



Wisconsin Department Dispatch



Winter 2024-2025

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Wreaths Across America throughout the Department



Above, Camp #4: PCC Craig Wheeler at Wood Cemetery in Milwaukee.

Below, Camp #8: Brian Peters, PDC and his wife Lucy at the Veterans Cemetery at King.

Bottom Right, Camp #2: L-R Sr. Vice Commander Tom Trimble, WISSAR Secretary William Austin, Lyle Laufenberg, unidentified veteran, Chaplain Alan Hembel, PDC at Union Rest in Madison



Above, Camp #15: PCC Gerry Drought, CC Jerry Covey and PDC Brian McManus at the grave of Col. Hans C. Heg in Norway, WI

Below, Camp #1 Junior Member Lucas Nugyen, Chaplain Dean Collians, PDC Tom Brown, Will Ammann and



“PRESERVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD”

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

SUVCW

Department of Wisconsin 2024-25 Officers and Staff



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

The Sons of Veterans, U.S.A., Takes Hold in Minnesota

By PCinC Steve Michaels

In early 1882, Maj. A.P. Davis further organized the Sons of Veterans, U.S.A., by dividing the country into five Grand Divisions. Chicago's William J. Maskell, known throughout the northwest as an active and earnest worker in the GAR's ranks, assumed command and organized the third Grand Division (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas). He visited Stillwater, the home of Minnesota's GAR Department Commander, seeking support.

Adam Marty (right) had served with the 1st Minnesota Infantry in the Civil War, returned to Stillwater, organized the first fire company, and became a charter member of the fire department. He was appointed deputy sheriff in 1882. He had just been elected department commander after serving six terms as commander of Muller GAR Post #1. The department was being reorganized and Minnesota's GAR membership was beginning to grow.



Commander Marty appointed John N. Darms, who was both a veteran and a son of a veteran, to head up the SVUSA. Both Darms and his father had also served in the 1st Minnesota. Both contracted diseases, the father dying in 1864. The younger Darms was active in the Muller GAR Post. Maskell confirmed the selection and Darms was appointed as such in SVUSA Commander-in-Chief Rowley's General Order 3, dated July 28, 1882.

Unfortunately, the disease Darms contracted during the war disabled him and he died that December. Marty took over the position temporarily, but resigned in early 1883, in favor of Col. William Henry Harrison Taylor.

Taylor's family traced its ancestry to Benjamin Harrison, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. His grandmother was the older sister of President William Henry Harrison, the 9th U.S. president. The colonel (right) grew up in Richmond, Virginia, and moved to Cincinnati, where he worked in several government jobs.



During the Civil War, Taylor recruited for the 5th Ohio Cavalry. He was ill during much of his service, and back home, his wife was also ill, leading to his resignation. After his wife's death, he moved to Minnesota to farm in Brooklyn, Hennepin County. By 1877, he had recovered sufficiently to accept an appointment as State Librarian. Four years later, the Capitol burned, along with most of the library. Taylor spent the next 12 years restoring the library, which eventually grew to over 20,000 books.

Taylor remarried and in March 1882, became a charter member and commander of St. Paul's reorganized Acker GAR Post #21. He had already been re-elected commander of Stillwater's Muller Post #1.

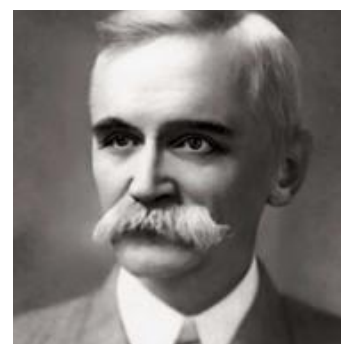
By September 20, 1883, Col. Taylor reported four Sons camps had been organized: Gen. Sherman Camp #1, Stillwater; J.S. Cady Camp #2, Anoka; Gen. Lyon Camp #3, Sauk Center; and G.N. Morgan Camp #4, Minneapolis.

Col. Taylor's bad experience with fires continued when the Division's early records were destroyed by a fire in Stillwater on January 26, 1884. He resigned as provisional division commander in February.

Upon Col. Taylor's resignation, Edward Van Cleve (right) was appointed to replace him.

Edward's mother was the first white child brought into what is now Minnesota in 1836. His father was a West Point graduate, served on the frontier in the 1830s, and in 1861, was appointed colonel of the 2nd Minnesota Infantry, where he served throughout the war. Afterwards, he served as Minnesota's adjutant general.

Edward became a law clerk upon graduation from the university. In 1875, he was appointed Assistant Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard. In May 1882, he resigned to resume the practice of law, but was soon promoted to colonel and appointed inspector general.



After Taylor's departure, Minnesota's provisional division dwindled to 20 men. Together with Van Cleve, several men set to work, recruiting and organizing new camps.

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Among these men were:

Edward Milham (upper right), described as a hustler with no superior and few equals. His father, William, served as a private in Company B, 29th Wisconsin Infantry, was taken prisoner at the Battle of Sabine Crossroads, and subsequently died of disease. Edward helped organize St. Paul Camp #1, was a charter member when it was chartered on February 1, 1885, and was elected the camp's first commander. He was an officer in the Knights Templar and a St. Paul reserve military company, and these provided prospective members.



Alfred Morgan (middle right), an early member of Minneapolis Camp #4, was elected camp commander in 1884. He had already been recognized as a national aide in 1883 for his recruiting efforts. His father, George Nelson Morgan, served as captain of Company E, 1st Minnesota Infantry, as colonel of the 2nd Veterans Reserve Corps, and finally, as commander of Fort Snelling before succumbing to consumption.



George Penniman (bottom right), a reformist in Massachusetts, active in Minnesota's prohibitionist movement, organizing clubs throughout the state. He joined Minneapolis Camp #4 and attended the 1884 National Encampment in Philadelphia, serving on the Officer Reports Committee. He was nominated, but not elected Commander-in-Chief. He was nominated Lieutenant (Senior Vice) Commander-in-Chief, but declined. He accepted appointment as Chief Mustering Officer. His father, William Woods Penniman, had served as a drum major in Co. B, 60th Mass. Infantry and after the war, became a prominent Grand Army man.



Minnesota's first Division Encampment was held on June 4th, 1885; a membership of 307 was reported. Edward Van Cleve was duly elected the first division commander. He later attended the 1885 National Encampment in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and served on the Officer Reports Committee. That December, he was elected commander and council member of Minneapolis' G.N. Morgan Camp #4.

At that first Minnesota Division encampment, Alfred Morgan was elected to the Division Council and as an alternate delegate to the 3rd Grand Division Encampment.

George Penniman was reappointed Chief Mustering Officer at the 1885 National Encampment. In both 1884 and 1885, he served on the Commandery Council (National Council of Administration). As Chief Mustering Officer, Br. Penniman attended the Dakota and the Iowa Divisions' encampments. He made speeches and organized camps. He mustered-in the 2nd Grand Division's officers in Washington, D.C., in August 1885.

Edward Milham attended the 1885 National Encampment, served on the Constitution, Rules & Regulations Committee, and was named an aide for his recruiting efforts. He was elected commander at the second Division Encampment and was re-elected twice. By his third term, the division numbered 878 members in 34 camps.

Sources:

- [Ancestry.com](#)
- [History of Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul Including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota ...pg 618-619](#)
- [Minnesota Law Library Research Guide](#)
- [Mnopedia.org](#)
- [New Ulm Weekly Review](#), April 4, 1884
- [Princeton Union](#), June 17, 1897
- [Ramsey County, Minnesota Genealogy & History](#)
- [Springfield Weekly Republican](#), June 23, 1893, March 1, 1895

(Continued on page 5)

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- **St. Paul Daily Globe**, December 16 & 31, 1882, March 30, May 7, & September 22, 1883, July 20 & September 23, 1884, March 28, May 10, May 16, December 19, & December 24, 1885, July 22, 1888
- **St. Paul Sunday Globe**, May 14, 1882
- **SUVCW 1883 National Encampment Proceedings**
- **Worthington Advance**, June 8, 1882

Why was Wisconsin's 1st Camp organized in Waukesha?

Who was the disgruntled Wisconsin Dept. Commander who formed his own order, "The Sons of the GAR?"

How did Lincoln's Birthday observance in Wisconsin begin?

What was Wisconsin's connection to Memorial University?

Who was the Wisconsin brother who formed the state's first VFW post?

How did Wisconsin's Allied Orders help rebuild Cushing Park?

Why were silent movies shown at a Wisconsin Dept. Encampment?

Who was the Auxiliary sister who organized a second camp in Madison?

Where are the Department's Memorial benches located?

Were there any minority Camps in Wisconsin?

Who was the 40-year Wisconsin brother who met a violent death at the hands of an ex-convict?

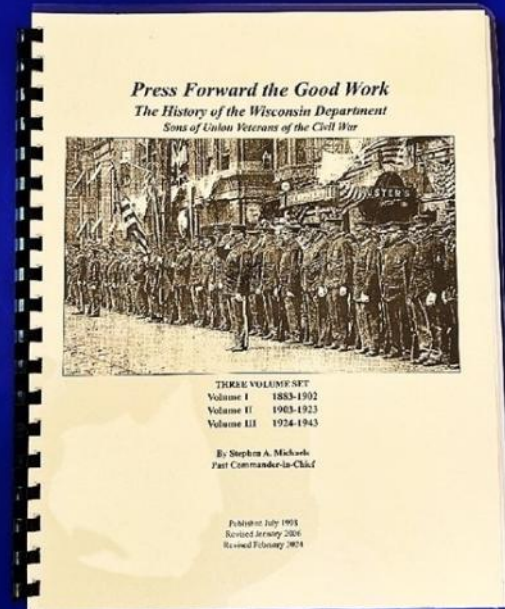
The answers to these and other fascinating questions in **"Press Forward the Good Work: The History of the Wisconsin Department, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War."** On sale now.

Our Wisconsin Department's History:

The first 60 years in 160 pages! The struggles, the triumphs!

Fully illustrated. 54 Department Commander bios. Four appendices.

Reserve yours now for delivery at the 2025 Wisconsin Dept. Encampment on June 7th. price: Only \$25. Email pcincmichaels@suvchw.org to reserve your copy.



Department Events Calendar

April 12 - 69th Annual Lincoln Tomb Ceremony, Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, IL

May 26 - Memorial Day

June 7 - 142nd Wisconsin Department Encampment, Town of Norway Village Hall

The *Wisconsin Department Dispatch* is

published four times per year for members of the Wisconsin Department, SUVCW. Articles, photos and news items may be submitted to PDC Bruce Laine at brucelaine@gmail.com. Editorial

deadlines are the 1st of April, July, October and January.

Visit us on the Web at

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

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this Edition!

The Milwaukee Regiment

By Mike Deeken

It was a warm and sunny Friday afternoon in Milwaukee on the last day of July 1862. Work had been cancelled for most businesses, and bands marched along Grand Avenue (the current Wisconsin Avenue) playing patriotic tunes. Flags were waving and the beer was flowing.



At Kneeland's Grove, between 10th and 11th Streets just south of Grand Avenue, the state's governor was about to speak. This event was called the Great War Meeting, and its purpose was to induce Milwaukee men to volunteer for the war.

Just a few months earlier, the casualties at Shiloh had shocked the nation, and the failure of the Peninsula Campaign convinced President Lincoln that this would not be a short war. He called on the states to provide 300,000 more troops. If they failed to do so, he threatened to order a draft. Milwaukee was then a city of 45,000 and its quota was to produce at least two regiments. The 24th Wisconsin needed 1,000 volunteers.

Wealthy Milwaukeeans donated money for enlistment bonuses, which could be as much as \$7,000 in today's money. Enticing men to volunteer was becoming more difficult and recruitment now also focused on older and married men.

Gov. Edward Salomon spoke to the crowd about the urgency for volunteers, concluding with:

"What a field of heroic struggle is offered to you. Your gallant comrades from the battlefield call upon you by name. Will you shrink? Will you turn your backs?"

Within only two weeks, the recruitment efforts paid off, and 10 companies of 100 soldiers each were formed. The 24th was mustered in on Aug. 15. They gathered at Camp Sigel on Milwaukee's East Side; land leased to the federal government for \$1. Camp Sigel was named after Union Gen. Franz Sigel, and was bounded by Prospect and Bartlett Avenues and Lafayette and Royal Streets. The 24th was one of seven Wisconsin regiments to train at this site, while most others trained at Camp Randall in Madison.

The men were housed in 10 barracks and spent the next three weeks drilling. Their muskets arrived two weeks later but never were fired in this camp. The boys of the 24th were a source of much



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entertainment for the citizens, and ladies watched along Prospect Avenue with their parasols protecting them from the sun. One humorous moment occurred when the 17-year-old regimental adjutant, in his high-pitched voice, gave orders for the men to wheel right – and then promptly tripped over his sword.

The embarrassed young lieutenant, who stood 5-foot-7 and weighed less than 100 pounds, was Arthur MacArthur Jr., son of Judge MacArthur. The judge was able to secure an officer's commission for his son, after being frustrated earlier when failing to secure a commission to West Point.

Little more than a year later, on Nov. 25, 1863, MacArthur led the 24th up Missionary Ridge shouting, "On Wisconsin," leading them to an improbable victory and ultimately receiving the Medal of Honor. The medal was awarded in 1890.

Not even two months after being organized, the 24th would see its first action, at Perryville, Ky., on Oct. 8, and then in December 1862 was hit hard in the bloody battle of Stones River in Tennessee. It later won fame at Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge in 1863, and Division.

Commander Phil Sheridan called the 24th his favorite regiment. The Milwaukee Regiment came to the rescue at the desperate and decisive 1864 Battle of Franklin, earning the nickname "The Invincibles." MacArthur, now a major, once again led the charge and was shot twice at close range but survived, was promoted, and known nationally as a hero and the "Boy Colonel."

On Sept. 5, 1912, about four dozen surviving members of the 24th met in a downtown Milwaukee banquet hall to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their deployment. The guest speaker was retired Lt. Gen. Arthur MacArthur, now 67 and a hundred pounds heavier than when he was a young lieutenant. He began, "Little did we know 50 years ago..." then paused, spoke softly, and then said, "I can't go on" and sat down. He suffered what appeared to be a stroke, although other reports said it was a massive heart attack – and died instantly.

When the 24th returned to Milwaukee in 1865, on hand to welcome them was a disabled former member of Company G, Sgt. Henry Walton Carter. He had been shot through the right shoulder at Stones River and captured, imprisoned in Richmond, exchanged and discharged as disabled.

On Aug. 15, 1863, the Milwaukee Sentinel had run a story when he received a gift of \$122 from his company, which had taken up a collection. Commending the generosity of that nearly all-Irish company, the Sentinel used the story to argue for housing and pensions for disabled soldiers.

In 1870, Carter would become one of the early residents of the Northwestern Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. He died in 1872, at age 42, from the lingering effects of his injuries and is buried in Wood National Cemetery, in the area just north of the freeway. Carter was my great-great-grandfather.

Recruiting Tips from the Dept. Junior Vice Commander

One innovative recruiting technique developed by Sr Vice Commander Mike Huttner from Camp 56 is to offer “on the spot research” at Civil War Roundtables and Reenactments. These events are obviously target rich as almost every participant there already has an interest in the Civil War, many because they have a Civil War relative. Most have sketchy information on their relative and the majority do not know where to research to find the Civil War Pension Index, CMSR or muster roll documents we find routinely. This is a service greatly appreciated and we are invited back.

When recommending this, Brother Mike recommended we do something different to draw the public’s attention and provide a community service at our recruiting and information booths. In addition to the SUVCW brochures, application forms, and photos of Camp 56 in action on a trifold display board, he recommended that we offer to do “on the spot research” of audience member’s relatives. This has proven to be of great interest and there have been times Mike has had a line of people waiting to see him. At the Twin Cities Civil War Roundtable Symposium four people asked for application forms!



Camp 56 Sr Vice Commander Mike Huttner researching for a participant’s relative. Photo by Gary Carlberg

How to do this technique: Coordinate with event host for a info table to do the “on the spot research” and 5 minutes to brief the crowd on what your SUVCW camp is doing. Ask host to mention in their event marketing that SUVCW will be there to do “on the spot research” to increase the number of participants and for them to bring what data they have. In addition to a member to talk about events and how to join, an experienced Camp Researcher brings his laptop to the event (with extension cord). Good internet sites are the normal SUVCW database (now has 35,111 Civil War veterans listed as interred in WI, and 13,749 in MN so it’s value has increased), Ancestry, American Civil War Database, FamilySearch, Find-A-Grave (they like to know where they are buried), etc. Email them the data and documents you found, and maybe include your Camp Facebook page and an application form if they showed interest. Don’t forget to invite them to a Camp event (headstone dedication, presentation, Camp meeting, etc.).

At many events (especially events outdoors) they often do not have good internet or WiFi connections available so you will need to set up a “hot spot”. Someone technically competent on your cell phone can show you how to do this free capability most cell phones have in a couple minutes.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,

Gary Carlberg

Junior Vice Commander

Dept of WI, SUVCW

(651) 214-7086

Camp News & Activities

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

2025 Officers

Commander: Tom Hesse

Senior Vice Commander: PCC Patrick Fallon

Junior Vice Commander: Will Ammann

Secretary: PDC Tom Brown

Treasurer: PDC Kent Peterson

Camp Council #1: PCC Grant Johnson

Camp Council #2 PCinC Steve Michaels

Camp Council #3: PCC Tom Mueller



Colonel C.K. Pier



Camp Commander Tom Hesse



Bruce Nason



Honoring 85 years of service!!! Treasurer Kent Peterson (left) and Chaplain Dean Collins received 30-year pins at the November meeting. Peterson has seniority, joining on Oct. 25, 1994, vs. Collins' Nov. 15 of that year. Brother Bruce Nason also received a belated 25-year pin at the meeting. He was voted into the Camp in 1998.

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



Brother Bill "the Bugler" Seaman (left) received the Americanism Award (right) from the Wisconsin Military Order of the Purple Heart for "unwavering commitment to veterans and their families."



Brother Andrew Sabin was initiated at the October meeting, accompanied by his PTSD service dog. Sabin, of Kenosha, is an Army veteran who served in Iraq from 2006-'08. More info about the vital role of service dogs in helping veterans is at many websites, including <https://canine.org/service-dogs/our-dogs/veterans-initiative/>



Junior Lucas Nguyen describes a patriotic penny drive that he organized at his school, Honey Creek Continuous Progress. Lucas is a fourth-grader. He raised more than \$600, and received much more than coins from the Camp.

Col. Henry Harnden Camp #2 - Madison

2025 Officers

Commander: Ben Hobbins

Senior Vice Commander: Thomas Trimble

Junior Vice Commander: Scott Schable

Secretary: Alan Hemble, PDC

Treasurer: Fred Campbell

Camp Council #1: John Decker, PDC

Camp Council #2: Scott Schable

Camp Council #3: Thomas Trimble



Colonel Henry Harnden

GAR Roll Call of Honor Tablets: Camp #2 Partners with Dane County Historical Society

In late 2022, it became known to Camp #2 that the GAR Post Hall in Madison was going to be demolished and had in its possession 20 bronze GAR Veteran tablets, the Dane County Roll Call of Honor tablets, with the engraved names of over 700 Dane County Men in Blue who gave their last full measures of devotion to the nation, dying in War of the Rebellion battlefields around the USA.

These are Sacred to our SUVCW, DUVCW and Allied Orders, and also to our USA, and all Veterans. They represent the memory of our Men, our Ancestor Fathers, their Families, and Wisconsin Veterans. All of these Boys in Blue, passed through our Camp Randall Mustering Camp in the center of the City of Madison.

From 2023, 2024 to present, PDC Decker and CC Hobbins worked together to secure the tablets, having possession taken by the Dane County Historical Society in Madison. Once secured, the men worked together and devised a method and manner to restore them, devise a fund raiser for their restoration, and find an ultimate home for them, yet to be determined.

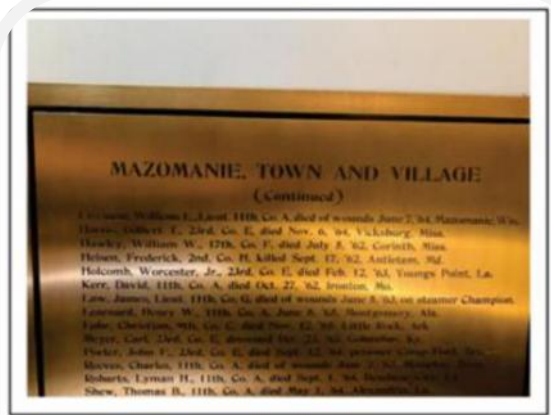
Camp #2 and the Dane County Historical Society have led these current efforts. The project mirrors the restoration and re-dedication efforts taken for the Hans Christian Heg Statue at the Capitol May 29th, 2022. That was also supported by WIMN Dept SUVCW, SUVCW HQ, the MVC, the Sons of Norway, and the many private and public donors.

A budget was devised for their restoration of \$18 000, and an anonymous donor pledged to give \$9 000 to match the other \$9 000 needed to complete the fund-raising campaign.

We have and can boast of very generous donors who have completed the fund-raising efforts to date, as we are only a few hundred dollars from the target of \$9 000. The project will be completed by Memorial Day 2025!

Among the donors are DUVCW Detached Tent #23 Mary Chesebro Lee and Sisters Pat Blackmer, Linda Tanner Freitag, AA Hobbins, Daus of the War of 1812 LT Freitag/AA Hobbins, the historic Elks Lodge #410 in Madison,

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GAR Hall Roll Call of Honor Restoration
Camp Randall Mustering Camp

Col. Henry Harnden Camp #2 - Madison continued

(Continued from page 11)

VFW Post of Mazomanie, Legion and VFW of Brooklynn, Camp #2 Col Henry Harnden, DCHS Exec Dir Rick Bernstein, Brother Decker and Brother Ben and Sister Ashley-Anne Hobbins, Brother Jerry Remy, the Town of Rutland, Dixie and Dennis Brown, Steve Varesi, and Jane Licht.

MOLLUS, DOLLUS, Aztec Club, SAR, DAR, Mayflower Societies are also represented supporting these American Veteran efforts in the spirit of the coming America 250th!

HUZZAHS America 250th and Eternal Thanks to all Donors!

J. Ben Hobbins



Brothers from Camp #2 placed wreaths Forest Hill Cemetery in Madison



Col. Henry Harnden Camp #2 - Madison continued



Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Camp Commander J. Ben Hobbins, Camp #2 Colonel Henry Harnden
June 26th, 2024

Proclamation

Blue-Ribbon Committee for the Preservation of Camp Randall Veterans Memorial Park

Whereas,

Brothers and Sisters of the Sons and Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, MOLLUS, DOLLUS, Allied Orders, WDVA's, VFW, Legion, America 250 and allied blood line Organizations have taken note and symbolic action;

Whereas,

Camp Randall Veterans Memorial Park in Madison's Capitol is Men in Blue Sacred Grounds. It was here, during the onset and during the Civil War that nearly 90 000 Wisconsin Volunteers were assembled, drilled and drilled some more, mustered into military service, and sent in duty, honor, spirit of the United States into the deep south and southeast to Confederate battlefields in the War of the Rebellion;

Whereas,

In 1912, Wisconsin's Men in Blue were honored with the dedication of Camp Randall Memorial Arch, a stark symbol honoring their sacrifices and representing the Collective Memory of these Men and Nation - our Boys in Blue, and embodies the Courage and Sacrifice of our Wisconsin Volunteers - America's Saviors and Abolitionists, their Regiments, Wisconsin communities, families and forefathers -enshrined here forever;

Whereas,

June 13th 2024, Camp #2 Col Henry Harnden was made aware of a Newspaper article and WDVA meeting outlining a substantial University Shell facility renovation project in final project planning unbeknownst to the SUCW, DUCW, MOLLUS and DOLLUS, and the Madison Veterans Council Organizations, a project that somehow passed National Veterans and Historic Site legal hurdles;

Whereas,

Camp #2 Camp Commander Ben Hobbins, Bros Decker, Hembel, Campbell, Trimble, Schable and Sister Ashley-Anne Hobbins attended the Wisconsin Dept of Veterans Affairs Exec Board "final" listening session Zoom mtg June 13th, 2024

Whereas,

Camp Commander Hobbins proposed the formation of a "Blue-Ribbon Committee" June 26th 2024 "for the Preservation of Camp Randall Veterans Memorial Park" made up of Camp Brothers John Decker, Alan Hembel, Tom Trimble, Schott Schable, Fred Campbell and himself Chair, and DUCW Tent 23 Sisters Pat Blackmer, Ashley-Anne Hobbins, and informing SUCW WI MN Dept, Natl SUCW HQ, the University of Wisconsin, WVM and WDVA;

Whereas and therefore,

The Blue-Ribbon Committee was consecrated, and while symbolic in nature, it endeavors to work with the WHS, UW and State to preserve and protect Camp Randall Veterans Memorial Park grounds, honor the memories, valor and sacrifice of all Wisconsin and American Veterans.

Proclaimed on this day, June 26th, 2024 in Madison, Wisconsin



J. Benjamin Hobbins

J. Ben Hobbins, Camp Commander, PI

*Camp #2 Col Henry Harnden, DRO, SUCW WI-MN
SUCW HQ America 250 Birthday Cmte, WI America 250*

MG John Gibbon, Camp #4 -Waukesha County

2025 Officers

Commander: Brian McManus, PDC

Senior Vice Commander: Allen Keinert, PCC

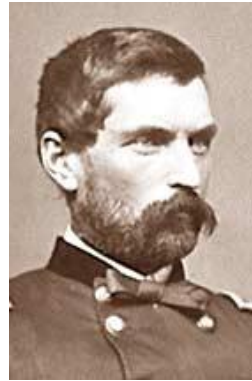
Junior Vice Commander: Bob Mann, PCC

Secretary/Treasurer: Bruce C. Laine, PDC

Camp Council #1: Craig Wheeler, PCC

Camp Council #2: Brian McManus, PDC

Camp Council #3: Jeremy Johnson



Major General John Gibbon

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

2025 Officers

Commander: Jerry Coveney

Senior Vice Commander: PDC Jeff Graf

Junior Vice Commander: PCC Dave Daley

Secretary/Treasurer: PDC Brian McManus

Camp Council #1: Gerry Drought

Camp Council #2: DC Bob Koencke

Camp Council #3: PDC Jeff Graf



Colonel Hans C.

Camp #15 2025 Officers were installed by PDC Bruce Laine at their December meeting, Left to Right: Brother David Miller, Commander Jerry Coveney, Camp Council #3 PDC Jeff Graf, Secretary/Treasurer PDC Brian McManus, Camp Council #2 PCC Gerry Drought



Old Abe, Camp #8 ~ Fox Valley

2025 Officers

Commander: Vince Barker

Senior Vice Commander: Scott Kreis

Junior Vice Commander: Sam Solberg

Secretary/Treasurer: PDC Brian Peters

Camp Council #1: PCC Kirby Scott

Camp Council #2: Michael Mladenik

Camp Council #3: David Melancon



Old Abe

In Remembrance Brother Kurt Kirk



Kurtis Kyle Kirk, age 58, of Auroraville, died peacefully at home on Friday, January 3, 2025. He was born April 26, 1966, in Waupaca, WI, the son of Robert and Donna Madison Kirk. Kurt was a 1984 graduate of Berlin High School. He attended Marquette University and graduated from Ripon College in 1988 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management. He also completed coursework at UW Oshkosh to prepare for taking the CMA exam. On January 22, 1994, he was united in marriage to Anne Stemler at Grace English Lutheran Church in Berlin. Kurt worked for 19 years at Oshkosh Truck in the Defense Division, retiring as Finance Director. He had a passion for life and everything he set his mind to. Kurt was an avid hunter and outdoorsman who thoroughly enjoyed special hunting trips, shooting skeet and trap, bird hunting, cutting wood, riding his bike, visiting National Parks or anything outdoors. Kurt enjoyed reading and listening to live bands, especially Blues music. He was an enthusiastic collector of miscellaneous sporting items. He was a dedicated Associate member and Treasurer the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and Treasurer of Pine Grove Cemetery Board. Kurt was a member of the Institute of Management Accountants and All Saints Catholic Parish in Berlin.

He is survived by his wife, Anne; mother, Donna Kirk; brother, Kris (Tammy) Kirk; nephews and niece, Paul (Stephanie) Kirk, Ashlynn Kirk and Kyle Kirk (fiancé, Belle); sisters- and brothers-in-law, Marcy (Wayne) Klepinger, Mary Jo Smith, Christian (Linda) Stemler, Monica (Matthew) Goldin, Therese (Dallas) Lewallen, Joseph Stemler and Jonathon Stemler; and many nieces, nephews, greatnieces, great-nephews and friends. Kurt was preceded in death by his father; parents-in-law, Joseph and Beatrice Stemler; and brothers-in-law, Jerrold Smith and Mark Stemler. Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Saturday, January 11, at 11:00 a.m., at All Saints Catholic Parish in Berlin, with Father Eric Nielsen officiating. Interment will be in Burdick Cemetery. Visitation will be held on Friday, January 10, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at Barbola Funeral Chapel in Berlin. A memorial has been established. Anyone wishing to send a sympathy card to the family, please mail to Kurtis Kirk, c/o Barbola Funeral Chapel,

PO Box 201, Berlin, WI 54923.

L. G. Armstrong, Camp #49—Boscobel

2025 Officers

Commander: Dan Chroninger
Senior Vice Commander: Steven Bultman
Junior Vice Commander: Dan Griesel
Secretary/Treasurer: James Griesel
Camp Council #1: Greg Pomerening
Camp Council #2: Charles Griesel
Camp Council #3: Rod Dary

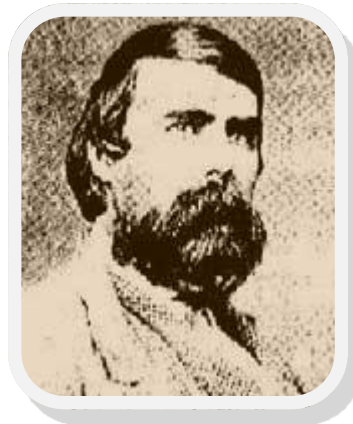


L.G. Armstrong, M.D.

Col. William Colvill Camp #56 - Minnesota

2025 Officers

Commander: Gary Carlberg
Senior Vice Commander: Michael Huttner
Junior Vice Commander: James A. Johnson
Secretary/Treasurer: Mark Campbell, PCC
Camp Council #1: Randall Nelson, PCC
Camp Council #2: Robert J. Selden
Camp Council #3: Andrew Willenbring



Colonel William Colvill

Camp 56 had an extremely productive 2024 campaign between our work on the Last Union Veteran ceremonies and OPERATION HEADSTONE. We completed the research and conducted Last Union Veteran ceremonies in twenty-three additional counties. We have completed fifty-nine of eighty-two counties, or about two-thirds of the state. On Commander Carlberg's initiative, the camp has made it our mission to complete at least twenty Last Union Veteran ceremonies

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With DUVCW, LGAR, 1st MN INF reenactors, VFW and American Legion, Camp 56 and the Iron Brigade SVR led the ceremony at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis where 106 new headstones were dedicated on September 28. Numerous descendants were in attendance, even more by U-tube. Photo Credit: John Haworth.

Col. William Colvill Camp #56 - Minnesota continued

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each year, a goal that we have surpassed in each of the past two years. Jr. Vice Commander James Johnson has led this effort, often more than one county in a single day. Additional research has been completed by Vice Commander James Johnson, Commander Carlberg, Sr. Vice Commander Mike Huttner, Skip Parson, Jackson Piper, Ken Rowe, Julie Carpenter, and Vern Barker. Barker often accompanied Johnson at many of the Last Union Veteran ceremonies and spoke at the Annual Memorial Day ceremony. Sometimes, these ceremonies have been conducted under less than agreeable weather conditions. Our goal for 2025 is to complete an additional twenty counties and, if all falls into place, to complete our last set of Last Union Veteran ceremonies in 2026.

OPERATION HEADSTONE also had a productive 2024 season. We ordered 217 headstones this year, up from 27 the previous year. More headstones could have been placed if not for the cost of setting each one, and our funding ran short. Commander Carlberg is to be applauded for his outreach to the American Legions and VFWs in the state to obtain revenue to fund OPERATION HEADSTONE, but this was not enough. To address this problem, the camp has applied for a grant from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs to help offset our costs, and we can confidently report that this grant was recently approved. Fruitful as his efforts have been, the estimated additional 1,000 headstones we need to order and set make this a daunting endeavor, to say the least.

In 2023, the camp loaded 3,000 names into the national database, which we increased to 3,600 in 2024. In many cases during our research, we have found ten-fold the number of veterans in a county that had previously been reported. While this is breathtaking, it does create additional work for the camp to ensure that each veteran is duly added to the database. One such example is Douglas County, where 21 soldiers were initially reported. Our research has instead unearthed an astounding 542 soldiers in that county! As so often happens during our work, we uncover many men who had not previously been reported for various reasons, and we are committed to accurately accounting for each soldier in the state to guarantee that no Union soldier is left behind.

The year also brought about a fifty percent increase in camp membership and several others who assisted in our research projects; people like to be a part of an organization making such a positive difference. The LGAR and the DUVCW, for the first time in many years, have assisted the camp in many of our ceremonies in the cemeteries. The camp will hold its first meeting of the year on January 25, 2025.



1Sgt Arn Kind from our partner group "Boy in Blue" read the biography of Washington Kelly at the Last Union Veteran ceremony in Faribault County. Photo Credit: Rebecca Novak.