

**DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS
SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR**

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
THIRTIETH ANNUAL
DEPARTMENT ENCAMPMENT**



**MARCH 28, 2026
TOPEKA, KANSAS**

**KENT M. MELCHER, PDC
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER**

Department Officers

2025-2026

Department Commander**Kent M. Melcher, PDC**
(Pvt. John N. Eckes Camp 10, Winfield)

Senior Vice Department Commander**James D. Thornton, PCC**
(Franklin Camp 5, Olathe)

Junior Vice Department Commander**Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC**
(Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1, Wichita)

Secretary (term expiring 2028).....**Alan L. Russ, PDC**
(Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka)

Treasurer (term expiring 2028).....**Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC**
(Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka)

Council Member (term expiring 2026)**James H. Graves, PCC**
(Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1, Wichita)

Council Member (term expiring 2026)**Barrett E. Young, PCC**
(Humboldt Camp 9, Humboldt)

Council Member (term expiring 2027)**Roy A. Lafferty, PDC**
(Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence)

Patriotic Instructor**K. Kirk Nystrom, PDC**
(Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka)

Chaplain**W. Patrick Myers, PCC**
(Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence)

Graves Registration Officer**Joseph E. Chrisman, PCC**
(Pvt. John N. Eckes Camp 10, Winfield)

Historian.....**Joshua S. Gillihan-Young**
(Franklin Camp 5, Olathe)

Civil War Memorials Officer**Joshua S. Gillihan-Young**
(Franklin Camp 5, Olathe)

Counselor**K. Kirk Nystrom PDC**
(Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka)

Signals Officer**Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC**
(Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1, Wichita)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL ENCAMPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS
SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR
March 28, 2026
Topeka, Kansas

1. The Encampment business meeting was preceded by the Memorial Service, beginning at 11:00 am. During the Memorial Service, the Department remembered the five brothers we lost since the last encampment. The service finished with a video remembrance of all the brothers we have lost over the last thirty years.
2. As required by Chapter II, Article III, Section 1 of the Regulations of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and by Article VI, Bylaws of the Department of Kansas, SUVCW, the Thirtieth Annual Encampment of the Department of Kansas, was held on March 28, 2026, at Topeka, Kansas.
3. The Encampment was called to order at 12:05 pm by Department Commander Kent M. Melcher, PDC. The opening was conducted in accordance with the Ritual and Ceremonials of the Order.
4. The Department Secretary called the roll of officers and reported the following officers as indicated below:
 - Department Commander Kent M. Melcher, PDC, Camp 10, present
 - Senior Vice Department Commander James D. Thornton, PCC, Camp 5, present
 - Junior Vice Department Commander Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Camp 4, present
 - Secretary Alan L. Russ, PDC, Camp 16, present
 - Treasurer Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC, Camp 16, present.
 - Council Member Barrett E. Young, PCC, Camp 9, present.
 - Council Member James H. Graves, PCC, Camp 1, absent.
 - Council Member Roy A. Lafferty, PDC, Camp 4, present.
 - Chief of Staff Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC, Camp 16, present.
 - Patriotic Instructor K. Kirk Nystrom, Camp 16, present.
 - Chaplain Jeffrey A. Winters, Camp 5, present.
 - Graves Registration Officer and Historian Joshua S. Gillihan-Young, Camp 5, absent.
 - Counselor K. Kirk Nystrom, PDC, Camp 16, present.
 - Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator Eric L. Crittenden, Camp 10, present.
 - Signal Officer and Assistant Treasurer Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Camp 1, present
 - Assistant Treasurer Alan L. Russ, PDC, Camp 16, present.
5. In addition to the Past Department Commanders listed as present in paragraphs 3 and 4, above, the following additional PDCs were present:
 - Craig A. Sundell, PDC, Camp 4
 - Michael A. Todd, PDC, Camp 4
6. Commander Melcher then appointed the following brothers for the encampment:
 - Color Bearer: Timothy A. Baxter, Camp 1
 - Guide: Barrett E. Young, PCC, Camp 9
 - Guard: Michael A. Todd, PDC, Camp 4
7. The Chaplain's prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL ENCAMPMENT

8. Commander Melcher declared the Thirtieth Annual Encampment of the Department of Kansas, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, open for the transaction of such business as may legally and properly come before it.

9. Commander Melcher welcomed Brian C. Pierson, PCinC, Department of Oklahoma, to the encampment as the National Representative for Commander-in-Chief Kevin P. Tucker. PCinC Pierson briefly addressed the encampment and provided greetings from CinC Tucker.

10. The following guests were also recognized and welcomed:

Cynthia L. Cruz, Julia Louisa Lovejoy Tent 36, DUVCW 1861-1865, Topeka
Rosanna Wilson, Julia Louisa Lovejoy Tent 36, DUVCW 1861-1865, Topeka
Eadie Flickinger, Julia Louisa Lovejoy Tent 36, DUVCW 1861-1865, Topeka
Paul Hadley, PDC, Department of Nebraska, SUVCW
Wilma Handley, Department President, Department of Oklahoma, DUVCW 1861-1865
Terry Handley, PDC, Department Commander, Department of Oklahoma, SUVCW
Keith Rockefeller, PDC, Department Commander, Department of Nebraska, SUVCW

11. The Credentials report was presented. Brothers signed in as they arrived at the encampment. A quorum was declared to be present. Summary of attendance is shown below. Appendix A contains the full listing of attendees and their status. One alternate delegate was changed to delegate due to the absence of a delegate from his camp.

Encampment Status	Present
Department Commander	1
Past Department Commander	7
Camp Commander	6
Past Camp Commander	12
Department Elected Officer	0
Delegate	18
Alternate Delegate	1
Total Present and Eligible to Vote:	45

12. Commander Melcher appointed the following brothers to the Encampment Bylaws Committee.

PDC Alan L. Russ (Chairman)
PDC Michael A. Todd
PCC James D. Thornton.

13. Commander Melcher appointed the following brothers to the Encampment and Resolutions Committee.

PDC Rocky L. Bartlow (Chairman)
PDC Thomas E. Schmidt
PCC Barrett E. Young.

14. Commander Melcher informed the Encampment of “housekeeping rules” to be used during the meeting.

15. The Department Officer and camp reports were received, reviewed, and compiled prior to the encampment. Copies of the reports were provided to all attendees of the Encampment. Commander Melcher declared that, if there were no objections, the previously submitted officers and camp commanders reports not containing any recommendations would be accepted. With no objections, the reports were accepted.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL ENCAMPMENT

16. The report submitted by Department Treasurer Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC, contained the following recommendation:

The Department of Kansas will add to the funds received at the 30th department encampment to bring the total to \$500 for the purpose of giving the minimum required to the Kansas History Museum Adopt a Flag program. The decision of which flag to adopt will be at the discretion of the Department Council.

17. Commander Melcher referred the recommendation of the Department Treasurer to the Encampment Resolutions and Encampment Committee.

18. Secretary Russ reported that the correspondence which had been received has previously been distributed to all officers and camp secretaries, except for submissions by candidates for National officer positions. These will be electronically forwarded to all from the department who will be attending the National Encampment.

19. Commander Melcher reminded the encampment that, according to Roberts Rules of Order, no unfinished business can be carried over from the twenty-ninth encampment.

20. Secretary Russ, as chairman of the Department Bylaws Committee, stated the amendments had previously been submitted to the various camps per Department Bylaws along with the recommendations of the committee. They were also included, along with the recommendations, in the encampment reports packet each attendee received.

a. A motion was made by Brother Russ to vote on all amendments, as published, as a group. Motion was seconded and carried.

b. The proposed amendments were submitted to the encampment for vote as recommended by the Department Bylaws Committee. Amendments 2026-01 and 2026-02 were approved with the required two-thirds of votes cast in favor of the amendments.

21. PDC Alan L Russ presented the report of the nominating committee. Nominations were as follows:

Department Commander – James D. Thornton, PCC, Camp 5

Senior Vice Department Commander – Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Camp 4

Junior Vice Department Commander – Roy A. Lafferty, PDC, Camp 4

Council Members – Two Positions (terms ending 2028), with a possibility of one additional position for the remaining one year unexpired term if Brother Lafferty is elected as JVDC.

Brent D. Whitten, Camp 4

Bryan W. Wampler, Camp 5

Jonathan A. Holder, Camp 16

22. PDC Thomas E. Schmidt, in his role as chairman of the Department Encampment Committee, presented the recommendations of the committee for the 2027 Department Encampment, with it proposed to be held on April 3, 2027, at the Shawnee Indian Mission State Historical Site in Fairway, Kansas. Franklin Camp 5 will be the host camp. The recommendation was accepted by the encampment.

23. PDC Roy A. Lafferty presented the report of the Department Council Members and declared the financial records had been reviewed by the council and appeared to be in order.

24. Commander Melcher then took the encampment into “New Business.”

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL ENCAMPMENT

25. Commander Melcher addressed the encampment concerning the 2026 National Encampment, to be held at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 30 through August 2. The business meeting is to be held on July 31 and August 1. PCC Thornton stated he plans to attend in his role as Department Commander, if so elected. The following past department commanders stated their intention to attend: Commander Melcher in his status as PDC, PDC Bartlow, PDC Lafferty, PDC Russ, PDC Schmidt, and PDC Todd.

26. Commander Melcher called for nominations to elect delegates to the 2026 National Encampment. The Department will be allowed to have seven delegates. PCC Richard W. Hummel (Camp 16) stated his intention to attend. PDC Russ moved the following be elected as Delegates: Richard W. Hummel (Camp 16), Brent D. Whitten (Camp 4), Jonathan A. Holder (Camp 16), Steven W. Hammil (Camp 1), Rocky D. Ansell (Camp 9), and Terry E. Justice (Camp 1). Motion seconded and carried.

27. PDC Russ moved “all remaining Brothers of the Department of Kansas in Good Standing at the time of this Encampment are hereby elected as Alternates to the next annual National Encampment of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.” Motion seconded and carried.

28. The Chairman of the Encampment Resolutions and Officers Reports Committee recommended the recommendation by Treasurer Rocky L. Bartlow be approved [see item 16, above]. Motion passed.

29. PDC Thomas E. Schmidt then moved the Department work with Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4 to obtain a plaque to be placed at the grave site of Charles W. Bailey at Oakwood Cemetery, Baldwin City, Kansas. Motion passed. It was stressed the Department would work with the SUVCW and the SUVCW Charitable Foundation for financial support.

30. Commander Melcher proceeded with the nomination of officers. The following brothers were nominated for the indicated office.

Department Commander – James D. Thornton, PCC, Camp 5

Senior Vice Department Commander – Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Camp 4

Junior Vice Department Commander – Roy A. Lafferty, PDC, Camp 4

Council Member – Brent D. Whitten, Camp 4, Bryan W. Wampler, Camp 5, and Jonathan A. Holder, Camp 16

31. Commander Melcher called for nominations from the floor. There being no additional nominations for the positions, nominations were closed.

32. With regards to the three Council positions, Brother Holder stated he would accept the one-year term expiring in 2027. The other two candidates agreed to his request. That being said, Commander Melcher then declared the following:

For the unexpired term as Council Member, term ending 2027 – Jonathan A. Holder, Camp 16.

For the terms as Council Members ending 2028 - Brent D. Whitten, Camp 4, Bryan W. Wampler, Camp 5

33. In accordance with Roberts Rules of Order, the candidates were declared by Commander Melcher as elected.

34. Brother Steven W. Hamlin moved to recognize and thank the Kansas Museum of History for providing the meeting facility. Motion carried.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL ENCAMPMENT

35. PDC Russ moved to accept the proceedings of this encampment as approved when they have been approved by the Department Council. Motion carried.

36. Commander Melcher then proceeded to present Department Awards, as follows:

PDC Dean K. Speaks Award for Recruiter of the Year – Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4

William W. Nixon Award for Camp of the Year – Franklin Camp 5

Leander Stillwell Outstanding Achievement Award – Jerry W. Reiman, PCC, Old Abe Camp 16

Captain Patrick H. Coney Award for Brother of the Year – Jerry A. Coffelt, Franklin Camp 5

John Clem Award for Accomplishments by a Junior Member or Junior Associate – Harrington Joseph Montgomery, Franklin Camp 5

Past Camp Commander Certificates for 2026:

Michael L. Halfman, PCC, Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1

William Patrick (Pat) Myers, PCC, Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4

James D. Thornton, PCC, Franklin Camp 5

Rocky D. Ansell, PCC, Humboldt Camp 9

Terry E. Justice, PCC, Pvt. John N. Eckes Camp 10

J. Thomas Morgan, PCC, Old Abe Camp 16

37. There being no further business to come before the encampment, Commander Melcher turned the gavel over to National Representative Brian C. Pierson, PCinC, for the installation of officers. Brother Pierson relieved Brother Melcher of his command.

38. Commander-elect James D. Thornton was asked to provide a list of appointed officers for the secretary. The secretary read those elected and appointed:

Department Commander	James D. Thornton, PCC
Senior Vice Department Commander	Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC
Junior Vice Department Commander	Roy A. Lafferty, PDC
Secretary (term ending 2028)	Alan L. Russ, PDC
Treasurer (term ending 2028)	Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC
Council Member (term ending 2027)	Jonathan A. Holder
Council Member (term ending 2028)	Bryan W. Wampler
Council Member (term ending 2028)	Brent D. Whitten
Immediate Past Department Commander	Kent M. Melcher, PDC
Chief of Staff	Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC
Patriotic Instructor	Christopher R. Cardone
Chaplain	Stanley E. Palmer
Graves Registration Officer	Joseph E. Chrisman, PCC
Historian	Joshua S. Gillihan-Young
Counselor	K. Kirk Nystrom, PDC
Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator	Eric L. Crittenden
Civil War Memorials Officer	Jeffrey A. Winters
Signals Officer	Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC
Assistant Treasurer-1	Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC
Assistant Treasurer-2	Alan L. Russ, PDC

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL ENCAMPMENT

39. PCinC Pierson proceeded to install the Department Officers, after which they assumed their respective stations.

40. Commander Thornton then presented a certificate to PDC Kent M. Melcher for his service as the Twenty-Third Department Commander of the Department of Kansas.

41. Commander James D. Thornton proceeded to close the Encampment, as per the Ritual and Ceremonials of the Order. The Encampment was declared closed at 2:30 PM.

These proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Encampment for the Department of Kansas are certified to be complete and accurate, to the best of my knowledge and ability.

SUBMITTED IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,



Alan L. Russ, PDC
Department Secretary

Approved by the Department of Kansas Council on April 27, 2026

Attachment:

A Roster of Encampment Attendees

B Department Officer Reports, Camp Commander Reports, and Department Committee Reports

**ATTACHMENT A
ENCAMPMENT ATTENDEES**

CORP. PATRICK COYNE CAMP 1, WICHITA Strength-March 28, 2026: 25

Baxter, Timothy A. (Del) Hamlin, Steven W. (CC) Palmer, Stanley E. (Del)
Rouse, Dale L. (PCC)

Department Commander	Past Department Commander	Camp Commander	Past Camp Commander	Elected Dept. Officer	Delegate/Alt. Delegate	TOTAL PRESENT	VOTING STRENGTH
0	0	1	1	0	2	4	4

SGT. SAMUEL J. CHURCHILL CAMP 4, LAWRENCE Strength-March 28, 2025: 29

Fernkopf, Paul S. (Del) Goff, George E. (Del) Handl, Michael J. (PCC)
Heck, Michael D. (CC) Jefferson, Paul (PCC) Lafferty, Roy A. (PDC)
Lawrence, Dennis L. (PCC) Myers, W. Patrick (PCC) Schmidt, Thomas E. (PDC)
Sundell, Craig A. (PDC) Todd, Michael A. (PDC) Whitten, Brent D. (Del)

Department Commander	Past Department Commander	Camp Commander	Past Camp Commander	Elected Dept. Officer	Delegate/Alt. Delegate	TOTAL PRESENT	VOTING STRENGTH
0	4	1	4	0	3	12	12

FRANKLIN CAMP 5, OLATHE Strength-March 28, 2025: 43

Coffelt, Jerry A. (Del) Stilley, Daniel W. (CC) Stilley, William D. (Del)
Stoker, William J. (PCC) Thornton, James D. (PCC) Walters, Edward D. (Del)
Wampler, Bryan W. (Del) Wilson, Lloyd L. (Del) Winters, Jeffrey A. (Del)

Department Commander	Past Department Commander	Camp Commander	Past Camp Commander	Elected Dept. Officer	Delegate/Alt. Delegate	TOTAL PRESENT	VOTING STRENGTH
0	0	1	2	0	6	9	9

HUMBOLDT CAMP 9, HUMBOLDT Strength-March 28, 2025: 9

Ansell, Rocky D. (CC) Piatt, Dennis L. (Del) Young, Barrett E. (PCC)

Department Commander	Past Department Commander	Camp Commander	Past Camp Commander	Elected Dept. Officer	Delegate/Alt. Delegate	TOTAL PRESENT	VOTING STRENGTH
0	0	1	1	0	1	3	3

PVT. JOHN N. ECKES CAMP 10, WINFIELD Strength-March 28, 2024: 18

Crittenden, Eric L. (Del) Justice, Terry E. (CC) Melcher, Kent M. (DC)

Department Commander	Past Department Commander	Camp Commander	Past Camp Commander	Elected Dept. Officer	Delegate/Alt. Delegate	TOTAL PRESENT	VOTING STRENGTH
1	1	1	0	0	1	3	3

OLD ABE CAMP 16, TOPEKA Strength-March 28, 2024: 38

Bartlow, Rocky L. (PDC) Bluthardt, Douglas L. (Del) Cardone, Christopher R (Del)
Dodson, Boone O. (Del) Dunstan, Craig E. (PCC) Holder, Jonathan A. (Del)
Hummel, Richard W. (PCC) Krause, Gary W. (PCC) Ronald H. Martin (CC)
Nystrom, K. Kirk (PDC) Puett, Jack M. (PCC) Reves, Robert J. (Del)
Russ, Alan L. (PDC) Siltman, Frank J. (Alt)

Department Commander	Past Department Commander	Camp Commander	Past Camp Commander	Elected Dept. Officer	Delegate/Alt. Delegate	TOTAL PRESENT	VOTING STRENGTH
0	3	1	4	0	6	14	13

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP FOR ENCAMPMENT

Department Commander	Past Department Commander	Camp Commander	Past Camp Commander	Elected Dept. Officer	Delegate/Alt. Delegate	TOTAL PRESENT	VOTING STRENGTH
1	7	6	12	0	19	45	44

DC=Dept Cdr PDC=Past Dept Cdr CC=Camp Cdr PCC=Past Camp Cdr DO=Dept Elected Officer Del=Delegate Alt=Alternate Delegate

Incoming Department Officers

2026-2027

Department Commander	James D. Thornton, PCC <i>(Franklin Camp 5, Olathe)</i>
Senior Vice Department Commander	Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC <i>(Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence)</i>
Junior Vice Department Commander	Roy A. Lafferty, PDC <i>(Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence)</i>
Secretary (term expiring 2028)	Alan L. Russ, PDC <i>(Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka)</i>
Treasurer (term expiring 2028)	Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC <i>(Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka)</i>
Council Member-IPDC (term expiring 2027)	Kent M. Melcher, PDC <i>(Pvt. John N. Eckes Camp 10, Winfield)</i>
Council Member (term expiring 2027)	Jonathan A. Holder <i>(Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka)</i>
Council Member (term expiring 2028)	Bryan W. Wampler <i>(Franklin Camp 5, Olathe)</i>
Council Member (term expiring 2028)	Brent D. Whitten <i>(Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence)</i>
Patriotic Instructor	K. Kirk Nystrom, PDC <i>(Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka)</i>
Chaplain	Stanley E. Palmer <i>(Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1, Wichita)</i>
Graves Registration Officer	Joseph E. Chrisman, PCC <i>(Pvt. John N. Eckes Camp 10, Winfield)</i>
Historian	Joshua S. Gillihan-Young <i>(Franklin Camp 5, Olathe)</i>
G.A.R. Records Officer	Boone O. Dodson <i>(Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka)</i>
Civil War Memorials Officer	Jeffrey A. Winters <i>(Franklin Camp 5, Olathe)</i>
Counselor	K. Kirk Nystrom PDC <i>(Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka)</i>
Signals Officer	Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC <i>(Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1, Wichita)</i>



LET US NEVER FORGET.

OFFICER, CAMP, & COMMITTEE REPORTS



©

TO THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL
DEPARTMENT ENCAMPMENT

March 28, 2026

TOPEKA, KANSAS

DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

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OFFICER REPORTS

Department Commander – Kent M Melcher, PDC

In November, I formed a 250th Anniversary Committee, the purpose of which was to put together resources for our Camps for their participation in the Semi quincennial. From the committee's brainstorming, we organized a framework and put together a report that drew upon the video presented by Commander-in-Chief Tucker.

After two months of work, the committee sent the report, dated January 15, to our Camp Commanders and Secretaries. We urged every Camp in the Department to plan at least one event in 2026 but reminded them to keep in mind that the 250th anniversary commemoration will continue through 2033 as a way of recognizing that the Revolutionary War continued from 1776 to 1783.

We suggested that Camps begin their planning by sending the complete report to all their members, asking them to read it and consider what suggestions and resources might be effective in their communities. Then, at their next Camp meeting to devote time to discuss projects and programs that seem doable in their situation. We also suggested that it might be helpful to appoint a committee to list the most viable options for use in the coming years.

We cautioned our brothers about feeling overwhelmed by the many suggestions and resources in the report, remembering that they can only do what they are able.

I am proud of the work that the members of the committee did to produce the report.

The Bobby Boyd Recruitment Challenge, named for our late brother Robert Boyd, PDC, continues and has yielded modest results. At least one camp will be recognized at our encampment for meeting the target of three new members since last summer. I firmly believe that a camp's participation in the Semi quincennial will provide opportunities for visibility in their communities, with greater opportunities for growth.

As I write this in late January, Department officers and committees are preparing for the Department Encampment on March 28, 2026. I am planning to present awards for Brother of the Year, Camp of the Year, Best Facebook Page, and the Johnny Clem Award for accomplishments by a Junior Member or Associate. I will also present an Outstanding Achievement Award "to the brother who has performed significant service to the Department of Kansas or the organization as a whole over an extended period of time."

We continue to have a dedicated group of brothers who honor the memory of the Boys in Blue and who keep green the memory of those who fought valiantly and unselfishly to keep our country the *United States* of America.

Kent M Melcher, PDC

Department Commander

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Senior Vice Department Commander – James D Thornton, PCC

The purpose of the office of Senior Vice Department Commander is to assist the Department Commander, promote the Order and Department, and preside at Camp/Department meetings in the absence of the Commander.

During my tenure as Senior Vice Department Commander, it was the second item on the list that I took to heart. I wished to stimulate a sense of pride and brotherhood within the Department of Kansas. With that desire in mind, I planned, coordinated, and set up an online webstore enabling the brothers of the Department of Kansas to purchase custom embroidered polo shirts designed specifically for the Department.

OFFICER REPORTS

With the assistance of Department Secretary Alan Russ in obtaining the necessary SUVCW Merchandise License, I was able to utilize the SUVCW logo for the shirts, with “Department of Kansas” embroidered below. Nearly fifty Department of Kansas polo shirts were purchased by the brothers of the department. I hope they are now being worn with pride to promote the SUVCW and the Department of Kansas.

I also served on the Department 250 Committee and assisted with the compiling of ideas, suggestions, and a list of events to provide to our camps for participation in the 250th Anniversary of our nation. As a member of the 250 Committee, I suggested the possibility of partnering with the SAR in a wreath laying on July 4 at the grave of Sarah Ruddell Davis, the only SAR recognized Revolutionary War Patriot buried in Kansas, along with Brother Randolph Colby suggesting the same for the grave of a Revolutionary War veteran in South Haven.

It has been my honor to serve as the Senior Vice Department of Kansas Commander.

Respectfully Submitted,

James D. Thornton, PCC

Senior Vice Department Commander

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Junior Vice Department Commander – Thomas E Schmidt, PDC

After being elected Junior Vice Department Commander at the April 2025 Department Encampment, I have attended all the Department Council meetings that took place on May 5, August 18, October 13, 2025, and January 19, 2026.

In April of 2025 the annual Lincoln Tomb Ceremony sponsored by the SUVCW and MOLLUS in Springfield, IL. I then attended the B. F. Stephenson, founder of the GAR, service in Petersburg, IL.

I responded to three inquiries from the department website from individuals seeking information to join our organization. I followed up with each and forwarded their inquiries to the proper camp for their further handling. Two of them have since joined our organization and are members of the Topeka Camp.

I attended the National Encampment of the SUVCW in Houston, TX in August of 2025 and presented bylaw changes to the National SUVCW Monuments and Memorials committee, that had been approved at our Department Encampment in April 2025. By vote of the national encampment attendees the bylaws changes were approved to include civil war flags, in public domain, to be eligible for grant funding as handled by the committee.

I attended and participated in the grave side memorial service for Past Commander-in-Chief Brad Schall on September 19, 2025 in Hutchinson, Ks.

I attended and participated in the memorial service for PDC Conrad Fisher in Topeka, Ks on October 18, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC

Junior Vice Department Commander – Dept. of Kansas

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

OFFICER REPORTS

Department Secretary - Alan L. Russ, PDC

All numbers are effective as of March 1, 2026.

My term of office runs through the 32nd Department Encampment in 2028. Please note I will not run for reelection as Department Secretary at that time.

Since the last Department Encampment, I have continued with my duties as Department Secretary to the best of my abilities. As Secretary, I processed and submitted the following to National Headquarters:

- a. Certificate of Election and Installation of Department Officers for 2025-2026 (SUVCW Form 49)
- b. Amended Department Bylaws to CinC Martin for approval.
- c. Department Annual Report for 2025 (SUVCW Form 35) with annotated department roster and Camp Annual Reports (SUVCW Form 27) for all camps.
- d. Department Bylaws as approved and signed by CinC.
- e. Certification of Election and Installation of Camp Officers (SUVCW Form 22) for all camps.
- f. Applications for membership, with Camp Status Report and supporting documents - 15.
- g. Applications for reinstatement of membership, to include Camp Status Report - 0.
- h. Camp Status Reports reporting changes of address – 10.
- i. Supplemental applications to include Camp Status Report and supporting documents - 2.
- j. Camp Status Report reporting death of brother – 4.
- k. Camp Status Report reporting change in “dual” status – 2.
- l. Camp Status Report reporting honorable discharge – 0.
- m. Camp Status Report reporting general discharge – 1.
- n. Camp Status Report reporting change of Associate to Member – 1
- o. Camp Status Report reporting transfers in or out of Department – 0
- p. Camp Status Report reporting Junior Member to Member - 1

The above actions ensured the Department remained in good status with the National Organization, thus continuing the Department’s record of never having been suspended by a Commander-in-Chief.

Additionally, I prepared agendas and took minutes for the four Department Council meetings; I attended the Lincoln Tomb Ceremony at Springfield, Illinois, in April 2025. I also attended the 2025 National Encampment at Houston, Texas, in my status as both Past Department Commander and as the serving National Secretary.

I edited and distributed four issues of *The Sunflower Picket* during the last year. Special appreciation goes to PDC Rocky Bartlow who pursued article submissions and to the officers and camps who submitted the materials that made up the Department newsletter and PCC Jim Thornton who provided his proof-reading skills.

CAMP STRENGTHS AS OF MARCH 1, 2026 (Unofficial)

The following strength figures represent information received by the Department Secretary as of March 1, 2026. Note these figures do not yet reflect the 2026 Camp Annual Report information as those will not be received until after the encampment. The Department is currently showing a net increase of ten brothers within the Department of Kansas since March 31, 2025. After discounting for dual brothers and juniors (as National does to get true strength), our actual reportable strength is 167.

OFFICER REPORTS

Camp Name & Number	Members	Assoc.	Junior Members	Junior Assoc.	Total	Net Change
Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1	26	1	0	0	27	-2
Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4	28	2	0	0	30	+4
Franklin Camp 5	44	2	1	0	47	+3
Humboldt Camp 9	10	0	0	0	10	-1
John N. Eckes Camp 10	20	0	0	0	20	+2
Old Abe Camp 16	40	0	0	0	37	+4
DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS	168	5	1	0	174	+10
Dual Brothers	6	0	0	0	6	0
Department Reportable Strength (minus Dual Brothers and Juniors) 167						

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Department Treasurer - Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC

During the last year, I have maintained the department bank accounts, presenting them at the end of each quarter to the Department Council and at the end of the year for their approval and inspection. We bank at Envista Credit Union in Topeka and The Bank of Tescott in Salina and the balances of the checkbook, savings, and Schall Fund correspond with my report.

As of this report (March 9, 2026) we have: Savings-\$5236.26, Checking-\$3206.90 (\$2951.90 available), Schall Fund-\$1487.37 and Tescott Checking-\$347.00.

I have filed the department's 990N with the IRS, confirmed that all the camps are in compliance as well, and will send in our Form 11 to National after the department encampment.

I worked with the Department Council to make the 2026 Budget (See attached at the end of this report).

The department also has two assistant treasurers, PDC Thomas Schmidt in Eudora and PDC Alan Russ in Salina.

The department council voted to contribute \$ to the Bobby Boyd fun after the passing of PDC Robert Boyd in April and \$200 to the Schall fund after the passing of PCinC Brad Schall in September.

All records and departmental accoutrements reside at my home 125 NW Courtland Ave in Topeka as well in a cloud storage facility.

Submitted,

Rocky L Bartlow, PDC, Department Treasurer.

RECOMMENDATIONS: One

Explanation:

The flags held at the Kansas Museum of History are in the process of restoration. This process is very costly but must be done. We, as the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, should be at the forefront of this project because it was under these flags many of our ancestors marched, fought, bled, and died.

Recommendation:

The department of Kansas will add to the funds received at the 30th department encampment to bring the total to \$500 for the purpose of giving the minimum required to the Kansas History Museum Adopt a Flag program. The decision of which flag to adopt will be at the discretion of the department council.

OFFICER REPORTS

Patriotic Instructor – Michael J Hadl, PCC

What I have tried to do this past year is to get state members of the SUVCW, is to join SUVCW Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4's Facebook page and I join theirs. Our fb page has 93 members. We have a lot of members from other camps back east. We can share what other camps have been doing. Tom Schimdt, Roy Lafferty and I went to a seminar Friday Feb. 27 at Free St. High School in Lawrence. We had 2 recruitment tables set up. We had a lot of people stop by to talk to us.

Dept P. I. Mike Hadl

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Chaplain – Jeffrey A Winters

No report received

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Graves Registration Officer – Joseph E Chrisman, PCC

On 4 January 2026, I received an email from Mr. John Schoenrock. He had visited his ancestors' grave in the Poala Cemetery and discovered there was not a GAR grave marker (flag holder) at the gravesite. I gave him several options where one could be purchased. After a few days I emailed him to see if he had any luck purchasing a marker, but I didn't get a response.

On 12 February 2026 I received an email from Mr. Alan Burt; he was looking for supportive documentation for a Union Soldier buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Lawrence, Kansas. I found the veterans Pension record, and other supportive documentation stating the Veteran was a member of the GAR post in Lawrence.

Mr. Burt is a volunteer trying to find the burial locations for the 3800 Civil War Veterans from Winnebago County Illinois. He then adds the veterans to Find a Grave along with all the documentation to honor the veterans who served from his home county.

Mr. Burt relayed my contact information to Mary Rose Fullip, the founder and leader of the Winnebago County Illinois Civil War Veterans Program who was extremely grateful for the help in locating one more Winnebago County Illinois Civil War Veteran.

This is all I have to report at this time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph E. Chrisman,PCC

Graves Registration Officer - Department of Kansas SUVCW.

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Historian – Joshua S. Gillihan-Young

Nothing to report.

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

OFFICER REPORTS

Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator-Eric L Crittenden, PCC

2026 there were some Eagle Scout Certificates that continue to be distributed and either presented to Scouts for their Court of Honor or sent to them ahead of time.

Per the record of the certificates I was part of disseminating out there was a total of 8 Scout certificates total and the following is summary of those Eagle Scout certificates by each camp:

Franklin Camp – 4

Humboldt Camp – 1

Coyne Camp – 1

At-large – 2

In Fraternity, Charity & Loyalty,

Eric Crittenden, Dept of KS, SUVCW – ESCC

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Department Signal Officers – Thomas E Schmidt, PDC

Our new Department website has been up and running for the last three years. It is a professional and

fully functional website (suvchwks.org) that supports the Department of Kansas SUVCW.

Between April 1, 2025, and March 7, 2026, we had the following:

Views: 5,600

Visitors: 2,300

I want to again point you to the website where PDC Alan Russ spent a large amount of time compiling information on the civil war ancestors of the Department of Kansas SUVCW members. By clicking on the History tab on the website he has added two drop downs. One for **Ancestors of Members of the Dept. of Kansas** and another for the **Ancestors of Members of the Dept. of Kansas by State and Regiment**. These are two great additions to the website.

Please take a moment the next time you are on the site to look at them.

Also under the History tab is a drop-down menu entitled **Our Fallen Brothers** which shows our members who have passed away that Alan Russ PDC also maintains. Brother Russ continues to handle a number items in connection with the overall website. Thanks to Alan for all he does for our website.

Camp pages are supported as follows: Camps 1, 4, and 5 by PDC Thomas E. Schmidt; Camps 9, 10,

and 16 by PDC Kent M. Melcher.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC

Department Signal Officer and Technology Committee Chair

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

CAMP REPORTS

Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp No. 1 – Commander Steve Hamlin

The Camp scored one member from a transfer and one additional member who is a member of Humbolt camp who participates with Coyne Camp as well. Meetings are the fourth Thursday of each month (except August and November) at 7 pm at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in west Wichita.

Our Camp prides itself in member-generated programs tied to the conflict covering historical figures, events, and family histories. This year the camp continues over a decade of commitment to the maintenance of WBTS headstones in Highland Cemetery. For the fifth year the camp hosted Wreaths Across America at Maple Grove continues and through it our relationship with area Daughters of Union Veterans, Daughters of the American Revolution, and Scout chapters at the Women's Relief Corps Pavilion in Maple Grove and across the street at the Grand Army of the Republic Eggleston Post 244 plot in Highland. Our relationship with the local Sons of the American Revolution, Washington Chapter, remains strong and ongoing as we share many members and our meeting space.

Our obedience to General Logan to observe Memorial Day and keep its memory sacred was again observed by placing wreaths at the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in downtown Wichita, the WRC Pavilion, the Eggleston plot, in downtown Hutchinson, and Hillside Cemetery in Sedgwick.

PCC Michael Halfman completed his many years of work procuring from the VA a headstone for a Civil War nurse buried in Wichita. Brother Halfman not only researched and organized the placement of the stone he hosted a dedication ceremony.

Coyne Camp is proud to announce that we have donated \$500 to the Kansas Historical Society to put toward restoration of a Civil War battle flag.

Brothers of the camp along with Brothers from Eckes camp participated in the Arkansas City Independence Day and Veterans Day parades.

Coyne Camp is currently planning four activities to celebrate America 250 in 2026.

Respectfully submitted, in Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty
Steve Hamlin, Camp Commander

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp No. 4 – Commander Michael D Heck

In accordance with paragraph 3(b) of Order No. 08, Department of Kansas, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the following is a report of the activities, in chronological order, of Camp No. 4 since the last Department Encampment.

2025 – Pat Myers, Commander

- April 15 - regular monthly meeting; program by Chris Cardone on his children's book "High Noon at Pryor's Creek" which follows the 2nd Kansas Colored Infantry from the summer of 1863 into the Reconstruction era.
- April 19 - workday at Maple Grove Cemetery cleaning headstones of Civil War veterans.
- May 20 - regular monthly meeting; program by Camp member John Shobe on Samuel Bryers, one of his three Civil War ancestors. Bryers served with a unit of the Kentucky Calvary.
- May 24 - placed flags on over 400 graves of Civil War veterans in three Lawrence cemeteries in conjunction with Memorial Day.
- June 17 - regular monthly meeting; program by Camp member John Solbach on his Civil War ancestor Michael Senn. Senn was an early settler in that part of the Kansas Territory

CAMP REPORTS

that is now Colorado, joined the Union Army through a Colorado volunteer unit in August of 1861, and participated in the battles that ended the Confederate invasion of New Mexico Territory in 1862.

- July 19 – workday at Pioneer Cemetery cleaning headstones of Civil War veterans. A story about the event, including photographs, was published in the Lawrence Journal-World.
- August 16 – a second workday at Maple Grove cleaning and straightening headstones.
- August 19 – regular monthly meeting; program by Camp Secretary and PDC Tom Schmidt on the “Save the Kansas Civil War Flags” program with the Kansas History Museum in Topeka. Tom presented information on the flags in the museum’s possession that need conservation. He gave some background on some of the flags, their flag bearers, process of conservation, cost of conservation and number of flags that have been conserved as well as how many are waiting for the process.
- September 14 – a second workday at Pioneer Cemetery with 8 more headstones cleaned and/or straightened.
- September 16 - regular monthly meeting; inducted new member Mike Hinz into the Camp; the program was conducted by Commander Myers who offered a video presentation on the Battle of the Little Bighorn.
- October 21 – regular monthly meeting; program by Kerry Altenbernd on the Grover Barn (still standing in Lawrence at the intersection of Clinton Parkway and Lawrence Avenue). Built in 1858, the barn was a stop on the Underground Railroad and utilized successfully by John Brown in leading to freedom 12 slaves from Missouri in January 1859.
- November 18 - regular monthly meeting at which officers for the coming term were elected.
- December 13 – the Camp held a Wreaths Across America ceremony at Maple Grove Cemetery, including the placement of 78 wreaths on the graves of Civil War veterans and three volleys fired by an honor guard of members of SUVCW. Wreaths were also placed in Pioneer Cemetery.
- December 16 – regular monthly meeting at which officers for the 2026 term were installed by Department Commander Kent Melcher.

2026 – Mike Heck, Commander

- January 21 – regular monthly meeting; program by Bill McFarland titled “Is That What You’re Wearing?”. It explained what Kansas Union Civil War soldiers wore and the many types of clothing that were permitted as well as what soldiers wore of their own choosing.
- February 17 – regular monthly meeting; inducted new member Eric Smallwood into the Camp; program by Camp Secretary and PDC Tom Schmidt on the 1909 Centennial Celebration of Lincoln’s birth. Tom shared artifacts from the event in his personal collection, including postcards, stamps, medallions, sheet music, and coins.

An ongoing activity of the Camp, started in January 2025, and continuing at every regular meeting covered by this report, is a raffle to raise funds for the Save the Kansas Civil War Flags project of the Kansas State Historical Society. Our goal has been to raise \$1,000. As of the date of this report, the Camp has raised \$934. Once we reach our goal (likely by next month) the funds will be donated to the Historical Society, allowing the Camp to be recognized as an official member of the Adopt a Flag program.

Dated this 19th day of February, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Michael D. Heck, Commander

Sargeant Samuel J. Churchill Camp No. 4

Lawrence, Department of Kansas

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

CAMP REPORTS

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Franklin Camp No. 5 – Commander James D. Thornton, PCC

Franklin Camp 5 enjoyed an active and successful 2025. The year saw the camp hold a regular camp meeting each month, except in December when the camp held a Holiday Dinner with no business transacted. Each meeting was well attended by twenty or more brothers and included a presentation of Patriotic Instruction given by visiting speakers or one of the camp brothers.

In May, Brother Dan Stilley led an extensive driving tour of sites around Kansas City related to the Battle of Westport. As there is no official “Westport Battlefield,” this tour required immense planning and mapping. Several Franklin Camp members coordinated carpooling to enjoy Brother Stilley’s knowledge and insights into the battle.

Later in the year, Brother Stilley led a walking tour of historic Union Cemetery in Kansas City, highlighting the graves and memorials of those instrumental in the early history and Civil War history of the area.

Franklin Camp also participated in multiple community events throughout the year, including Missouri School Day at Lone Jack Battlefield in May (partnering with the SCV Key Camp), Wornall House Civil War Day, Mine Creek Battlefield Heritage Day, and the Old Shawnee Indian Mission Fall Festival (again partnering with the SCV Key Camp).

We also held our annual Remembrance Ceremonies and Quilt-of-Valor presentations on Memorial Day weekend and Veterans Day weekend. For the Memorial Day ceremony, Quilts-of-Valor were presented to four United States Veterans. For the Veterans Day ceremony, six quilts were presented. Thanks to the efforts of Brother Richard Miller and a press release, two local TV stations attended the Veterans Day ceremony with camera crews and included features about our ceremony on their news broadcasts.

Throughout the year, multiple Franklin Camp brothers presented programs to local organizations, museums, and historic sites. Commander Thornton was a featured speaker for the Western Academy Speaker Series at the Shawnee Indian Mission Historic Site and for the Johnson County Parks and Recreation Lunch & Learn program. Brother Lane Smith was featured twice at the Miami County Historical Society for presentations.

Franklin Camp is looking forward to 2026 and celebrating America’s 250th Anniversary!

Respectfully Submitted,

James D. Thornton, PCC

Franklin Camp Commander

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Humboldt Camp No. 9 – Commander Rocky D Ansell, PCC

Brother Dennis Piatt continues his exceptional work cleaning and resetting gravestones in the GAR section of Mount Hope Cemetery. There have been several emails and news articles recognizing his work.

Commander Ansell was invited to speak at the Allen County Historical Society meeting on 25 Oct 2025. The presentation included Civil War history and information about the SUVCW. Membership information was provided to attendees. Group discussion also revealed the location of several rural cemeteries in Bourbon County with approximately 40 Civil War

CAMP REPORTS

Veterans graves near Fulton, KS. Some of the graves have stones marked “Unknown US Soldier” who died of disease at the former site of Camp Denver. Additional research is ongoing.

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Pvt. John N. Eckes Camp No. 10 – Commander Terry Justice, PCC

2025 was a challenging, yet very productive year for the Eckes Camp. Recruitment went well with overall a total of five new members during the calendar year; composed of three members initiated in January 2025, and then also a new member in May and October 2025. One avenue of recruitment we have put in place is youth scholarship program, the purpose is to attract young adults through this scholarship program which is still being developed. An eligible candidate is given a years membership so as to attract them to our activities. Among them is participation in community events both in Winfield and Arkansas City, Cowley County's two largest communities. We have extended our attendance to other events held by smaller communities for which the Eckes Camp has received much recognition. Through the Eckes Camp 10 activities and engagement over the past year there are local ladies interested which has grown to seek organizing a Daughters of Union Veterans Civil War tent hopefully in near future. Through talks and presentations by Eckes Camp leadership we have raised awareness and interest in our activities. The work we have done in local cemeteries to include Cowley, Chatauqua, Summer, Elk and Greenwood Counties has continued to receive much positive feedback. Eckes Camp monthly cemetery workdays over the past year extensively within Riverview Cemetery in Arkansas City and in October the camp was recognized and publicly thanked by the city in local newspaper. Membership has shown how to clean and preserve headstones. The general public now recognize our service to the legacy of our Civil War ancestors. As the Camp is still young, our brother organizations, such as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans recognize now Eckes Camp as a leader in the preservation of Veterans headstones. One such service, where all were unified in its endeavors was done on a grand scale, Saturday, October 4, 2025. The event was the headstone dedication and memorial to Civil War Veteran, Photographer, soldier, spy, activist and pioneer Isaac H. Bonsall. Sgt 2nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Added support came from the VFW Post #1254, American Legion Post #18. We had flag support from the Sons of the American Revolution. Leading the firing party was the VFW State Commander Charlie Cravens. In addition to physical support by our brother organizations, Mr. Jeff Wood, a publicist, photographer and production manager produced a wonderful video of our program. The video of the program can be found on U-Tube or the Eckes Camp web site under Isaac H. Bonsall, Civil War Photographer. The program was well served by all, resulting in recognition by the media and the several Historical Societies to include the Cincinnati Historical Society where Bonsall started his career. Through the unified efforts of the camp membership we have produced a survey of most of Cowley County's cemeteries for Civil War Veterans burials. Through this ongoing search we have uncovered a great many unmarked Civil War Graves. It is our purpose to see that all such Graves are found, accounted for and marked. As a final act of the year a number of camp members were present for the annual laying of wreaths at the Kansas Veterans Cemetery in Winfield, KS with the Wreaths Across America program in December, with the current Department of Kansas Commander and Eckes Camp member Kent Melcher serving as Chaplin.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty

Terry Justice, Commander Eckes Camp #10

CAMP REPORTS

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

Old Abe Camp No. 16 – Commander Ronald Martin

Camp Meetings are the first Thursday of each month at Perkins Restaurant in Topeka, Kansas. At each meeting the Camp collects money to save the flags of Union civil war units which were assigned to Kansas. This is being done to support the worthy efforts of the Kansas State Historical Society to conserve these precious and irreplaceable flags which were used by our ancestors. And as we close out the year 2025 our Camp has donated a total of \$412.00 to the Kansas State Historical Society for this purpose.

The Camp performs regular workdays on the fourth Saturday of each month starting in March and concluding in September, weather permitting. These workdays involve cleaning and resetting gravestones of Union Civil War Veterans. This year our focus was on the Rochester Cemetery in Topeka, Kansas. A total of 41 headstones were cleaned or reset or both, from the following state units as indicated:

Illinois – 7	Indiana – 5	Iowa – 1	Kansas – 7
Kentucky – 1	Maryland – 1	Nebraska – 1	Ohio – 6
Pennsylvania – 5	West Virginia – 1	Wisconsin – 1	States Not Listed – 5

The Camp conducted extensive Memorial Day Services on May 24th at the Topeka KS cemetery. Traditional Civil War music was performed by the Camp's Drums and Fife Corp. To The Colors was performed by a traditional Bugle and Drum Roll. Attending Honors included the Army JROTC, Topeka West High School, Air Force JROTC, Highland Park High School; and Marine JROTC, Topeka High School. Our Camp JVC, Brother Rob Reves sang, "Hard Times Come Again No More". Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic and Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War were also in attendance. This service was also covered by local media.

It was with sadness that our camp bid farewell to our friends and brothers D. Darrel Gilliland and Conrad M. Fisher. Brother Fisher served as Commander of Old Abe Camp #16 and Commander of the department of Kansas. He also served as the ROTC coordinator and Color Bearer for many years. The camp conducted a well-attended Memorial Service for Brother Conrad at the Topeka Cemetery on October 18th, 2025.

The Brothers of Old Abe Camp No. 16 are actively planning for the year 2026 to be another year of service and dedication to the memory of those brothers who have gone on before us. And we are already planning to do our part in observing America's 250th Anniversary.

Ron Martin, Commander

Old Abe Camp #16, Dept of Kansas, SUVCW

RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Department Bylaws Standing Committee - Alan L. Russ, PDC, Chairman

1. The Department of Kansas Bylaws Standing Committee was appointed by Department Order No. 2, dated April 6, 2025. The committee consists of the following brothers of the Department:

Alan L. Russ, PDC, Chairman – Old Abe Camp 16

Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Member – Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1

Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC, Member – Old Abe Camp 16

Roy A. Lafferty, PDC, Member – Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4

Barrett E. Young, PCC, Member – Humboldt Camp 9

Kent M. Melcher, PDC, Member (ex officio) – Pvt. John N. Eckes Camp 10

2. The committee conducted its business via email and considered proposed amendments to the Department Bylaws. Proposals 2026-01 and 2026-02 were reviewed and addressed by the committee and recommended for approval. Proposals 2026-01 and 2026-02 will be submitted to the 2026 Department Encampment with the recommendations of the committee indicated.

3. As required by Department of Kansas Bylaws, Chapter IX, Article III, Section A1, on January 5, 2026, the proposed amendments, along with the recommendations of the Department Bylaws Committee, were distributed to the camps of the Department for their review.

Alan L. Russ, PDC

Chairman

NOTE: Changes and additions are shown in *italics* with removed text ~~lined through~~.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT NO. 2026-01

SOURCE: Proposed by Department Bylaws Committee

DISCUSSION: There is no permanent Department award for camp strength gains. The PDC Dean K. Speaks Award for Recruiter of the Year is an individual award presented to the brother who recruited the greatest number of new brothers since the previous encampment.

It is recommended a new permanent award be created to be awarded to the camp which shows the greatest net gain in strength since the previous camp annual report (April 1 through March 31). To be eligible for the award, a camp must have a net gain of five or more brothers since the last annual report.

This award may be awarded to more than one camp if there is more than one camp which qualifies for consideration. Likewise, the award will not be awarded to any camp if the eligibility criteria is not met.

The recommended name of the award shall be the “Leland J. Webb Recruiting Award.” Leland J. Webb, in addition to being a Civil War Veteran and member of the GAR, was the first commander of the original Old Abe Camp 16 and the original Department of Kansas. He also was elected and served as National Commander-in-Chief of the Sons of Veterans, the original name of the SUVCW.

A streamer for placement on the camp flag will be presented to any camp who receives the award.

RECOMMENDATION: The committee recommends this amendment be adopted.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

CHAPTER VII - DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Article III: PERMANENT AWARDS

The following awards, having been well established within the Department of Kansas by precedent, are established as permanent awards of the Department. These awards, and their criteria, are as follows:

Section G. [New] LELAND J. WEBB RECRUITING AWARD.

1. *This award is presented by the Department Commander to a camp within the Department which had a net gain of five or more new brothers since the ending period of the previous annual report. For the purposes of this award, dual brothers are not considered. More than one camp may receive this award so long as they meet the criteria. The award shall not be presented to a camp which did not meet the criteria. The camp or camps to receive this award will be determined by the official records of the Department Secretary as determined by the Camp Annual Report. In the event an encampment is being held before the Camp Annual Reports are available, the awarding of the Leland J. Webb Camp Recruiting Award will be delayed until official results become available.*

2. *Camps which receive this award shall be presented with a streamer for placement on their camp flag.*

PROPOSED AMENDMENT NO. 2026-02

SOURCE: Proposed by Department Bylaws Committee

DISCUSSION: This proposal incorporates Department Order 6 (2007-2008), dated April 28, 2007, and Department Order 4 (2012-2013), dated April 28, 2012) requiring the elected department officers to wear the badge of elected department officers.

RECOMMENDATION: The committee recommends this amendment be adopted.

CHAPTER V - DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Article I: OFFICERS

Section A. ELECTED OFFICERS.

1. The elected Officers of the Department shall be the Department Commander, Senior Vice Department Commander, Junior Vice Department Commander, three brothers of the Department Council, Department Secretary, and Department Treasurer. The offices of Department Secretary and Department Treasurer may be combined into the office of Department Secretary/Treasurer.^{67, 68}

Section H. WEARING OF DEPARTMENT OFFICER BADGE BY ELECTED OFFICERS.

1. *In accordance with National Regulations of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the Elected Department Officers shall wear their Department Officer Badge in place of their Membership Badge for the duration of their term of service as an elected Department Officer.*

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

2. *A brother currently serving as a Camp Commander and also serving as an elected Department Officer shall wear the badge of Camp Commander in lieu of the Department Officer Badge during his term as Camp Commander.*

3. *Any elected department officer authorized to wear a National elected officer badge may wear that badge in lieu of the Department Officer Badge.*

Special Committee on Nominations – Alan L Russ, PDC, Chairman

1. The Department of Kansas Bylaws Standing Committee was appointed by Department Order No. 2, dated April 6, 2025. The committee consists of the following brothers of the Department:

Alan L. Russ, PDC, Chairman – Old Abe Camp 16

Roy A. Lafferty, PDC, Member – Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4

Michael A. Todd, PDC, Member – Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4

2. The committee conducted its business via email and considered brothers who had been recommended to the committee. Once the committee had decided to consider a specific nominee, that brother was advised and was asked if he was willing to accept the nominee and serve in that capacity, if elected.

3. The following brothers are recommended by the Special Nominating Committee for the indicated office and will be placed into nomination by the committee at the Department Encampment on March 28, 2026.

Department Commander: James D. Thornton, PCC, Camp 5

Senior Vice Department Commander: Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Camp 4

Junior Vice Department Commander: Roy A. Lafferty, PDC, Camp 4

Council Members – Two positions for terms expiring 2028 and one position for a term expiring 2027. The one-year term expiring 2027 is subject to its current office holder being elected as JVDC:

Brent D. Whitten, Camp 4

Brian W. Wampler, Camp 5

Jonathan A. Holder, Camp 16

Alan L. Russ, PDC

Chairman

Department Encampment Committee-Thomas E Schmidt, PDC, Chairman

January 25, 2026

Department of Kansas Encampment Committee Report

The following brothers were appointed to this committee:

Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Chairman, Corp. P. Coyne Camp # 1

Roy A. Lafferty, PDC – Member, Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp # 4

Michael A. Todd, PDC – Member, Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp # 4

Barrett E. Young, PCC, Member, Humboldt Camp # 9

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Alan L. Russ, PDC, Aide (without vote) Old Abe Camp # 16

The committee met via Zoom on the following dates: May 5, August 18, October 13, 2025 and January 19, 2026.

Through the course of the meetings the 2026 Department Encampment Committee was planned and the details put in place for the 30th Annual Department of Kansas Encampment to be held on Saturday March 28, 2026 at the Pottawatomie Mission on the Kansas State Historical Society grounds beginning with the Memorial Service at 11:00 AM and the business meeting starting at noon. We have also planned the Friday night March 27, 2026 dinner at 6:30 pm at the Kansas National Guard Museum in Topeka which is open for members and guests.

We have started the process of planning the 2027 Department Encampment on the proposed date of April 3, 2027 at The Old Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway, KS which will be hosted by the Franklin Camp #5 – Olathe.

RECOMMENDATION: It is the recommendation of the Ks Department Encampment Committee that Franklin Camp # 5 be awarded the 2027 Department Encampment to be held on April 3, 2027 at The Old Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway, KS

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty

Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC

Chairperson Department of Kansas SUVCW Encampment Committee

Special Committee for Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of USA Independence-Eric L Crittenden, PCC, Chairman

A Special Committee was put together by current Dept of KS Commander Kent Melcher composed of nine members with at least one member from each of the camps within the Dept. of KS, SUVCW which wanted to be part of the special committee. There were a number of meetings by these members and conducted by Zoom starting in mid-November 2025 thru January 2026. A number of ideas, events and activities were discussed and composed into a final report which were to be distributed to all of the camps. In an effort to get members to engage and participate in America 250 events, activities, etc. there was an incentive program developed whereby Dept of Kansas SUVCW members could earn points that once arrive at 30 points the member could be recognized at the following year encampment with something like a certificate and/or challenge coin. To earn points they would be earned by 1 point awarded based on three criteria: Organizing, Participating and Attending an America 250 event/activity (total of 3 points per event/activity). The challenge coin portion of the program came under some discernment as to how to raise funds for the coin and possibility of having the Department pay half and the camps combine to pay other half; also question as to how many coins might be needed. Thus leaving the option of awarding a keepsake incentive to each of the camps discretion and hopefully members will participate in number of America 250 events, activities, etc. from the final report.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Reference: Edited 250th Report to Camps of January 15, 2026 previously distributed

SUMMARY OF 2025-2026 DEPARTMENT COUNCIL MEETING ACTIONS

The summaries below indicate formal actions taken by the Department of Kansas Council for the period from April 5, 2024, to March 28, 2026. Voting members of the Council are:

Department Commander – Kent M. Melcher, PDC, Camp 10

Senior Vice Department Commander – James D. Thornton, PCC, Camp 5

Junior Vice Department Commander – Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Camp 4

Department Secretary (term exp 2028) – Alan L. Russ, PDC, Camp 16

Department Treasurer (term exp 2028) – Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC, Camp 16

Council Member (IPDC) (term exp 2026) – Conrad M. Fisher, PDC, Camp 16, served until his death on September 13, 2025)

Council Member (term exp 2027) – Roy A. Lafferty, PDC, Camp 4

Council Member (term exp 2026) – James H. Graves, PCC, Camp 1

Council Member (term exp. 2026) – Barrett E. Young, PCC, Camp 9

SUMMARY OF MAY 5, 2025, DEPARTMENT COUNCIL MEETING ACTIONS

1. A regular meeting of the Department Council was held on May 5, 2025, for the purpose of discussing and acting upon the business that came before it.
 2. Approved the minutes of the March 17, 2025, Council meeting. Motion carried.
 3. Approved the Proceedings of April 5, 2025, 29th Annual Department Encampment.
 4. Approved appointment of PDC Thomas E. Schmidt as Department Signal Officer.
 5. Approved donation of \$100.00 to the “Bobby Boyd Memorial Fund” in memory of PDC Robert D. Boyd II.
 6. Approved motion to not allow advertisements and charity appeals on the Department website.
 7. Approved motion the Department put out the challenge to the camps of the Department, with the challenge amended to be named “2025-2026 PDC Robert D. Boyd II Membership Challenge.”
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SUMMARY OF AUGUST 18, 2025, DEPARTMENT COUNCIL MEETING ACTIONS

1. A regular meeting of the Department Council was held on August 18, 2025, for the purpose of discussing and acting upon the business that came before it.
2. Approved the minutes of the May 5, 2025, Council meeting.
3. Approved new Department Form 1 for use in requesting reimbursement from Department funds.
4. Approved motion to allow camps to submit certain limited numbers of Form 30 to the Department Secretary by email. These actions are ones which require neither supporting documents nor funds. Paper copies will continue to be submitted by the Department to National Headquarters.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

SUMMARY OF OCTOBER 13, 2025, DEPARTMENT COUNCIL MEETING ACTIONS

1. A regular meeting of the Department Council was held on October 13, 2025, for the purpose of discussing and acting upon the business that came before it.
2. Approved the minutes of August 18, 2025, Council meeting.
3. Approved the purchase of a new Department Commander badge from the National Quartermaster at a cost of \$50.00 plus shipping costs of up to \$9.00, for a total estimated cost at or below \$59.00. The current Department Commander badge shall be retired at the earliest opportunity and placed in safekeeping under the control of the Department Treasurer.
3. Approved a \$200.00 donation from the General Fund be made to the William Braden Schall and Willis T. Reed Memorial Fund in memory of PCinC D. Brad Schall.

SUMMARY OF JANUARY 19, 2026, DEPARTMENT COUNCIL MEETING ACTIONS

1. A regular meeting of the Department Council was held on January 19, 2026, for the purpose of discussing and acting upon the business that came before it.
2. Approved the minutes of October 13, 2025, Council meeting.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

2025 Department Budget Final

Categories				
100	Expenditures	Budget	Actual	Balance
104	National Charter Fee	-	-	-
105	National Quartermaster	130.00	64.00	66.00
106	National Encampment Advertising	50.00	50.00	-
111	Web Hosting	115.00	115.00	-
112	Zoom License	175.00	174.85	0.15
121	Postage, Department Secretary	100.00	77.89	22.11
122	Postage, General	50.00	-	50.00
123	Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator	75.00	42.00	33.00
131	Department Encampment Facility	100.00	100.00	-
132	Department Encampment Supplies	50.00	-	50.00
133	Department Encampment Printing	175.00	193.07	(18.07)
134	Department Encampment Nat'l Representative	150.00	-	150.00
135	Department Encampment Other	-	-	-
	TOTAL BUDGET EXPENDITURES	1,170.00	816.81	(353.19)
199	Unbudgetted Expenses		850.00	(850.00)
101-103	Passthru Expenses		4,734.50	4,734.50
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES		6,401.31	
200	Receipts	Budget	Actual	Balance
204	National Charter Fee	-	-	-
205	National Quartermaster	-	-	-
211	Department Per Capita	1,156.00	1,071.00	85.00
212	Web Hosting	60.00	50.00	10.00
213	Bank Interest	50.00	-	50.00
	TOTAL BUDGET RECEIPTS	1,266.00	1,121.00	(145.00)
299	Unbudgetted Receipts		-	-
201-203	Passthru Receipts		3,934.75	3,934.75
	TOTAL RECEIPTS		5,055.75	
	NET STATUS OVERALL	96.00	304.19	208.19

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

2026 Approved Department Budget

Categories					Last Year													
100	Expenditures	Budget	Actual	Balance	Actual	Balance	Notes											
104	National Charter Fee	-	-	-	0	0												
105	National Quartermaster	65.00	-	65.00	0	130	Change for 2026; Repl DC Badge; No PDC badge needed (Melcher)											
106	National Encampment Advertising	50.00	-	50.00	50	0												
111	Web Hosting	115.00	-	115.00	115	0												
112	Zoom License	175.00	-	175.00	174.85	0.15												
121	Postage, Department Secretary	100.00	-	100.00	59.89	40.11												
122	Postage, General	50.00	-	50.00	0	50												
123	Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator	75.00	-	75.00	42	33												
124	ROTC Coordinator	-	-	-			New for 2026											
131	Department Encampment Facility	200.00	-	200.00	100	0	Change for 2026											
132	Department Encampment Supplies	100.00	-	100.00	0	50												
133	Department Encampment Printing	200.00	-	200.00	193.07	-18.07	Change for 2026											
134	Department Encampment Natl Representative	150.00	-	150.00	0	150												
135	Department Encampment Other	200.00	-	200.00	0	0												
	TOTAL BUDGET EXPENDITURES	1,480.00	-	(1,480.00)	734.81													
199	Unbudgetted Expenses		-	-	850.00													
101-103	Passthru Expenses		-	-	4708.00													
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES		-															
200	Receipts	Budget	Actual	Balance														
204	National Charter Fee	-	-	-														
205	National Quartermaster	-	-	-														
211	Department Per Capita	1,120.00	-	1,120.00	1057	99												
212	Web Hosting	60.00	-	60.00	30	30												
213	Bank Interest	30.00	-	30.00	50	50												
	TOTAL BUDGET RECEIPTS	1,210.00	-	(1,210.00)														
299	Unbudgetted Receipts		-	-														
201-203	Passthru Receipts		-	-	3840.25	3840.25												
	TOTAL RECEIPTS		-															
	NET STATUS OVERALL	(270.00)	-	270.00														