



The Sunflower Picket

Publication of the Department of Kansas, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

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EIGHTH ANNUAL DEPARTMENT ENCAMPMENT

**April 24, 2004
Beloit, Kansas**

The Eighth Annual Encampment of the Department of Kansas was held in Beloit on April 24, 2004. In spite of the rainy weather, all went well. This year, the National organization was represented by PDC David Stephen, National Council of Administration member from the Department of Iowa.

At the Encampment, Department Commander Ken Spurgeon presided over the business portion of the meeting. Corporal Patrick Coyne Camp 1 provided the Color Guard for the opening and closing ceremonies. In addition to the various officer and camp reports during the business the meeting, Doug McGovern reported on the Hutchinson Soldiers and Sailors Monument restoration project. PDC Alan Russ reported on the 2003 National Encampment.

Department of Kansas awards were presented to the following:

- Corporal Leonidus B. Davis Award for Recruiter of the Year** – Awarded to both **Craig Sundell** and **Roy Lafferty**, who are members of Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence.
- William W. Nixon Award for Camp of the Year** – Awarded to **Corporal Patrick Coyne Camp 1, Wichita.**

Captain Patrick H. Coney Award for Member of the Year – Awarded to PDC **Alan Russ**, Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka, and Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence.

Leander Stillwell Award for Meritorious Service – Awarded to PDC **Dean Speaks**, Joseph Gaston Camp 3, Beloit.

The Encampment directed that the Department Commander would appoint a committee to work with the Mine Creek Battlefield Foundation and the Kansas State Historical Society for ways to best expend donations which the Department holds for use at Mine Creek battlefield. See Department Order No. 2 elsewhere in this newsletter.

The following Officers were elected by the Encampment to serve during the 2004-2005 term:

Department Commander	PCC Thomas E. Schmidt Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1
Senior Vice Commander	PCC James R. Knopke Old Abe Camp 16
Junior Vice Commander	Randal L. Durbin Old Abe Camp 16
Secretary/Treasurer	PDC Alan L. Russ Old Abe Camp 16
Council	PDC Dean K. Speaks Joseph Gaston Camp 3 James A. Scheidel, Jr. Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1 Robert L. Wandel Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4
Department Commander Tom Schmidt then appointed the following officers:	
Patriotic Instructor	James A. Scheidel, Jr. Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1
Chaplain	Jonathan P. Goering Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1
Historian	PDC Dean K. Speaks Joseph Gaston Camp 3
Counselor & Graves Registration Officer	PDC Franklin L. Bergquist Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1
CW Memorials Officer	Douglas E. McGovern Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1
Eagle Scout Coordinator	PDC Alan L. Russ Old Abe Camp 16

After the business meeting had concluded, the Encampment members traveled to Jewell, Kansas, to tour a small museum of Abraham Lincoln memorabilia owned by Reid Geist. From there, the group traveled East of town to the Jewell cemetery. Here, a wreath laying ceremony was performed at the grave of Victor Tullar, the last Real Son in the Department of Kansas, and at the grave of William W. Nixon, the only man from Kansas to serve as Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic. The ceremonies included a firing of volleys by the Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1 firing detail.

A special "Thank You" is extended to PDC Dean K. Speaks and Joseph Gaston Camp 3 for hosting the Encampment.

The Ninth Annual Department Encampment will be held on Saturday, April 23, 2005, in Lawrence. Sgt Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence, will be hosting the Encampment. Put this on

your planning calendar, now. All members of the Department are encouraged to attend these encampments.

[Thanks to Dept Commander Tom Schmidt for providing many of the above details.]

WILLIAM WASHINGTON NIXON **Commander-in-Chief, Grand Army of the Republic** **1940-1941**

By Blair Tarr, Old Abe Camp 16

William Washington Nixon was the only Kansan to serve as the National Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, having been elected to that post at the Seventy-fourth National Encampment at Springfield, Illinois in 1940.

He was born near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the son of Samuel and Jane (Steele) Nixon. The day was Washington's Birthday, February 22, 1846, a fact that gave him his middle name. Because of his age, William did not enlist until January 30, 1864, as a private in Company I, 2nd Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery. He arrived in Grant's army just before Cold Harbor, and served at Petersburg. Nixon was stationed at Farmville, Virginia, at the time of Lee's surrender, and was discharged at Philadelphia on January 29, 1866.

Nixon made one visit to Kansas before settling here for a lifetime. In the Spring of 1866 he and three other young veterans made their way by water from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Kansas City, then on to Topeka. But Nixon backtracked to Iowa where he remained until 1869, when he returned to Pennsylvania. There he married Sarah Hope at Mansfield, Pa., on July 20 of that year. The couple moved to Iowa, starting a family. They settled in Jewell County, Kansas in 1879, on a farm in northeast Buffalo Township – a son still farmed it at the time of Nixon's death in 1944.

Sarah Nixon died on April 1, 1884. William remarried on June 11, 1885 to Maria E. Jones at Bridgeville, Pa. She died in 1927. With both wives, he had a total of eight children. William retired to a home he purchased in Jewell in 1903.

His interest in the Grand Army of the Republic was very strong. He joined in 1880, a member of the S.R. Deach Post No. 58 of Jewell, Kansas. At its strongest, the Deach post had 154 members. Nixon would be their last member. He was the Commander of the Department of Kansas in 1934-35, and again in 1943. He attended encampments and reunions faithfully, including the 75th reunion at Gettysburg in 1938.

His election in 1940 meant that he would preside over the Seventy-Fifth National Encampment in 1941 at Columbus, Ohio. But his service would not end there. Longevity meant serving in other positions, and at the time of his death he was the National Judge Advocate General.

On the completion of his term as National Commander, a reception was held in his honor at the Memorial Building in Topeka, on April 5, 1941, as well as a parade and dinner at the Hotel Kansan. Martin Phillips, the commander of Capitol Post No. 1 of the American Legion, was master of ceremonies, while Mrs. Grace Wanner, the president of the Woman's Relief Corps and secretary of the Grand Army of the Republic, both Department of Kansas, made the arrangements. Five other Kansas Civil War veterans were present: J.P. Fair of Mankato; W.E. Applegate and George Ellis of Topeka; Charles Wingrove of Clay Center; and A.T. Williams of Chapman. An address was delivered by the Honorable William A. Smith, a justice of the Kansas Supreme Court, who represented Governor Payne Ratner.

Among the gifts presented to Nixon was a copper plaque described as bearing his war record. This may be the plaque placed along his

military gravestone, which actually commemorates his term as National Commander. He also received a silk lounging robe and an album containing prints of famous paintings.

William Washington Nixon died at his home in Jewell on March 17, 1944, at the age of 98. The services were held at the Methodist Church in Jewell. The American Legion presented a full military funeral at the Wallace Cemetery. The tributes summed up his life – farmer, banker, good neighbor, devout Christian, ideal father, kind friend, brave soldier, the patriot and patriarch of Jewell. He was the last soldier of Jewell County.

At the time of the 1941 reception he commented on what he thought about the war then raging in Europe. "There's nothing today that compares with the Union Army. It's just a machine fight now – a war of machines. They aren't doing any real fighting."

"I wish the world were at peace."

This account is summarized from the Jewell County Republican, April 10, 1941 and March 23, 1944; the Topeka Capital, April 5, 1941; the Journal of the 62nd National Encampment of the Woman's Relief Corps, 1944; and the Proceedings of the 78th National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, 1944.

WHO WILL STEP FORWARD?

by Alan L. Russ, PDC, Old Abe Camp 16

How many times have you looked at a group of today's high school kids and wondered about the future of this great Nation? All too often, it may leave one with a very nervous feeling. Well, during the first week of May I had the opportunity to attend two different high school Junior ROTC awards ceremonies. I am much more confident about the "next generation."

On May 3, Brother Earl McIntosh and I attended the Topeka High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC awards ceremony. Brother McIntosh, who is a First Sergeant with the Marine Corps Reserve, had sponsored the SUVCW ROTC Medal which was being presenting that night to Cadet Colonel Edmund Guerrero. What we saw was a group of young men and women who demonstrated purpose and dedication in their life. The soon to be graduating seniors were called forward. As their names were read, some were going on to college and the rest had already committed themselves to serve their Country in the Marines, or, in one case, as a Navy corpsman.

Three days later, on May 6, Department Senior Vice Commander Jim Knopke, PCC, and I attended the Leavenworth High School Army Junior ROTC awards ceremony. The program at Leavenworth High School is one of the oldest in the Nation. Brother Knopke presented the SUVCW ROTC Medal to Cadet Adam Kuehne. In addition to watching all of the awards being presented to the various cadets, we were entertained by drill team presentation by the men's and women's drill teams. Again, this was another fine group of students who put forth the extra efforts to attend drills before and after regular school times, maintain certain standards not expected of the other students, and demonstrate the necessary discipline to participate. Leavenworth is a military town, and that may account for the large number of cadets, but, again, all economic classes were represented. Eight of the graduating seniors had already enlisted in the armed forces, two in the Air Force and six in the Army. Two others have earned full ROTC scholarships.

The next time you see a group of high school kids and wonder where they are heading in life, remember these two groups of ROTC cadets. These are kids, who, without the guidance and discipline they acquired through the Junior ROTC program, may well have become "at risk." The dedication and leadership of the Junior ROTC staff and cadre must be commended, and the commitment and perseverance of the cadets is applauded. It is reflected in the pride

and determination seen on the faces of the cadets. Brother Earl would say, "Semper Fi!"

[Editor's Note: Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1, Wichita, presented an SUVCW ROTC Medal on May 6, 2004. Camp Commander Doug McGovern presented the medal at the Derby High School to Cadet Colonel Shawna Hamblin, Air Force Junior ROTC program. Also attending from the Camp were Dept. Commander Tom Schmidt, and Camp SVC Jim Scheidel. Congratulations to Cadet Colonel Hamblin.

CAMP INFORMATION

PATRICK COYNE CAMP 1, Wichita

Camp Commander.....Douglas E. McGovern
 Senior Vice CommanderJames A. Scheidel, Jr.
 Junior Vice Commander.....Norman R. Kimrey
 Secretary/TreasurerPCC Thomas E. Schmidt

Camp Meetings are held at the DAV Clubhouse, 3011 George Washington Blvd., in Wichita. The meetings are at 7 PM, normally on the fourth Thursday of the month. Remaining meeting dates for 2004 are September 23, October 28, and November 18.

JOSEPH GASTON CAMP 3, Beloit

Camp Commander.....Kim L. Nelson
 Secretary/Treasurer PDC Dean K. Speaks

Camp meetings are held at the Port Library, 311 W. Main in Beloit, at 7 PM on the last Thursday of each month.

SGT. SAMUEL J. CHURCHILL CAMP 4, Lawrence

Camp Commander.....Craig A. Sundell
 Senior Vice Commander Kent R. Johnson
 Junior Vice Commander..... Alan L. Van Loenen
 Secretary/Treasurer PDC Alan L. Russ

Camp meetings are held at the Watkins Museum of History, in Lawrence, at 7 PM on the third Thursday of each month.

OLD ABE CAMP 16, Topeka

Camp Commander.....Randal L. Durbin
 Senior Vice Commander PDC Randall M. Thies
 Junior Vice Commander.....D. Darrel Gilliland
 Secretary/Treasurer PDC Alan L. Russ

Camp meetings are held at Perkins Restaurant, 1720 SW Wanamaker Rd., in Topeka, at 6:30 PM on the second Monday of each month.

DEPARTMENT ORDERS

DEPARTMENT ORDER NO. 1 April 26, 2004
 Series 2004-2005

1. Having been elected and installed as Department Commander by the assembled delegates at the 8th Department Encampment at Beloit, Kansas, on April 24, 2004, command is hereby assumed and headquarters established at the above address. All correspondence requiring the attention of the Department Commander should be sent to the above address.

2. The following brothers were also elected at the 8th Department Encampment to the positions indicated:

Senior Vice Commander	James R. Knopke, PCC, Old Abe Camp 16
Junior Vice Commander	Randal L. Durbin, Old Abe Camp 16
Secretary/Treasurer	Alan L. Russ, PDC, Old Abe Camp 16
Council	Dean K. Speaks, PDC, Joseph Gaston Camp 3 James A. Scheidel, Jr., Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1 Robert L. Wandel, Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4

3. I have appointed the following brothers to the positions and responsibilities indicated:

Patriotic Instructor	James A. Scheidel, Jr., Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1
Chaplain	Jonathan P. Goering, Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1
Historian	Dean K. Speaks, PDC, Joseph Gaston Camp 3
Counselor	Franklin L. Bergquist, PDC, Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1

Graves Registration Officer
 Franklin L. Bergquist, PDC, Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1
 Civil War Memorials Officer
 Douglas E. McGovern, Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1
 Eagle Scout Coordinator
 Alan L. Russ, PDC, Old Abe Camp 16
 Assistant Treasurer Dean K. Speaks, PDC, Joseph Gaston Camp 3

3. All business correspondence, bills, and requests for payment should be sent to Alan L. Russ, Department Secretary, P.O. Box 68, Auburn KS 66402-0068.

4. All requests for monuments and memorials grants, and all completed monuments and memorials registration forms should be sent to Douglas McGovern, 100 W. 20th Ave., Hutchinson KS 67502-2846.

5. All requests for Eagle Scout Certificates should be sent to Alan L. Russ, Department Eagle Scout Coordinator, P.O. Box 68, Auburn KS 66402-0068.

6. I proudly accept this position to which I have been elected to serve with anticipation and responsibility. It is with anticipation that I look forward to the journey the next 12 months as we continue to build on the efforts of the past year. It is with a deep sense of responsibility that I think of the charge that has been left to us by our ancestry, the Union soldiers and sailors of the Civil War.

7. May our actions and achievements this next year be a memorial to all of our civil war ancestors. May we work together to live up to ideals and legacy they left behind for us to carry on. Let us not drift from their and our motto of "Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty" as we go forward.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

/s/ Thomas E. Schmidt
 Thomas E. Schmidt, PCC
 Commander

ATTEST:

/s/ Alan L. Russ
 Alan L. Russ, PDC
 Secretary

DEPARTMENT ORDER NO. 2 May 4, 2004
 Series 2004-2005

1. Per a motion which passed at our 8th Department Encampment, I am to appoint a committee to work with the Mine Creek Battlefield Foundation and the State visitors site to develop a use for the funds in the Department's Mine Creek Battlefield special fund. The following brothers have agreed to serve on the Mine Creek Battlefield Committee:

Randal L. Durbin, Old Abe Camp No. 16
 Kenneth R. Spurgeon, PDC, Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp No. 1
 Douglas E. McGovern, Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp No. 1

2. The committee is directed to report back to me within three months, and every three months thereafter, as to what progress and/or direction is being pursued.

3. We do not have to immediately identify the exact use, but the committee needs to interface with the above entities and get dialogue started.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

/s/ Thomas E. Schmidt
 Thomas E. Schmidt, PCC
 Commander

ATTEST:

/s/ Alan L. Russ
 Alan L. Russ, PDC
 Secretary

NEXT ISSUE

The Fall issue will be mailed by October 1, 2004. Camp Commanders, Sr. Vice Commanders and Department officers need to submit information and articles to the Newsletter Editor by September 15, 2004, preferably in electronic format. Send to:

Alan L. Russ, Newsletter Editor
 P.O. Box 68
 Auburn KS 66402-0068
 Email: suvcwks16@mindspring.com