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Department of Kansas Contingent
134th Annual SUVCW National Encampment
Richmond, Virginia, August 22, 2015

(Top) PDC Roy Lafferty, CinC Eugene Mortorff,
PDC and Natl Secy Alan Russ, Dept of KS JVC Bill Fischer

TWENTIETH ANNUAL DEPARTMENT ENCAMPMENT
Saturday, January 9, 2016 - Salina, Kansas

The Twentieth Annual Department Encampment will be held on Saturday, January 9, 2016, in Salina, Kansas, at the United Methodist Church of the Cross, 1600 Rush Street. This is just north of the intersection of Broadway and Cloud Street. The doors will open by 9 a.m. for registration, and the Encampment will begin at 10:00 a.m. with the Memorial Service for department brothers lost during 2015.

We are honored to have CinC Eugene G. Mortorff, Department of the Chesapeake, attending the encampment. This is an important milestone anniversary for our department and a great opportunity to share fellowship with brothers from across the state. Please plan to attend. Watch for registration information.

Here is a brief encampment agenda:

09:00 a.m. Registration Opens
10:00 a.m. Memorial Service
10:30 a.m. Business Meeting (Morning Session)
Noon Lunch (time approximate)
01:00 p.m. Business Meeting (Afternoon Session)

Inclement weather date is Saturday, January 23, 2016, at same location

Fall Council Meeting Held in Salina

Department and camp officers met at the United Methodist Church of the Cross, location for the 2016 department encampment, on Saturday, October 17, to discuss the business of the department. All six camps had representation.

UPCOMING 2016 EVENTS CALENDAR

Jan 9 – Department of Kansas Encampment, Salina
Apr 16 – Lincoln Tomb Observance, Springfield, Illinois
April 16-17 – Civil War Encampment, Fort Scott Nat’l Hist Site
May – Memorial Day services across the Department
August 11-14 – National Encampment, Springfield, Illinois
On July 17th, members of American Legion Post 102 used more than 50 iron kettles for its free community bean feed during the 142nd Annual Old Soldiers & Sailors Reunion in Erie, Kansas, continuing a tradition that began to honor Civil War veterans. Huzzah, Legion Post 102!

November 6, 1865. The Confederate commerce raider CSS Shenandoah surrenders to the British at Liverpool, England. The crew of the Shenandoah was the last remaining organized Confederate unit.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER
Kent M. Melcher, DC

I became aware of the SUVCW by accident. While doing some online research into Civil War history, I made my way eventually to the SUVCW national website. That is where I learned the location of SUVCW camps in Kansas. I showed up at the next meeting of Old Abe Camp to find out more.

The 150th anniversary commemoration of the Civil War raised public awareness and interest in the Civil War. I am certain that there are many more like me who have no idea there is such an organization as the SUVCW and who would like to know more. So, how do we capitalize on that interest “for the good of the order”? Here are some ideas:

Make some “business cards” to carry with you. (You can make and print them yourself on your computer) Put your name, contact information (phone and e-mail), SUVCW website URL addresses (national and state), and the meeting date/time/location of your camp. Carry them with you to hand to anyone who expresses interest.

Develop an “elevator speech,” a monologue you can deliver quickly enough to tell the purpose and mission of the SUVCW in the time you would have with someone in an elevator. Short, to the point, meaningful. Make your speech and hand them one of your business cards.

Camps can take advantage of free publicity from local media. Newspapers and radio and TV stations will publish the meeting time and place of your camp. Inform them every month. Media are also interested in feature stories when your camp does special events, such as Memorial Day services and headstone dedications. Contact news reporters and invite them to attend.

Create a “speaker’s bureau” of camp members ready to present short programs about their ancestor’s Civil War service, or a particular battle of the Civil War, or a biographical portrait of a Civil War figure. Contact civic/service clubs in your community (Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.) to let them know camp members are available to be speakers. I know from experience that they are always looking for programs!

Once a year, invite the public to attend a camp meeting. Schedule a special program having local interest. Prepare a flyer or brochure about our mission, your camp and its events, and your meeting information, as well as how to become a member. Hand out the flyer/brochure to those who attend.

All this is “for the good of the order,” but more importantly for the good of our mission and purpose . . . to “keep green in the memory” of American citizens the sacrifices and hardships made by all those who fought to preserve the Union, 1861-1865. The SUV is alive and well in Kansas. Let’s make sure it continues!

HUMBOLDT CAMP HEADSTONE DEDICATION

Members of Humboldt Camp 9 performed a memorial service on October 24, 2015, in Mount Hope Cemetery, Humboldt, for Corporal John Ward Howard (March 5, 1832-January 18, 1928), who served in Company I, Berdan’s 1st US Sharpshooters.

Corp Howard was born near Cincinnati, Ohio. Enlisting from Michigan in August 1862, he was wounded and captured during the First Battle of Hatcher’s Run (AKA Boynton Plank Road), Virginia, in October 1864, and held at Libby Prison.

Carolyn Whitaker of the Humboldt Museum researched Howard’s military service and worked with family members to obtain a headstone for Howard’s unmarked grave. Community and Camp 9 members enjoyed a potluck dinner with 20 Howard descendants at the museum. All then followed an American Legion Riders motorcycle escort to the cemetery, with camp brother Frank Schomaker driving his restored 1950s US Army jeep – quite a sight with all the US flags flying boldly in the
breeze. Mounted members of the Chanute Bit & Spur Club met the entourage at the cemetery and joined in the procession to Corp Howard’s gravesite.

**November 10, 1865.** Major Henry Wirz, former superintendent of Camp Sumter, the Confederate prison at Andersonville, Georgia, becomes the only person to be executed for war crimes committed during the American Civil War.

Descendants place a US flag at Corp John W. Howard’s grave

New Bleeding Kansas/Civil War Exhibits Open at Fort Scott National Historic Site

After more than four years of planning and production, beginning with an August 2011 multiple-day roundtable discussion (which took months itself to organize) with local and national experts on Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi, followed by refinement of interpretive themes, research and development of audio-visual interactives, conservation of museum artifacts for display, and fabrication and installation of the exhibits, Fort Scott National Historic Site welcomes visitors to explore The Fight Over Freedom! Kansas Inflames and Divides a Nation.

With an overarching theme centered on the varied historical definitions of freedom found in territorial Kansas, visitors can follow the lives of six fictional characters representing those multiple perspectives: these include an abolitionist, a slaveholder, a Free State farmer, an Osage Indian, an enslaved person, and a recent immigrant (in this case from Ireland) in the critical years of 1855 (opening of the territory), 1858 (height of Bleeding Kansas intrigue in SE KS), 1862 (Civil War), and 1867 (post-war).

The “History’s Headlines” interactive offers Northern and Southern newspaper excerpts on critical national events, including the Dred Scott Decision, the Bombing of Fort Sumter, the Fall of Vicksburg, and Lincoln’s Assassination, among others, helping visitors understand how partisan newspaper reporting increased sectional distrust across the nation.

The importance of Fort Scott as a critical supply depot and rallying point to launch Union offensives into rebel territory, as a refugee safe haven, and as the recruiting and mustering location for the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry, the first black unit organized by a Northern state, are also highlighted in the new exhibits.

Fort Scott NHS Exhibit Entrance Panel

Museum objects, including period weapons, a Civil War-era surgical kit, and Captain Charles Haynes’ MOLLUS medal help tie the past to the present. The MOLLUS organization graciously provided a replacement ribbon drape from which to display the medal.
Remainder our boys in blue on Memorial Day and everyday

May 26, 1865. In New Orleans, CSA General E. Kirby Smith, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department, accepts terms of surrender, thereby effectively ending the Civil War.

Brothers are encouraged to provide biographies of up to 500 words on their Civil War ancestors for future issues of the Sunflower Picket.

Sites to see related to the Civil War

Kansas has the honor to be the home of the Dwight D. Eisenhower VA Medical Center in Leavenworth County. The center began in 1885 as the Western Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers as a response to the increasing number of former Union soldiers who had made Kansas “The Soldier State” in the decades following the Civil War. The establishment of the home was no small feat for Leavenworth, which won out over communities in six other states. The 650-acre campus included what later became the Leavenworth National Cemetery.

The Leavenworth Home was the fifth of eleven branch institutions established to care for aging Union veterans of the Civil War. In recognition of its significance in the understanding of United States history, the remaining campus buildings were designated as a National Historic Landmark in 2011, becoming only the 25th such site in the state.

More information on the exhibits can be found at:


More info can be found at:

- http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/veterans_affairs/Western_Branch.html
- http://loc.gov/pictures/item/ks0115/