Lest We Forget

Volume 5, Issue 2
Summer 2025

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

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty

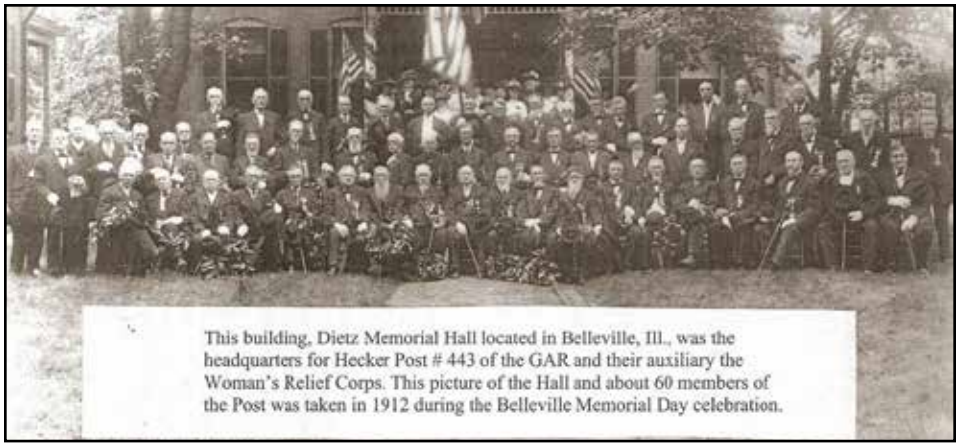
In this issue ...

Trivia #1

One of the keys to Stonewall Jackson's successes in the Shenandoah Valley was a transplanted New Yorker named Jedediah Hotchkiss. What was he?

a. A Confederate spy
b. A munitions expert
c. A mapmaker

Want the answer? Find the second trivia question.



This building, Dietz Memorial Hall located in Belleville, Ill., was the headquarters for Hecker Post # 443 of the GAR and their auxiliary the Woman's Relief Corps. This picture of the Hall and about 60 members of the Post was taken in 1912 during the Belleville Memorial Day celebration.

About this Newsletter

For anyone new to our camp and this newsletter, this camp was first chartered in 1884 as a camp of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). Today, the Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp, #443 is one of 11 camps in the Department of Illinois for the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW). It is the only SUVCW camp in southern Illinois. The camp was chartered as part of the SUVCW in 1996.

The SUVCW is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of heroes who fought and worked to save the Union. In 1881, the GAR formed the SUVCW as the Sons of Veterans of the United States of America (SV) to carry on its traditions and memory long after the GAR ceased to exist. It became the SUVCW in name in 1925 and is the legal successor to the GAR, first founded in 1866.

This newsletter is used to help educate readers, as well as continue the tradition of providing camp members, and others interested in maintaining our history, news about the SUVCW, our treasured American history, and what we can all do to help preserve and honor the memories of the Americans who sacrificed to preserve our Union so many years ago. Some of the history of Hecker Post #443 and the GAR is here.

Please share this newsletter with anyone who may have an interest. It's free to subscribe and/or send submissions. Just email lestweforget1861@outlook.com. Thank you for your readership of this newsletter and/or your participation in Hecker Camp, and the SUVCW. 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. Click here to learn more.

As usual, I try to provide a variety of topics and stories in *Lest We Forget*, as well as highlight camp activities and members.

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, visit our Website: http://www.heckercamp443.org/

Our Facebook page is here.
For more information or interest in joining, you may also send a message to info@heckercamp443.org.
More about the SUVCW is here: www.suvcw.org.
Camp Commander (CC): Brother Russell Schleicher
Sr. Vice Commander (SVC): Brother John Stanton
Jr. Vice Commander (JVC): Brother Donn Cooks
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Camp Guide: Brother Justin Ottolini
For submissions or to subscribe to the newsletter, email: lestweforget1861@outlook.com.

On the cover: Statue of Brig. Gen. John Buford on the Gettysburg, Pennsylvania National Battlefield.

The Corner

By Gerald Sonnenberg
Hecker Camp secretary, editor

Hello Brothers,

Camp in Review

May—Camp meeting was held May 14. After the financial report and reading of the last meeting's minutes, we discussed planning for the dedication of the Hecker informational sign and directional sign at the Summerfield, Illinois cemetery, as well as the sign in the Summerfield Park and Benton Park Hecker monument rededication in St. Louis.

Junior Vice Commander Donn Cooks, via Zoom, discussed a prospective new member and efforts to provide him with the forms needed to apply.

PCC Garry Ladd provided an update from the family of John S. Ackerman and a new headstone at Greenmount Catholic Cemetery, in Belleville. The headstone was received. The family will pay for installation in the cemetery. Once installed they will let us know and discuss the camp providing a dedication.

Final planning for Memorial Day activities took place. In addition to participating in the parade in Belleville, Illinois on May 26, brothers were asked to meet May 24 to place U.S. flags in the Walnut Hill cemetery. The flags were retrieved May 27.

Connected with Memorial Day, Camp Patriotic Instructor and Treasurer Brother Richard Piper discussed Memorial Day's forgotten founders.

See the article on page 6.

June—Camp meeting was held June 4. After the financial report and reading of the last meeting's minutes, we briefly discussed and reminded members about the upcoming dedication events for the Hecker sights in Summerfield, Illinois, as well as Benton Park in St. Louis.

We thanked all who participated in the Memorial Day activities on behalf of the Camp: CC Russell Schleicher, SVC John Stanton, PCC Greg Zelinske, Brothers Richard Piper and Geral Sonnenberg, as well as Donna Rees who drove the trailing vehicle.

CC Schleicher was presented a bucket of flags as a donation from the Walnut Hill Cemetery workers for us to use on the graves of our fallen brothers.

Patriotic Instructor and Treasurer Brother Richard Piper discussed New Orleans during the war titled, Crescent City and the Civil War.

July—Camp meeting was held July 2. Robert Aubuchon, PDC of the Department of Missouri SUVCW, attended. PDC Aubuchon let us know about an event at Grant's Museum and Whitehaven home in St. Louis, Missouri July 19 at 10 a.m.

After the financial report and reading of the last meeting's minutes, we discussed a June 18 call with the Hecker family regarding the upcoming events.

We also dicussed the upcoming camp picnic.

Please see the upcoming events below regarding both events.

Camp Patriotic Instructor and Treasurer Brother Richard Piper discussed Wilmer McClean and his life regarding his living at Manassas when the war began and in Appomattox when it ended.

Upcoming Events

If you have ideas for upcoming events that we, as a camp, or even as individual representatives of the camp can participate, please let use know.

Summerfield and Benton Park dedications - The events will be in conjunction with the Hecker family and the dedication of the Benton Park Hecker monument in St. Louis. The events are scheduled for Sept. 8 at 10:15 a.m. in the Summerfield, Illinois Cemetery and Sept. 9 at 11 a.m. in Benton Park, which are a Monday and Tuesday.

We will fire a salute in Summerfield, and may carry weapons and equipment at Benton Park, but we will not fire a salute at Benton Park. Showtime in Summerfield for participating camp members is no later than 9:45 a.m.

These dates were chosen in combination with the German delegation from Col. Hecker's hometown, which includes the mayor, and the Lufthansa Airlines schedule. **See the article on page 7 for full details.**

Camp picnic

Our annual camp picnic will be held Sept. 3 at 6 p.m., at the Shiloh Community Center before our 7 p.m. meeting. Emails to camp members will provide further details.

Camp Project Status

*Highland Project — On hold.
*Walnut Hill Restoration — Working.

Please keep the newsletter in mind if you have an article or idea to share and if you have attended or participated in any event as a living historian or representative of the Camp. Contact me at lestweforget1861@outlook.com.

We encourage our members that are not able to attend our meetings in person to join us on the Zoom call. We need five attendees, including two officers, for a quorum.

The Civil War Union Soldiers Memorial in Walnut Hill Cemetery in Belleville, Illinois during the 2025 Memorial Day weekend.

(Photo by Gerald Sonnenberg)

Memorial Day recognizes the service, sacrifice of Veterans

By Gerald Sonnenberg
Hecker Camp Secretary/Editor

Memorial 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."

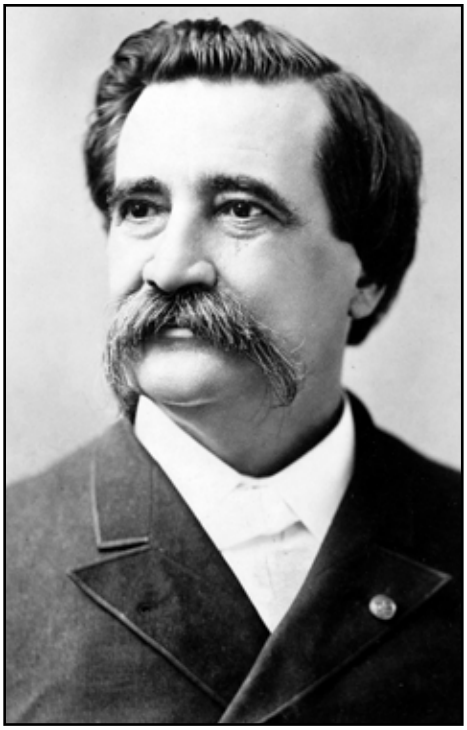
Logan, a Murphysboro, Illinois native, was a former Union Army general; served the state of Illinois as a state representative, a congressman and a U.S. senator. He was also an unsuccessful candidate for vice president of the United States in 1884.

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.



(Above) An image of Gen. John A. Logan. (Courtesy photo)

(Below, left to right) Hecker Camp members PCC Greg Zelinske, Treasurer Richard Piper, SVC John Stanton, Secretary Gerald Sonnenberg, and (not pictured) CC Russell Schleicher prepare to participate in the Belleville Memorial Day parade May 26. (Below right) Brothers Stanton, Piper and Zelinske place flags on Union dead at Walnut Hill Cemetery in Belleville. (Courtesy photos)

Memorial Day's forgotten founders

By Richard Piper
Hecker Camp treasurer and patriotic instructor

(Above) A woman decorates the graves of soldiers in the 19th century. (Courtesy photo)

Memorial Day is a sacred day where we honor our country's men and women who bravely served and gave their lives so our country could survive. As we remember our Memorial Day observances, let us look back at one of the earliest observances.

The date is May 1, 1865. The observers are black men and women numbering about 10,000, who are mostly newly freed. The location is Charleston, South Carolina at the town's Washington Race Course and Jockey Club. Why there, one may ask? The race course had been the unlikely site of a Confederate prison that housed Union prisoners where many had died of ill treatment and disease. Their bodies quickly buried in unmarked graves.

To remedy the dishonor that was shown to these Union dead, black community leaders, along with ministers and freedmen, moved over 250 Union dead to a new cemetery whose entrance archway proclaimed "Martyrs of the Race Course."

The Memorial Day was marked by a parade led by 3,000 black children holding flowers. Hymns and songs like "John Brown's Body" were sung. Ministers and Union officers gave speeches, and black Union regiments performed military honors as they marched in formation.

As one of the first U.S. Memorial Day observances, it showcased black Americans' role to preserve the Union and set the tradition for future Memorial Day celebrations up through the decades through today.

During the Civil War, the Union enlisted about 200,000 black troops in the Navy and Army. They proudly served while experiencing unequal pay, racism and segregation. After the war, many joined the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) in posts both integrated and segregated. Some black Veterans founded their own posts.

Memorial Day was originally known as Decoration Day. It was widely seen by both whites and blacks as the national day to remember our fallen Veterans.

General Order Number 11 was issued by Gen. John Logan, a commander in the GAR in 1968 which set aside an annual Decoration Day to remember fallen Union soldiers. The holiday increased its scope after World War I to honor all U.S. military members who died in service.

Confederate Memorial Days in southern states were established when the "lost cause" movement became popular. It rewrote the cause of the Civil War as being a fight for states' rights rather than a fight to end slavery.

When Memorial Day became an official federal holiday in 1971, its origins had been largely forgotten. Let us remember the Martyrs of the Race Course and those who first ensured that sacrifices of the fallen Union dead would be remembered.

Source(s):
*Gorbulja, Ashley (May 2025). Forgotten Founders. The American Legion Magazine, pages 32-33.
*Memorial Day https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorial_Day

Trivia #2

The answer to Trivia #1 is c, a mapmaker. He was one of the great topographers of his time. With a special genius for finding unlikely routes to a given place.

The Union army was in trouble in the center at Gettysburg. However, in the area between the Round Tops and Cemetery Ridge, Gen. Hancock sent one of the best regiments in the army, the 1st Minnesota, to plug the hole. They made a famous charge and held the position. What percentage of the men in the regiment were killed or wounded in this engagement?

a. 40% b. 60% c. 75% d. 80%

Want the answer? Find the third trivia question.

Bi-state projects bring U.S., international guests together for dedications of 'The Hecker Project'

By Gerald Sonnenberg
Hecker Camp Secretary/Editor

Under the leadership and support of the German-American Heritage Society of St. Louis, a group of organizations and individuals began a bi-state project in 2019 that will officially conclude this September with two events to recognize and celebrate the life of Col. Friedrich K. Hecker, who is considered by many to be one of the most influential 19th Century German-Americans.

These celebrations were timed to coincide with the visit here of a delegation of nearly 30 people from Hecker's birthtown in Germany, including its current mayor. Two authors of books on Hecker – Sabine Freitag and Steven N. Fuller – are also part of the delegation.

Hecker was a leader in his homeland of Baden, Germany during the 1848 Revolution. After emigrating to the United States, he first served in the Union Army as an enlisted man. He was quickly appointed an officer, leading two regiments to help defend and reunite his adopted country during the American Civil War.

The Events

The first smaller event is a ceremony on Sept. 8 at 10:15 a.m. in Summerfield, Illinois where Hecker lived and farmed. The event takes place at the Summerfield Cemetery where he is buried, and the delegation from Germany will place a wreath on his grave. With the cooperation of the Summerfield Cemetery Association, the Col. Friedrich K. Hecker Camp #443, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) installed a directional sign to his grave, as well as a graphic sign with images of Hecker and an overview of his life. Hecker Camp 443 also arranged for an Illinois State Historical Society marker honoring Hecker that was installed by the park in Summerfield.

The second and much larger event will be the rededication of the restored Hecker Obelisk in St. Louis' Benton Park on Sept. 9 at 11 a.m. The community, especially the Benton Park neighborhood, is invited to this celebration which will include a substantial number of individuals who worked to help bring the dilapidated monument back to life, as well as the delegation from Germany and Hecker descendants.

The monument's restoration was accomplished with the cooperation of the City of St. Louis Parks Department and the City of St. Louis Board of Public Service.

A major goal of the monument's restoration was to recreate original bronze elements which were stolen many years ago when the obelisk was vandalized. The north side of the monument featured a rondel with a bronze bas-relief portrait of Hecker, while the south side featured a bronze oakleaf wreath. The present-day recreations were cast in resin with a bronze patina.

According to newspaper accounts of the time, Hecker was so renowned in the St. Louis area that the original 1882 dedication of this obelisk attracted some 15,000 people. That ceremony was preceded by a parade of so many groups that the procession itself stretched for one-half mile. People also lined the streets and watched from buildings along the parade route.

At the original dedication, Hecker's granddaughter unveiled the obelisk. This time, two of Hecker's great-great-great-granddaughters will participate in the rededication. One of them is St. Louis KMOV reporter Caroline Hecker.

Who was Friedrich Hecker?

Friedrich Karl Franz Hecker was born Sept. 28, 1811, in Baden, Germany. There, he became a lawyer, politician and revolutionary. He revered the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights and was one of the most popular speakers and protagonists of the 1848 Revolution where he worked to make Germany a Republic. When his and other's efforts failed, he emigrated, along with many other "Forty-Eighters," to the U.S. where he bought a farm and settled in Summerfield, Illinois about 18 miles east of Belleville.

Like most Forty-Eighters, his attention became increasingly focused on domestic political issues in the United States. He remained active intellectually and politically, gave lectures, supported the Turnverein (gymnastics clubs for physical fitness), played a role in the founding of the Republican Party and in the election of Abraham Lincoln and was strongly committed to the cause of abolition.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, he volunteered for the Union Army and first served as a private under General Franz Sigel, another Forty-Eighter from Baden. Hecker was subsequently appointed colonel and commanded the 24th Illinois Infantry regiment. He was then commissioned to recruit the 82nd Illinois Infantry Regiment, using his own funds in part for the purpose. He was severely wounded leading the 82nd at the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863. He missed the Battle of Gettysburg in July because of his wounds, but the 82nd went on to distinguish itself there. He later returned to command in the fall after his recovery until being granted an honorable release in March of 1864.

After the war, Hecker mostly lived on his Illinois farm but became more involved in the German-language press and in lecture tours. During his lifetime he was recognized as an influential national figure, and his ties to St. Louis and Missouri included his writings for the Westliche Post, a premier German-American newspaper published in St. Louis.

On March 24, 1881, at the age of 69, he passed away at his farm. For his contributions, Hecker will be inducted into the virtual German American Hall of Fame http://gamhof.org in November.

Any media in need of more information may email James Martin jmartin@polsinelli.com.

Five women of Gettysburg

By Barbara Noe Kennedy
Reprinted with permission of Blue and Gray Education Society

The Battle of Gettysburg 162 years ago was fought July 1 to 3, 1863, and is often told through generals and battlefields, but the women of the town fought a different kind of war. They nursed the wounded, buried the dead, fed hungry soldiers and recorded the devastation around them with grit and compassion. Here are five remarkable women whose courage shaped the town's story—and whose legacies still linger today.

Tillie Pierce

When the chaos of war rolled into Gettysburg in July 1863, 15-year-old Tillie Pierce fled with her neighbors—the Shriver family—seeking refuge at a farmhouse on the southern edge of town. They thought they were escaping danger, but fate had other plans. Just beyond their doorstep, brutal combat erupted at Little Round Top. Amid cannon fire and chaos, Tillie found herself transformed from schoolgirl to battlefield nurse—rushing water to parched lips, tending shattered limbs, and comforting the dying.

Years later, her extraordinary eyewitness account became a memoir—At Gettysburg: Or What a Girl Saw and Heard at the Battle—offering a rare glimpse of the Civil War through the eyes of a courageous teenage girl.

"The whole landscape had been changed," she wrote, "and I felt as though we were in a strange and blighted land."

Her story is still in print today.

Hettie Shriver

Hettie Shriver was just 24 years old, the mother of two young daughters, when 170,000 Union and Confederate soldiers descended on Gettysburg. Her husband, George Shriver, had joined the Union army at the outbreak of war, leaving Hettie to manage their elegant brick home on Baltimore Street alone.

When fighting erupted at her doorstep, Hettie fled with her daughters and their neighbor, 15-year-old Tillie Pierce, to her parents' farm on the southern edge of Gettysburg. There, she stayed to nurse the wounded and help bury the dead.

On July 7, Hettie returned to a shattered town. Miraculously, the Shriver home was still standing—barely. Confederate soldiers had occupied it during the battle, converting the attic into a sharpshooter's nest. Bullet holes riddled the walls, furniture was smashed, and the pantry had been ransacked.

George returned briefly for Christmas later that year, but just after returning to Cole's Cavalry, he was captured and sent to the notorious Andersonville Prison in Georgia, where he died in December 1864. Financial hardship forced Hettie to sell the home in 1866. She moved to High Street and eventually remarried.

The Shriver House was painstakingly restored in 1996 to how it appeared during the Civil War and today operates as a heritage museum.

Jennie Wade

Perhaps Gettysburg's most famous civilian, 20-year-old Jennie Wade had sought refuge at her sister Georgeanna's home when the fighting erupted.

See FIVE WOMEN, next page ...

FIVE WOMEN, continued ...

Georgeanna had just given birth, and Jennie, along with their mother, stayed to care for the new mother and her infant son. As the battle raged around them, Jennie baked bread and offered water to nearby Union troops. But then, tragedy struck.

On the morning of July 3, while kneading dough in the kitchen, a stray bullet pierced two closed doors and struck Jennie in the heart, her corset tragically trapping the fatal shot. Union soldiers wrapped her body in a quilt and carried her to the cellar, where her grieving family rode out the final hours of the battle.

Jennie was laid to rest in Evergreen Cemetery, where a U.S. flag flies perpetually in her honor—one of the few sites in the country where a flag is flown continuously for a woman.

Her sister's home has since become a memorial and museum, known today as the Jennie Wade House.

Margaret "Mag" Palm

Margaret "Mag" Palm was a washerwoman and domestic servant living in Pennsylvania, though she was most famous for serving as a conductor on the Underground Railroad in Gettysburg. Perhaps it was her ability to assist so many escapees that drew the attention of southern slaveowners, because one day in 1858, after doing the washing at Joseph Tuckey's home, three men seized her, tied her hands, and tried to push her into a horse-drawn carriage—presumably to take her South.

A newspaper account of the day stated she possessed "more than ordinary muscular power" as she fought off her attackers, even biting off one of their thumbs to free herself. Later, she implicated Ferdinand Buckingham, Philip Snyder and Tuckey as her abductors and brought them to court—and won.

When the Battle of Gettysburg broke out, she and her husband, Alfred, were renting a house from a fellow African American in Gettysburg. Knowing the threats of being abducted into slavery, they fled town ahead of the Confederate Army's arrival. After the war, they remained in Gettysburg for the rest of their lives. Palm died on October 25, 1896, at the age of 67; she is buried in Gettysburg's Lincoln Cemetery.

Elizabeth Thorn

As the wife of a Gettysburg cemetery caretaker, Elizabeth Thorn's role became more prominent when war came to town in 1863. Her husband was off serving in the Union Army, leaving her at home, six months pregnant.

As the battle waged, Evergreen Cemetery became a makeshift hospital and burial ground for fallen soldiers. She tirelessly carried water from the cemetery's well to wounded soldiers. And, with only the help of her elderly father, she buried more than 90 Union soldiers who died during the battle.

Her contributions were recognized in 1904 when the federal government awarded her a pension.

Today, you can visit her cemetery—Evergreen Cemetery—and view the tombs of soldiers she buried. Here, too, is the Gettysburg Women's Memorial, a bronze statue depicting a heavily pregnant Elizabeth wiping sweat from her brow. Her tombstone is just up the hill, where she was laid to rest in 1907 next to her husband.

Trivia #3

The answer to trivia question #2 is d. 80%.

How many women secretly served in the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War?

The answer to trivia question #3 is that it is impossible to know with any certainty how many women soldiers served in the Civil War. Estimates place as many as 250 to 1,000 women served as soldiers.

A photo of what remains of the Alton, Illinois prison. (Courtesy photo)

The other side of the war; Prison camps and exchanges

By Gerald Sonnenberg
Hecker Camp secretary, editor

Imagine suffering sweltering heat or blistering cold, little to eat, filth, disease and the stench of thousands of others in the same situation. This was the environment for most Union and Confederate troops captured during the American Civil War. By the end of the war, there would be more than 150 prisons of various sizes, established both North and South, to hold the nearly half a million Union and Confederate soldiers captured during the war. However, when the war started in April 1861, these prison camps did not yet exist.

Earlier prisoner exchanges

The Federal government initially adopted a tough attitude toward Confederate prisoners. The Lincoln administration wanted to avoid any action that might appear as an official recognition of the Confederate government, including the formal transfer of military captives. But in the North, public opinion on prisoner exchanges would soon begin to soften after the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861, when the rebels captured about one thousand Union soldiers. Petitions from prisoners in the South and editorials in Northern newspapers eventually brought pressure on the Lincoln administration.

In addition, as opposing forces headed into the field in the summer of 1861, and with no means for dealing with large numbers of captured troops, commanders began negotiating individual exchange agreements on their own.

Both Union and Confederate leaders would typically rely on a traditional European system of parole and exchange of prisoners. A prisoner who was on parole promised not to fight again until his name was "exchanged" for a similar man on the other side.

Union and Confederate forces exchanged prisoners sporadically, usually as an act of humanity between opposing field commanders. In some cases, a transfer of only sick and wounded captives took place. Exchanges for just a couple of prisoners between sides could prove very time-consuming to achieve. There were also a few military commanders unfamiliar with the practice who were reluctant to engage in exchanges without explicit approval and instruction from their superiors.

On Dec. 11, 1861, the U.S. Congress passed a joint resolution calling on President Lincoln to "inaugurate systematic measures for the exchange of prisoners in the present rebellion." During meetings on Feb. 23 and March 1, 1862, Union Maj. Gen. John E. Wool and Confederate Brig. Gen. Howell Cobb met to reach an agreement on prisoner exchanges. However, differences over which side would cover expenses for prisoner transportation stymied the negotiations.

See PRISON, next page...

PRISON, continued ...

But Wool and Cobb did discuss many of the provisions later adopted into the Dix-Hill agreement.

Dix-Hill Cartel

Talks continued in the summer, and the Dix–Hill Cartel was signed by Union Maj. Gen. John A. Dix and Confederate Maj. Gen. D. H. Hill at Haxall's Landing on the James River in Virginia on July 22, 1862. It was the first official system for exchanging prisoners during the American Civil War, and "it was patterned upon a similar arrangement used by the Americans and the British during the War of 1812," by using a sliding scale to calculate the relative values of officers and enlisted personnel.

The agreement established a "scale of equivalents for captured officers to be exchanged for fixed numbers of enlisted men, and agents from each side were appointed to conduct the exchanges at particular locations. Prisoners could also be released on parole."

For example, a navy captain or an army colonel was worth fifteen privates or ordinary sailors, while personnel of equal ranks were exchanged man for man. Each government appointed an overall agent to handle the exchange and parole of prisoners. The cartel also allowed the exchange of non-combatants and civilian employees of the military.

According to the cartel, authorities were to parole any prisoners not formally exchanged within ten days following their capture. The terms of the cartel prohibited paroled prisoners from returning to the military in any capacity including "the performance of field, garrison, police, or guard or constabulary duty."

Union prison camps lowered the number of Confederates dramatically, often reducing from thousands to a few hundred prisoners.

Former Union prisoners were transported to designated parolee camps. Benton Barracks, a St. Louis fairground that was converted into a Union Army training camp, was designated to receive Union parolees belonging to regiments from Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri.

Building prison camps

While prisoner exchanges helped lower the number of incarcerated men, there was still a need for prison camps for the increasing numbers of men captured on the battlefield.

This view of Alton, Illinois in 1862 clearly shows the prison in the foreground as the large white structure. The building with the multiple windows was the original blockhouse when the prison was the State Penitentiary before the war. (Photo, national archives)

Many were developed from existing buildings such as Salisbury Prison in North Carolina. It was a converted cotton mill in early 1861 and conditions inside were considered quite good at first.

"The 120 or so Union soldiers interned there were fed meager yet adequate rations, sanitation was passable, shielding from the elements was provided, and the prisoners were even allowed to play recreational games such as baseball."

Locally, the Alton Military Prison north of Belleville, Illinois and across from St. Louis had been the state's first penitentiary in 1833 before closing in 1857. It reopened in 1862. While it had 256 cells when it closed, it was renovated to house up to 1,750 Confederate prisoners.

Out of the 11,764 rebel prisoners who entered it during the war, more than 1,500 died primarily of diseases like smallpox and rubella. It closed permanently in 1865.

Units like the 144th Illinois Infantry Regiment were created for one-year enlistments just to serve as guards at the prisons. During its service, the 144th lost sixty-nine men to disease while guarding prisoners at Alton.

There were thirty-two major Confederate prisons, with sixteen of them in the Deep South states of Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina. Training camps were often turned into prisons, and new prisons and camps also had to be built.

End of the Cartel

The issue that eventually ended the cartel was that of black soldiers. In July 1862 congress gave the president authority to accept black men into the army. Following the Emancipation Proclamation, which took effect Jan.1, 1863, the government aggressively recruited black soldiers. Nearly 200,000 black soldiers would serve during the war.

Southerners were so outraged by the new Union policy, that on May 1, 1863, the Confederate congress created a joint resolution declaring that captured black soldiers would be turned over to the states and presumably returned to slavery. Their white officers would be "deemed as inciting servile insurrection, and shall, if captured, be put to death or otherwise punished at the discretion of the court."

Lt. Col. William Handy Ludlow, the Union's agent of exchange, reminded his Confederate counterpart, Robert Ould, that color was never mentioned in the agreement. He concluded, "I now give you formal notice that the United States will throw its protection around all its officers and men without regard to color and will promptly retaliate for all cases violating the cartel or the laws and usages of war."

Ludlow's threats were soon made into formal Union policy. On May 25 orders went out to all department commanders that no Confederate officers were to be paroled or exchanged.

On July 13, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton ordered that no more prisoners of any rank be delivered to City Point, Virginia for exchange. Ludlow believed this order went too far. When he protested, he was relieved and replaced by Brig. Gen. Sullivan Amory Meredith, who took a hard

See PRISON, next page...

PRISON, continued ...

line in his negotiations with Ould.

Hardline effect

This hardline effectively ended the exchange of troops, and prisons began filling beyond capacity. General Ulysses Grant was against the exchanges as a military necessity.

He said, "It is hard on our men held in Southern prisons not to exchange them, but it is humanity to those left in the ranks to fight our battles. Every man we hold, when released on parole or otherwise, becomes an active soldier against us at once either directly or indirectly. If we commence a system of exchange which liberates all prisoners taken, we will have to fight on until the whole South is exterminated. If we hold those caught, they amount to no more than dead men."

Lack of food and sanitation, the abundance of disease and other issues soon took their toll. Even Salisbury Prison in North Carolina that started with 120 Union prisoners, adequate food and recreation, ended up with a death rate of 28% by October 1864 as its population skyrocketed to more than 10,000.

As victory in the war for the Union became clearer in early 1865, some exchanges began to again take place.

"For thousands of captives, exchange did not come soon enough. At the Confederate prison at Salisbury a burial sergeant recorded 3,406 deaths from October 1864 through January 1865. The toll was also high at the Florence, South Carolina prison. One of the sad ironies of the war is the fact that February 1865, when general exchanges were resumed, was also the month that the number of deaths peaked at the eight largest Union prisons. The toll was 1,646, including 499 at Camp Chase alone."

Of 194,732 Union soldiers held in Confederate prison camps, about 16% or some 30,000 died while captive. Union forces held about 220,000 Confederate prisoners. Nearly 26,000, or 12% died. These deaths totaled nearly 10% of all fatalities during the war.

While some camps were clearly worse than others, neither North nor South had a clear advantage in acceptable facilities. It is safe to say that all the prisons and camps housing Civil War soldiers were probably overcrowded, unsanitary, with not enough food, blankets, quarters and other necessities. Despite all this set against them, many soldiers did not lose their will to fight on and live.

A will to live

Private Michael Dougherty, of the 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry, was one of them. At 18, he was captured by Confederates the first time. He was exchanged in May 1863 after a three month stay in Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. Dougherty was captured again in October 1863, along with 127 others in his regiment, after helping lead a fight for several hours against rebel forces for which he would later receive the Medal of Honor.

From October to February, he was kept in several prisons in and around Richmond, then boarded a train headed for a new prison near Andersonville, Georgia called Camp Sumter.

He wrote on Nov. 8, 1864, "Election Day in the North for President of the United States. (Captain) Wirz, (commander of the camp) has requested that we have a mock election, and each prisoner is to vote, whether of age or not, and says that whatever will be the majority in the hospital will be a fair test as to the result in the North. We all like McClellan, but to spite the rebels, most of us will vote for Lincoln. So this afternoon, each man was given two slips of paper with the names of McClellan on one and Lincoln on the other; two rebel sergeants visited each tent with a basket and gathered the vote, and at five o'clock they announced the result, which stood, McClellan 531, and Lincoln 1,239. Wirz is terribly angry and says it will be 'Link-in and Link-out' for us for some time to come."

This meant harder times for the prisoners. It would be hard to imagine worse conditions than what they had already. Regardless, Dougherty would survive his time in the Confederate prison; the only one of his comrades who were captured with him.

After nearly two years in Confederate prisons, he was free and one of the lucky ones. He later married, had twelve children, and died peacefully at home in 1930 at the age of eighty-five having survived the other side of the war.

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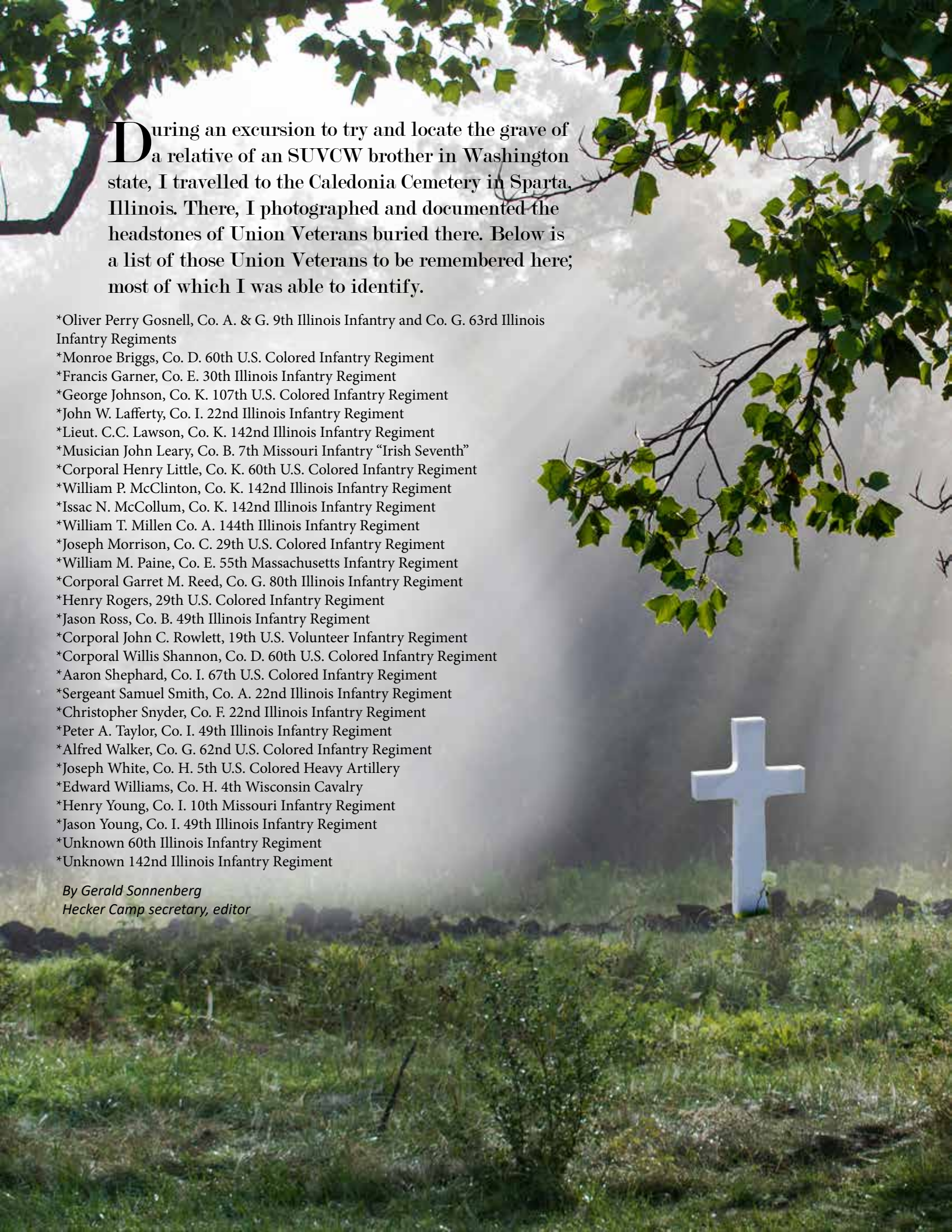

During an excursion to try and locate the grave of a relative of an SUVCW brother in Washington state, I travelled to the Caledonia Cemetery in Sparta, Illinois. There, I photographed and documented the headstones of Union Veterans buried there. Below is a list of those Union Veterans to be remembered here; most of which I was able to identify.

*Oliver Perry Gosnell, Co. A. & G. 9th Illinois Infantry and Co. G. 63rd Illinois Infantry Regiments
*Monroe Briggs, Co. D. 60th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment
*Francis Garner, Co. E. 30th Illinois Infantry Regiment
*George Johnson, Co. K. 107th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment
*John W. Lafferty, Co. I. 22nd Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Lieut. C.C. Lawson, Co. K. 142nd Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Musician John Leary, Co. B. 7th Missouri Infantry "Irish Seventh"
*Corporal Henry Little, Co. K. 60th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment
*William P. McClinton, Co. K. 142nd Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Issac N. McCollum, Co. K. 142nd Illinois Infantry Regiment
*William T. Millen Co. A. 144th Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Joseph Morrison, Co. C. 29th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment
*William M. Paine, Co. E. 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment
*Corporal Garret M. Reed, Co. G. 80th Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Henry Rogers, 29th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment
*Jason Ross, Co. B. 49th Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Corporal John C. Rowlett, 19th U.S. Volunteer Infantry Regiment
*Corporal Willis Shannon, Co. D. 60th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment
*Aaron Shephard, Co. I. 67th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment
*Sergeant Samuel Smith, Co. A. 22nd Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Christopher Snyder, Co. F. 22nd Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Peter A. Taylor, Co. I. 49th Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Alfred Walker, Co. G. 62nd U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment
*Joseph White, Co. H. 5th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery
*Edward Williams, Co. H. 4th Wisconsin Cavalry
*Henry Young, Co. I. 10th Missouri Infantry Regiment
*Jason Young, Co. I. 49th Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Unknown 60th Illinois Infantry Regiment
*Unknown 142nd Illinois Infantry Regiment

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