



# Wisconsin Department Dispatch



Summer 2024

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## Successful 141st Department Encampment in Boscobel



Officers and Delegates in front of Boscobel's GAR Hall. This year's Encampment was hosted by L.G. Armstrong, Camp #49.

Commander in Chief Peter J. Hritsko addresses the Encampment in Boscobel.



Encampment photos  
by PCC Kirby Scott

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

“PRESERVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD”





CinC Hritsko presents PDC Brian McManus a certificate and badge for becoming a member the SUVCW's 1881 Club.

The 1881 Club was started in 2023 as a Capital Campaign by the order. For more information go to the national website at: <https://suvchw.org/1881club>



Junior Vice Commander –Elect, Gary Carlberg talks about the great work that Camp #56 has done to mark the graves of Minnesota's last soldiers. See more detail in the Camp #56 section on pages 11-13.



Commander in Chief Hritsko installs the Department's newly elected 2024-2025 Officers and Staff.

# Department of Wisconsin 2024-25 Officers and Staff



<b>Department Commander:</b> Robert F. Koenecke, PCC	commander@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Eagle Scout Coordinator:</b> Vacant	scouts@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Department Senior Vice Commander:</b> Patrick Fallon, PCC	svc@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Iron Brigade Highway Coordinator:</b> Robert F. Koenecke, DC	highway@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Junior Vice Commander:</b> Gary Carlberg, CC	jvc@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Civil War Memorials:</b> Gerald W. Drought, PCC	memorials@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Council #1:</b> John R. Decker, PDC	council1@suvcw-wi.org	<b>ROTC Award Coordinator:</b> David D. Daley, PCC	rotc@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Council #2:</b> Thomas J. Brown, PDC	council2@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Last Soldier Project Officer:</b> Jimmy Johnson	lastsoldier@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Council #3:</b> Jerome Coveney	council3@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Recruiting Officer:</b> James B. Hobbins	recruiting@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Secretary/Treasurer:</b> Brian G. Peters, PDC	secretary@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Department Genealogist:</b> Jeffrey M. Graf, PDC	genealogy@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Assistant Secretary/Treasurer:</b> Brian D. McManus, PDC	secretary2@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Camp Organizer:</b> Kim J. Heltemes, PDC	organizer@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Patriotic Instructor:</b> Richard A. Kallan	pi@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Guard:</b> Thomas S. Mueller, PCC	guard@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Chaplain:</b> Gerald W. Drought, PCC	chaplain@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Color Bearer:</b> Jeffrey M. Graf, PDC	colorbearer@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Graves Registration Officer:</b> Thomas S. Mueller, PCC	gro@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Signals Officer:</b> Kent A. Peterson, PDC	webmaster@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Historian:</b> Scott Schable	historian@suvcw-wi.org	<b>IRS Compliance Officer:</b> Brian D. McManus, PDC	compliance@suvcw-wi.org
<b>GAR Records Officer:</b> John R. Decker, PDC	gar@suvcw-wi.org	<b>Chief of Staff:</b> Brian D. McManus, PDC	chiefofstaff@suvcw-wi.org
<b>Counselor:</b> Kent A. Peterson, PDC	counselor@suvcw-wi.org		

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## Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Wisconsin Department

### 141st Annual Encampment Minutes

Saturday, June 8th, 2024

McDermott GAR Hall, Boscobel, Wis., Camp 49 Hosting

Registration opened at 8am. As has been the practice since 2007, a commemorative ribbon/button combination was given to each attendee of the Sons and the Auxiliary, including guests.

The encampment was called to order at 9:04 AM. A joint opening with the Auxiliary was conducted including a presentation by Sister Susan Fallon to Brother Dave Daley for his 50th anniversary of serving in Vietnam. Other veterans present were recognized, and each told of their service. Guests were introduced. Attending were: SUVCW Commander in Chief Peter Hritsko and his spouse Judy, PCinC Ken Freshley, and Auxiliary National President Sue Freshley. Words from National President Sue Freshley included the need for all Allied Orders to work together toward their shared goals.

The Auxiliary then adjourned to their meeting room and the Sons Encampment official opening ceremony was conducted.

Roll call of officers was conducted. Department SVC office is vacant due to the untimely passing of Brother Sam Keith. Department Treasurer Kurt Kirk was absent due to serious illness. Several other officers were absent. Three Brothers attended via Zoom. Vacancies were temporarily filled by Brothers present.

1. **Officer reports:** (see separate reports packet) All reports as submitted.
2. **Camp reports:** (see separate reports packet) All reports as submitted. Camp 56 Commander Gary Carlberg thanked the Department for those Brothers who attended the Albert Woolson last soldier ceremony in Duluth. The Camp has had a significant increase in membership this year. The graves registration and last soldier projects are progressing very well.
3. **Appointment of Committees**
  - Credentials—Brian Peters and James Griesel
  - Fraternal Relations (this committee was not appointed)
  - Resolutions & Recommendations (since there were no resolutions or recommendations forwarded, this committee was not appointed)
4. **Communications:** Information on candidates for National office was presented but was indicated to be outdated.
5. **Awards and recognition:**
  - Special and meritorious service awards were presented to: Vernon Barker, James Johnson, John Theilmann (recently deceased), Bruce Laine, Michael Huttner and Mary Ellen Fleming.
  - Length of service awards were presented to brothers who had 5 year interval anniversaries in 2023.

**Break** (a 20 minute break was taken)

#### Unfinished and New Business

A short discussion was held on the Department Treasurer situation. Due to Kurt Kirk's health situation, it will be necessary to elect a new Department Treasurer. Department Secretary Brian Peters indicated willingness to serve as Secretary/Treasurer. The Department By-Laws do not specify this office so the National Constitution and Regulations would apply, and this office is considered valid.

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Donations to Veterans' Hospitals was discussed and a \$100 donation to each of three state-run hospitals was approved. The facilities to receive the donations are King, Union Grove and Tomah.

A motion was made to donate \$500 to Camp 56 for their headstone replacement project. The motion was amended to include determining if the funds can come from the Department Patriotic fund which has a floor balance requirement of \$1,000. The amended motion passed.

Camp 56 members discussed their recruitment success and how they use their website and Facebook pages to recruit new members.

Iron Brigade GAR Highway 12 discussion. The city of Fairchild is on Highway 12 and may have a memorial. CinC Hritsko discussed his experience with the GAR Highway project in Ohio. There, Villages, Towns and municipalities can approve memorial signs along the highway and bypass the state requirements. It may be an option in Wisconsin to add signs to the highway.

PCinC Steve Michaels is writing a History of the SUVCW in Wisconsin. It has been an ongoing project since 1997. Volumes 1, 2 and 3 are available. Steve is working on Volume 4 and hopes to finish it soon. Copies are available for sale.

Camp 1 will again offer their Member Orientation course on Zoom. Dates will be announced.

The annual Remembrance Day in Gettysburg will be held on Saturday November 16, 2024. This will not conflict with deer hunting season this year so attendance from the Wisconsin Department is strongly encouraged. There is a new headquarters hotel that is an improvement, and many events take place.

(Lunch Break was taken at the Central House Hotel in downtown Boscobel. Thanks is extended to those who provided an excellent lunch.)

## **Reconvene Business Session**

### **New Business**

Election of delegates to the National Encampment. The Wisconsin Department is allowed 10 delegates in addition to any past or sitting Department Commanders present. Elected as delegates are the following brothers: Patrick Fallon; Gerald Drought; Jerome Coveney; Gary Carlberg; Kirby Scott; Rich Kallan; Dan Chroninger; Dave Daley; Vernon Barker; Grant Johnson.

Motion made and passed that all remaining Brothers in Good Standing at the time of this Encampment are elected as Alternates to the next annual National Encampment of the SUVCW.

Housekeeping motions passed: that the thanks of the Department be extended to the host facility; that the treasurer write checks necessary to meet the Department's financial obligations throughout the coming year; when the temporary Encampment Committees have completed their duties, they be 3 discharged with the thanks of the Encampment; that upon publication, the minutes become the official record of the Encampment.

The location of the next Department Encampment was discussed. Camp 15 members volunteered to host the 2025 encampment. Based on past rotation sequence, Camp 4 and Camp 8 are due to be the next host Camps. Camp 4 was unable to host in the past. The offer by Camp 15 to host the 2025 encampment was approved.

CinC Hritsko presented the National 1881 award to Brother Brian McManus.

The report of the Credentials Committee on the number of allowable votes by Camp was given by Dept. Secretary.

## **Nomination and Election of Officers**

Department Commander: Robert Koenecke (unopposed)

A motion was made and passed that any unopposed nominee be automatically elected by unanimous ballot.

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Department SVC: Patrick Fallon

Department JVC: Gary Carlberg

Department Secretary/Treasurer: Brian Peters

Department Council: John Decker , Tom Brown & Jerome Coveney

All nominees were elected by unanimous ballot.

Appointed officers will be the same as last year except Assistant Secretary/Treasurer will be Brian McManus and Last Soldier Project Officer will be Jimmy Johnson. Dept. Commander Koenecke will need to appoint a new Eagle Scout Awards Coordinator.

The Installation of Officers was performed by National CinC Peter Hritsko.

With no further business to be brought forward, the closing ceremony was conducted, and the encampment was adjourned by Department Commander Robert Koenecke at approximately 2:30pm.

Photos were taken outside the GAR Hall and then several members including the National officers retired to the Boscobel cemetery on the hill and a brief memorial ceremony and wreath laying was performed at the grave of L.G. Armstrong, namesake of Camp 49.

Respectfully Submitted:

Brian G. Peters, PDC

Wisconsin Department Secretary/Treasurer

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## Graves Registration Database Update

### PCC Tom Mueller, Dept. GRO

There are 35,011 known graves of Civil War soldiers in Wisconsin, but many more no doubt are out there. Graves registration never ends.

PCC Tom Mueller, the longtime Department GRO and a member of the national graves registration committee, provides these figures of note from the national database, as of July 4:

- Wisconsin soldiers buried in Wisconsin: 23,758
- Soldiers from other state, and federal, units buried in Wisconsin: 11,253
- Wisconsin soldiers buried outside Wisconsin: 18,426
- Soldiers in Wisconsin units total: 42,184
- National database total (including some burials in other countries): 837,181



There is no one method of finding a grave that needs to be registered, Mueller says. Curiosity is the key to finding and adding people. Find a Grave listings that were examined a decade ago may now have photos of tombstones, some of which may be government stones or private ones with the war unit engraved on it. Thousands of listings are added to Find Grave daily, so a cemetery's overall listings grow and grow.

Also every day, there seem to be more research tools available; free or at paid sites like Ancestry. People in other states tracking units in from those states often come across a Wisconsin grave. All submissions are very welcome — from a project involving dozens, down to even one that you come across while reading. So is adding new info to incomplete entries in any county.

## The Double Bag Knapsack (a.k.a. the “Soft Pack”)

**By Patrick Fallon**  
**Department SVC**

In previous stories, I have covered such things as the Sharps rifle and the varied styles of fatigue jackets commonly called the sack coat. My subject now is another common item, the double bag knapsack, also called the soft pack.

It was called the soft pack because once you got rid of the wooden frame that could be put inside it to provide rigidity, it became much more comfortable to carry. There was a knapsack that was basically a box with straps, and it was as cumbersome and uncomfortable as the description sounds.

The name double bag is because it is divided into two compartments.

In the first compartment, made of four flaps and two straps, regulations stated that the soldier was to store “all public property,” the government-issued equipment that he was expected to return at the end of his enlistment.

Not only did the regulations specify which items were to be kept in this compartment, they also stated the order in which they would be packed: First the blanket; followed by the ground cloth, a supposedly waterproofed cloth sheet; and then the individual half of the shelter half tent that each soldier was issued.

There actually is a practical reason for this order of items. When the soldiers were setting up their temporary bivouac, first they would put up their shelter half tents, then lay out their ground cloth, followed by placing their packs and blankets on top of that.

The other compartment was where the soldiers would keep their personal items: bibles, diaries, letters, etc.; personal hygiene items like razors, combs, soap, towel and toothbrush. They also would put extra clothing, socks, shirts and drawers in that compartment.

It is a common misconception among us modern folks that some of that stuff would be carried in your haversack. The haversack actually is only for your rations and eating utensils; nothing else. Would you want your bacon to taste like soap?

On top of the knapsack, there are some loops through which two straps can be placed. Another mistaken belief is that those straps are there to hold your rolled-up blanket. In fact, that is where the soldier would secure his rolled-up overcoat.

I tried that once and found it to make for a badly balanced pack. Very uncomfortable. According to the period accounts of the first day's march when the Army was leaving winter encampments, the soldiers of that time found it every bit as uncomfortable as I did, based upon the numbers of discarded overcoats along the roadside.



This sample of a soft pack is one of the many items at <https://www.ccsutlery.com/store/civil-war-canvas-accessories.html>

# Wisconsin Department Pioneers: Charles D. Donaldson

By PCinC Steve Michaels

Charles Durwood Donaldson, the oldest of eleven children, was born December 15, 1873, in Sand Creek, Dunn County, Wisconsin. His parents, John Jabez and Laura Emelia Toycen Donaldson.

John's mother died when he was nine and his father remarried. Soon, a new baby was on the way. At age 14, John ran away from home to enlist in Co. I, 11<sup>th</sup> Mass. Infantry under the alias, "John Miller." He participated in the battles of Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg. He was paroled from Andersonville prison in February 1865 and discharged. After the war, he returned to Chippewa County to farm.

On February 19, 1898, Charles married Georgina "Gena" Olava Thingvold, the daughter of Norwegian immigrants. They had seven children: Dora Dorritt (1898-1986), Avis V. (1899-1900), Donald (1901-1968), John Henry (1902), Pearl (1904-1905), Charles D. Jr. (1906-1975), George Roderick (1918-1996).

Charles graduated from Superior's State Normal School and the University of Chicago with graduate work in psychology. Upon graduating in 1899, he was appointed principal of Bloomer's high school (1900-1906); Cumberland's high school (1906-1907); Alma's high school (1907-1911); Colerain's (Minn.) high school (1913-1917), and Savannah Township's (Ill.) high school (1917-1920).

Br. Donaldson came to Eau Claire's State Normal School in 1921, and was an education and psychology instructor. He also coached debate, extemporaneous speaking, and oratory. His debate teams made frequent public appearances, not only in Eau Claire, but throughout the region.

One of his students recalled his "Wide range of anecdotes, the brilliant analysis of difficult topics, and the remarkable quotations from literature that seemed to flow in unending enthusiasm..."

Br. Donaldson joined Bloomer's Gen. L.A. Fairchild Camp #15, ca. 1900-06. After his membership lapsed, while moving from school to school, he was reinstated at Eau Claire's Michael Griffin Camp #35 in April 1922, probably encouraged by DC Charles Brewer who was Donaldson's supervisor. Donaldson served as division patriotic instructor in 1923, before being elected division commander the following year in Janesville. In 1927 and 1928, he was elected division secretary/treasurer and appointed a camp organizer. He was appointed division chaplain in 1931, patriotic instructor in 1933-1937, and national patriotic instructor in 1934. He and continued to serve on the division essay contest committee and as his camp's secretary/treasurer.

He was active in his community and often called on to address civic, fraternal and educational organizations. He was a member of the American Psychology Association, National Education Association (life member), Northwest Wisconsin Teachers Association, I.O.O.F., the Masons (Blue Lodge Chapter, Commandery, Council, Consistory, and Shrine), Eastern Star, Modern Woodmen of America, and Rotary Club.

He had suffered from a heart ailment since 1935 and died suddenly on November 26, 1942. He was buried in the Bloomer City Cemetery



## Information sources:

- ♦ *Ancestry.com*
- ♦ *Eau Claire Leader-Telegram: November 26, 1942*
- ♦ *Michael Griffin Camp #35 Sketchbook*
- ♦ *The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire: A History 1916-1976* by Hilda R. Carer & John R. Jeuswold, Eau Claire Foundation 1976.



## Camp News & Activities

### CK Pier Badger Camp #1 - Milwaukee

**2024 Memorial Day.** Camp 1 and Auxiliary 4 conducted Memorial Day services for nearly the 100th year in a row at Calvary Cemetery in Milwaukee.

This year, Brother Paul Eilbes succeeded longtime host Dean Collins in arranging the event, which drew more than 300 people and featured the Camp, Auxiliary, Iron Brigade Honor Guard, Cushing's Battery, 29th Colored infantry Company F and much more.

The groups have been holding Memorial services at Calvary since at least 1927, and probably earlier.

**Pier Cemetery Cleanup.** The Camp supported a youth crew from a local church in cleaning up Col. C.K. Pier's small pioneer cemetery in Fond du Lac. PDC Tom Brown and PCinC Steve Michaels joined seven students from Trinity Lutheran School, Waucosta, and their two leaders. Kudos to local pastor David Wege of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee for organizing this activity.



Camp 1 and Auxiliary 4 kicked off the parade season with the Fourth of July march in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Milwaukee. We thank Pat Kulas and Dave Daley of Camp 15 for joining in.

**War Service Recognized.** Col. C.K. Pier's Camp looked after one of his officers, placing a GAR flag-holder on his grave at Forest Home Cemetery. For well over a century, it had only a civilian tombstone with no recognition of wartime service. Capt. Francis Gideon Holton was wounded in the 1864 Battle of the Crater and died in 1905 at age 59.

Holton long has been in the Sons' national graves database, chronicled by Tom Ludka and Marge Berres along with many helpers in the Camp. PCC Tom Mueller noticed the lack of war recognition on the grave while researching the death of Capt. Newton Ferris of the 38th. Mueller looked up E.B. Quiner's history of the 38th and saw the mention of Ferris, noticed it also mentioned Holton – and then Mueller looked for Holton in the national database and on Find a Grave.

Quiner gave this account in his 1866 Wisconsin history of the war: "Company E, but just arrived from Wisconsin, and only four days in the field, under Captain Ferris and Lieutenant Holton, leaped over the works without hesitation, and advanced toward the crater of the blown-up fort, under a terrific fire, which swept through their ranks.

"They reached the crater, but Captain Ferris was killed and Lieutenant Holton severely wounded. They remained in the crater till 4 p.m., when they retired with the brigade."

Holton, 18 when he was wounded, was from Milwaukee and had been mustered on May 10, 1864. He was promoted to captain Sept. 6, a week and a month after being wounded, and served until the entire 38th was mustered out on July 26, 1865.

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Ferris, Pier's only officer killed in combat, is buried at City Point National Cemetery in Virginia.

**Ancestor's Family Farm Falls to Developers.** The Oak Creek farm that was the home of the soldier ancestor of Camp 1 Chaplain Dean Collins has entered a new chapter.

Pvt. George Verhalen of the 24th Wisconsin Infantry, Co. K, was from that land. It is marked as "B. Verhalen" on the 1876 plat map at the Oak Creek Historical Society.

Work began in spring on turning the 19-acre property at 517 E. Rawson Ave. into a business development. The huge barn and old house were removed, then several bulldozers began their work.

The land will be "a flex commercial / light manufacturing development .... There will be four multi-tenant buildings once fully constructed," says Kari Papelbon, senior planner for community development of the City of Oak Creek.

Verhalen lived in Saukville after the war, and died there in 1879.

### *In Memoriam: Brother John Thielmann*

Camp 1's John Thielmann, a prime proponent of Civil War history, German Fest, schoolchildren and more, has died.

Thielmann, 71, of Hales Corners, died in a hospital on June 2. The longtime educator had multiple forms of pneumonia during COVID, spending substantial time in the hospital, and had been on portable oxygen ever since.

Thielmann died just a few days before receiving an award for meritorious service at the Department Encampment.



Brother John Thielmann  
1952-2024

The nomination, filed by Camp 1 in the spring, said "Thielmann and friends have run a private Civil War booth at German Fest for several years, complete with many artifacts. But as helpers faded away, it became more and more of a project in which he carried the brunt of the load.

"In 2023, amid his own health challenges, he called in the cavalry, campaigning for the active support of Camp 1 and then organizing the three-day schedule."

The Camp immediately started work to carry on Thielmann's efforts at this year's German Fest, July 26-28.

Thielmann was a Camp member since 2007. He taught in Milwaukee Public Schools for more than 25 years.

After graduating from Milwaukee's James Madison High School, he attended Dominican College in Racine (1970-74), majoring in History and English. He graduated from Cardinal Stritch University (1976-78) with a bachelor of arts degree in History. Thielmann returned to school in 1990-92, receiving a master of divinity degree at the Sacred Heart School of Theology. He attended Cardinal Stritch again

(2005-07) to receive his Wisconsin educator license.

In addition to serving as secretary of Company K, 2nd Wisconsin Infantry Association, Thielmann was a board member of the Milwaukee Substitute Teacher Association, and a sub at the Milwaukee German Immersion School.

He was an avid Milwaukee Brewers fan and often worked as a stadium usher. He umpired youth baseball for more than 20 years, and "knew every little nook and cranny park that held a baseball game" across southeastern Wisconsin, his obit said. "He advised actors about umpiring for the movie 'Mr. 3000' filmed in Milwaukee and appeared in the film calling the star 'out' at first base." The movie is from 2004 and starred Bernie Mac.



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## Hans C, Heg, Camp #15—Wind Lake



Samuel M. Keith, PCC  
1947-2024

Department Senior Vice Commander and Past Camp Commander Samuel Martin Keith, 77 years old of Salem, WI passed away Thursday, May 9, 2024.

He was born April 8, 1947 to the late Samuel and Eugenia (Martin) Keith in Chicago, IL. On December 28, 1968, Sam was united in marriage with Lorraine Hines in Luling, Louisiana. He proudly served his country in the United States Army and held office in veteran chapters. Sam was the past state president of the Sons of the American Revolution and a past chapter president of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War. He enjoyed spending time outdoors, going hunting, and showing interest in genealogy. Above all things, he loved spending time with his grandchildren.

Survivors include, his wife of 55 years, Lorraine Keith; daughters, Christina (Steve) Tower and Stephanie (Mike) Turney; and grandchildren, Stephen Tower, Lauren Tower, Genevieve Turney, Liam Turney, Leah Tower, and Connor Turney.

Graveside Service with Military Honors were held Thursday, June 6, 2024 at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery, 21731 Spring St, Union Grove, WI 53182. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the [American Heart Association](https://www.americanheart.org). For additional information, please call (847)-395-4000. Please sign the online guestbook for Sam at [www.strangfh.com](https://www.strangfh.com).

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## Col. William Colvill Camp #56 - Minnesota



Headstone dedication for Charles "Carl" B. Oswell. Many descendants were in attendance, and brothers Johnson, Kunze, and Barker coordinated affairs for the dedication. *(Photo Credit: Elizabeth Johnson)*

Col. William Colvill Camp 56 has had a busy start to spring 2024. Our main objective of performing ten Last Union Veteran ceremonies is off with a large boom. We have paid tribute to the Last Union Soldiers in Hubbard County (Pvt. Christian Teas-47<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin), Polk County (Pvt. Os-good Sargent-6<sup>th</sup> Minnesota), Norman County (Pvt. Even Larson-2<sup>nd</sup> Minnesota), Kanebec County (Pvt. Isaac Claggett-2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin), and Sherburne County (Pvt. Charles "Carl" Oswell, 14<sup>th</sup> New Hampshire). Before the season ends, ceremonies in Isanti, Chisago, Stevens, Traverse, Pope, Kandiyohi, Pipestone, Jackson Swift, Lac qui Parle, Rice, Olmsted, and Fillmore Counties. To date, the camp has conducted the research in over fifty percent of the counties in Minnesota. This daunting task has moved forward quickly thanks to the persistent dedication by camp members in both researching and performing these ceremonies across the state. Though the camp started later than other states, we project a 2026 finish.

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(Continued from page 11)

Operation Headstone is in full swing with several ceremonies including Aikin County (Abel Curtis Bennett) already completed. The project, a joint operation with the VFW and American Legion, hopes to replace 200 headstones this year in twenty counties. Our research to find the Last Union Veteran has detected over 800 Civil War veterans who do not have headstones. Multiple headstone requests are in progress in fifteen counties throughout Minnesota. While the headstone for military veterans is provided at no cost, the setting fees are not, and any help the camp can receive to accomplish this mission is appreciated. Commander Carlberg has led the charge to reach out to many organizations, especially our veteran's groups, to aid in our work to honor these men who deserve a proper headstone. Fox 9 News anchorwoman Kelcey Carlson produced a nice tribute for the twenty new headstones placed at Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul over Memorial weekend. *The Minnesota Legionnaire* interviewed Carlberg for their May 2024 publication to illustrate the significance the camp has placed on Operation Headstone. "I think it's important for us to inform the posts in Minnesota," said Carlberg, "of those soldiers they are not aware of so they can be recognized on Memorial Day." He noted that the camp can work with the local Legion and VFW "to get the headstones that those veterans deserve."

On June 23, Camp 56 completed a headstone ceremony for Sgt. John Harper, 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry, at Crystal Lake Cemetery in Minneapolis. Including a large contingent from Harper's descendants, other VIPs included Judge La June Lange, VFW Commander for Minnesota David Staehlin, VFW Post 3915 of Palmer Lake, Dept. Adj. MN, GAR, Harley Bergdale, 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota Honor Guard, Daughters of the Union Veterans, and the Living History Society. The 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, the second African American infantry regiment formed during the war, achieved fame for its assault on Fort Wagner in 1863. On June 23, Sgt. John Harper. Last year, Camp 56 was instrumental in replacing twenty-seven headstones in the state.

Many camp members spread out across the state over the Memorial weekend to honor those who bravely fought and died for our nation. Commander Carlberg participated with the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota Infantry at the Colonel Colvill memorial in Cannon Falls, Brother Jimmy Johnson participated in three ceremonies in his community, and Brother Vern Barker offered remarks as the main speaker at the Barnesville Memorial Day Program. He delivered his address in his SVR uniform to "expose the audience members to a little Civil War history and how it relates to ... Decoration/Memorial Day remembrances."

James Johnson with his coterie has presided at Last Union Veteran ceremonies in several counties to date with more on the horizon. In an interview with the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Sgt. Johnson summed up the commitment many members of Camp 56 have willingly made in the pursuit to honor our departed brothers. "When we take the oath and muster into the organization we make an obligation to keep green their memories." Commander Carlberg attended the St. Thomas Military Awards ceremony on May 22, where he presented the SUVCW ROTC Award to Cadet Sgt. Tadhgan Harlin. Commander Carlberg and Brother Barker attended the Department of Wisconsin Encampment in Boscobel, Wisconsin on June 8. Camp 56 received numerous awards and Commander Carlberg was elected as the Junior Vice Commander of the Wisconsin Department.



Descendants of Sgt. Harper with Bryce Stenzel as President Lincoln and Commander Gary Carlberg.  
(Photo Credit: Ken Rowe)

We have added over fifteen hundred names to the SUVCW Database as of June 16, which brought our total 11,684

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Memorial Day Celebration at Camp 56 namesake, Col. William Colvill in Cannon Falls, Minnesota. *(Photo Credit: Catie Jacobs)*

*(Continued from page 12)*

names of Civil War soldiers buried in Minnesota in the database. Our tally continues daily, and our goal for the year is to add 4,000 names. Camp 56 met at the Scottish Rite Temple on June 22 and initiated three more members into the SUVCW. Our group has grown 50% in the last year and intends to reach out further to add additional memberships throughout the year. The camp conducted our summer meeting at the Scottish Rite Temple on Saturday, June 22 where five new members were accepted. Our ambitious summer continues with many Last Union Veteran ceremonies planned in another sixteen counties.

Commander Carlberg received camp awards at the Wisconsin Department Encampment. *(Photo Credit: Vern Barker)*



### Department Events Calendar

September 2 - Labor Day  
 September 11 - Patriot's Day  
 October 14 - Columbus Day  
 October 27 - Member Orientation (online)  
 November 11 - Veterans Day  
 November 16 - Remembrance Day - Gettysburg  
 December 14—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](mailto: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 who  
 contributed to this Edition!**

## The 2024 Dept. of Wisconsin Member Orientation is Coming!

You're cordially invited to the annual **SUVCW Member Orientation!** Since 2001, a group of officers, comprising nearly 90 years of experience at all levels of our Order, have shared what they know with our brothers, using colorful, detailed images and information.

Why wait another year? Make use of this valuable resource now.

Serving with and in our Order ... find out about our:  
Core Values, Badges of the Order, History, Customs and  
Courtesies, Missions, Organization & Structure, Ritual and  
Ceremonies ... plus much more.

New members, prospective members, even long-time  
members may be surprised to find what they didn't  
already know. I promise you will not be disappointed.

By raising our collective knowledge and experience, we  
improve our ability to honor Union ancestors, learn more  
about our American heritage and are of greater service to  
our community, state and nation...and we grow immensely  
as an organization.

Please confirm your attendance with PDC Kent Peterson right away, so that he may  
provide the Zoom link and digital handouts. Contact him at (414) 614-3690 or via email at  
kapeterson0681@gmail.com.

The **2024 Member  
Orientation** will be  
held online on  
Sunday afternoon,  
October 27<sup>th</sup>, from  
12:30 to 4 pm.

**The cost of the Orientation is free ...  
your benefit is priceless.**

*What's wrong with this picture?*



*Find out at the Member Orientation!*