

Minutes – 137th Department of Indiana Annual Encampment April 29, 2023

The 2023 Annual Encampment, Department of Indiana, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War was held at the Kokomo Howard County Public Library, South Branch, mailing address 1755 E Center Road, Kokomo Indiana. Dept. Commander James Floyd opened the meeting at 9:32 AM.

Members of Co. D, 27th Indiana Infantry SVR presented the Colors.

The 2023 Department of Indiana Annual Encampment was called to order by Commander Floyd.

The Secretary called the roll of officers as follows:

Commander, James M. Floyd, Present
Sr. Vice Commander, Thomas L. Schmitt, Present
Jr. Vice Commander, Travis J. LeMaster, Present
Secretary, William R. Adams, PDC Present
Treasurer, Gilbert H. Young, Jr., PDC Present
Council Member #1 Dennis H. Rigsby, PDC Present
Council Member #2 Timothy J. Beckman, PDC Present
Council Member #3 Dennis C. Hutchinson, PDC Present
Patriotic Instructor, Brian J. Mexin, Present
Chaplain, J. Alan Teller, PDC Present
Graves Registration Officer, David Hoesli, Absent
Historian, Bruce Kolb, PDC Present
Civil War Memorials Officer, Michael W. Beck, PDC Present
Eagle Scout Coordinator, Michael W. Beck, PDC Present
GAR Highway, William R. Adams, PDC Present
Signal Officers, Timothy J. Beckman, PDC Present
The Legion Editor, Jonathan P. Swarts, Present
GAR Records Officer, Bruce R. Kolb, PDC Present
S.V.R., William R. Adams, PDC Present

Chaplain J. Alan Teller presented the opening prayer. Commander Floyd then welcomed all to the encampment. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance. He then introduced our National Representative Sr.-Vice-Commander-in-Chief Peter J. Hritsko.

Commander Floyd requested Secretary Adams to read the October 29th Midyear Encampment minutes. Commander Floyd then asked for a motion to approve the October 29, 2022 Department Midyear Encampment minutes. A motion was made by Brother Alan Teller that the minutes of the Midyear Encampment of October 29, 2022 be accepted. The motion was seconded by Brother Bruce Kolb, there was no further discussion, the motion to accept the minutes as presented passed.

Department Officers Reports:

Commander Floyd reminded the Encampment that we would not be reading the Department Officer reports. Secretary Adams reported that all Department Officers Reports were received. Commander Floyd then polled each Department Officer asking if there were any additions, deletions, or recommendations to their published reports. Secretary William Adams thanked all camps for submitting their Form #27's on time for the year. He then provided membership statistics compiled from those reports. 2022 results showed that overall gains for the department was 10 while there were 27 losses vs. 2021 where there were 25 gains and 15 losses. Of those 2022 losses 18 were due

Brothers being dropped vs.12 in 2021. Treasurer Gib Young reported he had an updated treasurer's report. The Department account has \$16,168.35. Several copies of the Treasury Report were available for review by the Encampment. Chaplain Alan Teller asked to read his report as it listed the obituaries of three (3) deceased members. (See Chaplains report) Chaplain Teller then asked for a moment of silence to remember each Brother. Legion Editor Jon Swarts added to his report that some Brothers have said they did not receive the last Legion. Brother Swarts pointed out that the Legion is distributed thru the Department of Indiana Googles Group. If you are not a member of the Googles group, contact Signals Officer Tim Beckman to receive instruction on how to do so. There were no additions, deletions or corrections to the other Department Officer Reports.

Camp Reports:

Commander Floyd requested of each Camp Commander present if there were any corrections or deletions to their Camp reports, the following additions were presented. Sommers camp noted that the Miami County Last Union Veteran event was being planned and mentioned they attend a Kokomo Program called Last Friday, where the camp provides an information table in downtown Kokomo on that scheduled Friday. Foster camp noted that September 23rd is the date set for the Last Union Veteran of Vandenberg County. Additionally, it was noted that the 2023 Midyear would be held November 4th in Newburgh Indiana at the Newburgh- Chandler Library. Auten Camp included an update on the planned Last Union Veteran events in Kosciusko and Elkhart Counties. Benton Camp presented their written report to the Department Secretary and then verbally presented the report. Anderson camp informed the Encampment that they would be participating in a Fund Raiser, "Talking Tombstones" for the Bartholomew Count Historical Society. Also, they are refurbishing the GAR Monument in the City Cemetery. There were no additions, deletions or corrections to the remaining Camp Reports.

Department Standing Committee:

Visitation Committee: An update was provided by Brother Tom Schmitt. Brother Schmitt reported that we have a directive from our Department By-laws for the visitation but nothing has been done by us with the Indiana Veterans Home in Lafayette for a number of years. His recommendation is that this body needs to decide to either revive and continue the program or cancel the program but a decision is needed. Commander Floyd pointed out that the direction to do this is in our By-laws so it would require the process for By-law changes to cancel and remove it. Alan Teller discussed past visits and what donations of time and money had been contributed. It was suggested that this program and committee should continue. Brother Schmitt said he would visit the Indiana Veterans Home to see what can be done and what are their needs. Brother Mike Beck volunteered to go with Brother Schmitt.

Department Special Committees:

Last Union Veteran Project: Brother Gib Young reported that a "Last Veteran" had been found for each of Indiana's 92 counties however, all graves have not been marked. Brother Tim Beckman responded that after much research it was determined that the Last Union Veteran identified for Ohio County turned out not to be the last. In fact, he probably was not a Civil War Veteran. Therefore, Ohio county remains without a known Last Union Veteran at this time.

26th Indiana Vicksburg Monument: Brother Bill Adams provided an update on the request to move the 26th Indiana's Monument back on the VNMP property. There was no new update to the situation as reported at the Midyear Encampment in October 2022. Due to severe erosion problems and lack of funding to correct those problems quickly the park can not begin to turn its attention to the relocation of the 26th Indiana Monument or the Missouri and Iowa monuments. Brother Adams did note that the "Friends of Vicksburg" are active and do have the responsibility for the care and upkeep of the monuments. If conditions improve, they would be an additional source to contact.

Department Records Storage: Secretary Adams reported that all Department records are currently sorted and stored in heavy plastic totes. He updated the Encampment on his recent discussions with Dr. Heather Calloway, Director, Center for Fraternal Collections & Research Indiana University. Dr. Calloway explained that they had completed their initial startup methods and processes. They are now working with other outside Heritage Organizations. Brother Adams read the Centers Mission Statement to the group and pointed out how its purpose aligned well with our organizational purpose. Although no commitments were made by Dr. Calloway, she agreed that it appeared we would fit the parameters to assist us. Secretary Adams requested the Department Commander to assign several other Brothers to assist him in exploring the next steps in a face to face with Dr. Calloway.

Department Projects: No requests have been made.

General Encampment Business: Commander Floyd reminded those present of the new date changes for the Annual and Midyear Encampments for the Department. The Annual will be the last weekend of April and the Midyear the first weekend of November. Commander Floyd asked the two (2) Brothers who had recently completed Memorial University to please stand to be recognized. Brother Tom Schmitt and Brian Mexin both stood and were recognized with applause.

Old Business:

Department By-Laws Revision: This subject came to the agenda by Commander Floyd due to the Visitation Committee's requirement to visit both the Knights Town Orphanage and the Indiana Veteran's Home in Lafayette. Since the Orphanage in Knights Town no longer exists the By-Laws will require a change. However, the most current revised By-Laws had already been corrected to remove this requirement. No action required.

Past Department Commanders Badge: Brother Tim Beckman passed around a picture of the final iteration of a proposed modification to the Past Department Commanders Badge. During the previous Midyear Encampment Brother Tim discussed the modification noting it was based on the design that the Department of Illinois uses. This modification design has been approved by the National Organization. A onetime tooling cost for the top plate was \$125 and paid by Brother Beckman. He said the cost to the PDC's would be \$150 to have their PDC badge modified. This would be done by sending their badge to the selected company where they would add the top plate.

Motion: The Department to refund Brother Beckman \$125 for the onetime tooling cost for the PDC Badge modification. *Motion Approved.*

SUVCWIN.ORG Domain: Signals Officer, PDC Tim Beckman announced that the Department of Indiana's SUVCWIN.Org domain came up for renewal in February of 2023. He paid the domain renewal fee of \$42.34 personally and now requested the Department to reimburse to him \$42.34. The following motion was made and supported. **Motion:** The Department reimburse PDC Beckman \$42.34 for the 2-year renewal cost of the Departments Domain name. *Motion Approved*

Department Zoom Account: The Departments Zoom account was due for a 1-year renewal and Brother Tim Beckman paid the \$149.90. He came before the Encampment to request a reimbursement of that amount. **Motion:** A motion and support to reimburse Tim Beckman \$149.90 for cost of the 1-year renewal of the Departments Zoom Account. *Motion Approved.*

Evansville Memorial Coliseum Update: PDC Dennis Hutchinson spoke on this project for Foster Camp. He gave a brief history of the Coliseum and mentioned the inventory of items and records held there. He reported that the records were sent to the University of Southern Indiana where they began the process of digitizing all of them. Examples of some of those records were shown to the Encampment. PDC Hutchinson said he had to recontact the National GAR Records Officer about the records. He also indicated he would like to see the digitized records available on both the Foster Camp and Department Websites for others to view.

Sultana Memorial Project: Brother Bruce Kolb announced the bronze plaque that was purchased for the Memorial was available at the Encampment for viewing. He then deferred to Brother Tom Schmitt for the remainder of the update. Brother Schmitt said that Champion Hill Camp had received a defective Headstone for a Civil War Vet that could not be used. The Sultana plaque, when mounted on this stone, would cover the chiseled incorrect markings. This allowed the use of the defective stone to be used for the Sultana plaque and monument. Brother Schmitt informed the Encampment that he with the support of other SUVCW and Lindenwood Cemetery personnel had located a Civil War Vet buried in a pauper's unmarked grave. A Government headstone had been placed earlier this year at his grave. The family now wished to attend a dedication of that stone. Brother Tom said the Veterans National Shrine and Museum grounds had just erected a Civil War Monument on their grounds. Since the Sultana Memorial would be placed near this Monument and Lindenwood Cemetery was only 2 miles away it would be best to dedicate all three monument stones on the same day. The VNMS&M was still completing some work on the Civil War Monument and once that was completed the "Triple Dedication" would be scheduled and announced.

Kimmel Park LGAR/DUV Monument: Vincennes Update: No change to previous report of October 2022.

The Indiana Legion: Editor Brother Jon Swarts had nothing to update to his published report.

Eliza Ann Hardy-Boston: Brother Schmitt commented on two ceremonies in their planning stages to honor Civil War Nurses. One is for Eliza Ann Hardy-Boston the other is being planned in St. Joseph County. Brother Tom mentioned that St. Joseph Hospital would need to give permission to honor the nurses on hospital grounds in St. Joseph County. He hopes to have the plans together by March of 2024 on the ceremonies.

Bonding of Officers: Commander Floyd briefly reviewed the bonding issue to date. He reminded everyone that that the National Constitution and Regulations (CC&R) require all Camp and Department Officers handling money must be bonded. At a previous Encampment it was voted to bond the appropriate Department and Camp officer with the Department paying the costs for both the Department and Camps. The Department Liability Insurance Carrier, State Farm Insurance, is able to provide the Fidelity Bond. State Farm requested that a bonding questionnaire be completed by each person to be bonded and that they return the questionnaire to our Insurance Agent. To date only 50% have been returned. Commander Floyd asked the questions; do we want to be bonded or not? Bruce Kolb responded that it is mandatory that the form be completed and returned! He said it has to be done, it's not a choice. Commander Floyd said he would leave the bonding issue to the next DC.

Chaplain Alan Teller closed the Bible and the Encampment was adjourned for lunch at 11:36

Programs presented during lunch:

Patriotic Instruction – Brian Mexin

Special Presentations – Brother Parker Shinn on his ancestor, Orlando Somers.

Return from lunch:

Upcoming SVR Events: Brother Adams explained that all upcoming events were marked on the SVR Activities Calendar. He noted that the next event would be May 28th, Somers Camp hosting a Last Union Veteran at Mount Hope Cemetery in Peru. On June 10th a Last Union Veteran of Kosciusko County in Warsaw is scheduled. This Veteran was Isaac Sharp a Past GAR Commander in Chief. Time for the event was TBD. Lastly, August 19th is the Last Union Veteran of Elkhart County dedication for George Harbinson. Adams noted that he was still in need of more uniformed SVR members to attend these events.

New Business

Reimbursement of Department Officers: Commander Floyd brought before the Encampment the request for Department Officers to be reimbursed for expenses incurred while doing the Departments business. Receipts were presented to Department Treasurer Gib Young from Commander Floyd and Secretary Bill Adams. A Motion from Brother Dennis Rigsby supported by Brother Michael Beck was made. **Motion:** To reimburse Commander Floyd and Secretary Adams for expenses. *Motion Approved.*

SUVCW Special Committee: The National Special Committee to Review Membership Qualifications report was presented by National representative Sr-Vice Commander-in-Chief Peter Hritsko Jr. Brother Hritsko explained that at a previous National Encampment a motion was passed to require detailed documentation for proof of Hereditary Membership. He said we are to improve credibility in proofing who we are as new members. That we have been too relaxed about documentation of proof. He related that this was similar to MOLLUS and the SAR. He stressed that this would be voted on at the upcoming National Encampment in New Hampshire in August. He urged all who could, to attend so they could voice their thoughts about the proposed change. Brother Hritsko fielded numerous questions and concerns including impact to Camp Secretary workload and to recruiting. Additional questions and discussion ensued regarding the increase in National dues of \$10.00 passed at the Grand Rapids Michigan National Encampment the previous year. Commander Floyd then interrupted the questioning to announce that there was an additional set of recommendations we would be asked to consider. Brother Hritsko explained that those recommendations dealt with the questions of transgender. He said that by our CC&R we accept members born male at birth as indicated on their birth certificate. He said that if a currently accepted member who meets those requirements were to change their gender, we cannot remove them from membership. Those were the issues regarding the additional CC&R proposed amendment changes recommendations. Commander Floyd then read a summary of each recommendation. A brief discussion then began regarding those proposed CC&R amendment changes. Commander Floyd then added clarification to what we had just been informed regarding the two issues before us. Commander Floyd reviewed the history of General Orders issued and rescinded on issue #1 that of Lineage documentation. He then further explained that issue #2 was the addition of inclusive language to be added to the CC&R on the gender question. Commander Floyd termed the request to have Departments vote on the recommended changes to the CC&R by the Special Committee to Review Membership as a way to “smooth” the way to pass the changes at the New Hampshire National Encampment. Commander Floyd then opened the discussion on issue #2, the addition of inclusive language to the CC&R. Brother Beckman made a motion supported by Alan Teller. **Motion:** That we vote as a department on each recommendation individually. Results of the voice vote could not be determined and a hand vote was called with the results of **14 Yay, 9 Nay** *Motion Approved*

Recommendation #1: Recommendation 1: The Constitution of the Order is hereby amended as follows: Article III, Eligibility to Membership, is hereby amended to read as follows: All male descendants assigned at birth as biologically male, whether through lineal or collateral line of ages lineages specified in Article VII of this Constitution who are blood relatives of soldiers, sailors, marines or members of the Revenue Cutter Service, who were regularly mustered and served honorably in, were honorably discharged from, or died in the service of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps or Revenue Cutter Service of the United States of America or such State regiments as were called into active service and were subject to orders of United States general officers, during the War of the Rebellion between April 12, 1861 and April 9, 1865

Vote Results Recommendation #1: 12 Yay; 7 Nay; 4 Abstained *Recommendation Approved*

Recommendation #2: Recommendation 2: The Constitution of the Order is hereby amended as follows: Article VII, Membership, Section 2, Subsections (a) and (b), are hereby amended to read as follows: Section 2. Associates.

There shall be two classes of Associates. (a) Associates are males assigned at birth as biologically male at least fourteen (14) years of age who do not meet the blood relative qualifications stipulated in Article III of this Constitution and Section 5 of the Articles of Incorporation but otherwise meet the requirements for membership established by the National Organization. (b) Junior Associates are males assigned at birth as biologically male at least six (6) years of age but less than fourteen (14) years of age who do not meet the blood relative qualifications stipulated in Article III of this Constitution and Section 5 of the Articles of Incorporation but otherwise meet the requirements for membership established by the National Organization.

Vote Results Recommendation #2 14 Yay; 7 Nay; 2 Abstained; Recommendation Approved

Recommendation #3: Recommendation 3: The Constitution of the Order is hereby amended as follows: Article VII, Membership, is hereby amended to add a new Section 6 to read as follows: Section 6. A Brother who has been duly elected to membership in the Order shall not be subsequently disqualified from membership or be involuntarily discharged from the Order solely because of that Brother's change in gender or sexual identification.

Brother Tim Beckman addressed the camp from a prepared statement in regards to Gender change. Several other Brothers addressed their thoughts on the subject as well.

Vote Results Recommendation #3: 2 Yay; 18 Nay; 2 Abstained; Recommendation Failed.

Note: Total Number voting changed due to one Brother leaving the Encampment.

Recommendation #4: Recommendation 4: The Regulations of the Order are hereby amended as follows: Chapter III, Article X, Junior Associates, Section 2 is hereby amended to read as follows: Section 2. Junior Associates shall be males assigned at birth as biologically male at least six (6) years of age but less than fourteen (14) years of age, who do not meet the ancestor service qualifications stipulated in Article III of the Constitution and Section 200303 of the Articles of Incorporation but otherwise meet the requirements for membership established by the National Organization.

Voting Results Recommendation #4: 15 Yay; 4 Nay 3 Abstained; Recommendation Approved

Recommendation #5: Recommendation 5: It is recommended that Form 3, Membership Application, be amended so that the declaration in Part II, Application Information and Declaration, be amended to read as follows: I declare that I am a male, assigned at birth as a biological male, and that this application has been examined by me and to the best of my knowledge and belief is true, correct and complete and, if accepted, I will obey and support the National Constitution of the Order, the Bylaws of the Department and the Bylaws of the Camp.

Voting Results Recommendation #5: 16 Yay; 5 Nay, 1 Abstained; Recommendation Approved

Last Union Veteran Grave Markers: Brother Michael Beck remarked that there are 92 counties in Indiana where a Last Union Veteran's grave is or will be marked. He said that the markers used however, say GAR on them and in some cases all of these veterans may not have been GAR members. Ben Harrison Camp purchased gravestone Markers similar to challenge coins that can be affixed to the headstones. Brother Beck passed around samples. These medallions say, Last Union Veteran Buried in this County 1861-1865. Cost is \$10.00/ marker. See Brother Beck to purchase them.

The Encampment had a brief 5-minute break at 2:30 PM

Return From break:

National Encampment: Commander Floyd reminded everyone that this year's National Encampment would be August 3rd – 6th in Nashua, New Hampshire. The Commander pointed out that the recommendations we had just voted on would come before the Encampment for voting.

National Encampment Advertising: The Department of Indiana historically has placed an advertisement in the National Encampment Program book, the question was asked if the Department wanted to continue that practice. Alan Teller made a motion supported by Brother Travis LeMaster.

Motion: That the Department place a full-page ad in the 2023 National Encampment Program book at cost of \$50. *Motion Approved*

Election of Delegates to the 2023 National Encampment: Secretary Adams explained that the number of delegates allowed to a National Encampment is determined by a formula based on the total number of eligible Department members. For the 2023 National Encampment the number of delegates is 9. The following 9 Brothers names were nominated to be delegates to the 2023 National Encampment: Drew Godby, David Hoesli, Tom Ashley, Peter Dieterlien, Brian Mexin, Herb Smith

III, Joe Beckman, Travis LeMaster, and Jon Swarts. Alan Teller made the following motion supported by Brian Mexin. Motion to elect the 9 Bothers nominated as Department of Indiana Delegates to the 2023 National Encampment. *Motion Approved.*

Hosting a National Encampment: PDC Michael Beck proposed that a committee be formed for the purpose of investigating the possibility of Indiana hosting a National Encampment. Brother Beck offered to chair the committee as he has previous experience in this area. Commander Floyd directed that the next Department Commander appoint the committee since he was stepping down at the end of this Department Encampment. The new Commander will therefore appoint the Committee to explore Indiana hosting a National Encampment.

Other New Business: Reminder that the CRA Central Region Association will meet October 6th and 7th in Dayton OH. - Captain Mike Beck reminded everyone of the 27th SVR Facebook page and urged camps to report to him all events needing SVR help so he could post it on the Facebook page. -Benton Camp will make available books to be sold at the next Midyear Encampment with the proceeds going to the Department.

Election and Installation of Officers: Commander Floyd and Department Treasurer Gib Young having previously announced they were resigning their current positions resulted in an election to replace the positions of Department Commander and Department Treasurer. Nominee for Treasurer, Dennis Hutchinson required that his position on the Department Council be replaced if he was elected Treasurer. This is a CC&R requirement that a secretary and/or treasurer cannot hold a Council Position at the same time. The nominee to replace PDC Hutchinson's Council seat was PDC Alan Teller. The encampment then instructed the Department Secretary to cast one unanimous vote for the following list of Department Officers:

Commander	Thomas L. Schmitt PCC
Sr-Vice Commander	Travis J. Le Master PCC
Jr. Vice Commander	David Hoesli CC
Secretary/ GAR Highway Officer	William R. Adams PDC
Treasurer	Dennis C. Hutchinson PDC
Council Member #1	Dennis H. Rigsby PDC
Council Member #2	Timothy J. Beckman PDC
Council Member #3	J. Alan Teller PDC
Signals Officer	Timothy J. Beckman PDC
Historian/GAR records Officer	Bruce R. Kolb PDC
Legion Editor/Assistant Secretary	Jon P. Swarts
Chaplain	J. Alan Teller PDC
CW Memorial Officer/Eagle Scout Coordinator	Michael W. Beck PDC
Patriotic Instructor	Brian J. Mexin
Graves Registration Officer	David Hoesli CC

National Representative, Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief Peter J. Hritsko Jr. properly installed all those duly elected per the SUVCW "Installation of Officers Ritual" to their elected positions.

There being no further business to bring before this Encampment Commander Schmitt proceeded to the closing ceremony. The Colors were retired and the meeting properly adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Respectively Submitted,

William R. Adams

William Adams, PDC
Secretary, Department of Indiana