

Minutes - Department of Indiana Mid-Year Encampment November 2, 2024

The Department of Indiana, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War 2024 Mid-Year Encampment was called to order at the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum at Fort Wayne, IN, November 2, 2024. The Encampment was called to order by Commander Thomas Schmitt. at 9:00 AM.

Co. D, 27th Indiana Infantry SVR Members Bruce Kolb and Dennis Hutchinson presented the Colors.

Secretary Adams called the roll of officers as follows:

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

Chaplain Alan Teller gave the opening prayer.

All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commander Schmitt then proceeded to complete the meeting opening per the SUVCW Ritual.

Courtesies were presented by Commander Schmitt. He announced the location of restrooms and that there was bottled water available in the rear of the meeting room. Also, that the lunch was being catered and provided by Mission Barbeque.

Commander Schmitt introduced Curtis Vanover, representing the newest Indiana Camp, William Baumgartner Camp #33. Brother Curtis received a welcoming round of applause.

Commander Schmitt asked for a motion to approve the April 27, 2024 Department minutes. A **Motion** was made by Brother Alan Teller that the minutes of the 138th Annual Encampment of April 27, 2024 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 Schmitt reminded the Encampment that we would not be reading the Department Officer reports. Secretary Adams reported that all Department Officers Reports were received. Commander Schmitt said that Chaplain Alan Teller wished to comment on his completed report. Chaplain Teller said since the time he filed his report noting no deaths, there were now two deaths he wished to report. He announced the death and read the obituary for Brother Rick Deutscher, Jr. Vice Commander of John Auten Camp #8. Brother Alan also read General Order #6 that reported the death of James H. Houston Jr. PDC of Ohio. Chaplain Teller asked all to stand for a moment of silence to remember our departed Brothers.

Camp Reports:

In response to Commander Schmitt's question, Secretary Adams reported that he had received Camp Reports from all Camps.

Department Treasurer Hutchinson presented the Treasurer's report ending the period of October 31, 2024. The Departments account balance was \$7,845.74. **Motion** to accept the Treasurer's report as presented was made by Brother Phil Dyer and supported by Brother Alan Teller. **Motion passed to approve the Treasurer's report.**

Department Standing Committee:

Visitation Committee Commander Schmitt reported that by holding the 138th Annual Department Encampment in the Commandants House at the Indiana Veterans Home in April fulfills the By-Laws visitation requirement. He indicated he was disappointed though that we gave \$1,000 to the IVH but received no formal thank-you or acknowledgement.

Department Special Committees:

Last Union Veteran Project: Brother Tim Beckman reported that with the discovery of the last Union Veteran of Ohio county, all Last Union Veterans have been found for all Indiana Counties. Brother Beckman added that the current Website list is accurate to his knowledge but if anyone knows of an error, please report the error to him. Brother Beck mentioned that he had prepared a map indicating the counties that had LUV graves marked. The map also included those counties still needing the Last Veterans Grave marked. Brother Beck explained that Benjamin Harrison Camp #356 was exploring a new way to mark the graves of the Last Union Veterans. He explained that a smaller marker that could be affixed to the headstone is under investigation. He noted that many of the current larger markers being used are being stolen. This new marker would help reduce or prevent that problem

ROTC/JROTC: Secretary Adams announced changes made to the ROTC/JROTC form # 7. He noted that there were several other groups added to the form and that it now requires the Camp Commander to sign the certificate that is presented to the cadet. Another change noted was that the form lists a new Assistant National Quartermaster, Brother Ken Jacobsen. He reminded everyone to be sure to use the most recent revision of the form #7.

26th Indiana Vicksburg Monument: Brother Bill Adams Reported that there had been no change in the situation with the 26th Indiana Monument since his report at the Annual Encampment April 27, 2024. He briefly reminded everyone the issue and explained that he had contacted PDC of Tennessee George Huttick for help. He directed Brother Adams to the proper person, Executive Director of the

Friends of Vicksburg, Bess Mitchell Averett. After sending emails to Bess and receiving no reply he called her personal cell number twice and left messages also with no reply. Brother Adams then contacted one of Bess Mitchell Averett's employees, Sean Simpson, Development coordinator for friends of Vicksburg. Sean asked that the emails sent to Bess Mitchell Averett be sent to him. He assured Brother Adams he would be sure she saw it. At the time of this Midyear Encampment report Brother Adams had not received a reply.

Department Records Storage: Secretary Adams reported that the committee met via Zoom July 13, 2024. They reviewed our options with the Center for Fraternal Collections and Research. It was agreed that we need to contact Dr. Calloway and determine a time and location to meet with her. Brother Adams mentioned that he returned to the website for the Center for Fraternal Collections and Research and found that it had changed considerably. He said he needed to contact Dr. Calloway and arrange the meeting. At the time of this report to the encampment he had not completed that contact.

State of Indiana Camp TID# Filing: Brother Mike Beck requested that as camps are requested to file their TID# reports, he has the information on how to do this and camps should contact him. A discussion then began about what is this TID# and that no camps have ever filed or been requested to file before? Bruce Kolb provided more input. No Brothers present were aware of this document or that they ever filed one. Brother Adams suggested maybe it was for those who wanted to receive charitable organizations tax-exempt status in Indiana for sales tax? Department Treasurer Hutchinson said he has not ever been requested for any such filing to be made. Commander Schmitt asked Brothers Beck, Kolb and Hutchinson to gather more information on the subject and report back at a future Encampment.

Department Projects: Commander Schmitt asked for clarification to what this item pertained. Secretary Adams reported that he had reviewed past minutes and listened to past Encampment recordings. Based on that this was part of the issue of the Department providing funding to camps for projects. Commander Schmitt said this was to be discussed later in the agenda. The discussion was dropped at this time.

Old Business:

Mother George Monument: Commander Schmitt began by informing the encampment that the grounds of the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum covers 41 acres and the Mother George Monument is located at the back of the property, straight back from the Chapel. It is located next to the Sultana Monument; both of these monuments are next to the large Monument Stone commemorating the Civil War. The Commander also shared that there is a time capsule, donated by Brother Bruce Kolb, to be buried next to all of these monuments in the future. A local monument company donated a vault for the time capsule. Due to the size of the vault additional items will be included with the time capsule once the items have been identified. Commander Schmitt described the Mother George ceremony and reported that the 27th Indiana and 14th Michigan SVR were joined by the 30th Indiana reenactors to provide the color guard and firing squad. He informed the group that there had been very good media coverage for the event as well as numerous local groups present for the ceremony.

Thraikill Cemetery Monument: Brother McNally reported that they had raised all of the funds necessary to complete the restoration. They have a few contractual items to complete but expect the restoration to start in spring of 2025 followed by the dedication later in the summer. In answer to a question, it was reported that they had raised a total of \$11,701.25 towards the restoration.

Kimmel Park LGAR/DAR Monument: Brother Mike Beck updated the group on this project. He reminded everyone that his contact for this project at Vincennes University had passed away. He had been trying to locate a new contact but had not received a reply to his inquiries. After further research he located a Mr. Hahn of the Universities Office of Government Legal Affairs. Mr. Hahn reported that he had no knowledge of this project. He did offer to locate those who would have

worked with the previous contact. He said he would contact Brother Beck once he had gathered more information. At the time of this Encampment Brother Beck had not received a reply.

Legion: Commander Schmitt notes that Legion Editor was unable to attend. Commander Schmitt passed along a reminder from Brother Swarts asking for all camps to send in pictures and written information about camp events. The Legion needs this information to be able to provide the best newsletter possible!

Eliza Ann Hardy-Boston: Brother Tim Beckman reported that most of the work on Civil War era nurse, Eliza Ann Hardy-Boston has been done by Brother Bowyer. Brother Tim said that Ben Harrison Camp would do a ceremony to honor Eliza Ann Hardy-Boston sometime in 2025. He needed to discuss this with the camp to finalize. Brother Bowyer reported that the local community and government agencies were supporting and behind honoring her with a ceremony. Brother Bowyer then discussed briefly Civil War nurses in general from Indiana with Commander Schmitt noting there were approximately 200 Civil War nurses who served from Indiana.

Nurse Monument – South Bend: Brother Bill Adams introduced a plan being developed by John Auten Camp to honor Civil War nurse Mother Angela Gillispie from Saint Mary's College in South Bend. She and 60 other Sisters of the Holy Cross from Notre Dame/Saint Mary's served at three to four army hospitals during the course of the Civil War. Plans are to have a late March ceremony at Saint Mary's College and at the grave side of Mother Angela. More information to come.

Bonding of Department and Camp Officers: Commander Schmitt informed the encampment that the Bonding issue must be resolved and be completed now, it can't continue on any longer! He said currently there are 6 camps out of the total of 8 that have completed their surveys and are ok for bonding. Since each camp would be holding new elections for camp officers soon the following procedure would be followed. The Camp Commander, Secretary, and Treasurer must be bonded in each camp. As the Department Commander attended each camp's installation meeting, any officer who had not completed the bonding survey form and was one of the positions requiring bonding, he would not install that brother. If you wish to hold the office you also must meet the requirements for the office including bonding. He informed the group that he had blank bonding survey forms available and urged camps to take some with them for any member who had not yet completed the form and needed to do so.

Upcoming SVR Events: Company D 27th Indiana SVR Adjutant William Adams addressed the Encampment. He reported on the 2 remaining SVR events on the activity calendar for the remainder of the year. The Dedication Ceremony of the 130 plus headstones replaced and/or reset at Bellefontaine Cemetery in Mt. Vernon, Indiana on November 9th and Wreaths Across America ceremony at the Williams Creek Cemetery December 14th. Brother Adams then mentioned that he had to leave this encampment early today because he had to drive back to the Indiana/Illinois line to Lowell, Indiana to present an ROTC Award. He was presenting the award because the recipient was his Grand Nephew a member of the US Navy Sea Cadet Corps.

Commanders Encampment Update: Commander Schmitt announced that the meal for this Encampment is being catered to us at no charge by Mission Barbeque. That means that the approximately \$14.00 cost for meals that each of us usually pay was not charged. He recommended then that each of the brothers present to consider contributing an amount to serve as a tip for the person delivering today's meal. Other options for the \$14 saved today, in addition to the tip could be contributing to the Veteran's Home in Indianapolis that had just burned. Another option would be a contribution to the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum where we are meeting today. They receive no funds from the government and is funded entirely by donations and contributions from the public.

Evansville Memorial Coliseum Update: Brother Dennis Hutchinson reported that there was no change since our Annual Encampment in April. He agreed with the Commander that this item could now be removed from future agendas.

Hosting a National Encampment: Mike Beck, chair of the National Encampment Exploratory Committee presented the general details required to host a National Encampment, He detailed a

number of items and requirements that will be expected to be accomplished if hosting the National Encampment. Brother Hutchinson, also a member of the Exploratory Committee, reported on his discussions with several of our brothers from Kentucky who just completed hosting the National Encampment. The main emphasis and key point indicated by both Brother's Beck and Hutchinson was that it requires a commitment from many Department members to make this successful! It was explained that the first step is to send a "Letter of Intent" to National from the Department of Indiana. It was noted that a Letter of Intent is not a commitment but only that we have an interest in doing so. **Motion** was made by Brother Travis LeMaster, stating that, A Letter of Intent is to be sent to the National Encampment Site Committee stating the Department of Indiana wishes to host a National Encampment. The motion was supported and after considerable discussion the Motion was voted on by hand Vote, **Motion was Approved.**

Clarification of the TID# Filing: Brother Bruce Kolb explained that the TID# filing was just for the state of Indiana. He explained that it is used for sales tax exemption. Brother Kolb reported that as of 2024 unless you had more than \$100,000 in sales or wanted to be exempt from paying sales tax as a 501c3 organization, you do not have to register or file.

New Business:

Reimbursement of Department Officers: Department Treasurer Dennis Hutchinson reviewed and presented receipts for his and Department Secretary William Adams expenses incurred on behalf of the Department of Indiana. Brother Hutchinson made the **Motion:** to reimburse both. Supported by Brother Travis LeMaster that the department reimburse both Treasurer Hutchinson and Secretary Adams the amount submitted on the receipts. **Motion Approved**

Reimbursement of CinC gifts: Commander Schmitt added that he had a receipt he would present for approval at our next encampment. He explained that it was for the purchase of 2 books on Lew Wallace. These were given to the outgoing Commander-in-Chief and President of the SUVCW Ladies Auxiliary at the National Encampment. Commander Schmitt commented that this is a tradition he does not agree with, giving gifts to the outgoing Leadership but none the less it is expected of the Departments.

SUVCWIN.ORG Domain: Signals Officer Tim Beckman, PDC reported that The Domain license for the Department of Indian's website was now on a 2-year renewable basis and the renewal date was February 2, 2025. Signals Officer Beckman, said that the 2-year cost would be \$46.34. The intent was to place the charges on the Departments Debit Card. Brother Beckman then made a Motion: That the 2-year renewable licensing fee be approved to be paid on the Departments Debit Card. **Motion Approved.**

Civil War Nurses Project: Bruce Kolb provided background on the Civil War Nurses Program that Ben Harrison camp has developed. They foresee this program to be similar to the Last Union Veteran Program. Camps would locate local Civil War nurses' graves, conduct a Dedication Ceremony and mark the grave with a medallion. There were no Federal Markers created for nurses so Ben Harrison Camp designed one. Brother Kolb described the medallion; it's size and the all costs to the camp. The intent at this time is that Ben Harrison Camp would purchase them and control the distribution to camps. They also would pursue making them available to the Allied Orders and other similar organizations that might want to recognize local Civil War nurses. The purpose of the presentation today was to gather feedback from Department Members on the design and suggestions.

Adjourn for lunch at 11:36 AM:

Presentation; Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum: Eric Johnson, First Vice Commander at the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum spoke to our Encampment. He told us about the mission of the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum “Where No Veteran Will Ever Be Forgotten”. He reported on many of the new monuments, such as, the WWI and WWII monuments being dedicated soon. He also mentioned that monuments for Operation Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom were planned for next year. He provided an update on the refurbishing of the Viet Nam Wall and the Purple Heart Monument and spoke about the newly completed Chapel on the museum grounds.

Return from lunch:

Department Donations to camps and Organizations: Commander Schmitt explained that he had asked Brothers Hutchinson and Brother Maudlin to review the department financial position in relation to making donations. He also requested that they provide guidelines based on those findings to make such donations. Treasurer Hutchinson presented a review of his findings. (copy of report on file) Brother Hutchinson explained that the information showed department income and disbursements covering a period from May 5, 2023 to May 31, 2024. Based on his presentation Brother Hutchinson said that we don’t have enough income each year to allow making donations of \$1000 every year for projects without using up our reserve. Brother Hutchinson then presented the following recommendation to the Department: That a committee of 2-3 members be appointed by the Commander to review and approve or deny requests by the members at one or both of the Department Encampments. All requests must support the objectives of the SUVCW. General discussion followed.

Hosting Camp for the Annual Meeting: Commander Schmitt prefaced this item of discussion by making his thoughts known about the Department’s \$1000 donation to the Indiana Veterans Home last year. He said he had not received a follow up thank you or any indication of the use of the funds. The donation was made with the instruction it was to be used to refurbish and restore the Commandant’s Home. He expects to see some sign of improvement at the home or he feels we should reconsider any other donations.

Commander Schmitt introduced this agenda item by saying that we needed to establish a method to rotate hosting or setting up of the Annual Encampment at La Fayette on the IVH grounds. He reminded everyone that our By-laws state we must visit the home annually. In the past Alan Teller informed the group that we would trim shrubs or provide other forms of labor for the IVH. It was thought that with the age and availability of some members, work projects would not be the best way to meet our obligation. Further discussion included Brother Rigsby telling the encampment if we are going there for our meeting to meet the by-laws then change the by-laws and remove visitation at the IVH as a requirement. Others commented on the importance of maintaining a presence at the IVH. Brother Mike Beck made the following **Motion:** That we continue to have our Annual Encampment at the Indiana Veterans Home (IVH) on a rotational basis of camps and Benjamin Harrison Camp 356 would be responsible for setting up the 2025 Annual Encampment. Support by Dennis Hutchinson. **Motion Approved.**

Other New Business:

- Brother Dennis Rigsby addressed the Encampment brothers regarding a concern that has a potential impact to all camps. Brother Rigsby contacted the National Counselor for advice and information regarding camp inventory. William Benton Camp 28 had been informed that the meeting location they had been using for years would no longer be available to them and they needed to move to a new meeting location. Benton Camp 28 has considerable inventory. In fact, the list of inventories is 6-7 pages long. The question to the National counselor was how to properly dispose of camp inventory? The amount of inventory had to be reduced to be

able to move into a smaller meeting location. The National Counselor's response was that all camp inventory is being held in trust by each camp for the National Organization. This brought up the question then, can we dispose of historical inventory if it belongs to the National Organization SUVCW? Example of books, these might typically be donated to appropriate public or state libraries. Can we do that still? After considerable discussion, the general consensus of the brothers assembled was that as long as a camp is active, they as caretakers of the inventory may choose to decide the proper disposal of that inventory. Once a camp is disbanded then all inventory of that camp is the property of the National Organization SUVCW.

- Commander Schmitt brought before the Encampment the issue of where do we store/display the 1889 Indiana Petersburg Camp Charter gifted to the Department of Indiana by Brother Bobby Welch (Department of Illinois) at the 2024 Annual Encampment? Recommendation by Brother David Hoesli that the Petersburg Historical Society has a number of documents from that post and would be happy to accept it. Alan Teller mentioned that the department records have a reduced copy of many Indiana charters and Secretary Bill Adams should be sure to obtain a copy of this one too. It was recommended that a copy be made and sent to Secretary Adams before transferring the charter. It was cautioned that we should make the copy but discover how to properly transfer the inventory before we actually release it to the Historical Society.

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.

Respectively Submitted,

William R. Adams

William Adams, PDC
Department of Indiana, Secretary