

## **Department of Indiana - Commander, Dennis C. Hutchinson, DC**

Fraternal Greetings from the Department of Indiana and the Boyhood Home of our Great Civil War President, Abraham Lincoln!

It is my pleasure to submit to you a report of activities from the Department of Indiana over the last year (July, 2020 through June, 2021). I was truly honored and humbled to have been re-elected to a second term for the office of Department Commander, on June 5, 2021, at our 135th Annual Encampment. This year marked the 73rd Memorial Encampment that has been held since the last surviving Indiana G.A.R. comrade, John C. Adams of Jonesboro, Indiana joined his comrades in the Grand Army above.

The Department of Indiana includes eight (8) camps with a total membership of 217 brothers. This is a net increase of 9 brothers from the year 2019. Some camps have returned to in-person meetings while others are still meeting via Zoom. Some camps are planning to have Hybrid meetings (in-person and Zoom) to include those members living at long distances from the meeting place. Generally attendance has been very good since meeting virtually and the work of the camps has continued to a satisfactory degree.

A new appointed office position has been created called "Social Media Signals Officer". This person coordinates and maintains the Department of Indiana's Social Media sites.

Below is a list of departmental activities since July, 2020:

- August 22, 2020: Ben Harrison Camp #356 held a birthdate commemoration ceremony for Indiana's President, Benjamin Harrison at the Crown Hill cemetery. He was born August 20, 1833.
- August 31st, 2020: The John Auten Camp #8 presented a program on the GAR and the SUVCW to the South Bend Area Genealogical Society (SBAGS). The program was presented in conjunction with Sister Beth Thurston, President of the Arsinoe Martin Circle #78 LGAR. Beth Thurston presented a History of the LGAR and the Women's Relief Corp (WRC) of which she is the National Chaplain.
- September 5, 2020: The Ben Harrison Camp #356, John W. Foster Camp #2 and the 27th IN SVR held a headstone dedication ceremony for Sergeant, Jacob H. Hocker, Co. D, 3rd BN PA INF at the Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis, IN. The descendants attended and the event had very good media coverage. The Department of Indiana Commander presented the ceremony.
- September 19, 2020: The brothers of the William P. Benton Camp #23 and Champion Hill Camp #17 participated in a ceremony to bury Pfc. Louis Wiesehan at the Goshen Cemetery in Richmond. Wiesehan is a Marine who was killed in action at Tarawa, during WWII. His remains were recently found.
- September 26, 2020: Champion Hill Camp #17 and Ben Harrison Camp #356 worked in a Huntington cemetery to pull, reset, and clean two Civil War Union Veteran headstones and to install two new headstones for Civil War Union Veterans who did not previously have military headstones.
- October 7, 2020: Champion Hill Camp #17 presented information about the SUVCW at the Huntington County Library for the Genealogical Society.

- October 9, 2020: Champion Hill Camp #17, Ben Harrison Camp #356 and the 27th Indiana SVR participated in a dedication of U.S. 20 as the Indiana Medal of Honor Highway in front of the Civil War Monument in Angola, Indiana. The event had good TV coverage as well as by the newspaper.
- December 5, 2020: Members of the Ben Harrison Camp #356 and Co. D, 27th Indiana Sons of Veterans Reserve participated in the re-dedication ceremony at Williams Creek Cemetery in Indianapolis. Volunteers spent countless hours in order to save this cemetery from destruction. The ceremony took place to thank the volunteers and salute the veterans who were buried there. Descendants and family, plus the American Legion and representatives of all branches of the military and representatives from the City of Indianapolis participated. Wreaths were placed on the graves of the veterans as their names were read. The members of the 27th IN SVR fired three volleys and TAPS was sounded.
- March 2021: Champion Hill Camp #17 – at the request of the Huntington County Historical Museum research was done on Brig. Gen. Richard Slack's wooden secretary box that was carried by him during the first years for the war. It is inscribed with his name and regiment. The information found was then placed with the box at the display site in the museum. This civil war artifact was found last year in California and the finders felt it belonged back in Indiana in Slack's hometown.
- April 17, 2021: Members from Ben Harrison Camp #356, John W. Foster Camp #2 and Champion Hill Camp #17 participated in the Grave Rededication for Pvt. David Minnick Co. H 30th Indiana Saunders Cemetery, at Daleville, Indiana. The descendants of the Soldier were in attendance.
- May 8, 2021: Ben Harrison Camp #356 held their annual grave cleaning at Williams Creek Cemetery.
- May 8, 2021: John W. Foster Camp #2 - Participated in the Lincoln Pioneer Village Heritage Day in Rockport, IN. The Camp presented a Civil War living history with tent, muskets, accouterments and etc. for the public. 2 members were on hand to inform the public of the SUVCW with brochures and a John W. Foster Camp #2 Banner.
- May 22, 2021: Ben Harrison Camp #356 provided a Color Guard detail for the National Society of Daughters of the Union in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- May 20, 2021: Members of Champion Hill Camp #17 attended the Veterans Wall Dedication in Allen County Indiana as a part of the Memorial Day ceremonies.
- May 27, 2021: William P. Benton Camp #28 planted American flags on graves at the Earlham cemetery.
- May 30, 2021: Ben Harrison Camp #356 - (True Memorial Day and Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Day) Planted American flags at the Bethlehem and Highland cemeteries.
- May 30, 2021: William P. Benton Camp #28 held the annual Memorial Day Ceremony at the Goshen cemetery in Richmond, IN.
- May 30, 2021: David D. Porter Camp #116 - members of the Camp came together for a private celebration at Maplewood Cemetery in Valparaiso. Camp commander and treasurer were present. The Camp Commander read General Order #11 and gave a short speech.
- May 30, 2021: John B Anderson Camp #223 members put out American flags and laid a wreath for John B. Anderson in Springer Cemetery. In Lawrence County at Hamer Cemetery (Spring Mill State Park), and at the Red Cross Cemetery, and in Washington County at Martinsburg Cemetery. The Camp joined the VFW Post 2021 of North Vernon for services in Jennings County at the Vernon Cemetery.
- May 30, 2021: Orlando A. Somers Camp #1 performed a Last Soldier Ceremony for Tipton County, Fairview Cemetery, Tipton, Indiana. They honored Pvt. James Marshee Hoover, Co. B, 139th Indiana Infantry, as the last Union soldier buried in Tipton County. This is the 8th Last

Soldier ceremony that Orlando A. Somers Camp # 1 has completed. Involvement from local Boy Scouts and SVR in the ceremony. He was appropriately honored on the true Memorial Day.

- May 31, 2021: William P. Benton Camp #28 held Memorial Day Ceremonies at the Soldiers Hill and Veterans Field of Honor in Earlham cemetery and later participated in the Memorial Day Ceremony at the Wayne County Veterans Park.
- May 31, 2021 – Camp #17 held its Memorial Day Ceremony at the Monument City Cemetery in Polk Township, Huntington County. It unveiled a new sign at the monument that has all the soldiers names who died in the Civil War inscribed on it as the monument itself is facing some weathering.
- June 5, 2021 – 135th Annual Encampment took place in person and with Zoom for those who could not attend. We had 25 members attending as well as Jim Lyon, PDC representing the National Organization.

Respectfully submitted in Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,



Dennis C. Hutchinson  
Commander - Department of Indiana