

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

AMERICA 250



NEW BROTHERS, APRIL 1, 2026 – MAY 31, 2026

Name	Date Joined	Camp	Ancestor
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No new brothers to report.

OUR FALLEN BROTHERS

April 1, 2026 – May 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
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No losses to report.

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“AMERICA 250” WREATH LAYING HONORING A REVOLUTIONARY WAR PATRIOT

James D. Thornton, PCC



“She witnessed our nation’s founding and its near destruction eighty years later.” So said SUVCW Department of Kansas Commander Jim Thornton during a Memorial Day Wreath Laying at the grave of Sarah Ruddell Davis.

As part of its commitment to the nationwide “America 250” celebrations, the Department of Kansas took the opportunity to perform a grave marking, or wreath laying, upon the grave of the only known recognized Revolutionary War Patriot buried in the State of Kansas. Sarah Ruddell (she would later marry Thomas Davis) was captured along with her family and the entire community of Ruddell Station in Kentucky by British and Native American forces in 1780. She and her family were accused of being spies for American General George Rogers Clark and were imprisoned for three years, until the end of the war.

After her marriage, Sarah and her family made their way to Pike County, Missouri. Her daughter would grow up to marry Rev. Thomas Johnson who established the Shawnee Indian Mission located in today’s Fairway, Kansas.



As she aged and her husband passed away, Sarah relocated and lived with her daughter in Kansas until she passed in May of 1865.



With the wreath laying ceremony, the SUVCW Department of Kansas recognizes Sarah Ruddell Davis as a Revolutionary War Patriot who also witnessed the American Civil War and the potential end of what she and her family had helped establish.

Several Franklin Camp brothers participated, including Bill Stoker and Jerry Coffelt in Union uniform and Bruce Smith in SAR Color Guard uniform. Commander Dan Stilley provided a reading of the history of Memorial Day. Richard Miller provided a press release resulting in KMBC-9 and KCTV-5 attending.

With representatives from Churchill Camp and Old Abe Camp in attendance, it turned out to be a very successful Department of Kansas event.

KANSAS DAUGHTERS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR 1861-1865 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

KANSAS SUVCW Participates in DUVCW 1861-1865 Department Convention

On Saturday, June 20, 2026, five representatives of the Department of Kansas attended the 102nd Department Convention of the Kansas DUVCW 1861-1865. The convention was held in Topeka.

Those representing the Kansas SUVCW were Department Commander James D. Thornton, PCC; SVDC Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC; JVDC Roy A. Lafferty, PDC;



Department President Judith Barnes and Department Commander James Thornton.

Secretary Alan L. Russ, PDC; and Treasurer Rocky L. Bartlow; PDC.

The Kansas Department of the SUVCW presented the Colors at the meeting. Commander Thornton provided greetings from the Kansas SUVCW and presented a token gift to President Barnes.

Later in the meeting it was announced Julia Louisa Lovejoy Tent 36, of Topeka, was donating \$500 to the Kansas Museum of History “Save the Flags” program. This was matched by their department with an additional \$500 donation to the program. PDC Thomas E. Schmidt accepted the checks on behalf of the museum.

The convention provided both groups with an opportunity to become better acquainted with each other in the spirit of Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty.

After the morning business meeting, a luncheon was held, giving time to become better acquainted with our sisters. We look forward to them visiting our encampment in April as we hope to visit their convention in June.

**FROM THE DEPARTMENT
COMMANDER**

James D. Thornton, PCC

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA

LET US CELEBRATE A MORE PERFECT UNION

It’s here! We’ve made it! In just a few days our nation, The United States of America, will celebrate two-hundred and fifty years as a nation. One quarter of a millennium. There will be fireworks! There will be parties and celebrations! There will be more events celebrating this birthday than you can imagine.



But while we are partying and celebrating, it is my hope we do not lose sight of where we came from and what we went through to get here. We must also remember that we are not a perfect nation.

In fact, our nation’s founding fathers recognized our flaws in the establishment of our government. They stated this fact in the opening lines of our Constitution, “To form a more perfect union.” "To form a more perfect union" is the opening goal of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. It means creating a stronger, more effective, and more collaborative national government than the one that existed, while committing to an ongoing, never-ending journey of continuous improvement.

By definition, perfection is impossible. "More perfect" means that the American experiment is an unfinished work

in progress. It represents an eternal aspiration to fix flaws, overcome divisions, and continuously strive for a better, more inclusive nation for future generations.

Think about our nation’s history in the context of the previous paragraph: overcome divisions – The American Civil War; more inclusive nation – women’s suffrage in the 1910’s-1920’s and the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960’s-1970’s.

How many times has the United States faced near financial collapse? There was the Panic of 1837, the Panic of 1873, the Great Depression of 1929-1939, the Stock Market Collapse of 2008, and the Covid Pandemic. Yet each time, we pulled ourselves up by working together to find a solution – “To form a more perfect Union.”

“Union” is the key word in our nation’s history. Merriam-Webster defines “union” as the act of joining two or more things together to form a single whole. That’s what The United States is – we are many who have come together to form a single whole; a single nation of many parts.

This is what our “Union” ancestors fought to preserve. The nation would be stronger if held together – united as one – rather than divided. By preserving the Union, our ancestors made it possible to successfully face the challenges that would confront the nation in coming years. Our forefathers realized and understood there is strength in numbers.

So, my friends, as you celebrate the 250th Birthday of The United States of America, please keep in mind what our nation, and our ancestors, have been through and endured to get here. Remember and think upon what it has taken “to form a more perfect union.”

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
James D. Thornton, PCC
Department Commander

**CAMP STRENGTHS,
MAY 31, 2026**

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

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

2026 NATIONAL ENCAMPMENT

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

July 30, 2026, through Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

August 2, 2026

Credential Cards and other information have been mailed to all Brothers of the Department of Kansas who advised they were planning to attend the National Encampment at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Let the Department Secretary know immediately if we knew you were going and you have not yet received it. Likewise, if you have now decided you want to go, let the secretary know so he can get the information out to you.

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>

2027 DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS ENCAMPMENT

The **2027 Department of Kansas Annual Encampment** is scheduled to be held on Saturday, April 3, 2027, at the Shawnee Indian Mission State Historical Site in Fairway, Kansas, with Franklin Camp 5 hosting. At this time, it is anticipated a Friday evening meal will be planned for those able to attend.

More details will be provided later this year.

**LINCOLN TOMB CEREMONY
APRIL 10, 2027**

All are invited to participate in the 71st Annual Lincoln Tomb Ceremony, sponsored by the SUVCW and Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the U.S. (MOLLUS), commemorating the 162nd Anniversary of President Lincoln’s death. It will be held at the Lincoln Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois, at 10 am on Saturday, April 10, 2027.

The Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson Memorial Service will be held at 3 pm that day at Rose Hill Cemetery, Petersburg, Illinois. Dr. Stephenson is credited as the founder of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Headquarters hotel and additional information coming in Fall 2026.

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS REPORTS

**SENIOR VICE DEPARTMENT
COMMANDER**

Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC

What can we do during the summer in connection with recruiting new members for the Sons of Union Veterans and your local camps? A number of camps don’t meet every month in the summer. For example, the Wichita camp does not meet in July and August and the Lawrence camp does not meet in July.

As I have mentioned many times before, I believe recruiting to our organization is, for the most part, a connection-based opportunity, rather than potential new members coming from a large event where there is a



recruiting table. The recruiting table is a great way for people to become aware that we exist. Don’t get me wrong, we still need to do that as it allows us to interact with people who may know nothing about our organization. Make sure you have some information about your camp, when you meet and where, and contact information. The national organization has a brochure you can customize for your use, but I think the real potential for getting new members is through the relationships we already have in place. This would include our relatives, members of other organizations you already belong to, and co-workers.

Many of you may be attending a family gathering or reunion this summer. What a great time to bring up your membership in the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. They might not even be aware of their Civil War ancestor. Relatives should be an easy lineage identification for joining. Invite your nephew or cousin to a meeting

when you have a program or scheduled camp activity. If you belong to the Lions, Kiwanis or other service organizations, they are usually looking for programs. Volunteer to present on some civil war topic you are comfortable speaking about; which would include your ancestor or the SUVCW organization.

Co-workers could also be an opportunity to see if they have an interest. Again, invite them to a meeting when you have a speaker or program scheduled or a non-meeting camp activity is planned; you never know what could happen.

You are the best spokesperson for our organization. Being an active member, you have already given the SUVCW the stamp of approval for the individuals or groups I have mentioned. You are the best advertisement in trying to expand our membership. Give it a try!

JUNIOR VICE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Roy A. Lafferty, PDC

Thank you to everyone who participated in Memorial Day activities and to those who have or will be involved in America 250 celebrations.

Honoring the "boys in blue" and our country's heroes is at the core of the SUVCW. Remaining active in our communities is our most effective recruitment tool. While other organizations may focus solely on meetings, our clear mission and active presence are what attract new members. As Tom Schmidt often says, "If we don't honor them, who else will?"

On June 20, Commander Thornton, PDCs Russ, Bartlow, Schmidt, and I attended the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War annual conference in Topeka. It was a pleasure to meet with our sister organization. They generously donated \$1,000 to Save the Flags and expressed interest in our other upcoming activities.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
Roy Lafferty, PDC

SECRETARY

Alan L. Russ, PDC

It has been busy for your secretary since the last issue of *The Sunflower Picket*.

All camps submitted their Annual Camp Report (SUVCW Form 27) early, which helps tremendously with the preparing of the Department Annual Report (SUVCW Form 35). This was completed and signed by me, the Department Treasurer, and the Department Commander. It went into the



mail on May 13 and was received by National Headquarters on May 16, well ahead of the May 31 deadline. Thank you to all our camps for making this possible.

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



Fairway participants (L to R): Jerry A. Coffelt, Camp 5; PDC Rocky L. Bartlow, Camp 16; PCC Michael D. Heck, Camp 4; and PCC William J. Stoker, Camp 5.

Brothers,

Through Spring I have been busy with my duties as Old Abe Camp Secretary/Treasurer, Department Treasurer, Chief of Staff, and National Membership at Large Coordinator. Our big event was Old Abe's Memorial weekend service on Saturday, May 24, at Topeka Cemetery. We had a great crowd of Scouts, JROTC groups, military veterans, and speakers. We were especially honored to have Reverend Max Manning, age 97, who served in World War II and Korea, and then spent a life of service in missions and is still active. We



also heard from Brother Boone Dodson and the descendant of Fuel Williamson, who is buried in the GAR section and recently received a new headstone. Dr. Jennifer Gordon was a principal in the Topeka Schools and told of her experience as Williamson’s descendant and her trip to the USCT museum recently.

After the ceremony, brothers Doug Bluthardt, Jon Holder, Jack Puett, Commander Ron Martin and I went to the Osage City cemetery and set the stones of two soldiers who had never had one. They were for William Beckler and Joel Haworth, and a ceremony is planned for August with brothers of Nebraska and local veterans, civic, and historic groups.

Recently our camp cooperated with the Museum of the Kansas National Guard’s Heartland Military Day and Salute to America’s 250th with an information table and marching in the Patriot Parade. Commander Martin, Brother Chris Cardone, and I were there, and brothers Jerry Reiman and Tom Morgan played their drums to set the cadence in the parade. It was a grand event!

I also participated with the Department and Franklin Camp 5 for an American 250th ceremony in Fairway, Kansas, remembering Sarah Davis, a prominent Johnson County resident, captured during the Revolutionary War and who lived to see the end of the Civil War. It was held in conjunction with the City of Fairway and several historic and ancestral groups including Daughters of the American Revolution, Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War 1861-1865, and Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. I even got to wear my brand-new frock coat representing my Great-great Grandfather Captain William Henry Harrison Bartlow, Company I, 59th Ohio Volunteer Regiment.

Finally, as NMALC, I was able to help add a member to that camp, working with the mother of a US Army Colonel who would be retiring in May and lives in Germany. She wanted it to be a surprise. So, along with her and his wife, we were able to “secretly” process his membership and surprise him with a membership certificates and badge at his retirement. It was a lot of fun!

I hope you are busy with the work of the Order, making sure these heroes aren’t forgotten to time. When you are at their gravesites or at a ceremony, be sure to audibly speak their name. They won’t be forgotten in our time.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
 Rocky Bartlow, PDC
 Department Treasurer/Chief of Staff

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR

Christopher R. Cardone

Brothers, the 250th anniversary of our nation’s independence is upon us. Let us strive to help keep the light of memory for those who not only gave all to preserve the freedoms and rights we hold dear, but also those who helped in establishing the nation in its infant yet precarious times. As well with those who sacrificed all to preserve the Union in a terribly dark time.

The Fourth of July is indeed quite an event for our country, for it was during the days leading up to the celebration in 1863 that the victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg occurred, as well with the breakthrough at Cabin Creek. As the guns fell silent when the war ended, many had lost their husbands, fathers, brothers, and many other loved ones. This gave us our Memorial Day in time in 1868, and our brothers from across the Department of Kansas have done extraordinarily well in keeping the light of memory alive for the public.

Just recently, a few brothers of the SUVCW took part in the march in the Heartland Salute to America’s 250th on the same day as the D-Day anniversary. It was truly an honor to march alongside the brothers, but also other fellow historians, reenactors, military personnel, and veterans who also care about preserving history and keeping light to the public of the trials our country has endured over the years. Keep steadfast hearts and have a great Fourth of July.

Yours in Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
 Chris R. Cardone

CHAPLAIN

Rev. Stanley E. Palmer

A chaplain, like a pastor, is a “physician of souls”. The vocation of chaplain during the Civil War was a time of “learning” and “adjustments” for the Army regarding what a chaplain’s actual duties would comprise of, and several other questions that needed addressing such as rank and uniforms. Prior to 1861, there was very little organization or infrastructure regarding spiritual care for those in the military. At the outbreak of the war, however, the tremendous need for chaplains was recognized and addressing it was hastily accomplished, sometimes in an ad hoc manner.



On the Union side, over 3,000 clergymen served as chaplains, with most of them coming from the ranks of the Methodists, followed by Baptists, and Presbyterian. Smaller in number were Congregational, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic chaplains.

Rather than being recruited or mustered in like officers and ordinary soldiers, most chaplains were appointed by a regiment's commanding officer and then formally commissioned by the War Department. This appointment process was often irregular and inconsistent. This lack of standardization was most visible regarding their appearance in uniform and rank - or lack thereof.

In 1861, General McClellan issued General Order No. 102, which included the instructions for the uniform of U.S. Army chaplains: a plain black frock coat, equipped with a standing collar, and a single row of nine black buttons. Plain black pantaloons were specified, along with a black felt hat or a forage cap, without ornamentation. A plain chapeau-de-bras was allowed for formal ceremonies.

Early in the war, Union regiments often chose their own chaplain, which happened one of three ways: (1) By vote of the regimental officers, (2) by vote of the enlisted men, or (3) direct appointment by the colonel. If appointed and commissioned by the War Department, chaplains were typically assigned the rank of an officer – usually captain. Note that this gave rank without giving an actual command! It is surmised that many commanding officers felt that giving them a rank of an officer would be appropriate out of respect for their office as a minister, priest, or pastor.

However, a great many chaplains, having been recruited via the US Christian Commission, YMCA, or sent by local

churches, simply volunteered to offer their service. They were not officially commissioned by the Army, so they received no rank. Once commissioned, the chaplain was formally mustered in, usually at the regiment's camp. Unlike enlisted men, chaplains were not subjected to a medical exam, were not enlisted for a fixed term, and were not assigned to combat duties. Most chaplains did not carry a side arm, although there are records of a few who did.

While the spiritual care of the regiment was primary – such as conducting chapel services and attending to sick and dying - the duties of a chaplain were by no means limited to this. A chaplain was often a “jack of all trades”: librarian (keeper of wholesome literature for distribution), postmaster, errand boy, carpenter, or nurse aide. He was a scribe for soldiers unable to hold a pen, as well writing letters of sympathy to those who lost a son, husband or father.

[To be continued in the next newsletter...]

Fraternally yours in the Lord's service,
Rev. Stanley Palmer, Chaplain, Department of Kansas

EAGLE SCOUT CERTIFICATE COORDINATOR

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
Department Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator
Email: suvcweckes10@gmail.com

CAMP NEWS

CORP. 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

Corp. Patrick Coyne Camp 1 provided color guard for Mrs. John A. Logan Tent 6, DUVCW 1861-1865, for an America 250 memorial bench dedication ceremony at the



Robert J. Dole Department of Veterans Affairs Medical and Regional Office Center in Wichita on June 6, 2026.

The Camp color guard members were Chaplain Dale L. Rouse, Sr., PCC; Senior Vice Commander Timothy A. Baxter, and Junior Vice Commander Adam P. Harrison.

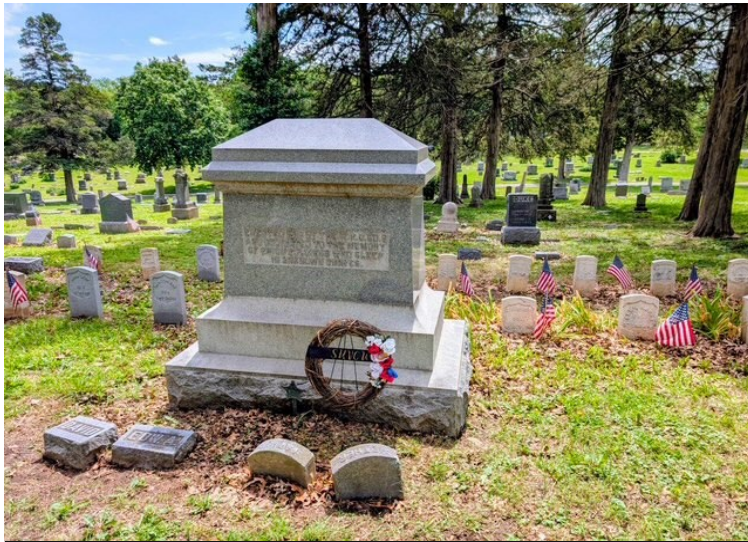
SGT SAMUEL J. CHURCHILL CAMP 4

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

Submitted by Commander Michael D. Heck, PCC



A wreath is placed by Camp 4 at the GAR Memorial, Oak Hill Cemetery.

A busy spring for Camp 4 was highlighted by two excellent programs which were presented by our own Camp members and the annual placement of flags on Union veteran graves for Memorial Day.

At our meeting in April, Camp 4 member Roy Lafferty presented a program on “The Most Eventful Month in American History.” In an informative presentation, Roy made a strong case that the month in question was April 1865 when each of the following events took place: the fall of Richmond, the surrender of the Confederacy, the manhunt for the fleeing Confederate president Jefferson Davis, Lincoln’s assassination, the manhunt for John Wilkes Booth, and the explosion of the steamboat Sultana resulting in up to 1,800 deaths.

Not to be outdone, Camp member Eric Smallwood followed with an excellent program at the May meeting on “The First Sacking of Lawrence”. Seven years before Quantrill’s Raid, and five years before the “official” start

of the Civil War, Lawrence experienced a major invasion by southern troops in the spring of 1856. Considered one of the first major acts of hostility during “Bleeding Kansas,” this first “Sacking of Lawrence,” as it became known, marked a point of no return in the political disputes of Kansas. As part of his presentation, Eric shared artifacts of the event from his personal collection.

Camp 4 invested considerable time and energy last year in cleaning headstones of Civil War veterans at three Lawrence cemeteries. To preserve those efforts, May 9 saw the first (annual?) “Headstone Spritz” event that applied a fresh coating of Wet & Forget to the previously cleaned stones.

The capstone to our spring activities was the annual Memorial Day placement of flags at the three Lawrence cemeteries that serve as the final resting place for Civil War



PDC Tom Schmidt studies the Oak Hill Cemetery map while members of Camp 4 intently await instructions.

veterans. Brother Mike Hadl was responsible for placing approximately seventy flags in Maple Grove Cemetery, about one-third of which honor members of the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry (79th USCI), and the 2nd Kansas Colored Infantry (83rd USCI). Another twenty-one flags were placed in Pioneer Cemetery on the west campus of the University of Kansas. Almost all these graves mark the burial place of members of the 13th Wisconsin Infantry who died of typhoid fever in 1862 while their regiment was encamped in



Brother Mike Hinz places a flag at Oak Hill Cemetery, May 23.

Lawrence on its way to garrison duty at Forts Henry and Donnelson in Tennessee. Oak Hill Cemetery contains the greatest number of Civil War veterans in Lawrence (including our Camp’s namesake and Medal of Honor recipient Samuel J. Churchill) and just over 500(!) flags were placed by a dozen members of Camp 4 with assistance from a local 4-H club.



Camp 4 members (from left) John Shobe, Alan Van Loenen, Mike Hinz, Mike Hadl and Pat Myers display the tools of their trade at the Headstone Spritz on May 9.

As we look ahead, June’s meeting will feature a program on John Brown, and although we don’t meet in July, we will be participating in a local National Moment of Remembrance event. We will be back in full swing in August, participating in the local historical society’s Civil War on the Border program.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,
Michael D. 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
	Lane D. Smith, PCC
Patriotic Instructor	Floyd E. Guliford
Chaplain	Joshua S. Gillihan-Young
Graves Registration Officer	Roger B. Miller
Historian	James D. Thornton, PCC
Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator	

A Very Busy Spring for Franklin Camp

Submitted by Camp Secretary Jim Thornton, PCC

As the temperatures began to rise in April, the community activities for Franklin Camp 5 began to increase. Springtime always brings opportunities for the camp to get involved and make its presence known around the area.

Mine Creek Battlefield presented the first activity of Spring 2026 on April 25 with the annual American Battlefield Trust Park Day. Volunteers assisted with tidying up the visitor center and cleaning up the walking trails of which had become impassable due to storm damage and downed trees. This was a fine example of teamwork with representatives of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War collaborating with representatives of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in caring for our shared heritage.

Just six days later, on May 1, Franklin Camp brothers were again on a battlefield; this time the Lone Jack Battlefield. But instead of cleanup duty, they were engaged in the education of middle-school history students as part of the Missouri History Day event. Partnering with the SCV Key Camp, who graciously provided their impressive replica weapons display, brothers joining in presented a program to students about Civil War history in our area.

The very next day, May 2, found Franklin Camp 5 Commander Dan Stilley leading a contingent of six Franklin Camp brothers on a work detail to clean headstones and trim the landscape around the GAR Monument and Civil War Circle at Olathe Memorial Cemetery. This was in preparation for the camp’s annual Quilt-of-Valor presentations.



Those quilt presentations took place on May 23 as the camp held a Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony at the Civil War Circle. The Quilt-of-Valor group from Prairie Point Quilt and Fabric Shop presented hand-made, personalized, custom quilts to six United States Military Veterans in gratitude for their service to our nation. Commander Stilley led the ceremony with Brother Lane Smith introducing each of the veterans and detailing their service.

Forty-eight hours later, Franklin Camp took part in the Department of Kansas America 250 Wreath Laying ceremony with PCC Bill Stoker and Brother Jerry Coffelt

...serving as members of the color guard. Several other camp brothers were in attendance.

The spring activities came to a close with the Old Shawnee Days Parade on June 6. Franklin Camp took part with Past Camp Commander Jim Thornton driving his 2007 Saturn Sky roadster displaying SUVCW/America 250 signage in the parade with others walking alongside carrying the 34-star flag.



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

No article submitted.

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
	Kent M. Melcher, PDC
	Kent M. Melcher, PDC
Patriotic Instructor	Joe E. Chrisman, PCC
Chaplain	Gregg L. Talkington
Graves Registration Officer	Joe E. Chrisman, PCC
Historian	Eric L. Crittenden
Civil War Memorials Officer	Kent M. Melcher, PDC
Eagle Scout Certificate Coordinator	
Signals Officer	

No article submitted.

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
	Christopher R. Cardone
Patriotic Instructor	K. Kirk Nystrom, PDC
Chaplain	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

Heartland Military Day: Salute to America's 250th

Five brothers from our camp attended and participated in this celebration on Saturday, June 6th (Which also happens to be the anniversary of "D Day"; i.e., the allied invasion of Europe in 1944), located at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard in Topeka.

Although I am not aware of any official count of the



L to R: PDC Rocky L. Bartlow, Commander Ronald H. Harrison, PCC J. Thomas Morgan, and Christopher R. Cardone.

attendance by the public, it is probably not an exaggeration to say that at least a thousand or more people were there. The camp was represented by brothers Ron Martin, Rocky Bartlow, Tom Morgan, Jerry Reiman, and Chris Cardone.

Brothers Jerry and Tom performed an outstanding drum cadence for the parade, while brothers Rocky and Chris ensured our Camp Banner was prominently displayed in the parade as well.

In addition to participating in the parade, Brother Rocky had the excellent idea of setting up a table with our Camp

Banner displayed and doing some public outreach and recruitment activities immediately after the parade.

Special thanks to these brothers for enabling our camp to provide meaningful participation in observance of the 250th anniversary of our nation!

OFFICIAL

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS 2026-2027

Table listing Department Officers for 2026-2027, including roles like Department Commander, Sr. Vice Dept. Commander, etc., and names like James D. Thornton, PCC, Thomas E. Schmidt, PDC, etc.

DEPARTMENT COUNCIL ACTIONS Between April 1, 2026, and May 31, 2026

April 27, 2026 (Remote) Meeting

- 1. A regular meeting of the Department Council was held on April 27, 2026, for the purpose of discussing and acting upon the business that came before it.
2. Approved minutes of January 19, 2026, Council meeting.
3. Approved Proceedings of March 28, 2026, 30th Annual Department Encampment (with minor typos corrected).

- 4. Approved advertisement for 2026 National Encampment Book.
5. Approved appointment of PDC Thomas E. Schmidt as Department Signal Officer.
6. Discussed new ROTC Coordinator position.
7. Approved motion to purchase three elected Department Officer badges at a cost of \$30.00 each for use by the new council members during their term of office.

DEPARTMENT ORDERS Commander James D. Thornton, PCC APRIL 16 TO MAY 31, 2026

DEPARTMENT SPECIAL ORDER 1 (SERIES 2026-2027) April 23, 2026 DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS AMERICA 250 WREATH LAYING CEREMONIES

- 1. Representatives of the Department of Kansas will be participating in two separate wreath laying ceremonies, both on Memorial Day, May 25, 2026, at 10:00 am.
2. One ceremony is at Shawnee Methodist Mission Cemetery, 5341 Canterbury Rd, Fairway, Kansas. This ceremony is to honor Sarah Ruddell Davis (1768-1865), who is an SAR and DAR recognized Revolutionary War Patriot who also lived through the Kansas-Missouri Border War and the Civil War. NOTE: Parking at the cemetery is non-existent. It is recommended attendees park at Old Mission United Methodist Church, 5519 State Park Road, Fairway, Kansas, and walk to the cemetery from there.
3. The second ceremony is at Rose Hill Cemetery, at the Northeast corner of the intersection of SW Road and E 170th Street S, approximately one mile east of South Haven, Kansas. This ceremony is at the memorial marker for Colby Creed, who served as a private during the Revolutionary War.
4. All attendees should wear appropriate attire, to include their SUVCW Membership Badge.

IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,

James D. Thornton, PCC Department Commander

ATTEST: Alan L. Russ, PDC Secretary

IN CONCLUSION

The Sunflower Picket

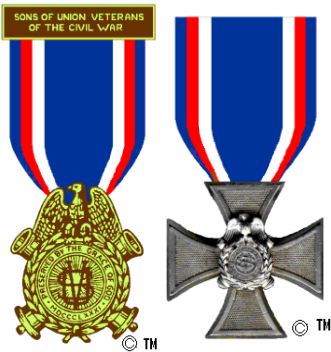
The Sunflower Picket is the official publication of the Department of Kansas, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Editor: Alan L. Russ, PDC – email: secretary@suvcwks.org

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)]

PROPER WEARING and ORDER OF BADGES



1. (Group A) - Membership Badge (or Associate, Junior, Junior Associate or Honorary Member badge); **Commander-in-Chief badge; Department Commander badge; Camp Commander badge; National Officer badge; Department Officer badge.** The Membership badge is appropriate for wear on all occasions where identification or recognition of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is fitting. May be worn alone. **Brothers may not wear more than one badge from this group at any one time.**



2. (Group B) - Past honors badge - Past Commander-in-Chief badge; Past Department Commander badge; Past Camp Commander badge. A Brother may choose to wear both a Group A badge and a Group B badge at the same time, or only a Group B badge, without wearing at the same time a Group A badge.



3. Group C - War Medal; Military Service Medal. Cannot be worn alone. **When worn, the War Medal or Military Service Medal must be accompanied by a Group A or Group B Badge of the Order.**



4. Group D Sons of Veterans Reserve Badges, Encampment/Temporary Badges. Cannot be worn alone. **Must be accompanied by a Group A or Group B Badge of the Order.** With the exception of SVR badges, Group D badges should be worn on the right breast during the proceedings of a National or Department Encampment. Following adjournment of the Encampment, the badge should be moved to

the left breast and worn in the Group D badge position.

Badges, ribbons and medals of the Grand Army of the Republic **may not be worn** by a Brother of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Miniature badges are allowed only for formal wear. The **mixing of regular and miniature badges is not allowed.**