

Four Stories of the Civil War, Columbus Public Library, Columbus, WI

#### **September 22**

Four Stories of the Civil War, Rock County Historical Soc., Janesville, WI

#### **September 27-29**

12th Annual Civil War Weekend, Wade House Historic Site, Greenbush, WI

#### **October 12-13**

Norskedalen's Civil War Heritage Wknd, Coon Valley, WI

#### **November 2**

15th Annual Harvest Ball, Memorial Hall, Racine, WI

#### **November 2**

Militaria Show, Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI

#### **November 11**

"The Other Tecumseh: William Tecumseh Sherman"  
Manitowoc County Heritage Ctr., Manitowoc, WI

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of various G.A.R., Sons, and other Allied Orders property.

The project was first announced in my Department Orders issued on October 22, 2001. In these Orders I announced the project and requested Jim to compile an inventory of all existing Wis. Dept. property, including records and artifacts, including the location of these items – within the current Department and Camp structure. I also asked him to also search out the location of and inventory of existing GAR and SUVCW, Department and Post/Camp records and artifacts not in the possession of the Camps or the Department.

I expect the vast majority of Dept. and Camp or Post items not currently in possession of the Department or it's Officers will be located in various public oriented institutions such as museums, historical societies, Public and College Libraries, and possibly some American Legion or VFW Posts. Examples of such materials are Post and Camp records, charters, flags, books, G.A.R. and "Sons" artifacts, and other items that were property of the Order (not monuments). Items such as personal badges, uniforms, books, pictures, and Civil War artifacts or anything owned by an individual member are beyond the intent of

this project. This does not mean that those personal affects do not have historical significance to our Order, and in fact information about them may be valuable to individuals doing research. Use your best judgment. Dept. or Post/Camp property owned by private collectors; due to security concerns most private collectors will wish to remain anonymous. However, try to impress the purpose of the project and our appreciation of their cooperation. As with similar projects, private collectors may allow items in their possession to be documented, or reproduced, but the location not identified except as "private owner in Milwaukee County" or something similar.

The inclusion of the other Allied Orders is only logical, as I have found them to usually be included as part of many collections.

For this project we must stress that the purpose of the project is not to acquire, but to locate. This is a long-term project with long-range benefits, intended for it to be more of a benefit to future generations of our Order. This will be Department information, available to the members. It's time to think ahead and plan for the future. Please do help us support this worthwhile and important project.

**Participation-** Your Camp needs your support. Whether it is your continued membership, or participation in Camp activities. Many of us lead busy lives with many responsibilities, and we are often reluctant to commit our valuable time (or what's left of it!). Please recall that if you study and appreciate the Civil War, and it's veterans, you know from your own studies the level of their commitment. It was their dedication and sense of duty and honor that made them different from others. Do what you can to support your Camp and fellow members. Help make the difference.

If interested in our Fraternal Orders' operations, I encourage you to join us at this years' National Encampment in Springfield, only a couple of weeks away.

Fraternally,

*Randy Novak,*  
*Wisconsin Department Commander*

*The purpose of the project is not to acquire, but to locate.*

## Camp News and Activities

### Auxiliary #4 Works on Camp #4 Flag

Members of C.K. Pier Badger Auxiliary #4 volunteered to work on Major General John Gibbon Camp #4's flag. Camp #4 inherited the flag from the now defunct Ammi Hawks Camp #3 which was located in Oconomowoc. The flag was brought to the



*Camp #4 Commander Scott Gutzke with (left to right) Pres. Kathy Cieszki, Mary Benecke and Christine Zahn from Auxiliary #4.*

Mukwonago Living History event in June where three members of the Auxiliary removed all of the embroidery from the camp name and location.

Department President Kathy Cieszki-Rohan has offered to re-embroider the new camp name and location on the flag. Br. Rich Young of Camp #5 has agreed to make two outdoor stands for our flags.

The camp is currently raising money to purchase a national flag, stand, and poles, as well as offset the costs of the work on the camp flag. The members of Major General John Gibbon Camp #4 would like to thank the members of Auxiliary #4 as well as Bro. Young for the help they have rendered the camp. This is another fine example of the fraternity that exists between our two orders.

### Henry Hamden Camp #2 Celebrates Centennial on Memorial Day

Camp #2's Centennial and Memorial Day activities coincided in May when members of the Camp came together for the annual Memorial Day ceremonies at Forest Hill



Cemetery in Madison. State representative Tammy Baldwin was the keynote speaker at the event. Later in the day, members gathered at the home of Camp Commander Alan Hembel to recognize their Camp's history and share fellowship as well as a great outdoor barbeque. Congratulations to Camp #2 from your Brothers of the SUVCW.

Madison. State representative Tammy Baldwin was the keynote speaker at the event. Later in the day, members gathered at the home of Camp Commander Alan Hembel to

*Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin was the featured speaker at Memorial Day ceremonies at Union rest in Madison's Forest Hill Cemetery.*



*Camp 2 Commander Alan Hembel hosted a feast and fellowship at his home to commemorate the Camp 2 Centennial.*

### Record Memorial Day Turnout at Milwaukee's Calvary Cemetery

Camp #1's annual Memorial Day Field Mass and Ceremony at Calvary Cemetery drew more than 400 spectators and participants, a 50% increase over 2001. This event is rapidly becoming to be considered Milwaukee's premier Memorial Day observance by attendees and the extensive media coverage.



### Camp #4 Holds First Memorial Day Event

Members of five organizations came together in Waukesha to celebrate Memorial Day. First, members of Major General John Gibbon Camp #4 and Battery B, 4<sup>th</sup> U. S. Light Artillery marched in Waukesha's Memorial Day

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The *Wisconsin Department Dispatch* is published three times per year for members of the Wisconsin Department, SUVCW. Articles, photos and news items may be submitted to SVC Kent Peterson, 6024 South Kirkwood, Cudahy, WI 53110 or e-mailed to kap@execpc.com. Editorial deadlines are April, July and October 15.

Visit us on the Web at  
<http://www.suvcw-wi.org>

## Calendar

8-10 August	SUVCW National Encampment, Springfield, Ill.
20-21 Sept.	Midwest Civil War Collectors Show, DuPage County Fairgrounds, Wheaton, IL
28-29 Sept.	Wade House Civil War weekend, Greenbush, WI
5 October	Central Region Conference, St. Louis, Missouri
2 November	Harvest Ball, Memorial Hall, Racine, Wis.
11 November	Veteran's Day
16 November	Remembrance Day parade and ceremonies, Gettysburg, PA

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Parade. The two organizations then proceeded to Waukesha's Prairie Home Cemetery to prepare for the ceremony, where they were met by representatives of C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1, C.K. Pier Auxiliary #4, and the Department of Wisconsin. Camp Commander Scott Gutzke began the ceremony with a welcoming message and Terry Brown read General Logan's General Order #11. Keynote speaker Waukesha Mayor Carol Lombardi spoke about Waukesha's role in the Civil War. Wreaths were presented by representatives from Camp #4, Camp #1 and the Department of Wis. Battery B fired a salute with their original 12 pound Napoleon. About fifty spectators witnessed the event. After the ceremony ended, Mayor Lombardi told the members of Camp #4 that "...it is a great thing that you are doing here." Plans are already in the works to make next years ceremony even better.

### Camp 8 and SCV join for Dual Graveside Service

An impressive 120 spectators turned out for this combination ceremony. There were 15 Camp 8 members and 5 Auxiliary 6 members present. The Sons of Confederate Veterans was represented by Bro. Vince Barker and members from Kentucky. Commander Donald Poynter, Sr. of Kentucky (SCV and SUVCW) offered prayer during the SCV service and also preceding the luncheon. The



service conducted by Camp 8 was based on a GAR service the Camp has been using with good success. The Confederate service included the spreading of soil on the grave that had been brought from the veterans home area in Kentucky – and a toast to the veteran by the SCV (home made moonshine). The hospitality provided by the Barker family, and everyone in the community, was greatly appreciated.

### Memorial Day in Oshkosh

In Oshkosh, members of Camp 8 and Aux. 6 once again participated in the Memorial Day ceremonies conducted by the members of the Oshkosh Patriotic Council. A procession takes the



*Auxiliary #6 Musician Angela Peters plays taps at Memorial Day graveside services in Oshkosh.*

participants a couple of miles to the Riverside Cemetery, which is the same route traveled by the GAR members for the same purpose. For the last couple of years Camp 8 has also conducted a ceremony in the old GAR section of the cemetery, followed by a picnic for the Civil War contingent.

### Publications Available from PDC Steve Michaels

Introduction to the SUVCW (1995/2000)	\$1 each
Camp Companion (1996)	\$3 each
Wisconsin Dept. History, 1882-1923 (1997-1998)	\$8 each
Junior Handbook, Vol. 1 (1999)	\$2 each
Recruiting Handbook (1999)	\$2 each
How to Organize an SUVCW Camp (2000)	\$2 each
Department Recruiting Pamphlet (1998)	.01 each
SUVCW Fact Sheet (1999)	.01 each
Me? A Recruiter? Allied Orders pamphlet (1999)	.01 each
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