

The Sunflower Picket

Recipient of the 2006 Marshall Hope Award for Best Department Newsletter
www. suvcwks.org

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

2026-2027 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

James D. Thornton, PCC
Twenty-Fourth
Department Commander



Front Row, L. to R.: Secretary Alan L. Russ, PDC; SVDC Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC; Commander James D. Thornton; JVDC Roy A. Lafferty, PDC; Treasurer Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC. Back Row, L. to R. Chaplain Stanley E. Palmer, IPDC Kent M. Melcher, PDC; Eagle Scout Cert. Coordinator Eric L. Crittenden; Council Member Brent D. Whitten; Memorials Officer Jeffrey A. Winters; Council Member Bryan W. Wampler; P.I. Christopher R. Cardone; Council Member Jonathan A. Holder; GAR Records Officer Boone O. Dodson; Brian C. Pierson, PCinC (National Representative)

NEW BROTHERS, JANUARY 1, 2026 – MARCH 31, 2026

Name	Date Joined	Camp	Ancestor
Carttar, Peter K.	2/23/2026	Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence	N/A
Fernkopf, Paul S.	3/17/2026	Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence	N/A
Mandic, Christopher M.	2/5/2026	Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka	Pvt. Christopher Schlitt
Pierce, Marshall L.	2/20/2026	Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence	Pvt. Benjamin Franklin Timmons
Siltman, Frank J.	1/8/2026	Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka	Pvt. John Davis Cawood
Smallwood, Eric N.	1/30/2026	Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4, Lawrence	Pvt. Melker James Hovatter
Walters, Edward D.	2/20/2026	Franklin Camp 5, Olathe	Pvt. Thomas J. Wright
Wilson, Lloyd L. III	1/2/2026	Franklin Camp 5, Olathe	Saddler John Wesley Taffe



OUR FALLEN BROTHERS

January 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026

“The faults of our Brothers we write upon the sand, their virtues upon the tablets of love and memory.”



Name	Deceased	Ancestor	Camp
Bennett, Richard T., PCC	2/5/2026	Pvt Abraham Bennett, Co. D, 2nd Iowa Inf.	Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1, Wichita

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FROM THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

James D. Thornton, PCC

Greetings!

These next six years promise to be an exciting time for our organization as we join in on the celebration of our nation’s 250th Anniversary. Nationally, and here within the State of Kansas, the SUVCW will be actively participating in the 250th Birthday of the United States, taking part in community activities, parades, and other events.



For many brothers of our organization, the 250th anniversary holds special meaning. Not only did these

members obviously have ancestors who fought to save the Union, they also had ancestors who fought to establish the Union and create our nation. That is an amazing lineage! An ancestor who is part of the Revolutionary War, fighting and struggling to establish a new nation, followed by that ancestor’s son or grandson eighty-five years later fighting to preserve what had been established. And now, here we are – the descendants of those founding patriots and those who held it all together.

Being a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War recognizes, honors, and pays respect to our forefathers who understood the importance of maintaining the union of states. The nation was stronger when we were together. They understood the risk to themselves, to their families, but they also understood the meaning of “patriotism” and “duty.”

And so, as we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States, let us pause and reflect on our ancestors who created our nation and our ancestors who held it together. The best way for us to honor them is to look forward to the future and maintain what they created and preserved – a nation of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness with liberty and justice for all.

Let us not forget.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

James D. Thornton, PCC

Department Commander

CAMP STRENGTHS, MARCH 31, 2026

As of March 31, 2026, Kansas listed **169** brothers, including one junior and six dual brothers. This is a net change of **five** within the Department since March 31, 2025.

<u>Camp Name & Number</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Net Change</u>
Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1	27	-2
Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4	31	+5
Franklin Camp 5	44	0
Humboldt Camp 9	10	-1
John N. Eckes Camp 10	19	+1
Old Abe Camp 16	38	+2
DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS	169	+5

2026 DEPARTMENT ENCAMPMENT

The Encampment activities began Friday evening with a buffet meal at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard. Thirty-seven brothers and guests were present. The activities included the presentation of a brief history of the Department of Kansas, which is included following this article. Attendees were also entertained with a musical presentation by Brother Robert Reves, his wife, and son. The Department also donated to the museum in gratitude for allowing us to use the facilities. In response, the Museum of the Kansas National Guard acknowledged the Department of Kansas as a 2026 Major Donor to the Museum (see letter at the end of this issue).

The 2026 Annual Department of Kansas Encampment was held on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at the Kansas Museum of History at Topeka. This was the thirtieth anniversary of the Department.

The encampment began with a memorial service at 11 a.m. for the purpose of remembering the five brothers we lost since the last encampment. It concluded with an audio-visual presentation remembering the fifty-two brothers the department lost over the last thirty years. The presentation concluded with eight bells signifying their “end of watch.”

The Business Meeting began after the memorial service, and it was opened using the Ritual of the Order. The following honored guests were in attendance:

- Brian C. Pierson, PCinC, Dept. of Oklahoma, representing Commander-in-Chief Kevin P. Tucker.
- Cynthia L. Cruz, Rosanna Wilson, and Eadie Flickinger, of the Julia Louisa Lovejoy Tent 36, DUVCW 1861-1865, Topeka
- Wilma Handley, Department President, Dept. of Oklahoma, DUVCW 1861-1865
- Keith Rockefeller, PDC and Department Commander, Dept. of Nebraska, SUVCW
- Paul Hadley, PDC, Dept. of Nebraska, SUVCW
- Terry Handley, PDC, Department Commander, Dept of Oklahoma, SUVCW

PDC Thomas E. Schmidt had organized a raffle and silent auction to be held during the encampment, with all proceeds going to the Kansas Museum of History “Adopt a Flag” program to support the ongoing restoration of the various Civil War flags. Over \$700 was raised for donation to the project.

Items were discussed and addressed at the encampment, culminating with the nomination, election, and installation of the new Department Officers. Congratulations to Department Commander James D. Thornton, PCC; and the rest of the new officers. A full list of elected and appointed officers is available on page 13

The following awards were presented by Commander Melcher:

**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

2025-2026 PDC Robert Dean Boyd II
Membership Challenge

Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4

5 new brothers

Old Abe Camp 16

5 new brothers

Franklin Camp 5

4 new brothers

The **2027 Department of Kansas Annual Encampment** will be held on Saturday, April 3, 2027, at the Shawnee Indian Mission State Historical Site in Fairway, Kansas, with Franklin Camp 5 hosting.

The full proceedings of the Department Encampment should be posted on the Department website by the end of April. Copies will also be forwarded to all camps.

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS**

Alan L. Russ, PDC

The First Thirty Years

The Beginning

The Department of Kansas exists today because one person pushed and worked to make it happen. In early 1996, Dean Speaks started the process to bring into being a new Department of Kansas twenty-three years after the last camp of the original department had folded its flag.

All it takes to form a new department is three active camps in the state where you want it. How hard could that be? After all, Kansas is a state that is roughly 200 miles by 400 miles. Dean approached existing reenactor organizations with the hope their interest in the Civil War would transfer to forming a camp with the SUVCW. It was an approach which provided mixed benefits.

The first camp to be formed was Corporal Patrick Coyne Camp 1 at Wichita on June 27, 1996, with fifteen members. Most of its charter members were reenactors with the 8th Kansas Infantry. That camp is still active, today.

Next was Brigadier General Thomas Ewing Jr. Camp 2 in Johnson County on June 29, 1996, with six members. This camp never really got off the ground and was declared as inactive only two years later.

Joseph Gaston Camp 3 formed at Beloit on July 6, 1996, with six members, including one Real Son. It struggled for years due to only having a small number of members. Efforts by then Department Commander Craig Sundell to revitalize the camp ultimately were unsuccessful. The camp charter was suspended in February 2007.

The final “original” was Colonel John A. Martin Camp 8 at Salina on July 11, 1996, with nine members. It, too, was based primarily on reenactors. Unfortunately, it also was short lived, with its charter being suspended in July 1998.

These four camps allowed Brother Speaks to hold a meeting July 12, 1996, for the purpose of organizing the Department. The application to form the Department of Kansas was sent to the Commander-in-Chief Alan R. Loomis. The application was approved, and the Department was officially chartered on August 3, 1996, with Dean K. Speaks serving as the first Department Commander. He served three terms before command was passed to Franklin C. Bergquist in 1999.

The Department Develops and Grows

The Department continued its slow growth as camps came and went. Between 1998 and 2002, three more camps were chartered.

Old Abe Camp 16, Topeka, was chartered on December 13, 1997. Old Abe Camp 16 is alive and well to this day.

Pawnee Camp 15 at Larned and Pap Thomas Camp 52 at Great Bend were chartered on February 28, 1998. They were formed primarily with members from a Santa Fe Trail historical organization, which proved a weakness to their possible success. Both camps were declared to be inactive in 2001, with their charters suspended in December of that year.

The year 2002 started with the Department on a potentially shaky footing. We were down to the minimum three camps, and a loss of any one of them would cause the Department to once again cease to exist. Fortunately, we were able to hold on until late 2003, when another camp was formed.

Sergeant Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4 at Lawrence was chartered on December 13, 2003. It, too, remains alive and well today. And with that, we were back at four active camps.

In 2005 we saw more growth in the Department as we added two new camps, bringing us to six camps until the loss of the Beloit camp in 2007.

Mine Creek Camp 6 was chartered on September 18, 2005, at Pleasanton. Four years later, in October 2009, it was suspended, reducing the Department to four camps.

Franklin Camp 5 was chartered on October 17, 2005, at Olathe. This camp flourished and has grown to become the largest camp in the Department.

A short-lived camp was chartered on October 9, 2014, as Old Glory Camp 7 at Saint Francis. The camp was weak from the beginning and was suspended on March 31, 2016.

Humboldt Camp 9 was chartered April 11, 2015, at Humboldt with eight brothers. It remains the smallest of the current camps in the Department.

It was almost six years later when another new camp was chartered on February 25, 2021, as Private John N. Eckes Camp 10 at Winfield. This camp is also alive and well.

And with this, the Department was back to six camps, where it remains today.

Original Brothers

Only four brothers remain from when the Department received its charter. These are PCC James P. Coyne and PDC Kenneth R. Spurgeon, Camp 1; PCC Kim L. Nelson, Camp 3; and Terry L. Iseli, Camp 8. Brothers Nelson and Iseli are now members of Camp 1.

Growth

The Department has grown substantially since its formation in August 1996. The Department was chartered with a total of 36 brothers. We now have 170 brothers, of which six are dual members, as we continue to slowly grow. What many do not realize is that as of August 2025, the Department of Kansas was the thirteenth largest department in the Order. And we were the largest in this area. Missouri had 152 brothers. Colorado & Wyoming, which also includes Utah and Idaho, had 92 brothers. Nebraska, which includes North and South Dakota, had 70 brothers., and Oklahoma had 48 brothers. In fact, of the departments located West of the Mississippi, only California & Pacific (including Nevada) with 328; Texas with 180, Columbia (which contains Washington, Oregon, and Alaska) with 175, are larger than us. Our growth is something we should be proud of.

Awards and Recognitions

We have had nineteen brothers who hold the honor of Past Department Commander, including several who served more than one term. Of these nineteen, only fourteen are still living. We also have in the Department forty-four brothers who hold the honor of Past Camp Commander.

The Department has received the following National awards:

1. Marshall Hope Award for best Department newsletter, 2006
2. U.S. Grant Cup for greatest percentage increase in strength, 2004, 2005, and 2006
3. Augustus P. Davis – Conrad Linder Award for the greatest number of new members, 2006
4. Albert Woolson Award for Sesquicentennial event, 2014

Camps within the Department have received the following National awards:

1. Marshall Hope Award for best Camp newsletter, Old Abe Camp 16, 2002

2. Joseph S. Rippey Award for camp chartered within the previous calendar year and determined to be active in the areas of recruiting, Civil War graves registration, and Civil War memorials assessment, Pvt. John N. Eckes Camp 10, 2021.

In addition to the Department and Camp awards, brothers of the Department were also recipients of awards.

1. Cornelius F. Whitehouse Award for outstanding member, PDC Dean K. Speaks, Camp 3, 1996, and PDC Alan L. Russ, Camp 16, 2011.

2. Meritorious Service Award with Gold Star for especially distinguished and meritorious service to the Order, PDC Alan L. Russ, Camp 16, 2007

3. Meritorious Service Award for especially meritorious service to Order, PCC Douglas E. McGovern, Camp 1, 2007; and PCC Jerry W. Reiman, Camp 16, 2015

National Officers

We have four brothers who hold or have held National appointed offices. These are:

1. PDC Rocky L. Bartlow, Camp 16, National Membership-at-Large Coordinator, 2023 to present.

2. PDC Kent M. Melcher, Camp 10, National Parliamentarian, 2016-2018

3. PDC Alan L. Russ, Camp 16, National Membership-at-Large Coordinator, 2005-2023, and National Chief of Staff, 2010-2011.

4. PDC Dean K. Speaks, Camp 3, National Membership-at-Large Coordinator, 1997-1999

One Kansas brother has held National elected office. He is PDC Alan L. Russ, Camp 16, National Council of Administration, 2010-2011, and National Secretary, 2013-2016, 2022, and 2024-2025

Challenges Facing Us

The biggest challenge that I see is we are getting old, some faster than others. Sixty-six percent of our membership, that is 107 brothers, are aged 60 and older. Look around and ask yourself, who will take our places?

Another challenge is that we are a hereditary organization which historically hasn't been too concerned with validating our status as a hereditary organization. We tend to resist requirements for applicants to document and prove their connection to a Union soldier or sailor, including proving their lineage. This is not just at the Department and Camp level, but also at the National level, as numerous committees over the years have been formed to address it. If you are a member of another hereditary organization, such as the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS), General Society

of the War of 1812, Sons of the American Revolution, or General Society of Mayflower Descendants, you understand what I am saying.

In 1973, the last camp of the original Department of Kansas closed. This was a camp which used to have the movers and shakers of the State as brothers, including one United States vice president. And with all of that history, in 1973, Old Abe Camp 16 folded its banner and faded away. Do not let it happen again.

[March 27, 2026, address delivered by PDC Alan L. Russ at the Department pre-encampment dinner.]

2026 SPRINGFIELD & PETERSBURG CEREMONIES

Lincoln Tomb Ceremony Springfield, Illinois

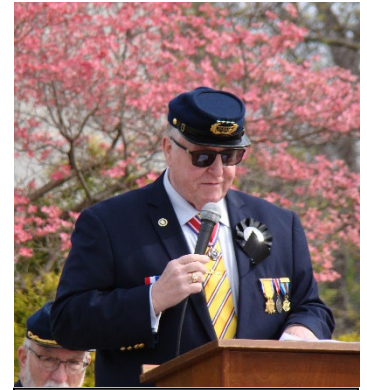


Department of Kansas attendees at the Lincoln Tomb Ceremony. L. to R.: PDC Kent M. Melcher, PDC Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC Alan L. Russ (Photo by PCinC Ed Norris)

The 70th Annual Lincoln Tomb Ceremony was held on Saturday, April 12, 2026, in front of the Abraham Lincoln tomb at Oak Hill Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois.

The morning started out a little brisk, but with the sun coming out before the start time, all was well. The Department of Kansas was represented by three past department commanders: SVDC Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Kent M. Melcher, PDC; and Alan L. Russ, PDC.

The ceremony began with the posting of the Colors by Co. A, 14th Michigan Infantry Regiment, followed by the invocation and playing of the National Anthem. SVCinC Daniel Murray, Sr., PDC, gave the welcoming address, followed by. SUVCW Commander-in-Chief Kevin P. Tucker, PDC; and MOLLUS Commander-in-Chief Paul Davis addressing the audience.



CinC Kevin P. Tucker

The 33rd Illinois Volunteer Regiment Band provided musical selections between the activities.

The organizations of the Allied Orders of the Grand Army of the Republic then presented their wreaths at the tomb site. SVDC Thomas E. Schmidt presented the wreath for the Department of Kansas. The wreath presentations concluded with the presentations by the National Commanders and Presidents of the Allied Orders and MOLLUS.

And at the sounding of Taps by the 33rd Illinois Volunteer Regiment Band, the 70th Annual Lincoln Tomb Ceremony concluded.

Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson Memorial Service Petersburg, Illinois

The memorial service honoring the memory of Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson, founder of the GAR, was held the afternoon of April 12, 2026, at the Stephenson gravesite, Rose Hill Cemetery, Petersburg, Illinois.

The service consisted of the welcoming remarks, posting of Colors followed by the National Anthem and pledge of allegiance. Commander-in-Chief Kevin P. Tucker spoke briefly, followed by area representatives. After wreaths were presented, there was an artillery salute, rifle salute, and retiring of the Colors.

One disappointment was that the Department of Kansas had raised funds to place a brick at the site. Although we had been informed that it was done and would be placed, we found out when we arrived that none of the new bricks had been placed. Perhaps we will see it in place next year.

KANSAS GAR POST RECORDS

How many times have you heard someone, or yourself, say, "My ancestor belonged to the GAR in Kansas. I wonder how I can get hold of these records."

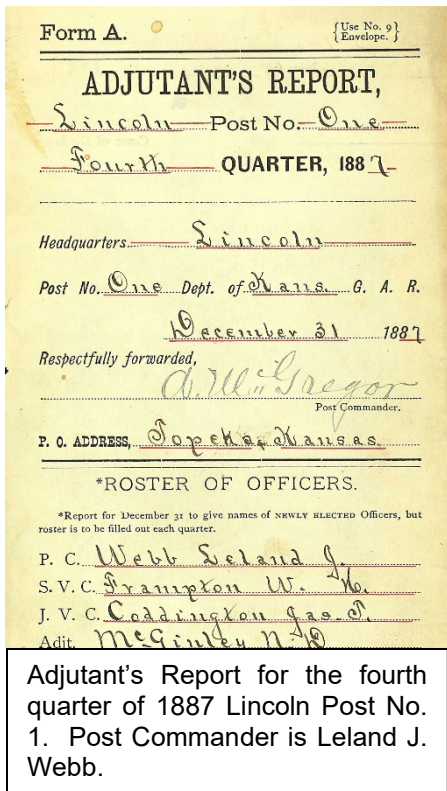
Did you know the Kansas GAR post records are available on Ancestry.com? I know, Ancestry is kind of pricey. Well, guess what? If you have a Kansas driver's license, you can create a free Ancestry account (limited access) by going thru the Kansas Museum of History website at

<https://www.kansashistory.gov/ancestry>

Read and follow the instructions on that page. Then click on "Verify your Kansas driver's license."

You will be granted access to the GAR post records by using the KSHS portal, and all the following:

- Kansas State Census Records (1865-1925—taken every 10 years for years ending in "5")
- Kansas Territorial Census Records (1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859)
- Population Schedules: Counties, 1953-1978 and Cities, 1919-1961
- Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Prior Service Records Index, 1859-1935
- Kansas Naturalization Abstracts, 1864-1972
- Kansas Vital Records Abstracts, 1854-1989
- Russell County, Kansas, Newspaper and Vital Records Index, 1869-1949 (J. C. Ruppenthal Collection)
- Kansas town and city directories up to 1963
- Military Records:**
 - Enlistment Papers of Kansas Volunteer Regiments, 1862, 1863, 1868
 - Veterans Enrollment, 1889 (Union veterans living in Kansas)
 - Grand Army of the Republic (Civil War Union Veterans)
 - United Spanish War Veterans Death Records (TAPS), 1898-ca. 1975
 - Fort Riley Hospital Muster Rolls, 1855-1902
 - United Spanish-American War Veterans, Reports of Deaths, 1945-1970 (TAPS)
 - World War I



- Camp Funston Military Records, 1914-1919
 - Veterans Enrollment, 1930 (veterans living in Kansas)
 - Kansas Veterans, 1917-1919, Manuscript Collection
- Also remember, many local libraries provide free access to Ancestry.com, Fold3.com, Newspapers.com, etc. Check with your local library.
[Above is from Kansas Museum of History website.]

2026 NATIONAL ENCAMPMENT

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

July 30, 2026, through Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

August 2, 2026

The 145th National Encampment of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War will be held Thursday, July 30 through Sunday, August 2 at the Eisenhower/Aspire Hotel, 2634 Emmitsburg Road, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

SUVCW business meetings are held on Friday and Saturday. The pre-encampment Council of Administration meeting will be held Thursday evening, and the post-encampment CofA meeting is Sunday morning.

Other activities include an optional tour which is available on Thursday morning for an additional cost. The traditional "campfire" and entertainment is Friday evening at no additional cost. The Allied Orders Banquet is to be held on Saturday evening (additional cost).

This is a great opportunity to visit the Gettysburg battlefield and attend the National Encampment. If you are planning to attend, make sure your Camp and Department Secretary are aware of this, so you will be provided with the required credentials card.

For additional information and to make hotel reservations for the encampment, go to the National website at <https://suvchw.org/national-encampment>

WILSON'S CREEK

[The following article was submitted by Brother Ronald H. Martin, Old Abe Camp 16, as extracted from the indicated sources.]

[An extract from a report by "M", with the "Union Guards," Company G, Second Kansas, dated Camp near Rolla, Missouri, August 18, 1861, published August 22, 1861.]

"Slowly, but steadily, the Second Kansas moved on through the valley, in the direction of a ravine, to the left of which, on a hill our artillery was belching forth its death dealing missiles, and where our infantry was scattering destruction among the ranks of the enemy."

+++++

"In this charge, Col. Mitchell received a dangerous, but not fatal, wound and was removed from the field. Lieut. Col. Blair had his horse shot from under him, and acting

Adjutant R. Lines, of Waubunsee, also had his horse shot from under him. Major Cloud being absent skirmishing, and Col. Mitchell wounded, the command of our regiment fell upon Lieut. Col Blair, assisted by Adjutant Lines. Both behaved with cool bravery, and constantly exposed to a raking fire, rode along the line, directing and encouraging the boys. In the charge, we met with our heaviest loss; and here it was, immediately in the rear of Company G, that Gen. Lyon fell dead, the ball entering near his heart. A moment before he fell, I was by the side of his horse, then

falling back into line, and heard him cheer the boys on, in his own clear, calm voice. The next moment, I heard that he was killed. His body carried from the field to the ambulance by Lieut. Shryer, of Co. K, A. Keplar and Ed. Spurlock, of Co. G, Kansas 2d, and not by his Aids, as stated by a correspondent of the Missouri Democrat."

[Source: "Kansans At Wilson's Creek: Soldiers' Letters from the Campaign for Southwest Missouri", c. 1993 by Richard W. Hatcher III and William Garrett Piston; pages 71 and 73]

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS REPORTS

SENIOR VICE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC

In this issue of *The Sunflower Picket* is a great article about the 30th Annual Department Encampment held on Saturday, March 28, at the Kansas History Museum in Topeka. We had great attendance (record breaking, I think) and it was well organized. The Memorial Service started at 11:00 am. It included the



wonderful PowerPoint presentation, done by Alan Russ that featured the names of the brothers we have lost over the past 30 years. The business portion of the meeting started on time, and we were done with the installation of new officers by 2:30 pm. Brother Boone Dodson then took attendees on a guided tour to view some of the Kansas Civil War Flags on display in the gallery of the museum.

Some of you have been to a National Encampment of the SUVCW. Our structure, setup, and script is very close to how the National Encampment runs. If you did not make this year's Department Encampment you missed a good one. We will try to duplicate the effort next year at the 2027 Department Encampment, hosted by Franklin Camp 5. It will be held on Saturday, April 3, 2027, at The Old Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway, Kansas, near Olathe. Put the date on your calendars now.

On another note, in this issue PDC Alan Russ reminds us that the Department of Kansas faces a challenge in connection with the age of our membership. Yes, we are growing but we need younger people in our ranks. Quoting Alan "66% of our membership, 107 brothers, are aged 60 and older". As you know, almost all recruitment takes place at the camp level. But how can we recruit not only older people, but young ones as well? One of my ideas is

if you have a grandson pay for him to become a member of the organization and bring him to meetings and camp activities. A lot of our members have become members because they were friends or acquaintances of existing members. The same can work for your grandson. Have him bring a friend to a meeting or activity. Invite a youth organization to a meeting when you are having a speaker, or activity (cemetery work or putting out flags for Memorial Day). Get them acquainted with the organization and what it does. Start building relationships with younger people, and you never know what might happen. Because, as Alan asks in his article, "Who will take our place?" The time to start is now.

SECRETARY

Alan L. Russ, PDC

It was a pretty good year for the Department. We gained a total of twenty new members, but we also lost fifteen. And, unfortunately, five of our losses were due to death of the brothers. As such we did end up with a net increase of five. As we look forward, repeating the gains of 2025-2026 would help us grow and ensure our future.



All camps have submitted their Annual Camp Report (SUVCW Form 27), and the Department Annual Report (SUVCW Form 35) should be completed and in the mail around the first of May.

As always, do not forget to check the National website at www.suvcw.org in the "Governance & Forms" section to ensure you are using the latest official forms.

If you have any questions, contact the Department Secretary.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
Alan L. Russ, PDC, Department Secretary

Email: Secretary@suvcwks.org

TREASURER & CHIEF OF STAFF

Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC

Brothers,

Spring is upon us and I look forward to Summer activities to include Memorial Day ceremonies, where we honor the Boys in Blue and “strew their graves with flowers of gratitude and remembrance”. My camp, Old Abe 16, is working diligently on ours and hope your camp is doing so as well.

As your department treasurer I would encourage camp treasurers to reference the recent email I sent out to go over your camp inventories. They probably haven’t changed. Either way, if you’d drop me a line, I’ll update yours with a current date. I am also glad to let you know our department and camps are in compliance with our IRS 990-N and Form 11 requirements, safeguarding our 501(c)3 status. I appreciate all your help in getting that done.

As department Chief of Staff, I had the privilege of working with our past department Commander PDC Kent Melcher and watched as he did a great job at our recent department encampment. Speaking of that, wasn’t that a great one? A record attendance and brothers represented from across the state, followed by a superb presentation by brother Boone Dodson highlighting the state Civil War flag collection. Our department plans to submit over a thousand dollars in support and well we should. Our ancestors were the ones who fought, bled, and died under those banners or some similar. It is our sober duty to make sure they’re not lost.

Well, back to the Chief of Staff duties. I’m proud now to be supporting our current department Commander, Jim Thornton. He also is a man of high quality and integrity and I can see nothing but good things for us this year. I will be the official “nagger” at the department level, arranging council meetings and letting you know of required reports and articles due. Be kind to an old man.

Besides my duties, we’ve recently discovered some cool certificates from the National Quartermaster’s store. There is a member’s certificate available for two dollars where you can add your name and your ancestor’s information on a template (available on the site). It prints out in a really cool script (see example). There are also other very



Rocky Leon Bartlow

Captain William Henry Harrison Bartlow

Co I, 59th Ohio Voluntary Infantry Regiment

fancy, and a little more pricey, that come with the Commander-in-Chief’s signature. You can find them at <https://suvcw-qm-store.square.site/s/shop> . Our camp has also been working with our camp veterans to get them the Military Service and War Service medals. They are deserving and I encourage your camps to make sure they are aware of their availability.

Well, as my dear friend PCC Jerry Reiman says, “I’m itching to get my hands on some headstones” so we’re off to another year of making sure these boys aren’t forgotten. It’s our solemn duty. Gird up your loins and let’s go!

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
Rocky Bartlow, PDC

Department Treasurer/Chief of Staff

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR

Christopher R. Cardone

Hello, my name is Christopher R. Cardone I have recently been appointed as the Department Patriotic Instructor. I have been a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War since August 21, 2021, when I joined at Jefferson City, Missouri. I was a member of Lillie Camp 6. After moving to Manhattan, Kansas, in the summer of 2023 that changed, and it did take me a bit to get back in contact with the SUVCW. Thankfully, help was available, and within a few months I became a member of Old Abe Camp 16. I am still very thankful to be part of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

My ancestor connection to the Civil War is Adolphe Simard (1840-1913) who originally was a French-Canadian and immigrated to the State of Massachusetts in the late 1850s, enlisted in January of 1864, mustering out in November 1865. After the war, Simard became a cobbler.

During the time of readjusting to Kansas, my grandmother handed me an old business card that led me to another ancestor on my mother’s side named Joseph Schorp (1836-1918).

Schorp has spelled his name in multiple different ways and was originally from Baden (modern southwest Germany). He immigrated to the U.S. in the late 1850s and settled in St. Louis, Missouri. Schorp joined the German Volunteers for 3 months before returning to St. Louis, working on wagons.

With the 250th anniversary of the nation’s birth, I look forward to the workdays and events honoring those who gave all to defend the freedoms we still hold near to our hearts.



Joseph Schorp

CHAPLAIN*Stanley E. Palmer*

Greetings to you, brothers of Kansas Department of SUVCW, in the name of our risen Lord and Savior!

As your Department Chaplain, I thought it best to introduce myself. I am a native Kansan, raised in Lawrence. I'm a called and ordained minister of the Gospel, serving as a Lutheran pastor in southwest Kansas since 2013. My wife (Dana) and I live near Offerle, Kansas, east of Dodge City. Before becoming a pastor, I spent 17 years as an audio-visual specialist in training development for BNSF Railway



I'm a bit of a latecomer to the Sons of Union Veterans. Through my growing years and most of my adulthood, I was unaware I had ancestors who served in the Civil War until after my father's passing in 2018. After learning this, and doing research, I joined SUVCW in March of 2019; with Camp 1; honoring the service of my great-great grandfather, James Rankin (11th Iowa Volunteer Infantry Regiment), who served from September 1861 to July 1865. I also learned that another great-great grandfather volunteered to serve a brief stint with the 21st Regiment of Kansas Militia in 1864.

When my youngest daughter graduated from high school, I took her to The Original Civil War Ball in Gettysburg as a graduation present. (She, too, is very interested in Civil War history.) Since dressing in period clothes is the general expectation for the event, I cobbled together a uniform as a Union chaplain. As a pastor, it seemed appropriate, of course.

Since a pastor is a "physician of souls", the service of Civil War chaplains – those brave men who served soldiers, sailors, and marines who fought during the war became of great interest to me. I hope to devote an article to *The Sunflower Picket* on this subject in the near future.

Whenever I read *The Sunflower Picket* or *The Banner*, we often find encouraging articles of our camps engaging in cleaning and re-setting headstones of our fallen heroes. This is, of course, a right and salutary activity for our brethren. We find similar examples in the Scriptures, where memorials were erected to serve as visual reminders of God's ongoing faithfulness to His people. One such instance was when the Joshua instructed leaders from the 12 Hebrew tribes to gather large stones from the riverbed

of the Jordan to be erected as a memorial to their people and the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant who crossed the river into the Promised Land. This was to serve future generations as "a memorial forever" of how God graciously provided a means for His people to cross the Jordan on dry ground (Joshua 4:1-24).

While our activities certainly go far beyond laboring in cemeteries, I exhort and encourage you, in whatever means God gives you strength, to continue your faithful work "to keep green the memory" of those who sacrificed so much to preserve our nation.

It is indeed an honor to serve as your Department Chaplain, and I want to assure you that I take this office seriously. Feel free to reach out to me if I can be in any way of service to you.

Fraternally yours in Christ's service,
Chaplain Stan Palmer, Department of Kansas

HISTORIAN & ROTC COORDINATOR*Joshua S. Gillihan-Young*

Brothers,

Hello. I am writing to let you know our Department, keeping in line with a National Directive, has established the position of Department ROTC Coordinator, and that I have been selected to act as the Point-of-Contact for the program, which is a great honor.

For those who may not know who I am, I have been a member of the SUVCW since 2004, while I was still serving in the Active-Duty Air Force, out in California. After I separated and moved back home to Kansas City, I transferred my membership to Franklin Camp No.5, which is the same Post my 3xs Great-Grandfather Thomas Jefferson Gillihan was a member of when it was part of the GAR.

Our goal going forward, is to not have to be reliant on National for ROTC awards/certificates. I humbly ask for each Camp's assistance in ensuring we meet this goal. Any ROTC-related concerns can be sent to me, at ROTC@suvchwks.org The following, are part of my responsibilities as the Department ROTC Coordinator.

- Act as primary point of contact for all Camps within the Department regarding ROTC Medals and Certificates.
- Receive and process completed Forms 7 after medals and certificates have been awarded.
- Forward the completed Forms 7 to the National ROTC Coordinator.
- Maintain communication with National ROTC Coordinator to ensure timely distribution and adequate supply of awards.

• In the case where a camp does not exist in the area, the ROTC unit can obtain the award directly from the Department ROTC Coordinator, who would be responsible for completing the certificate and shipping it to the ROTC unit, if necessary.

I look forward to working with the various Camps and to make our Department the example for others to follow. I thank you for your time and please be sure to let me know if you have any questions/comments concerning this matter.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty
JOSHUA S. GILLIHAN-YOUNG, LMSW

Department ROTC-Coordinator & Historian
ROTC@suvcwks.org

EAGLE SCOUT CERTIFICATE COORDINATOR

Eric L. Crittenden

For more information on the program, please check out the National SUVCW website with the following link or contact me.

<https://suvcw.org/eagle-scout-recognition>

Eric Crittenden – Dept of KS ESCC
Email: suveweckes10@gmail.com

CAMP NEWS

PVT. PATRICK COYNE CAMP 1

Wichita

Camp Officers

Camp Commander	Steven W. Hamlin, PCC
Senior Vice Commander	Timothy A. Baxter
Junior Vice Commander	Adam P. Harrison
Secretary/Treasurer	Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC
Council	Dale L. Rouse, PCC
	James H. Graves, PCC
	Bruce F. Burke
Patriotic Instructor	Randolph J. Colby Jr.
Chaplain	Dale L. Rouse, PCC
Historian	Michael L. Halfman, PCC

Submitted by Commander Steven W. Hamlin

Wichita’s Cowtown Museum hosted their Civil War Days event April 18 and 19, 2026. The event included a small skirmish reenactment between Union and Confederate forces. Cpl. Patrick Coyne Camp 1 hosted an information and recruitment table in conjunction with the event. Camp Commander Steve Hamlin, PCC Michael Halfman, and PCC James Graves welcomed visitors and answered questions about the



Commander Steven W. Hamlin representing his ancestor 1Sgt. Abram Van Norman, Co. L, 7th MI Cav.

SUVCW.

Visitors from all over the world including Russia, Germany, and Chili were in attendance along with US citizens from as far away as New York and California. The event was graced with a beautiful sunny day in the upper 50’s, a perfect day for wearing the wool uniforms of our Civil War ancestors.



PCC Michael Halfman

SGT SAMUEL J. CHURCHILL CAMP 4

Lawrence

Camp Officers

Camp Commander	Michael D. Heck, PCC
Senior Vice Commander	Brent D. Whitten
Junior Vice Commander	George E. Goff Jr.
Secretary	Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC
Treasurer	Michael A. Todd, PDC
Council	Joseph L. Bodine
	W. Patrick Myers, PCC
	Paul Jefferson, PCC
Patriotic Instructor	Michael J. Hadl, PCC
Chaplain	Roy A. Lafferty, PDC
Historian	Michael J. Hadl, PCC
Civil War Memorials Officer	Paul Jefferson, PCC

It has been an eventful 2026 thus far for Camp 4 with many highlights to report. The efforts of Patriotic Instructor Mike Hadl have resulted in educational programs at each of the first three monthly meetings. In January, Bill McFarland presented “Is That What You’re Wearing?”, an informative look at the clothing of Kansas Civil War soldiers, some of which was regulation issue, and some the soldiers’ own invention. In honor of President Lincoln’s birthday, PDC Tom Schmidt took the floor at the February meeting and shared his collection of memorabilia from the 1909 Lincoln Centennial celebration. Our guest in March was Bill Stumpf who spoke about four men practicing law in Leavenworth during the late 1850s – Thomas Ewing, Jr., Hugh Ewing, Daniel McCook, Jr. and William Tecumseh Sherman – each of whom was destined to become a general in the Union Army.

The March meeting was also notable for putting the Camp over the \$1,000 mark in money raised through raffles in support of Save the Flags, an effort of the Kansas Historical Society to restore and preserve the battle flags of

Kansas Civil War units. By its contribution, Camp 4 is now an official member of the Adopt a Flag program. A highlight for the eleven members of Camp 4 who attended the State Encampment at the Kansas Museum of History in Topeka on March 28 was viewing some of the flags that have already been restored.

The Camp has also resolved to honor the memory of Charles W. Bailey, who died in 1951, as the last Civil War veteran in Kansas. He is buried in nearby Baldwin City, but no marker tells his story. The Camp is working to find surviving family members and correct this oversight by placing a bronze marker adjacent to his grave.

Two projects loom on the immediate horizon: Memorial Day will once again see the Camp place approximately 400 flags on the graves of Civil War veterans across three Lawrence cemeteries. Sometime within the month of May, a workday will be devoted to “refreshing” the extensive headstone cleaning performed last year.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,
Michael Heck, Commander

FRANKLIN CAMP 5

Olathe

Camp Officers

Camp Commander	Daniel W. Stilley
Senior Vice Commander	Matthew T. Archambault
Junior Vice Commander	Jeffrey A. Winters
Secretary	James D. Thornton, PCC
Treasurer	Richard T. Miller
Council	William D. Stilley
	William J. Stoker, PCC
	Ronnie R. Thompson
Patriotic Instructor	Lane D. Smith, PCC
Chaplain	Floyd E. Guliford
Graves Registration Officer	Joshua S. Gillihan-Young
Historian	Roger B. Miller
Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator	James D. Thornton, PCC

Submitted by Camp Secretary Jim Thornton, PCC

A Dinner Conversation: Funeral Homes and Mortuary Science

The March meeting of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Franklin Camp had quite a packed agenda. With twenty in attendance for the evening, Commander Jim Thornton began the meeting at 6:00 pm and opened with a reminder of the Department Encampment and confirmed the camp delegates attending. He then went into detail about the Department of Kansas plan for an “America 250” event involving a wreath laying at the grave of Sarah Ruddell Davis, a recognized Revolutionary War Patriot, interred at the Shawnee Methodist Mission Cemetery in Fairway. The event will take place on Memorial Day.

Commander Thornton continued with a list of upcoming events, including the camp’s traditional Memorial Day Ceremony and presentation of Quilts-of-Valor.

Next came the evening’s presentation. Normally, mortician science would not be a proper dinner conversation. But since the group is centered around Civil War history, this was a perfectly fine subject – especially since the science drastically evolved during the years of the war.

The speaker for the program was Mr. Jeff Harrington from the Alden-Harrington Funeral Home in Bonner Springs. Mr. Harrington gave a detailed explanation on how before the war, a burial was mostly a family affair as time was critical due to the lack of preservation practices. During the war, death occurred far from home, but families desired the body to be returned for burial at home which took days. Thus, the rapid progression of mortuary science and embalming techniques.

Even terminology we take for granted today developed during the Civil War time period. Why is it called a “Funeral Parlor?” Well, as Jeff explained, that is because the family funeral took place in the “parlor” of the home. What about the term “undertaker?” Mr. Harrington explained that word comes from the duties of the embalmers “who undertook the job of preparing the body and returning the remains to the family.” Since they “undertook” the job, they became known as “undertakers.”

What may seem like a grim profession ultimately became a very valued service. Families were grateful to have their loved ones – their sons and fathers – returned home when possible. The development of the science and procedures over those four years was most evident in April 1865 with the care taken in the preservation of President Abraham Lincoln, allowing the nation to mourn at multiple stops during his cross-country journey to his final resting place.

So, it wasn’t a gruesome dinner conversation after all. It was quite an education about an often-underappreciated profession. And we also learned the origin of some of the terminology associated with it.



History of Funeral Directing & Embalming
Pre & Post Civil War
Alden Harrington Funeral Home



Mr. Jeff Harrington

HUMBOLDT CAMP 9

Humboldt

Camp Officers

Camp Commander	Rocky D. Ansell, PCC
Senior Vice Commander	Randy A. Downey
Junior Vice Commander	Barrett E. Young, PCC
Secretary	Barrett E. Young, PCC
Treasurer	Randy A. Downey
Council	William F. Schomaker William R. Hartford Dean L. Dillard
Patriotic Instructor	William F. Schomaker
Chaplain	William F. Schomaker
Historian	Bridger P. Keyes, PCC
Civil War Memorials Officer	Rocky D. Ansell, PCC

PVT JOHN N. ECKES CAMP 10

Winfield

Camp Officers

Camp Commander	Terry E. Justice, PCC
Senior Vice Commander	David W. Taylor
Junior Vice Commander	Dustin L. Jones
Secretary/Treasurer	Eric L. Crittenden
Council	Gregg L. Talkington Gordon L. Hare Kent M. Melcher, PDC
Patriotic Instructor	Kent M. Melcher, PDC
Chaplain	Kent M. Melcher, PDC
Graves Registration Officer	Joe E. Chrisman, PCC
Historian	Gregg L. Talkington
Civil War Memorials Officer	Joe E. Chrisman, PCC
Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator	Eric L. Crittenden
Signals Officer	Kent M. Melcher, PDC

OLD ABE CAMP 16

Topeka

Camp Officers

Camp Commander	Ronald H. Martin
Senior Vice Commander	Robert J. Reeves

Junior Vice Commander	Jonathan A. Holder
Secretary/Treasurer	Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC
Council	Craig E. Dunstan, PCC Jack A. Sanders
Patriotic Instructor	Christopher R. Cardone
Chaplain	K. Kirk Nystrom, PDC James L. Seipel
Graves Registration Officer	Jerry W. Reiman, PCC
Historian	Christopher R. Cardone
Civil War Memorials Officer	Jerry W. Reiman, PCC
ROTC Coordinator	Jonathan A. Holder
Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator	Gary W. Kraus, PCC

Submitted by Camp Commander Ronald H. Martin

What Has Worked For Me

My name is Ron Martin, and I currently have the privilege of serving as the commander of Old Abe Camp 16. I have a total of 36 years and 10 months of enlisted and commissioned service in the United States Air Force. I've also served as a civilian employee of the U.S. Army. I've served in many different interesting, amazing, and challenging positions. In addition to my work for the Air Force and the U.S. Army, I've also worked with the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Marines, and Deputy U.S. Attorneys. These agencies all have one thing in common: The most important single resource that they have for getting the job done is their people.

If I could only share one suggestion with you about what has been helpful in my life it would be this: "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you." This may sound familiar to some of us, because it has become known as "The Golden Rule." It's one of the things that Jesus shared with us, and it is recorded in your Bible, in Matthew, Chapter 7, verse 12. Although I've only been the camp commander for three months, I continue to be amazed at the dedication, ingenuity and accomplishments of the brothers of Old Abe Camp 16. Thank you so much for this opportunity!

OFFICIAL

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

2026-2027

Department Commander	James D. Thornton, PCC
Sr. Vice Dept. Commander	Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC
Jr. Vice Dept. Commander	Roy A. Lafferty, PDC
Secretary (term exp. 2028)	Alan L. Russ, PDC
Treasurer (term exp. 2028)	Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC
Council Member (term exp. 2027)	Jonathan A. Holder
Council Member (term exp. 2028)	Bryan W. Wampler
Council Member (term exp. 2028)	Brent D. Whitten
Council Member (IPDC)	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
ROTC Awards Coordinator & Historian	Joshua S. Gillihan-Young
GAR Records Officer	Boone O. Dodson
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 Secretary-1	Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC
Assistant Secretary-2	Alan L. Russ, PDC

DEPARTMENT COUNCIL ACTIONS
Between January 1, 2026, and March 31, 2026

January 19, 2026 (Remote) Meeting

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 ORDERS
Commander Kent M. Melcher, PDC
JANUARY 1 TO MARCH 28, 2026

DEPARTMENT ORDER 08 (SERIES 2025-2026) January 7, 2026
 NOTIFICATION OF THIRTIETH ANNUAL DEPARTMENT ENCAMPMENT

1. In accordance with Chapter IV, Article I, Section B, Bylaws of the Department of Kansas, the THIRTIETH ANNUAL DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS ENCAMPMENT will be held on Saturday, March 28, 2026, as follows:

Registration opens: 10:30 AM

Memorial Service, followed immediately by Business Meeting: 11:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Place: Kansas Museum of History, 6425 SW 6th Ave., Topeka, Kansas

[In case of inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances, the backup date for the encampment will be Saturday, April 25, 2026.]

2. The Annual Department Encampment is for the purpose of conducting the business of the Department, including amendment of Department Bylaws; approving policies and procedures; discussing and acting upon items which shall come before the encampment; and election and installation of Department officers for 2026-2027. All brothers of the Department are encouraged to attend this Encampment.

a. Voting Members of the Encampment are:

- i. Elected officers of the Department of Kansas.
- ii. All brothers who currently hold the honor of Past Department Commander (PDC) with the Department of Kansas.
- iii. All current Camp Commanders within the Department of Kansas.
- iv. All brothers who currently hold the honor of Past Camp Commander (PCC) with a camp within the Department of Kansas.
- v. All authorized Delegates, as elected by the various camps of the Department of Kansas. As of the date of this order, camps are authorized the following number of delegates (this is in addition to those listed in 2, a, i through iv, above).

Camp 1	4	Camp 4	4
Camp 5	5	Camp 9	2
Camp 10	3	Camp 16	5

b. Non-voting Members of the Encampment: All Alternate Delegates of the camps.

c. Other Attendees (without voice and vote): Brothers and sisters of the Allied Orders of the Grand Army of the Republic in good standing with their respective organization may attend as spectators.

3. Department Officer Reports, Department Committee Reports, and Camp Commander Reports:

a. Elected and Appointed Department Officers, and Department Committee Chairmen shall submit a written report of their activities in their capacity as an elected or appointed Department Officer or Committee Chairman since the last Department Encampment.

b. All Camp Commanders shall submit a written report of the activities of their camp since the last Department Encampment.

c. Reports shall be submitted to arrive no later than Saturday, March 14, 2026, via email to Department Chief of Staff Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC, at chiefstaff@sucvcs.org. This is to allow time to compile and distribute the reports to the officers and camps in a timely manner.

d. The various reports will NOT be read at the Department Encampment, as each attendee will be furnished with a copy of the reports at the encampment. Submitters will be called upon to state if there are any corrections to the report or if the report contains any recommendations. If the report does contain a recommendation, the recommendation shall be read and sent to the appropriate encampment committee for further action.

e. If any officer, chairman, or camp commander has nothing to report, he should submit an email as required in paragraph 3c, above, stating "Nothing to Report."

f. Reports not submitted by March 14, 2026, will not be included with the consolidated reports and will not be allowed to be presented from the floor at the encampment.

4. Additional information concerning the Department Encampment is posted on the Department website (www.sucvcs.org).
 IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,

Kent M. Melcher, PDC
 Department Commander

ATTEST:
 Alan L. Russ, PDC
 Secretary

DEPARTMENT SPECIAL ORDER 6 (SERIES 2025-2026) February 24, 2026

DEATH OF BROTHER RICHARD T. BENNETT, PCC
AND DECLARATION OF PERIOD OF MOURNING

1. It is with sadness and regret I announce the death of Past Camp Commander Richard T. Bennett on February 5, 2026. PCC Bennett was born on December 15, 1950, at Wichita, Kansas. Funeral arrangements are unknown at this time.

2. Brother Bennett joined the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War on February 24, 2005, as a member of Corporal Patrick Coyne Camp 1, Wichita, Kansas. He proudly honored his great-grand uncle Abraham Bennett, who served as a Private with Company D, 2nd Regiment Iowa Infantry, from September 22, 1864, until June 3, 1865.

3. Brother Bennett was elected and served as Camp Commander for Corporal Patrick Coyne Camp 1 for 2011, earning him the honor of Past Camp Commander.

4. Information concerning Funeral/memorial services for Brother Bennett will be provided as the information becomes available.

5. I am ordering the Department charter and all Department of Kansas camp charters to be draped for a period of 30 days from the date of this order.

Additionally, members should wear either the black "In Memoriam" ribbon or the black band on the drop of their membership badge in accordance with National Regulations Chapter V, Article VI, Section 9.

IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,

Kent M. Melcher, PDC
 Department Commander

ATTEST:
 Alan L. Russ, PDC
 Secretary

DEPARTMENT ORDER 09 (SERIES 2025-2026) March 28, 2026
 APPOINTMENT OF DEPARTMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS
 FOR 2025-2026

1. In accordance with Department of Kansas Bylaws Chapter VII, Article III, the following award recipients are hereby announced.

PDC DEAN K. SPEAKS AWARD FOR RECRUITER OF THE YEAR

Presented by the Department Commander to the brother who has recruited the most new brothers (Members, Associates, Junior Members, and Junior Associates) since the previous Department Encampment.

THOMAS E. SCHMIDT, PDC
 Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4

CAPTAIN PATRICK H. CONEY AWARD FOR BROTHER OF THE YEAR

Presented by the Department Commander to the brother whom the Department Commander has determined to have performed significant service to a camp or the Department within the past year.

JERRY A. COFFELT
 Franklin Camp No. 5

LEANDER STILLWELL OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Presented by the Department Commander 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.

JERRY W. REIMAN, PDC
 Old Abe Camp No. 16

WILLIAM W. NIXON AWARD FOR CAMP OF THE YEAR

Presented by the Department Commander to the camp within the Department which demonstrated the greatest degree of support to the goals and ideals of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War in such areas as community involvement, memorial ceremonies, public education, conduct of camp meetings, and such.

FRANKLIN CAMP NO. 5
 Olathe, Kansas
 JOHN CLEM AWARD

Presented by the Department Commander to Junior Member or Junior Associate within the Department for noteworthy accomplishments by that brother.

HARRINGTON JOSEPH MONTGOMERY
Franklin Camp No. 5

2. Congratulations to all the award recipients and thank you for the job well done.

IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,

Kent M. Melcher, PDC
Department Commander

ATTEST:

Alan L. Russ, PDC
Secretary

Commander James D. Thornton, PCC
MARCH 28 TO APRIL 15, 2026

DEPARTMENT ORDER 1 (SERIES 2026-2027) March 28, 2026

ADMINISTRATION

1. Having been elected as Department Commander by the assembled membership and delegates at the Thirtieth Department Encampment held at Topeka, Kansas, on March 28, 2026, command is hereby assumed, and headquarters are established at the above address. All correspondence requiring the attention of the Department Commander shall be sent to the above address.

2. The following brothers were elected, or continue to serve in an unexpired term, to the offices indicated:

- Senior Vice Dept. Commander ; Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill 4
- Junior Vice Dept. Commander ; -Roy A. Lafferty, PDC, Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill 4
- Secretary (term expiring 2028): Alan L. Russ, PDC, Old Abe 16
- Treasurer (term expiring 2028): Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC, Old Abe 16
- Council (term expiring 2027): Jonathan A. Holder, Old Abe 16
- Council (term expiring 2028): Bryan W. Wampler, Franklin 5
- Council (term expiring 2028): Brent D. Whitten, Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill 4
- Council (IPDC) (term exp. 2027): Kent M. Melcher, PDC, Pvt. John N. Eckes 10

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

- Chief of Staff - Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC, Old Abe 16
- Patriotic Instructor - Christopher R. Cardone, Old Abe 16
- Chaplain - Stanley E. Palmer, Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1
- Graves Registration Officer - Joseph E. Chrisman, PCC, Pvt. John N. Eckes 10
- Historian - Joshua S. Gillihan-Young, Franklin 5
- GAR Records Officer - Boone O. Dodson, Old Abe 16
- Counselor - K. Kirk Nystrom, PDC, Old Abe 16
- Eagle Scout Cert. Coordinator - Eric L. Crittenden, Pvt. John N. Eckes 10
- Civil War Memorials Officer - Jeffrey A. Winters, Franklin 5
- Signal Officer (pending Council approval) - Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill 4
- Assistant Treasurer-1 - Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill 4
- Assistant Treasurer-2 - Alan L. Russ, PDC, Old Abe Camp 16

4. All special reports, coordination of commander's schedule, and special correspondence should be directed to the Department Chief of Staff:

Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC, 125 NW Courtland Ave., Topeka KS 66606-1262

5. All business correspondence and official reports should be sent to the Department Secretary:

Alan L. Russ, PDC, 2825 Crystal Lake Dr., Salina KS 67401-6458

6. All bills, and requests for payment should be sent to the Department Treasurer:

Rocky L. Bartlow, PDC, 125 NW Courtland Ave., Topeka KS 66606-1262

7. All Civil War Memorials information and requests for monument and memorial grants and all completed monument and memorials registration forms should be sent to the Department Civil War Memorials Officer:

Jeffrey A. Winters, 15578 W 166th St., Olathe KS 66062-8139

8. All graves registration forms and information should be sent to Department Graves Registration Officer:

Joseph E. Chrisman, PCC, 16195 51st Road, Winfield KS 67156-7002

10. All requests for Eagle Scout Certificates should be sent to the Department Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator:

Eric L. Crittenden, 9760 322nd Road, Arkansas City KS 67005-6416.

11. Department Officers should attempt to attend as many events as possible throughout the year.

12. All Department Officers and Past Department Commanders, elected delegates, and all other brothers of the Department who can do so, are highly

encouraged to attend the SUVCW National Encampment on July 31 and August 1, 2025, in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

13. The 31st Annual Department of Kansas Encampment is scheduled to be held on April 3, 2027, at the Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site in Fairway, Kansas. If necessary, April 24, 2027, has been designated as the alternate date. Additional information will be distributed later.

IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,

James D. Thornton, PCC
Department Commander

ATTEST:

Alan L. Russ, PDC
Secretary

DEPARTMENT ORDER 2 (SERIES 2026-2027) March 28, 2026

APPOINTMENT OF DEPARTMENT STANDING COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENT BYLAWS COMMITTEE

As per Chapter V, Article III, Section E, Department of Kansas Bylaws, the Department Bylaws Committee is established.

The purpose of the committee is to review and/or propose changes to the Department Bylaws, as may become necessary. This includes reviewing changes to the National Constitution and Regulations of the Order as passed by a National Encampment for any effect they may have on Department Bylaws. The committee shall ensure all requirements in Chapter IX, Article III, Department Bylaws, are complied with concerning all proposed amendments.

The following brothers are appointed to the Department Bylaws Committee.

- Alan L. Russ, PDC, Chairman – Old Abe Camp 16
- Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Member – Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4
- 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
- James D. Thornton, PCC, Member (ex officio) – Franklin Camp 5

IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,

James D. Thornton, PCC
Department Commander

ATTEST:

Alan L. Russ, PDC
Secretary

DEPARTMENT ORDER 3 (SERIES 2026-2027) March 28, 2026

APPOINTMENT OF DEPARTMENT STANDING COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENT ENCAMPMENT COMMITTEE

1. As per Department of Kansas Bylaws Chapter V, Article III, Section E-3, the Department Encampment Committee is established.

2. The purpose of the committee is to provide for and ensure the requirements for Department Encampments are met.

3. The following brothers are appointed to the Department Bylaws Committee.

- Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Chairman – Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4
- Michael A. Todd, PDC, Member – Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4
- Roy A. Lafferty, PDC, Member – Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4
- Barrett E. Young, PCC, Member – Humboldt Camp 9
- James D. Thornton, PCC, Member (ex officio) – Franklin Camp 5

IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,

James D. Thornton, PCC
Department Commander

ATTEST:

Alan L. Russ, PDC
Secretary

DEPARTMENT ORDER 4 (SERIES 2026-2027) March 28, 2026

APPOINTMENT OF DEPARTMENT STANDING COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENT TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

1. In accordance with Chapter V, Article III, Section E, Subsection 3, Department of Kansas Bylaws, the Department Technology Committee is established.

2. The Department Technology Committee serves as the Department's advisory body on electronic communication technology and the management of assigned resources in such a manner as to reflect positively on the accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the Department of Kansas, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

3. The following brothers are appointed to the Department Technology Committee.

Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, Chairman (Signals Officer) – Sgt. Samuel J. Churchill Camp 4
Alan L. Russ, PDC, Member (Website Manager) – Old Abe Camp 16
Richard T. Miller, Member (Social Media Manager) – Franklin Camp 5
Daniel W. Stillely, Member – Franklin Camp 5
James D. Thornton, PCC, Member (ex officio) – Franklin Camp 5

4. The committee chairman is authorized to appoint non-voting aides to the committee as deemed necessary.

IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,

James D. Thornton, PCC
Department Commander

ATTEST:

Alan L. Russ, PDC
Secretary

DEPARTMENT ORDER 5 (SERIES 2026-2027) April 2, 2026
LOBBYING WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS

1. REFERENCE:

a. General Order No. 13 (Series 2023-2024), Subject: Lobbying for the Department of New York; as issued by then Commander-in-Chief Peter J. Hristsko, Jr. on April 22, 2024.

b. Department Order No. 10 (Series 2021-2022), Subject: Lobbying Within the Department of Kansas; as issued by then Department Commander K. Kirk Nystrom on March 3, 2022.

c. Department Order No. 7 (Series 2022-2023), Subject: Lobbying Within the Department of Kansas, as issued by then Department Commander Robert D. Boyd II on December 17, 2022.

2. The following department orders are hereby rescinded:

a. Department Order No. 10, Series 2021-2022), dated March 3, 2022.

b. Department Order No. 7 (Series 2022-2023), dated December 17, 2022.

3. The above references give specific rules concerning the lobbying (attempting to influence legislation) by the brothers of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. As stated in reference 1a, a 501(c)3 organization can do a limited amount of lobbying, but too much could jeopardize its tax-exempt status. Per General Order No. 13:

a. Legislation includes action by Congress, any state legislature, any local council, or similar governing body, with respect to acts, bills, resolutions, public referendum, ballot initiative, constitutional amendment, or similar procedure.

b. Legislation does not include actions by executive, judicial, or administrative bodies.

c. An organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if it contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation, or if the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.

4. All camps and brothers who are considering lobbying on behalf of the Department of Kansas or its camps shall comply fully with General Order No. 13. This includes Scope, Restrictions and Prohibitions, and obtaining prior Permission to Lobby from the Commander-in-Chief of the SUVCW.

a. Such request shall be sent to the Department Commander for his review. No camp or brother shall send a request directly to the Commander-in-Chief.

b. If the Department Commander finds the request acceptable, the Department Commander will forward the request to the Commander-in-Chief.

c. Additionally, the keeping of records and all required reporting must strictly be maintained by the lobbying unit.

5. General Order No. 13 states the following regarding the Rights of Brothers as Private Citizens.

Brothers are free to communicate as private citizens with their local, state, or national representatives on any legislation; however, in this case, they must refrain from mentioning or otherwise implying they are representing the SUVCW, nor may they use letterhead of the SUVCW National Organization, Department, Camp, or SVR Military District or Unit.

6. As stated in General Order No. 13, penalties for noncompliance with the order, the "National Organization must practice prudence and take action for the good of the Order against any subordinate body which fails to follow [General Order No. 13], namely suspension as well as other actions necessary to ensure the Order retains its 501(c)3 tax exempt status."

7. This Department Order, along with General Order No. 13 (Series 2023-2024), shall be an agenda item at the next meeting of all camps within the Department of Kansas.

IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,

James D. Thornton, PCC
Department Commander

ATTEST:

Alan L. Russ, PDC
Secretary

DEPARTMENT ORDER 6 (SERIES 2026-2027) April 3, 2026
APPOINTMENT OF DEPARTMENT ROTC AWARD COORDINATOR

1. Reference:

a. General Order No. 7 (Series 2025-2026), dated September 23, 2025, as issued by CinC Kevin P. Tucker.

b. National Regulations Chapter II, Article IV, Section 1

c. Chapter V, Article I, Section D-4, Department of Kansas Bylaws

2. In accordance with the above-cited references, the following brother is appointed to the position of Department ROTC Award Coordinator.

Joshua S. Gillihan-Young, Franklin Camp 5

3. Duties:

a. Obtain from the National ROTC Coordinator a supply of ROTC medals and certificates in sufficient quantity to support the Kansas camps.

b. Act as primary point of contact for all Camps within the Department regarding ROTC Medals and Certificates.

c. Receive and process completed Forms 7 after medals and certificates have been awarded.

d. Forward the completed Forms 7 to the National ROTC Coordinator.

e. Maintain communication with National ROTC Coordinator to ensure timely distribution and adequate supply of awards.

f. In the case where a camp does not exist in the area, the ROTC unit can obtain the award directly from the Department ROTC Coordinator, who would be responsible for completing the certificate and shipping it to the ROTC unit, if necessary.

g. At least quarterly, submit a written report to the Department Commander on activities.

4. This appointment shall remain in effect until the next Department Encampment, unless sooner terminated.

IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,

James D. Thornton, PCC
Department Commander

ATTEST:

Alan L. Russ, PDC
Secretary

IN CONCLUSION

The Sunflower Picket

The Sunflower Picket is the official publication of the Department of Kansas, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Editor: Alan L. Russ, PDC – email: secretary@suvvks.org

Individuals attending events hosted by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, by virtue of their attendance, agree to the usage of their likeness in the Banner, any Camp or Department Newsletter, any SUVCW website and/or on any SUVCW Social Media outlet, promotional brochures, or any other SUVCW material. [G.O. No. 7 (Series 2021-2022)]



Museum of the Kansas National Guard

Home of the 35th Infantry Division Museum

125 SE Airport E. Drive
Topeka, Kansas 66619

(785) 862-1020

office@kngmuseum.org

25 March 2026

Rocky Bartlow, PDC
Dept of Kansas, SUVCW
125 NW Courtland Ave.
Topeka, KS 66606

Dear Rocky & SUVCW,

This is to acknowledge with grateful appreciation your very generous donation of \$200.00 to the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, home of the 35th Infantry Division Museum, designated for sponsorship of the "Heartland Salute to America's 250th" on 6 June 2026.

We are also pleased to acknowledge you as a 2026 Major Donor to the Museum.

The Museum is a 501c3 organization, and all donations may be recognized as such for income tax purposes. No goods or services were received for this donation.

Your generous support of the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, home of the 35th Infantry Division Museum, is greatly appreciated and is important in the preservation and presentation of the militia heritage of the Kansas Army and Air National Guard.

Thanks
Sincerely,

Ed Gerhardt, BG (Ret)
President
Board of Directors