



# WISCONSIN

## DEPARTMENT DISPATCH



Summer 2004

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### MEET THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

**PDC Ronald M. Aronis** was elected our Department Commander at the Dept. Encampment, held June 12th, at King, Wisconsin. He is the second Associate to be elected to the high post in the Department's 123-year history.

Br. Ron Aronis joined the SUVCW at the 1969 National Encampment in St. Louis, where he lived at that time. He taught printing and helped print the 19th Ohio Infantry's newsletter. He was active in reenacting and the Sons of Veterans Reserve (SVR), helping organize Battery I, 1st Missouri Lt. Artillery.

Br. Ron changed careers and moved to Wisconsin, re-joining the SUVCW and the SVR in 1985. Shortly thereafter, he and three other members reorganized Cushing's Battery. At that time, he was a member of Ammi Hawks Camp #3 in Oconomowoc. In 1988, he became a charter member of Alonzo Cushing Camp #4, headquartered in West Bend.

In 1992, Br. Aronis volunteered to serve as Dept. Secretary. Previously, the Auxiliary had been handling the Department's administrative responsibilities. Over the next 12 years, Ron ensured that the Department's membership and per capita tax were correctly reported to National in a timely manner. At the 2002 National Encampment in Springfield, Illinois, he was presented the rank of Past Department Commander, in recognition of 10 years of service as Department Secretary.

In 1995, he assisted C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1 with its reorganization efforts and

a year later, became a dual member of that Camp. Since that time, he and his unit supplemented commemorative and memorial activities organized by the Camp.

In 1997, he inspired members to renew a tradition. On Memorial Day weekend, Camp and Battery members plant flowers and maintain Cushing Memorial Park before holding a public program there. He often served as spokesman for the SUVCW at Delafield Council meetings on matters pertaining to the Park.

In 1998, when a bronze plaque was stolen from the Cushing monument in the park, Br. Aronis acted as uniformed spokesman, appearing on TV and in newspapers. The plaque was returned within two weeks. He continued to speak to schools, Civil War clubs, genealogical societies about Union soldier sacrifices and the SUVCW

After serving in various staff positions in Camp #4, he organized Alonzo Cushing Camp #5 in 2000 and served as the Camp's Commander for two years. In 2000, he was also presented the SVR's Meritorious Service Award for his contributions to artillery organization and safety.

Outside of the SUVCW, Ron works as an engineer at a circuit board engineering company. He is the father of two grown children: Michael, who is an SUVCW member, and Laura. He also has two grandchildren. His hobbies include N-gauge model railroad-ing and home repair. He is researching a possible Civil War ancestor on his mother's side.



*PDC Ronald M. Aronis*

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR  
**SUVCW**

## Department Orders #1 Series 2004-05

1) Delegates attending the 121st Annual Encampment of the Department of Wisconsin held in King, Wisconsin on June 7th, accorded me the honor of election as your Department Commander. I am very pleased with that show of support and pledge my efforts on behalf of the welfare and future of the Department. We have a talented and capable staff of officers, both elected and appointed, who will be doing all they can to assure a successful year for the Department. It is a pleasure to be associated with such a fine group of men.

2) Officers, elected and appointed for 2004-05 are as follows:

Commander	PDC Ronald M. Aronis	Box 80205 Saukville WI 53080-0205
Sr. Vice Cmdr	Kent A. Peterson	6024 S. Kirkwood Cudahy WI 53110-3106
Jr. Vice Cmdr	Kim Heltemes	W2570 Archer Ave. Pine River WI 54965
Council 1	Andy Bollen III	621 Sheridan Dr. West Bend WI 53095
Council2	PDC Fred Murphy	4462 S. Lake Drive Cudahy WI 53110-1249
Council 3	PDC Lyman Elliott	
Secretary	PDC Randy Novak	641 Bowen St. Oshkosh WI 54901-4630
Treasurer	Dale Brassler	1201 Hillcrest Manitowoc WI 54220
Pat. Inst.	Richard Rohan	W181 S8290 Pioneer Dr. Muskego WI 53150
Counselor	Andy Bollen III	621 Sheridan Dr. West Bend WI 53095
Chaplain	Dean Collins	2809 N. 70th Street Milwaukee WI 53210-1224
Flagbearer	Pat Kulas	3800 Cardinal Ct. Racine WI 53405
GRO	Bruce Laine	421 S. Sherman St. Eagle WI 53119
Guide	Alan Hembel	Box 620-203 Middleton WI 53562-0203
Historian	Jim Benware	623 S. Main Street West Bend WI 53095
R&R Comm.	Brian Peters	646 Rays Lane Stevens Point WI 54481-9260
Eagle Scout Coord	Donald Shawhan	3324 Waldo Blvd. Manitowoc WI 54220-2441
Iron Brig. Hwy	(Unassigned)	
U.S. Grant Award	PCC James L. Johnson	100 E. Main St. WAukesha WI 53092
C. W. Memorials	Rich Beggs	210 Fairway Dr. Clintonville WI 54929-1063
Signals Officer	Kent A. Peterson	6024 S. Kirkwood Cudahy WI 53110-3106

My congratulations and best wishes are extended to this dedicated group of Brothers for a successful year.

3) To Auxiliary Department President Gloria Murphy and her fine team of officers, I extend my best wishes and pledge the support of the Department to promote our joint interests and goals during the ensuing year.

4) To the members of the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Women's Relief Corps, and the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War and all other Allied Orders, I extend the hand of friendship and support of the Wisconsin Department.

5) Copies of the minutes of the 121st Department Encampment will be placed on the Department Website [www.suvcw-wi.com](http://www.suvcw-wi.com) as soon as new Secretary Novak can transcribe them, as well as last year's midwinter meeting. Preparation is being made to provide all past minutes that are presently computerized in possession of the Department Secretary on to the website as well.

6) I want to remind all Camps that an annual donation to the Department Patriotic Fund would be appreciated to keep up the works of the Department such as the U.S. Grant award and Monuments and Grave registration programs. Typical is \$25.00 or more. Send to Department Treasurer Dale Brassler at the above address marked "for Patriotic Fund."

7) I am tasking the Department Treasurer to create a separate fund for accepting donations for reconstruction of the GAR Hall in Boscobel. Camp 49 can't do it all themselves, and we all know the importance of this project, so I won't reiterate it here. Please have your Camp do all it can to donate to this fund. Send to Treasurer Brassler marked "for GAR Hall."

8) I am also authorizing the Department to purchase and send a PDC badge to PDC Lyman Elliott.

*Con't. next page*

# THE 123RD DEPARTMENT ENCAMPMENT

In pictures



*Above, Dept. Chaplain Carl Liebert conducts the Memorial Service at the conclusion of the Encampment activities. Below, attendees gather for a group photo (photo by Sr. Theresa Novak).*



*Department award winners PDC Fred Murphy (Camp 1), Don Strube (Camp 8), Jim Johnson (Camp 4), Bruce Laine (Camp 4), Dick Roban (Camp 5) and PDC Randy Novak (Camp 8).*

9) Brother Elliott, now that he has moved to Sturgeon Bay Wisconsin, has informed me that he will be actively recruiting for a new Camp in that area. The Department wishes to send their thanks for a job well done, and looks forward to his further efforts with the Sons.

10) Congratulations to "Old Abe" Camp #8 and their Auxiliary #6 for a successful encampment on the campus of the Veterans Hospital at King Wisconsin. Well done, ladies and gentlemen.

11) Our sympathy to Camp #2 for the sudden unexpected loss of their Commander, Fred Cook.

12) The question of the host Camp for the Department Encampment next year must be brought up now. My recollection seems to indicate that Camps 1, 4 and 5 are next on the list. Can we have a volunteer, please?

13) The yearly meeting of the Central Region Conference is being held in Wisconsin this year, hopefully with the newly elected National Commander in attendance. Camp #1 is the host this year, and will be giving specifics in the Department Dispatch.

14) Congratulations for Camp #1 for their new meeting place, in Building #1 next to "Old Main" at the Milwaukee Veterans' Home in Milwaukee. The new facility does not require a checkpoint with M-16's to pass as the previous facility, and all visitors are welcome. The fit is perfect and obvious.

15) Please keep the new Camp Secretary informed of any address and/or phone number changes so you can continue receiving information uninterrupted. Don't rely on your Camp Secretary to send it in, as it may be too late for some mailings by the time the Dept. Secretary gets it; send notice yourself, too.

16) Brothers are urged to support the activities of their local Auxiliaries and the Department Auxiliary. Wives, daughters, sisters and mothers of our members are eligible to join the Auxiliary. If your Camp does not have an Auxiliary, I urge you to support the start of one. The Auxiliary is our partner in honoring our Civil War heritage and deserves our full endorsement.

17) To those Brothers and their loved ones who are ill, I wish them a speedy and complete recovery.

18) To those who have lost loved ones, I extend my deep and abiding sympathy. May you be comforted by the memories of lives well spent and by personal experiences to be treasured always.

RONALD M. ARONIS  
Department Commander

Attest:  
RANDY NOVAK PDC  
Department Secretary

## C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1 Milwaukee

Memorial Day weekend was busy as Camp and Auxiliary members, with the assistance of Boy Scouts and under the direction of PDC Fred Murphy, conducted a Flag Retirement Ceremony at the Milwaukee VA Soldier's Home.

Perhaps it was the combined prayers of PCC Maury and Dean Collins, but the rain held off until just after the Memorial Day Ceremony at Calvary Cemetery was completed. The 2004 ceremony attracted well over 600 spectators, who participated in an open-air Mass hosted by Brother Dean Collins. This was followed by a procession to the restored graves of Union Soldiers, a cannon salute by Cushing's Battery and a musket salute by members of the 5th Wisconsin. A highlight of the event was the firing of the cannon by Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. President Lincoln once again attended the ceremonies and was appropriately escorted by an Honor Guard to recite his second inaugural address.

The following weekend, the Milwaukee Soldier's Home annual

"Reclaiming Our Heritage" event was held, with more exhibits and twice as many spectators as last year. Camp 1 was graciously allowed a huge display space in "Old Main". Activities also included a parade featuring units representing all military eras.

On Saturday night, a midnight cemetery tour was held in Wood National Cemetery. Camp 1 Sons were among those doing graveside first person impressions.

C. K. Pier Badger Camp #1 and Auxiliary #4 meet on the first Wednesday of the month, at 7 p.m., at the historic



*Auxiliary Sisters march in the July South Shore frolics parade in bay View. Left to right: NP Danielle Michaels, Rita Hahn, Patricia Lynch and Linda Brown. Below, the Camp 1 color guard at "Reclaiming Our Heritage."*



Soldier's Home Building 1, on the grounds of the Milwaukee VA Center at 5000 W. National Avenue.

## Lt. Col. Henry Harnden Camp #2 Madison

Meetings are scheduled on the fourth Thursday of each month and held at the VFW Post 7591 at 301 Cottage Grove Rd, just east of Monona Drive in Madison. Every third meeting is planned as a formal business meeting with the intervening two meetings held on a more informal basis.

## MG John Gibbon Camp #4 Waukesha

The Camp 4 Color Guard marched in the Waukesha Memorial Day parade. Left to right in the photo were: Andrew and Danielle Laine, Jeremy Johnson, Michael Jones, Bruce Laine, Sister Kathy Cieszki, and PCC Jim Johnson.

Camp and Auxiliary members spent a morning with 5th grade students at Eagle Elementary School on May 18th

In addition to learning about the Civil War and life back home in those days, one lucky student named Hannah got to try out a uniform.

Major General John Gibbon Camp #4 meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every month in the Civil War Studies room of Carroll College's MacAllister Hall, 105 S. East Avenue, Waukesha.

## Lt. Alonzo H. Cushing Camp #5, Saukville

Cushing's Battery attended the SVR Artillery School at Boscobel and for Memorial Day, participated in the morning with Camp 1 in Milwaukee and removed to Delafield's Cushing Park for an afternoon ceremony.



*PCC Jim Johnson at Eagle Elementary.*



[www.suvcw-wi.org/crc](http://www.suvcw-wi.org/crc)

# 2004 CENTRAL REGION CONFERENCE

The Central Region Conference is a unique experience designed to enhance and reinforce the management skills needed in the Allied Orders. The CRC is designed to provide top-quality professional development in leadership, communication and management topics.

2004 Focus:  
"Effective Communication  
with the Masses"

## IMPORTANT DATES:

Conference date:  
**October 2, 2004**

Hotel Reservations:  
(to get one of the block of  
rooms we have reserved)

**By September 2**

Conference Registration  
(including lunch and dinner):  
**By September 18**

## Ramada Inn—South (Airport)

6401 South 13th Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Phone: (414) 764-5300

*Located 5 minutes from Mitchell International Airport and 20 minutes from downtown Milwaukee*

- Overnight rooms are available at \$ 68.76 (plus tax)
- Be sure to mention the SUVCW when making your reservation!
- Cutoff date to receive this special room price is Sept. 2, 2004

## Special Activities for 2004

**Saturday morning events:** plans include dedication of Civil War veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Boatswain John Breen's previously unmarked grave at Calvary Cemetery, and a look at the historic Milwaukee Soldier's Home, formerly the Northwestern Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

**Lunch will be at Milwaukee's historic Turner Hall**, headquarters site for the 1889 GAR National Encampment.

**The Banquet and Campfire** will feature a special reception for the incoming Commander-in-Chief. Our Campfire speaker will be Tom Ludka, Commander of American Legion Post #27 in South Milwaukee who will speak on "Patriotism, Strength and Courage: the GAR's Impact on Today's Society."

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*Hosted by the Department of Wisconsin,  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War  
and Auxiliary (includes Minnesota)*

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## INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kent Peterson, CC  
[svc@suvcw-wi.org](mailto:svc@suvcw-wi.org)  
(414) 769-0681

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## CENTRAL REGION MEMBER DEPARTMENTS:

Colorado & Wyoming, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin

# 2004 CENTRAL REGION CONFERENCE

## Pre-Registration Form

(Please return this form with payment by September 18, 2004)

### • Registrant Information •

Name(s)

Address

City, State, Zip

E-mail

Department

Camp/Corps/Tent/Auxiliary

Number

Make checks or money orders payable to:  
**C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1**

Please return this form with payment  
by **September 18, 2004** to:

Central Region Conference  
SVC Kent A. Peterson  
6024 South Kirkwood  
Cudahy, WI 53110-3106

### QUESTIONS?

SVC Kent A. Peterson  
(414) 769-0681  
E-mail: [svc@sucvw-wi.org](mailto:svc@sucvw-wi.org)

### 1. Registration Fee

Qty. \_\_\_\_\_ x \$5.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
SUBTOTAL

### 2. Lunch

Price includes sandwich, beverage, tax and gratuity.

• Chicken Schnitzel—\$14.00 QTY: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Lightly breaded and seasoned chicken breast, sautéed to a crisp golden brown and served on a toasted sesame seed bun with mustard-horseradish sauce on the side.*

• Roasted Pork—\$12.00 QTY: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Roasted, lean pork loin, thinly sliced, topped with melted Swiss and served on a toasted cornmeal crusted bun, Dusseldorf sauerkraut on the side.*

• Stacked Club—\$12.00 QTY: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Ham, roasted turkey breast, bacon, Swiss and tomato piled high on cracked wheat. Thousand Island dressing on the side.*

Lunch total = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
SUBTOTAL

### 3. Evening Banquet

N.Y. Strip Steak and Chicken Breast  
Dinner QTY: \_\_\_\_\_

(includes tossed salad, entrée, parsley buttered potatoes, green beans almondine, rolls & butter, coffee, tea or milk)

Number of meals x \$28.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
SUBTOTAL

### 4. Calculate the total amount due

Add the three subtotals above to calculate your total amount due. Please enclose the full amount with your registration.

TOTAL ENCLOSED

\$



## Remembrance Day Color Guard Needed

This November 20 the annual Remembrance Day parade and ceremony will be held at Gettysburg, PA to commemorate Pres. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Traditionally, the SUVCW Commander-in-Chief marches in the parade with his own color guard — and that's where we need your help. If you have never experienced Remembrance Day, never seen the parade of thousands in Union Blue, never watched the re-enacting of the handshake across the wall, this is absolutely the year to go. Our own PDC Steve Michaels is expected to serve as our next C-in-C and we are working on rounding up color guard members. Please contact Brother Steve at (414) 425-4648 or [steve\\_michaels@metronetworks.com](mailto:steve_michaels@metronetworks.com) for more information to to sign up.

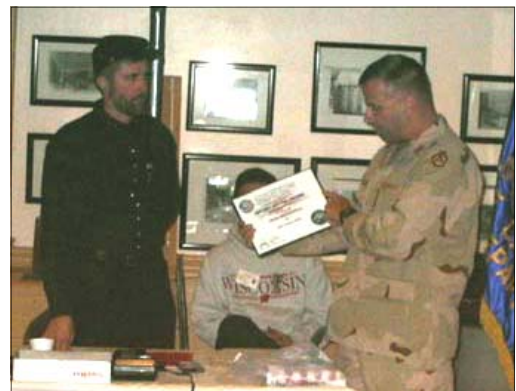
## CAMP NEWS

Camp #5 meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Saukville Community Center.

### Old Abe Camp #8 Oshkosh

At the March meeting Bro. Vince Barker was welcomed home. He had only arrived back in Wisconsin a few days earlier. When he showed up for the meeting, he arrived not in his Civil War uniform, but the uniform he had been accustomed to wearing for most of last year.

*Vince Barker reads the inscription on the certificate while Camp 8 Commander Brian Peters looks on.*



He surprised everyone by presenting the Camp with an American Flag that had been displayed at a military facility in Afghanistan. The flag was displayed for 9 hours and 11 minutes in view of prisoners. At the end of his presentation Vince remarked, "it's good to be home."

The Camp 8 and Auxiliary 6 annual family brunch was held March 21st at the Apple Creek Inn, DePere. The facility and service was great, as was the food. Brother Dave Dresang provided a feature presentation about the battle of Antietam, and talking about the meaning of patriotism for many of the Union Soldiers during the Civil War.

Oshkosh's Memorial Day parade included a Civil War contingent consisting of Camp 8, Company E, and McAllister's Battery in the line up. As the procession began, it started to rain. Despite the poor weather, the crowds of people along the parade route were substantial, and more than several shouted their thanks and encouragement. Af-

terwards, they continued on to the cemetery to the site of the annual ceremony, and found out we were pretty much the only unit there, everyone else had sort of decided to call it quits and consequently the ceremony was cancelled.

Camp #8 usually meets on the third Monday of odd numbered months at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are held at the old Masonic Temple building of the Omro Historical Society.

### L.G. Armstrong Camp #49 Boscobel

Peace has finally arrived—or at least a truce—in the battle over the Confederate battle flag, known as the Hutfill Flag, on display at the Boscobel GAR Hall. Grant County, which has its seat in Lancaster in the south of the county, sued the Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall last year for the return of a Civil War battle flag.

Doris Cruckson, president of the Women's Relief Corps, part of the GAR organization, confirmed the hall would not be the legal owner of the flag. She said the settlement requires the Grant County Historical Society to pay to professionally preserve the flag, a process that may cost \$10,000, and to loan the flag to Boscobel so it can be displayed at the Muskets and Memories Civil War reenactment held each August.

Looking ahead, we should be diligent in making sure Grant County adheres to the agreement and to the requirements of our Deed of Conveyance.

In May Camp 49 hosted a Crawfish Boil during the annual SVR Artillery School, held at Boscobel this year. The dinner was well attended and the food excellent.

Camp meetings are generally scheduled for the third Thursday of the month at the Boscobel GAR Hall and begin at 7 p.m. The Hall is located a few blocks east of Highway 61 at 102 Mary Street.

### William Colvill Camp #56 Minneapolis / St. Paul

Camp 56 is headquartered at the Litchfield, MN GAR hall. Meetings are held quarterly.

## CAMP 8'S DON STRUBE HEADS UP GRAVE MARKER REPLACEMENT PROJECT IN STEVENS POINT

- BY RANDY NOVAK, CAMP 8 NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Brother Don Strube of Camp 8 is already recognized as a person who is very active (read dynamo) in graves registration. In the Camp we also know him as the guy who when driving around will stop and march up to someone's house, knock on the door, and tell them the national flag they are flying is worn and needs replacement; or as the guy who carries around a bunch of GAR flag holders in the trunk of his car in case he sees a CW veterans headstone without one.

Don has also been very active at "advanced level" of graves registration; which is replacing headstones he finds that are worn or damaged, and I don't mean that he fills out the forms and that's it – I mean he gets out the shovel and starts digging. We are fortunate to have several members in Camp 8 that have this same kind of "can do" attitude towards grave marker replacement, but lately Don seems to have been working over time. His latest project, which began several years ago (2000/2001), has been the research, acquisition, and replacement of grave markers for 43 veterans (folks – this was one project - they were all replaced at the same time!). Forty-two of the markers were for Civil War veterans, and one was for a veteran of the War of 1812.

It started when during his registration work Don recognized that one of the small cemeteries, Union Cemetery in Stevens Point, badly needed grave marker maintenance as he found deteriorated military markers scattered throughout the cemetery.

Don got busy and did much of the research, but was able to solicit help from others in the area. He reports that the Portage Co. Veterans Service Officer, Mike Clements was "most helpful!" throughout the project.

### Don views this project as a cooperative effort ...

The process of getting the stones has gone fairly well, as he is able to receive the replacements within 4 to 5 weeks. Don views this project as a cooperative effort between the SUVCW, members of various Groups in the Portage Co. area (including AMVETS-Post No. 1051; American Legion Post No. 6; Portage County Historical Society) and other interested citizens from the Stevens Point area (including one lad performing "community service" work). Jane MacMillan, President of SUVCW Auxiliary 6, picked up a shovel and helped place a few grave markers, along with another helper; Toua Vang, a Hmong who served in Laos for the U.S. military during the Vietnam war. Camp 8 Commander Brian Peters grabbed a shovel and joined the action.

When it came to digging, it was not easy work; all of the stones involved were the vertical type markers that weigh in at about 230

(Continued on page 8)

## Welcome New Members!

### Camp #1

John M. Heinen, Jr.	Milwaukee
Thomas T. Heinen	Wauwatosa
David A Kurtz	Milwaukee
Christopher Weiss	West Allis

### Camp #4

Kent Peterson	Cudahy
Anthony J. Wank	Oconomowoc

### Camp #8

Mark A. Millard	Sherwood
Dennis R. Moore	Manitowoc
John T. Quigley	Omro

### Camp #49

Michael J. Riddet	Gays Mills
Robert E. Welsh	Wauzeka
Paul Welsh	Wauzeka
Charles White	Boscobel



*Above, JVC Kim Heltemes leads a tour of the grounds at King during the Encampment.*

## Grand Army Home at King

At the June Department Encampment, JVC Kim Heltemes of Camp 8 made a special patriotic presentation on the history of the Home and conducted a tour of the grounds. From the many photos and stories he related, it is evident he has put a great deal of work into researching the history of the Home. If you missed it, don't despair. Just keep an eye out for the publication of his new book, "Wisconsin Veterans Home at King." (Arcadia Publishing). The book was due out in July you can find it listed on Amazon.com. Congratulations and three cheers to Brother Kim for this terrific accomplishment.



## **CIVIL WAR TRIVIA: What was a “hire badge”?**

Slave hire badges were worn by slaves who were hired out by their owners. Badge laws were first passed in order to identify slaves, tax the practice, and to limit this type of labor from competing with white tradesmen in urban areas. The tags are about 3” in diameter, made of thin copper and etched with a number, city, occupation, and year. Of the many thousands that were issued, only about 100 still exist, and therefore are extremely valuable. They evoke the heartbreak of slavery in America, from which a profit is still made. Today slave badges are valued at over \$30,000.

## **OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE . . .**

We were there as volunteers, to help the elderly visitors maneuver the shuttles, the tourist sites, and the subway system. Many of us volunteered because we knew this was an historic occasion. And, those of us familiar with the Civil War, were struck by the similarities between the *World War II Greatest Generation Reunion* held this Memorial Day on the National Mall in Washington DC, and the 1913 *Gettysburg Civil War 50 Year Reunion*, held just 90 miles away and more than 90 years ago.

At both events, thousands of war veterans came together to remember what they did a generation before. At both, the honorees were old men in old uniforms, which amazingly still fit, decorated with dozens of medals. Just ask, and they would tell you the story behind each one. You didn't even have to ask.

Just like the Gettysburg Reunion, we learned that many who joined the World War II army were farm boys. It was the first time they owned clothes that hadn't belonged to someone else. It was the first time they ate food they didn't kill or raise themselves. Most of it came out of cans, a Civil War innovation that began with beans and Borden's milk. For a few, it was the first time they owned shoes. And for most, it was the first time they traveled away from home. As a result, they were changed forever.

There were women at both reunions, too, and not just the wives of veterans. The women talked about how the families managed things at home without the

men; or, how they cared for the men after the battles; or, how they visited them in the field to bring coffee and comfort and news from home.

Like the Gettysburg reunion, the men didn't talk much about the fighting. And we didn't ask. We felt it somehow, that that was the part they remembered most, but would most like to forget. We all knew about it, whether it was 1862 or 1942. About being ordered to run through a hail of bullets to take a position on a beach or a hill or in a farmhouse. These experiences caused nightmares and fractured lives. They didn't have a name for it then, but they do now. All veterans from all wars suffer from post traumatic stress syndrome to some degree. That's one reason why they didn't talk about comrades being killed right next to them, or seeing bodies blown apart, or faces forever disfigured. They remember it all, but they didn't talk about that, at least, not with us. For this, at this recent reunion, anyway, they went into the biggest tent of all, Reunion Hall. There, they left notes for others--or read the notes left by others--hoping to make contact with someone who was there when they were there, someone who saw what they saw, someone they could talk to who would truly understand.

Although it was more than 90 years between the two reunions, the technology was similar. Like the earlier reunion, we have photographs and movies showing bearded veterans shaking hands. But instead of just hazy movies and black and white photos, the 2004 World War II Dedication Reunion is documented with hundreds of thousands of photographs and videos in living color. Professional television programs and satellite feeds broadcast the events worldwide, in real-time. In addition, there are countless family photos and videos taken by children and grandchildren to document the events honoring their parents and grandparents.

For the World War II veterans, it was a cheerful celebration to honor their youth, their hardships, and their contributions. Without them, the world would be a very different place. For the over 1000 World War II volunteers, it was a unique experience. One volunteer said what we all felt. “Being there, talking to them and hearing their stories, was the most meaningful thing I ever did.”

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*From July 2, 2004 issue of Civil War Studies at  
The Smithsonian Associates e-newsletter*

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 [svc@suvcw-wi.org](mailto:svc@suvcw-wi.org)

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

## EVENTS CALENDAR

- 12-15 Aug: 123rd SUVCW and ASUVCW  
 National Encampment, Cedar Rapids, IA
- 25-26 Sept. Wade House Civil War Weekend
- 2 October: Central Region Conference, Milwaukee
- 6 November: Harvest Ball, Racine
- 11 November: Veteran's Day
- 20 November: Remembrance Day Ceremonies and parade, Gettysburg, PA

### GAR GIVEN ORDERS TO MERGE WITH SONS?

Most brothers are nominally aware that there were several attempts by the Sons of Veterans to serve as the perpetual successor organization to the Grand Army of the Republic. In 1910, there was even a move to rename our Order, 'The Sons of the GAR.' The motion was eventually defeated ten years later. During the interim, discussion and proposals to merge the two organizations continued.

Today, few know that there were comrades, high-placed in the GAR, who had similar intentions. In early 1914, GAR Commander-in-Chief Washington Gardner was widely quoted as favoring a move that would have the Sons assimilating comrades of the GAR. Moreover, the announcement, published in newspapers nationwide, also provided that the various Woman's Relief Corps would be taken over by the Auxiliary to the Sons of Veterans.

Meetings were held by GAR posts and Sons Camps to discuss the proposition, which would have given the Sons a large membership increase.

GAR spokesmen responded with tact and diplomacy. Col. Jerome A. Watrous, late of the 6th Wis. Inf., said, "It is almost the universal desire of members of all departments of the Grand Army of the Republic there be no successor to the GAR...GAR members have the kindest feeling for the Sons of Veterans, but at every national encampment, the votes on this matter were almost unanimous against receiving them into semi-membership. They have expressed themselves as hoping that the Sons of Veterans continue to carry on in its own way patriotic efforts until long after the death of the GAR."

While both Orders agreed to maintain the status quo, members of many Sons Camps were given honorary memberships in the local GAR post.

from *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 18, 1914.  
*Minute Book, C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1,*  
 June 2, 1905--June 25, 1915

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pounds. Brian reported that Don uses what seems to be the ideal method for placing this type of marker. They dig the hole, place a



*Don and Tona Vang filling in around a new stone.*

heavy treated board on the bottom as a footer, and then add some coarse rock. The stone is placed into the hole and the hole filled with more of the coarse rock up to several inches from the surface where the topsoil is replaced. This method should provide good drainage and prevent much of the movement that occurs during the seasons' freeze and thaw.

Don himself is a veteran with 4 years in the Marine Corps serving in Vietnam during 1965, '66, and '67. Don's son, Peter, has followed in his father's footsteps and is a Captain in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and has been serving for about 3 years (Peter is presently in school studying for his Masters; Nurse Anesthetist).

When asked if there was any particular veterans history he found interesting, Don says "Oh! Yes! One of particular interest to me was a man who served with my G-G-Grandfather (Onesime Rondeau, 1st Lt. 7th WI, Co. G). Another was a man from the 8th WI Infantry, Co. B - Jacob Burrell Pettit - who served with our Camps namesake; Old Abe." He also commented that one of the veterans (Scidmore) took him 3 years to identify.

Don's parting remark and words of advice to other SUVCW members was "Keep planting them!!" As this is being written Don has already started on his next project, and he says this one promises to be even bigger!

