

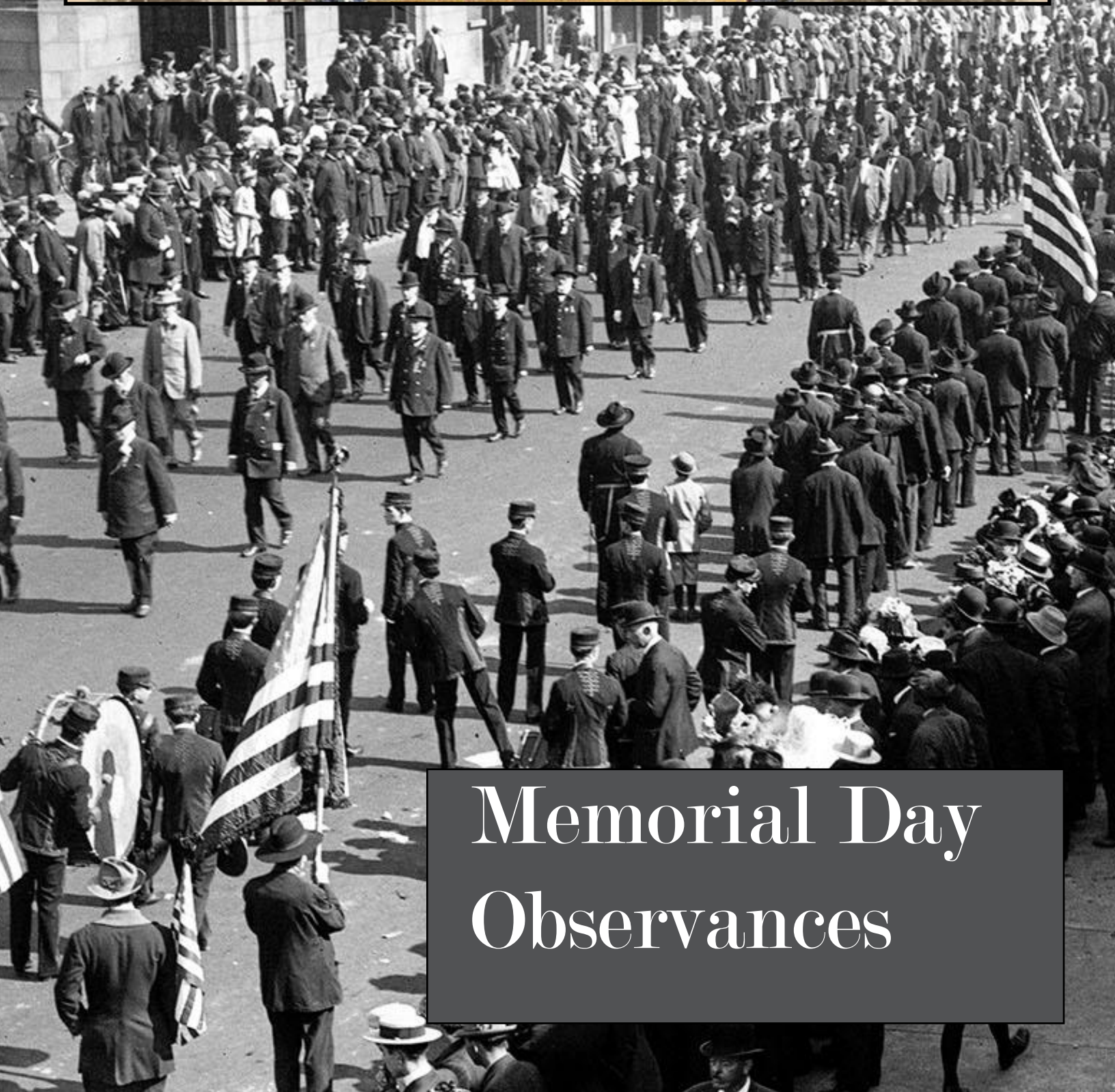


In Fraternity,  
Charity and  
Loyalty

# Lest We Forget

*A publication of the Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp, #443, and dedicated  
to the memory of those who fought to preserve the Union, 1861-1865*

Volume 2, Issue 2  
July 4, 2022



## Memorial Day Observances



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### Trivia #1

In honor of Independence Day, July 4, the trivia in this issue is dedicated to our Independence Day holiday. In which city was the Declaration of Independence adopted?

- a. New York, NY
- b. Philadelphia, PA
- c. Boston, MA
- d. Arlington, VA

Want the answer? Find the second trivia question.

## From the Editor



In this latest issue of 2022, Memorial Day activities and information are featured, as well as a variety of activities in which members of Hecker Camp have been involved. Since the publication of the previous issue in April, we have celebrated a handful of other holidays. Therefore, I hope you had a chance to celebrate and be with loved ones and friends on Mother's Day, Father's Day, Flag Day and on the newest Federal holiday called Juneteenth.

Juneteenth celebrates the day Union Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger issued General Order No. 3 on June 19, 1865 that transmitted the news of the Emancipation Proclamation to the residents of Texas where news of the Emancipation did not reach or was kept hidden from slaves. Granger's order, effectively, freed all remaining enslaved people in the state. The previous January, the anti-slavery, Republican-heavy congress passed the 13th Amendment ending slavery and indentured servitude. It was finally ratified on Dec. 6, 1865.

Our readership includes non-members of the SUVCW. I want to say thank you for your readership of this newsletter and/or your participation in Hecker Camp, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) and our efforts to educate and preserve the sacrifice in monument and memory of those who fought and worked to save the Union and end slavery in the American Civil War. If you are not a member and have an interest and/or a direct connection to the civil war, or know of someone else who may, please consider applying for membership and passing the word along to others. The SUVCW is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of heroes who fought and worked to save the Union. Today, the SUVCW is the legal heir and successor to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), first founded in 1866.

To learn more about our organization's history, click [here](#). The Hecker Camp history begins [here](#) with three chapters. We hope you are intrigued and encouraged to share this newsletter with anyone you feel may have an interest. It is also free to subscribe. Just email [lestweforget1861@outlook.com](mailto:lestweforget1861@outlook.com). Article submissions are also accepted at this email address.



**Lest We Forget** is a publication of the Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp #443 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW). It is the only SUVCW Camp south of Springfield, Illinois, covering the "Little Egypt" part of the state.

For more information about the camp and how to become a member, please visit the Website at:

<http://www.heckercamp443.us/>

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/ColFriedrichKHecker-Campsuvcw/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/ColFriedrichKHecker-Campsuvcw/about/?ref=page_internal)

You may also send a message to [info@heckercamp443.us](mailto:info@heckercamp443.us)

More about the SUVCW is here: [www.suvcw.org](http://www.suvcw.org)

Camp Commander: Brother David Wildermuth

Sr. Vice Commander: Brother Russel Schleicher

Jr. Vice Commander: Brother John Stanton

Secretary: Brother Justin Ottolini

Treasurer: Brother Richard Piper

Camp Guide and Editor: Brother Gerald Sonnenberg

For submissions or to subscribe to the newsletter, email:

[lestweforget1861@outlook.com](mailto:lestweforget1861@outlook.com).

**On the cover:** Civil War Veterans march in a Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Day parade along the 1400 block of South Michigan Avenue in the Near South Side community area of Chicago, Illinois on May 27, 1912. (Photo, Chicago History Museum).

See page 4 for more on Memorial Day .



# Commander's Corner

By Dave Wildermuth  
Camp Commander

## Greetings Brethren

I would like to wish our brothers who are fathers, a Happy Fathers Day, and to all, Happy Independence Day. Also I wish you and your family will stay healthy and safe. Even with gas price's as high as they are, I still have been able to do my commander travels, and as a camp we have been very busy this spring and early summer. These events are listed below, but more information, along with photos are available in this newsletter.

In April, Brother Richard Piper and I attended Lincoln's Death Day Remembrance Service in Springfield, Illinois and Dr. Stephenson's Memorial Service in nearby Petersburg, Illinois.

PCC Greg Zelinske and I attended the 200th Birthday Celebration for U.S. Grant at Whitehaven in St. Louis, Missouri, while Brothers from Hecker Camp were joined by those of Grant Camp #68 to participant in the unveiling of a historical interpretive sign at Palmier Cemetery in Columbia, Illinois. Brothers Piper, Sonnenberg, Boo and myself attended.

I attended the Department Encampment on May 14 and was elected to Department Council. In addition, our Camp newsletter, *Lest We Forget*, and myself were nominated for National Awards from the Department.

On Memorial Day, we participated in the Belleville parade. This included Brothers Sonnenberg, Stanton, Ottolini and myself. PCC Zelinske participated at a ceremony at Jefferson Barracks Cemetery in St. Louis.

In June, we setup a display at Koerner House for Old Belleville Days, Brothers Piper, Ladd and myself attended.

During the Worden, Illinois Homecoming, my wife and I participated in a parade to promote attendance at our ceremony there June 25.

A few brothers have participated in several reenactments and if you have

attended or participated in any event please share your event or experience with us in our newsletter by contacting Brother Sonnenberg, our editor, at [lestweforget1861@outlook.com](mailto:lestweforget1861@outlook.com).

The new Zoom format is working well for our meetings. We encourage our members not able to attend our meetings in person to join us on the Zoom call. Please let us know if you are having trouble receiving the link or have questions about how it works. Please join us to be a part of Hecker Camp in Zoom. We will not stop in person meetings, but we would love to hear from you.

## Camp Projects

Worden Unveiling and Dedication Service occurred June 25. More about this camp-sponsored event will be featured in our next newsletter issue. This dedication involved Henry Schulze and Frederick Schulze. Both served in the 9th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Co. D.

The Hecker Historical Marker in Summerfield, Illinois is coming along. Brother Russel Schleicher helped me pick up a sign pole, and on June 17, my wife and I drove to pick up the marker in Indiana. Both actions saved the camp shipping costs.

I will set up a meeting with the Village of Summerfield to take delivery and install the Marker in Summerfield Park. The dedication will not be until March 2023.



Hecker Monument restoration and signage in Summerfield Cemetery is continuing. The committee I serve on is in the next step of signage for Summerfield Cemetery and Benton Park St. Louis. We have come under the German/American Culture Society for 501c fundraising.

*Highland Project* — This project is on hold for now.

*Walnut Hill Monument Restoration Project* — A committee is working on a proposal. Hopefully, this year we can get the fundraising going.



## Upcoming Events

The Department of Michigan is proud to host the 141st National Encampment of our Order in Grand Rapids from Aug. 11-14, 2022. Please visit their [Encampment Website](https://www.michigan141st.org/) for more information.





# Memorial Day



*Members of Illinois' Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp #443 SUVCW prepare to march and participate in Belleville, Illinois' Memorial Day parade May 30. Pictured (left to right) are Junior Vice Commander John Stanton, Camp Commander David Wildermuth, Secretary Justin Ottolini and Camp Guide and Editor Gerald Sonnenberg. (Photo by Sheila Wildermuth)*

## Memorial Day recognizes the service, sacrifice of Veterans

*By Gerald Sonnenberg, Editor*

**M**emorial Day was first widely observed on May 30, 1868 to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers, by proclamation of Gen. John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of former Union sailors and soldiers. As the third Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic Veterans organization at that time, Logan issued General Order No. 11.

The first paragraph reads, "The 30th day of May 1868 is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form or ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will, in their own way, arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit."

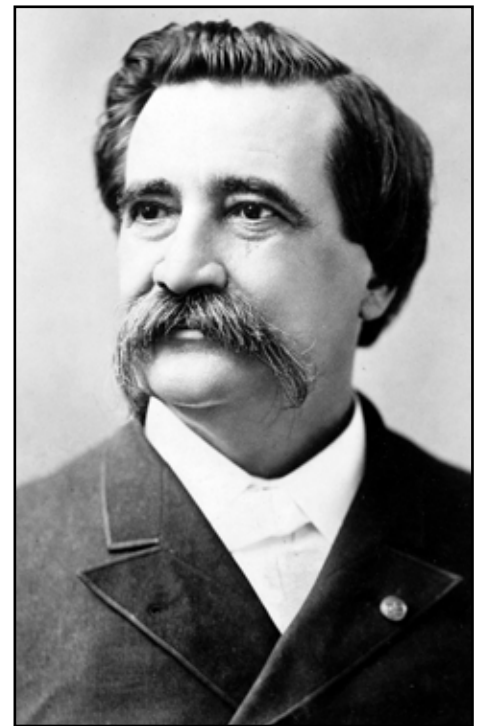
Logan, a Murphysboro, Illinois native, was a former Union Army general; served the state of Illinois as a state representative, a congressman and a U.S. senator. He was also an unsuccessful candidate for vice president of

the United States in 1884. During that first national commemoration, former Union General, sitting Ohio Congressman and future President James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, after which 5,000 participants helped to decorate the graves of the more than 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers who were buried there.

This national event helped galvanize efforts to honor and remember fallen soldiers that began with local observances at burial grounds in several towns throughout the United States following the end of the Civil War. One of the first such events was the May 1, 1865 gathering in Charleston, South Carolina organized by freed slaves to pay tribute and give proper burial to Union troops.

According to PBS.org, New York was the first state to designate Memorial Day as a legal holiday in 1873. By the late 1800s, many more cities and communities observed Memorial Day, and several states had declared it a legal holiday.

After World War I, it became an occasion for honoring those who died in all of America's wars and was then more widely established as a national holiday throughout the United States.



*An image of John A. Logan. (Courtesy photo)*

In 1971, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act and established that Memorial Day was to be commemorated on the last Monday of May. The holiday has come a long way in growth and formality from its beginnings as decoration day, but hopefully with a much greater appreciation for the service and sacrifice of millions of Americans.



# On Memorial Day, Hecker Camp brothers pay tribute to Union Veteran, family member

By Brothers Albert and Dustin Gross  
Hecker Camp #443

The years 1861-1865 saw the American Civil War, which plunged our country into a great conflict. During the war, Randolph County contributed 2,099 men to the Union cause to preserve the Union and to abolish slavery.

One of these soldiers was my great-great-great uncle Paulus Smith, who was the son of immigrants from Alsace in modern day France. At the age of 18, he joined Company D of the 80th Illinois Infantry on Aug. 25, 1862.

The 80th Illinois participated in several battles including Perryville, Kentucky; Streight's Raid and the resulting surrender and exchange in Northern Alabama; the Atlanta Campaign in Georgia, including the attack on Kennesaw Mountain, and the siege and capture of Atlanta; the Battle of Franklin; as well as the defeat and pursuit of Confederate General John Bell Hood's forces after the Battle of Nashville, Tennessee in 1864.

While on the Atlanta Campaign, Smith developed kidney disease and was assigned to be the company cook or

cook's helper. He was allowed to ride the mule that was used to transport the company's cooking utensils during the campaign.

He was discharged as a corporal on June 10, 1865 and returned to Randolph County to farm and marry. He eventually applied for a pension and after many interviews with fellow Veterans and doctors, he was granted a pension of \$8 per month.

Corporal Smith died Nov. 27, 1927 and is buried in Kelly Cemetery east of Evansville, Illinois.

*This image of a newspaper clipping shows the resting place of Paulus Smith, who served in the 80th Illinois Infantry, Company D. (Courtesy photo)*



## Camp brother leads firing team at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery

On Memorial Day, May 30, member and Past Hecker Camp Commander for the Son's of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), as well as commander of the 17th Missouri Vol. Infantry Regiment, Co.G., Greg Zelinske, led a rifle detail at a ceremony in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis. Local media documented the ceremony, including this image (left) taken by KSDK in St. Louis. More about the 17th Missouri and the Turner Brigade, of which it is a part, can be found [here](#).



## Living historians lead Memorial Day ceremony at Alton National Cemetery

On Memorial Day, May 30, members of the Alton Jaeger Guards presented the colors and paid tribute to fallen American Veterans. The group, which includes "dedicated living historians who's mission is to bring to life, the memory of those who fought to preserve the Union during the Civil War," is based in Alton, Illinois.

The unit honors the Alton Jaeger Company or Alton Jaeger Guards, which was organized in 1853, and comprised of German and Swiss immigrants living in Alton, Illinois. Most of the Jaegers, along with men from other Alton companies, would comprise Company A, 9th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment. More about the Alton Jaeger Guards is available [here](#).



Members of the Alton Jaeger Guards during their Memorial Day ceremony. (Courtesy photo)





(Above) On May 30, 1912, a Memorial Day parade in Los Angeles included local posts of the Grand Army of the Republic organization, including about 700 Civil War Veterans. (LA Times) (Photo right) Hecker Camp in the Belleville parade. (Photo by Ben Sonnenberg)

## Walking a mile in their shoes

By Gerald Sonnenberg, Editor

The admonition to walk a mile in someone else's shoes means that before judging someone, you must understand their experiences, challenges, thought processes, etc. The full idiom is, "Before you judge a man, walk a mile in his shoes." It is a reminder to empathize. That is at least part of the approach I take when I participate in a ceremony or other event as a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW). So now I have, walked a mile that is.

On Memorial Day 2022, I put on my blue wool uniform and leather brogans, carried my 10lb, 1853 Enfield rifle with bayonet and other equipment and actually marched a mile in the Belleville, Illinois Memorial Day parade. Was I hot, sweaty, a little sore, and were my feet yearning for a good set of Dr. Scholls inserts? You betcha. More than 30 years wearing comfortable boots and lightweight Air Force uniforms can spoil you.

But why serve? I can only speak for myself when I explain why I serve in the SUVCW. Though, I think many might share my reasoning. I do consider it a service, though not traditionally like my military service. My service is to preserve the memory of our ancestors and the history they made. Not because they were perfect people. They were not. However, they played a significant role in the development and preservation of the United States and the Constitution.

I never met my great, great grandfather David Ralston Livingston. His three years of service to the nation in the 102nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry (OVI) is something I discovered a few years back while working on my family history. What I know is that in August 1862, this husband and father of four children and a pregnant wife, at the time, left his farm in east central Ohio to serve the nation and help preserve the Union. Why? I doubt it was for the pay, and to my knowledge, he was the first of three brothers to fight. One brother, James, would die from an amputation he received at the Petersburg, Virginia battlefield. He died on a hospital ship and was later buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The other, William, would be wounded and serve for a time in the Veteran Reserve Corps; sometimes known as the Invalid Corps, before being mustered out. They both were grandpa's older brothers and served in the 60th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. They were 39 and 41 years old, respectively, when they enlisted.

As a journalist, I wish I could interview them and better understand their courage, the hardships they went through and what drove them to serve. I can't. So, the least I can do is pay tribute to them and the many other Americans who served so that this nation could endure by putting on a uniform; firing my weapon in salute; or marching a mile or so to bring attention to their sacrifice, even though I do get teased a little from time to

time by those who don't understand the value in what I'm doing and why.

Not understanding history is why some Americans have more recently found it convenient to their personal or political goals to demean certain ancestors and apply 21st century values to the values and actions of centuries past. Maybe they should try walking a mile in our ancestor's shoes before opening those mouths of white, well-kept teeth or typing hurtful things on their modern technology. The greatest value in remembering history is learning to not repeat the mistakes of the past, then moving on.

I didn't know our founding fathers any more than the people who criticize them, so it is simply out of ignorance that they treat them with contempt. I dare say that had these various critics of our history lived back then, they probably would have a different perspective on a lot of things they mumble about today.

I'm proud of our founding fathers, mothers and ancestors in general; no matter their race, relation to me, or if they were born here. They were Americans who fought, sacrificed and survived in a time when many of us today may not have. We remember them; not because they were perfect, or because we may or may not agree with how they lived or acted sometimes. We remember them because of what they achieved.

This Independence Day, I thanked them for what they achieved and making sure that I have the blessing of living in the United States. Happy Independence Day!







(Above) Image of the new marker. (Right) On April 5, Camp Commander Dave Wildermuth (right) met with Bruce Hecker and members of the Hecker family on the future sight of the marker in Summerfield Park. (Photo by Gerald Sonnenberg)



## Hecker marker project in Summerfield, Illinois park nears completion

By Gerald Sonnenberg, Editor

The Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp #443 was approved for its first historical marker in Illinois. The marker was approved by the Illinois State Historical Society and is completely funded by our camp. This marker will be placed in the Village of Summerfield, Illinois, which was home to Col. Hecker from 1848 until his death in 1881. He is buried in the Summerfield Cemetery.

The installation will occur sometime soon with the unveiling of the marker tentatively scheduled in March. The descendants and friends of Col. Hecker, along with our Camp and Grant Camp #68 SUVCW from St. Louis, are still working on getting interpretive signs in place at the Summerfield cemetery and one in St. Louis at his monument there. We are also working on getting the monument in St. Louis restored.

More information about this project should be available soon.



### Trivia #2

The answer to Trivia #1 is Philadelphia.

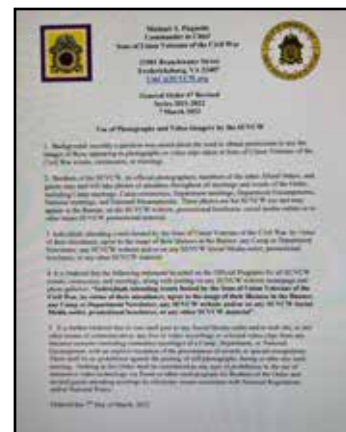
Next question:

2. What three presidents died on July 4?

- a. John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Zachary Taylor
- b. Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, John Adams
- c. James Monroe, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson
- d. John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe

Want the answer? Find the third trivia question.

## New photography guidance issued



Recently, Michael A. Paquette, Commander-in-chief of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), issued a revised version of General Order #7, *Use of Photographs and Video Imagery by the SUVCW*. In summary, he explains that official photographers, members of the other Allied Orders and guests may and will take photos of attendees throughout all meetings and events of the order, including camp, department and national meetings, ceremonies and encampments. These photos are for SUVCW use and may appear in the *Banner* newsletter and various other promotional material.

Individuals attending events hosted by the SUVCW, by virtue of their attendance, agree to the usage of their likeness being used in SUVCW material, social media and websites.

It is Ordered that the following statement be noted on the Official Programs for all SUVCW events, ceremonies and meetings, along with posting on any SUVCW website homepage and photo galleries: "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."





### Historic unveiling in Columbia

On Sunday, May 15, Hecker Camp #443 and U.S. Grant Camp #68 SUVCW members participated in the unveiling of a new interpretive sign in Columbia, Illinois at Palmier Cemetery. They were joined by the local American Legion, local dignitaries and living historians representing the American Revolution and World War I. This cemetery is one the the oldest in the Midwest with Veterans buried here from every war since the French and Indian War in 1754 to the present day. This new interpretive sign tells this story and lists the early Veterans buried there.

*In this photo, (left to right) Hecker Camp Commander Dave Wildermuth, PCC Grant Camp #68 Walter Busch, Brother Dick Piper, Grant Camp Commander Bob AuBuchon, Brother Gary Boo and Brother Gerald Sonnenberg. (Photo by Sheila Wildermuth)*



*(Right) Image of the Hecker Camp display at the Koerner House on June 4.*

*(Below right) In attendance was Brother Garry Ladd, whose uniform is that of a Union regimental surgeon because of his military experience as a hospital corpsman. He set up a field hospital display on the property. (Photo by Sheila Wildermuth)*



## Belleville Museum Days

Hecker Camp members Dave Wildermuth, Richard Piper and Garry Ladd participated in Belleville Museum Days June 4 in front of the Koerner House on Mascoutah Avenue in Belleville, Illinois. There is an effort to restore the home that belonged to Gustavus Koerner who lived 1809-1896.

Koerner's importance to the history of the city and the state of Illinois is significant. He immigrated to Belleville in 1833 from Germany after earning his law degree at the University of Heidelberg where he was arrested during a political demonstration. He escaped and joined a party of emigrants who came to the U.S. His legal reputation led to his appointment to the state supreme court in 1845. He also served in the legislature from 1842-1844, as well as lieutenant governor from 1853-1857.

In 1860, he helped write the strong antislavery Republican platform. He served as a staff officer during the Civil War and raised an all-German regiment. In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln appointed him minister to Spain.





## Zelinskis help educate the community

Past Camp Commander Greg Zelinski and his wife Diane participated in a Zoom call May 11 with 87, 4th graders from Spoele Elementary in the Ladue, Missouri school district. The Zelinskis demonstrated and displayed period officer and enlisted uniforms, ladies clothing, some weapons and other equipment. Diane also briefed the students about the women who joined the fight in various capacities. The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), Son's of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), and Company G, 17th



(Above) Greg and Diane Zelinski during the Zoom call.



In the photo (top right) Greg and Diane Zelinski during the Zoom call. (left), PCC Zelinski is sitting center while in camp in Carthage, Missouri with other living historians. (Courtesy photo)

Missouri Volunteer Infantry organizations, of which Brother Zelinski is commander were discussed, as well as the topics of reenacting, the difference between history and living history, and how to fully appreciate history.

Later that month, PCC Zelinski attended the 160th Anniversary of the Battle of Carthage in Missouri. Civil War camps, drills, demonstrations and other activities were open to the public on Saturday, May 21 and Sunday, May 22.



## Flag Day observance

On Flag Day June 14, Hecker Camp members Camp Commander David Wildermuth (right) and Brother Richard Piper presented a program at William Holliday Elementary



School Summer Programs in Fairview Heights, Illinois. They also conducted a flag changing ceremony and presented a certificate to the school. (Photo by Sheila Wildermuth)



## Worden homecoming

Hecker Camp Commander Dave Wildermuth and wife Sheila participated in the Worden, Illinois homecoming parade June 11 promoting the camp to the local community. (Photo by Sheila Wildermuth)



## U.S. Grant birthday

On June 27, Grant's Farm in St. Louis, Missouri celebrated what would have been the 200th birthday of the former president and general of the Union Army, Ulysses Simpson Grant.

Independent Silver Band from Southern Illinois portrayed the 48th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment Band and performed that day at the U.S. Grant National Historic Site Whitehaven in St. Louis. Click [here to a link](#) of a performance

recorded by Brother Dave Wildermuth.



## Dr. Stephenson remembrance day

Dr. Benjamin Stephenson Remembrance Day Ceremony was held in Petersburg, Illinois April 16. Stephenson founded the Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization for Union Veterans, and predecessor of the Son's of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Camp Commander Dave Wildermuth and Treasurer Richard Piper represented Hecker Camp. Brother Piper served on the honor guard with the camp flag and Brother Wildermuth presented the camp wreath. Brother Wildermuth also serves on the Stephenson Memorial Committee, and he set up a display on fund raising for the Memorial Plaza selling stone pavers to honor individual ancestors or organizations. Special thanks to his wife Sheila who helped him place over 20 pavers to bring the plaza up to date.





# Ancestor's service to nation symbol of pride for family

By Gerald Sonnenberg, editor

This issue, we feature Hecker Camp Junior Vice Commander John Stanton. Brother Stanton was born in Granite City, Illinois in 1955 to John and Joann Stanton from Pinckneyville, Illinois. He lives in Godfrey, Illinois with his wife Wendy.

An Air Force Veteran of 10 years, servicing on both active duty and in the Missouri National Guard, John retired from the U.S. Postal Service as a letter carrier.

He studied history in college, and it was John's love of history and family stories about his ancestors that encouraged his interest in reenacting or living history. He eventually joined the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) and Hecker Camp when he retired about 10 years ago. His ancestor is Union Private Samuel Watkins.

## Lineage

Watkins is John's 4th great grandfather and was born about 1820 in Wayne County in southeastern Illinois.

He was the descendant of an American Revolutionary War soldier by the same name, Samuel Watkins, who came to Illinois from Kentucky.

Watkins met and married Betsy Hamilton, and they had a daughter and, later, a son together. Their daughter Elizabeth would marry Harmon Stanton during the war; John's third great grandfather.

Samuel, Betsy and their children were living and farming around Pinckneyville, when Betsy died not long before the Civil War began. However, Samuel quickly remarried, and he then soon left to fight with the opening shots of the war leaving behind a new wife and a young son.

The Stanton family story relates as to how the family was greatly perplexed as to why he enlisted as a volunteer, especially since he had a very young son and a new wife that



In this photo, Junior Vice Commander (JVC) John Stanton (right), his grandson and Hecker Camp Secretary Justin Ottolini (left) and Justin's sister Maria pose at the grave of the Stanton ancestor Private Samuel Watkins in Pinckneyville, Illinois. He was killed during the fight to take Fort Donelson in Tennessee from Confederates. (Courtesy photo)

this little boy barely knew.

## Civil War Service

Samuel Watkins enlisted in the 31st Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment and he was assigned to Company A. He was mustered in as a private on Sept. 18, 1861 at Cairo, Illinois.

Watkins departed Cairo in late January 1862 with the 31st Illinois marching southeast about 100 miles to Confederate Fort Henry in Tennessee, which was located just across the border of Kentucky and Tennessee along the Tennessee River. This was part of U.S. Grant's campaign to take Fort Henry, and then, Fort Donelson 12 miles east with his 15,000 Union troops.

Watkins and the 31st Illinois saw no action at Fort Henry, and it fell Feb. 6. The army then moved on to Fort Donelson along the Cumberland River.

The effort to take Fort Donelson began Feb. 11, and the 31st Illinois was hurled into the battle. On Feb. 15,

1862, the unit reportedly suffered the heaviest casualties of any unit during the battle which included 15 men from Pinckneyville, including Samuel Watkins. Fort Donelson surrendered the next day after a failed breakout attempt by Confederates.

News of so many men killed from one small community stunned the Illinois town, and they sent a delegation to Fort. Donelson to disinter the Pinckneyville men and bring them home. The families of the dead decided to bury the soldiers in the center of the International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Cemetery together as they died.

It was noted that when Watkins' body was disinterred, he had died from wounds from a musket ball through his hip. The official military record said he died Feb. 15, while other soldiers from Pinckneyville said after the war he was wounded Feb. 14 and died on the 15th.

See STANTON on page 11 ...



STANTON continued ...

When news came of Watkins' death, his daughter Elizabeth, who had married Stanton after her father enlisted, took in her little brother and raised him.



(Photo, top left) In 2018, members of Hecker Camp and their families helped members of the Stanton family clean the headstones at the cemetery in Pinckneyville, Illinois of the Union Veterans killed during the war.

(Photo above) Members of Hecker Camp and a Stanton family member pause their cleaning efforts for a photo. (Left to right) A cousin of John Stanton. From Hecker Camp, Jan McKee (wife of member John McKee), Candi Buechler (wife of member Paul Buechler), Paul Buechler, Justin Ottolini, Richard Piper, John Stanton, John McKee, the late Bob Koerber.

(Photos by Brother John Fulton)

(Photo Left) JVC John Stanton (left), his granddaughter Maria and her brother, Hecker Camp Secretary Justin Ottolini pose next to a cannon at the Fort Donelson battlefield site, which sets near where their ancestor, Private Samuel Watkins was killed. (Courtesy photo)



### Trivia #3

The answer to question #2 is d., John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe.

3. What did George Washington give his soldiers for July 4, 1778?

- a. Balloons
- b. A double ration of rum
- c. Tobacco
- d. Colonial long rifles

The answer is b., a double ration of rum.