



The Indiana Legion

Department of Indiana Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



The 27th Indiana SVR presents colors for the 102nd annual Lincoln Day ceremonies. Tim Beckman with the National Colors. Credit; Keith James



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Department Officer Contacts

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| Commander | Travis LeMaster | commander@suvcwin.org |
| Sr. Vice Commander | David Hoesli | svcommander@suvcwin.org |
| Jr. Vice Commander | Fred Leickly | jvcommander@suvcwin.org |
| Secretary | Dennis Hutchinson | secretary@suvcwin.org |
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| Eagle Scout Coord. | Michael Beck | eagle@suvcwin.org |
| Signals Officer | Timothy Beckman | signals@suvcwin.org |
| Legion Editor | Taylin Allen | legion@suvcwin.org |

Department Camps

| Name | Location |
|---|--------------|
| Orlando A. Somers #1 | Kokomo |
| John W. Foster #2 | Evansville |
| John Auten #8 | South Bend |
| Champion Hill #17 | Huntington |
| William P. Benton #28 | Centerville |
| William Bumgarner #33 | Bluffton |
| David D. Porter #116 | Valparaiso |
| John B. Anderson #223 | Columbus |
| Ben Harrison #356 | Indianapolis |
| New Camp forming in Orange / Martin County: Contact Taylin Allen | |

You can email an officer to be put in contact with a local camp.

The Department of Indiana is made up of 9 Camps spread over the state. Our membership is comprised of history enthusiasts, genealogists, and plain old patriotic Americans. We are an active Department that spends time and effort to honor the men who fought for and saved the Union. Whether that is by erecting or repairing monuments, markers & headstones, researching & documenting local Civil War History or otherwise, we continuously strive to keep green the memory of the "Boys in Blue."

We would love to have you join our ranks. If you enjoy this newsletter then you must have some affinity for the history of the Civil War and the men who fought it. We need passionate and motivated individuals such as you to join us in preserving our shared history. You will not only gain a fulfilling purpose in preserving that history, but a unique brotherhood where you will find camaraderie and support. I implore you, if you have so much as an inkling of interest, to contact an officer and explore the possibility of membership. *Qualifications for membership are found on page 5.*

In Fraternity, Charity & Loyalty: Taylin Allen - Editor.



UPCOMING Events

March 28th

Grave Dedication - Sponsored by MOLLUS

Newark General Baptist Cemetery

7011 Newark Rd, Solsberry, IN 47459

Time: 1:00pm **EST**

March 28th

SUVCW Lineage Workshop

Kokomo-Howard County Public Library

220 N Union St, Kokomo, IN, United States, 46901

Time: 10:00am to 12:00pm **EST**

April 11th

Last Union Veteran Ceremony

Walnut Hill Cemetery

North St & State Rd 61, Petersburg IN 47567

Time: 2:00pm **EST**

April 11th

Dedication for Civil War Nurse

Walnut Hill Cemetery

North St & State Rd 61, Petersburg IN 47567

Time: 2:30pm **EST**

April 18th

Department Annual Encampment

Commandant's Home at the Indiana Veterans' Home

3848 N River Rd, West Lafayette, IN 47906

Time: 9:00am - 3:00pm **EST**

May 8th

Talking Tombstones

Columbus City Cemetery

Sycamore Street, Columbus Indiana 47201

Time: 5:00pm - 8:00pm **EST**

May 30th

Grave Dedication - Sponsored by MOLLUS

Woodlawn Cemetery

1230 N 3rd St, Terre Haute, IN 47807

Time: TBDT

June 15th

History Speaks; America 250

Buckley Homestead County Park

3606 Belshaw Rd, Lowell, IN 46356

Time: 10:00am - 4:00pm **CST**

July 25th

Dedication for 3 Civil War Nurses

Pine Lake Cemetery

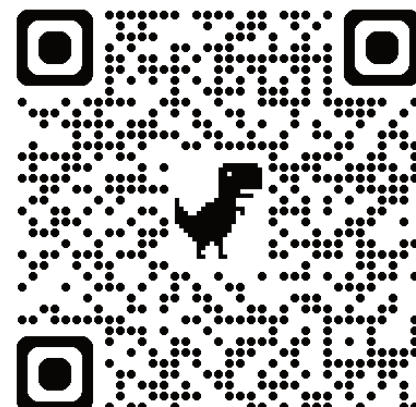
1367 Pine Lak Ave, La Porte, IN 46350

Time: 11:00am **CST**

Keep an eye on our Facebook Page for more pop-up events between issues of *The Indiana Legion*. If you have an event you would like the Department of Indiana to attend and or participate in, please be sure to get in contact with the Editor or one of the Department Officers.

For more details you can contact us on Facebook! We can also direct you towards who to contact for each event if you wish to participate. If you are involved in a project and you would like for us to take part, contact an officer and we will see what we can muster.

A lot of events are set up and take place between issues of *The Indiana Legion*. Follow the Department of Indiana at facebook.com/suvcwin or by scanning the QR code to stay up to date!. You can also visit our webpage at suvcwin.org to learn more about us.





It has been a pleasure to get out and meet many of you during the installation of Camp officers over the winter and now that spring will soon arrive I hope to see even more of you as we honor our ancestors.

I want to encourage you to attend the upcoming Encampment in Lafayette and participate in the decisions that will determine the direction of the Department. It is always a great time of fellowship and camaraderie.

It is so important for new Brothers to get engaged in the activities of the Camp, to learn the Charter, Constitution & Regulations, and continue to honor the memory of the Boys in Blue.

Yours in F. C. & L,
Travis LeMaster

This edition of *The Indiana Legion*, as with every edition covering the winter months, is quite a bit shorter than the rest as. I didn't have any particular story to share and fill out a few pages this time either, as I have in previous entries. It's been a slow winter for me as well.

If you haven't already, I strongly encourage you to read all of the 2025 entries of our Newsletter, as I feel the year was very active for our Order and will prove to be a read well worth your time.

I've had a lot of fun working on the Newsletter and have learned just as much over the last year. I want to thank Brother Fred Leickly and my wife Haley in particular for their proof reading and suggestions. They have made each edition measurably better as a result.

Lastly, as some general advice to give when making submissions, the more I'm given to work with the better. More information and more photographs, as it is much easier to trim an article down than it is to fill it up.

Yours in F. C. & L,
Taylin Allen

To support the good work of our Order, consider donating to the Department of Indiana Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War by contacting the Department Treasurer at treasurer@suvwin.org

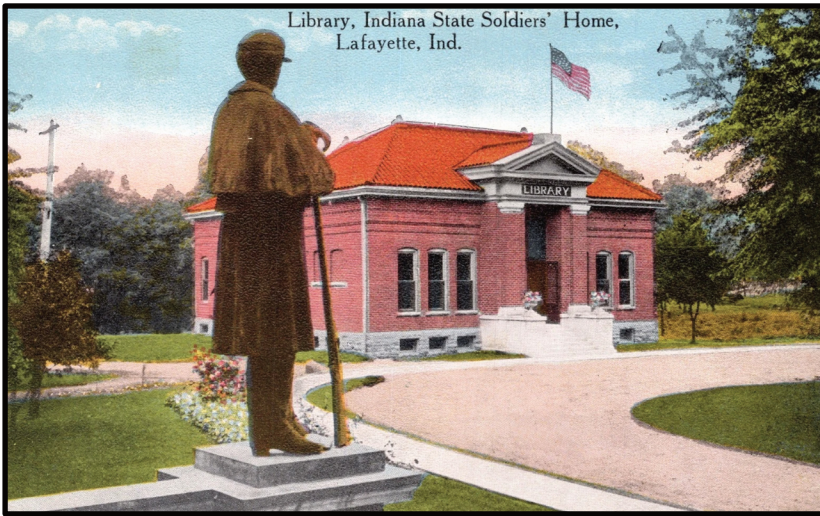


140th Annual Department Encampment

How time flies! It is that time of year once again for the Annual Department Encampment. We will gather on **April 18th** at the Commandant's Home, on the grounds of the Indiana Veterans' Home in West Lafayette, to conduct the business of our Order and hold elections. All Brothers are invited to attend and participate in a time honored process dating back well over a century. You are encouraged to pack your own lunch if you do not want to pre-order from Jimmy John's (pre-order form is on the encampment flier.) The Commandant's Home has a full kitchen for use. Otherwise the nearest options for food will be about a 10 minute's drive

one way. Information for address, registration and food can be found on the flier on page 7.

Here is an early colored postcard of the now Indiana Veterans' Home, picturing the Library from the point of view of the South facing Soldier, one of two cast zinc statues that stand on the front porch of the Commandant's Home. If you have never visited the Indiana Veterans' Home, you are strongly encouraged to come. It's worth seeing in person what our ancestors in the GAR created. There is also a large cemetery with some 3,000 veterans buried there, a large portion of which were veterans of the Civil War.



MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is a fraternal organization with over 6,500 members nationwide. Founded in 1881, we are the legal heirs of the Grand Army of the Republic, the chief veteran's organization made up of soldiers who served the Union during the Civil War. Our mission is to keep green the memory of the "Boys in Blue."

Full membership is open to men aged 14 or older who are directly descended from or a "Soldier, Sailor, Marine or member of the Revenue Cutter Service *or* directly descended from a brother, sister, half-brother, or half-sister of such Soldier who served in the United States armed forces between April 12, 1861, and April 9, 1865." **Junior membership** is open to those aged 6-14.

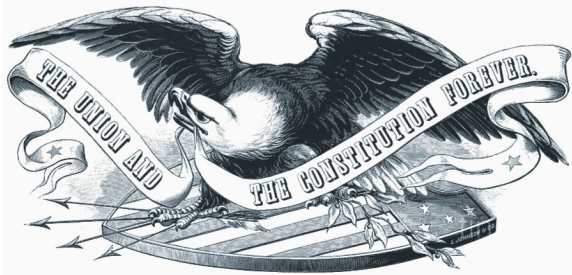
Associate membership is open to men who share the mission of the SUVCW but do not have or are in the process of establishing their ancestry.

Women may join one of the Allied Orders - Sister organizations with the same purpose. These are the Women's Relief Corps, the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War & The Auxiliary to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Active in Indiana are the Daughters of Union Veterans & Ladies of the GAR.

There is also the National Society Daughters of the Union, who are also active in Indiana.



Contact an officer for more information on how to join



Patriotic Instruction

Jonathan Swarts
Patriotic Instructor

In the January 2026 Department patriotic instruction, I included a Banner article from 1964 about the dedication of the Grand Army of the Republic monument at the Indiana State Soldiers' Home, now the Indiana Veterans' Home, in West Lafayette. As our Department has made the Soldiers' Home the location of our Annual Encampment, the following brief history should make us proud that we Hoosier Sons of Union Veterans are helping honor the rich heritage of our state's veterans, just as our GAR ancestors played such a vital role in establishing the Soldiers' Home in the nineteenth century.

The Indiana Veterans' Home enjoys a rich history and aims to preserve its treasures from the past. Not only does the Indiana Veterans' Home honor this history, but residents love connecting to the past as well.

The Indiana Veterans' Home was created to care for disabled Union soldiers after the Civil War. A committee was formed to promote the establishment of such a place, which at the time was referred to as the Indiana State Soldiers' Home. The committee visited several potential sites in cities all around Indiana, such as Warsaw and Muncie. However, the committee liked the 187 wooded acres in Lafayette, Indiana the best. In the summer of 1892, the committee formally recommended Lafayette as the location of the Indiana State Soldiers' Home.

In 1895, the Indiana General Assembly unanimously passed a bill to create the Indiana State Soldiers' Home and appropriated \$75,000.00 for its buildings. In addition to the 187 acres the state purchased from Tippecanoe County, the city gave an additional 55 acres to the Home. A local veteran and business man, General Richard P. DeHart, gifted a 1,900 foot strip of riverfront property to the Home as well. By 1910, 1,430 residents lived at the Home. It operated as its own little town, complete with a hospital, electric light plant, bakery, fire department, and an assembly hall with a seating capacity for six hundred people. The Home also had its own pet alligator!

R.P. DeHart, in his history of Tippecanoe County, written in 1909, wrote the following of the Home:

If one ever doubted that American appreciates and cares for her defenders, a visit to this beauty spot of Indiana will convince them that not only in times of peril and war does she care for her brave soldiery, but that now after forty years have come and gone, she still seeks to show these old and infirm men that she wishes them all the peace and comfort possible to provide for them, at any cost.

Now more than 120 years from its inception, the Indiana Veterans' Home is a very different place. The Home has adapted over the years to best provide for the needs of its residents and many of the buildings of the past have long since been demolished. And while the Home no longer has an alligator, many relics of the past remain. IVH boasts a small museum of historical artifacts related to various wars, as well as artifacts from the Home's history. A few of the original buildings remain as well and IVH is actively working to preserve and restore them.

Preserving the Home's incredible past is indeed a great way to show our residents that we wish them all the peace and comfort possible to provide for them. Being a good steward of this history is a part of IVH's mission and the staff is diligent in making the Home's historical buildings and artifacts a memorial honoring all Hoosier veterans.

Source: A Brief History of IPH. Indiana Veterans' Home. <https://www.in.gov/ivh/ivh-history-art-and-culture/a-brief-history-of-ivh/>

Jonathan Swarts
Patriotic Instructor
Department of Indiana

SUVCW

2026

140th ANNUAL ENCAMPMENT

Travis LeMaster

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

DEPARTMENT OF INDIANA • SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

April 18, 2026 • 9:00 a m E D T

**Commandant's Home
Indiana Veterans' Home**

3851 N. River Road, West Lafayette, IN 47906

- BUSINESS MEETING -

- JIMMY JOHN'S BOX LUNCH MEAL AND WATER ON-SITE -

- ENCAMPMENT IS FREE TO ATTEND (COST ONLY FOR LUNCH MEAL) -

PLEASE BRING YOUR CAMP FLAG AND ITS BASE

Please pre-register if you plan to attend.

ENCAMPMENT PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Camp: _____

LUNCH MEAL, IF DESIRED, MUST BE PAID FOR IN ADVANCE

Lunch meal checks should be made payable to: Orlando A. Somers Camp, SUVCW

Mail this order form and check to: Alan Teller, 3003 Lamplighter Ln, Kokomo IN 46902, (phone 765-455-0484)

LUNCH MEAL ORDERS AND PAYMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 10, 2026

Number of lunch meals @ \$14.00 each - indicate quantity:

TURKEY ___ HAM ___ ROAST BEEF ___



Every year the Department of Indiana is represented by the 27th Indiana SVR at the Lincoln Boyhood Home for the annual Lincoln Day ceremonies which were held on February 8th. The 27th SVR served as the Color Guard for the day, presenting the colors for each of the ceremonies at the Chapel and at the grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln.



At the Chapel, several spectators sat and listened to speeches and talks on Lincoln's life and legacy; from his humble boyhood on the very land they were now gathered at to his righteous leadership through our Nation's darkest hours. Among the several special guest and speakers were: Park Ranger Erin Hilligoss-Volkman, The Haycox & Meece Families, Rev. Nancy Nichols, Erich Kendall and our very own Brother: Bruce Kolb.



Brother Kolb gave the keynote address in a talk entitled "Building Abraham Lincoln's Library", which aimed to look at what books shaped Lincoln's mind and early life in Indiana, with titles including *The Arabian Nights* and *Franklin's Autobiography*.

Afterwards, with temperatures hovering around freezing and with plenty of snow on the ground, the 27th Indiana SVR led the way for the annual pilgrimage to the grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. She is buried in the Pioneer Cemetery which is about 300 yards north of the main buildings at the Lincoln Boyhood Home & National Museum.

The inclusion of honoring Nancy can trace it's roots back to the late 1800's when members of the Grand Army of the Republic held reunions here. In the 1920s, annual Lincoln Day programs began at the Boyhood Home, originally held at a pavilion very near to Nancy's grave. When the programs were moved south to the memorial building, it was decided to continue including Nancy in the ceremonies, despite the distance, which has since turned into the "annual pilgrimage" that many of us are familiar with today.



All photos are credited to Keith Jones of INDIGO Web Services



From the 80th Illinois to the Abraham Lincoln Association



My road to Abraham Lincoln ran first through my ancestors. James Harrison Claybourn and William Divine Claybourn both answered the call, serving first in the 1st Illinois Cavalry and then in the 80th Illinois Infantry. Tracing their service drew me into the Civil War's history, and that search eventually led me to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and Foster Camp No. 2. It also led me to Lincoln.

The more I studied the war, the more I wanted to understand the man who held the Union together through it. Lincoln grew up in southwestern Indiana, not far from where I grew up, lived, and practice law today. He read by firelight, taught himself the law, and built a career on reason and principle. That arc felt familiar. It pulled me deeper.

Founded in 1908 in Springfield, Illinois, the Abraham Lincoln Association is the oldest and largest organization dedicated to preserving and advancing the study of Lincoln's life and legacy. Its annual symposium gathers scholars, authors, and enthusiasts each February (Lincoln's birth month) and the organization publishes the Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association, the field's most respected scholarly venue. The ALA bridges serious scholarship and the broader public, keeping Lincoln's story alive and relevant for each new generation.

Last week, my fellow members elected me president of the Association. I accepted with gratitude and humility. Lincoln's ideas—equality, democratic self-government, and the dignity of honest work—still press on us today.

For SUVCW members, the connection runs deep. The men we honor fought for a cause Lincoln defined and defended. Understanding him means understanding why they served. I invite you to learn more at AbrahamLincolnAssociation.org.

Joshua Claybourn, PCC
Foster Camp No. 2



Brother Patrick Taber of Somers Camp worked the Bobsled/Luge/Skeleton tracks for the 2026 Winter Olympics, videoing events and medal presentations as a media major student with Asbury University. He has sent the Month of February in Cortina Italy.

Team USA placed 12th & 20th in the men's and 12th & 15th in the women's division out of 25. Athletes routinely achieve speeds of 80-90 mph!

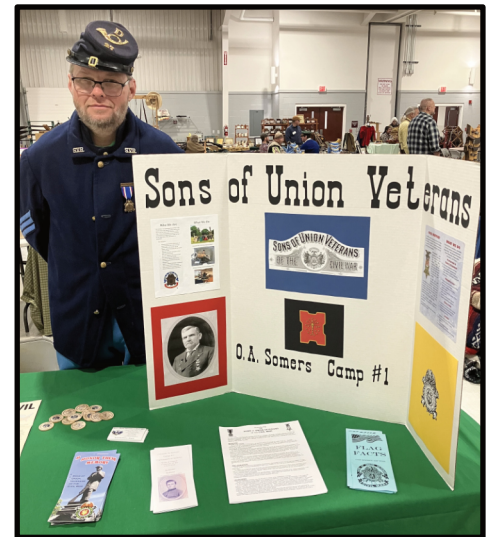


George Thomas Silvers 1839-1904, enlisted on August 11, 1862, into Company K of the 94th Ohio Volunteer Infantry at age 23 and was discharged with the rank of Private on February 1, 1865. The 94th Ohio saw service in the Western Theater, beginning with the Battle of Perryville, Kentucky, just 6 weeks after being mustered into service. He was married to Native American, Willow Morningstar, aka Rhodilla Shaner, who was found by Reverend Shooks near the bodies of her murdered parents in 1849. She was seven years old and was taken in by Frederick and Polly Shaner.

Photograph and information submitted to SUVCW Photos of the Past by his third great-grandson, Brian Joseph Mexin, Ben Harrison Camp No. 356. Brian

remembers first learning about George Thomas Silvers from his Grandmother Alma Rogers as a boy. A story she told was George participating in a long march with his unit and stopping by the side of the road to make some coffee. An officer told George basically to get moving and George threatened him and said he would continue when his coffee was ready!

Brother Stephon Hagman of Somers Camp again this year headed up a recruitment booth at the Long Rifle Show at the Hamilton County Fair grounds in Noblesville held on 21-22 Feb.



Brother Fred Leickly of Anderson Camp gave two talks on his ancestor's recollections, which he finished editing and published last year.

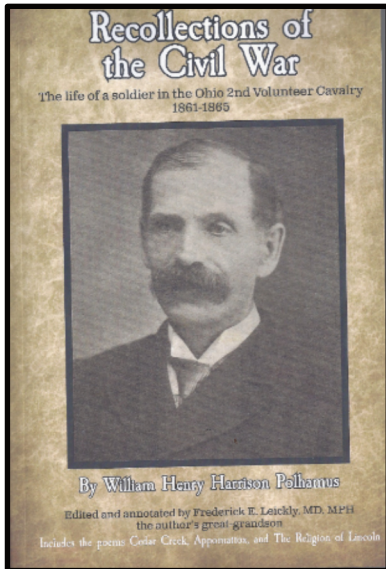
The first was at the Hamilton County Civil War Round Table - this is a community group dedicated to studying and discussing the American Civil War. The group was founded in 2002. The presentation was well accepted by close to 30 avid attendees.

On February 12th Brother Leickly had the honor of presenting 'Recollections' of the Civil War and other works by W. H. Polhamus (his great-grandfather) at the Southwest Ohio Lincoln Dinner hosted by the Major General William T. Sherman Camp #93, Department of Ohio. There were close to 50 attending this event.

A total of 14 books were sold at these two events. All proceeds of which go to John B. Anderson Camp #223.



Department Advertisements



Edited and annotated by Brother Fred Leickly, *Recollections of the Civil War: The life of a soldier in the Ohio 2nd Volunteer Cavalry 1861-1865* is the long over-due publishing of Sergeant William H. H. Polhamus' manuscript detailing his experiences during the Civil War.

Polhamus, who is Fred Leickly's Great Grandfather, wrote this manuscript in and around the 1890s. In the preface Polhamus makes it clear, these are the recollections of a soldier in the War of the Rebellion nearly 1/3rd of a century after the fact. It makes no attempt to create a history of the war or even of his own regiment, but rather to summarize, from memory, his own experiences and should be read with that in mind.

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0FH64SZVM>

Barnes and Noble: <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/1147808220?ean=9798897110018>

The Ben Harrison Camp now has a sufficient stock of these "Last Union Veteran" coins and they are now available to anyone who would like to purchase them at a cost of \$10.00 each, plus shipping, if not purchased in-person. The coins are inscribed with "LAST UNION VETERAN BURIED IN THIS COUNTY 1861-1865" and the colors are rated to last through about three years of sun exposure.

To attach the coin to the stone it is recommended to use either a 2 part epoxy or heavy duty double sided tape. Ben Harrison Camp prefers to use 3M VHB Double Sided Tape, available on amazon and it has held up very well through all the weather that you are familiar with here in Indiana.



For order information contact Mike Beck (email: fsgtcod11thindiana@att.net).



You may have found yourself looking at the red, almost fort shaped, symbol within the image of the State of Indiana found on the cover and top of each page and wondered; "What is that?" That would be the Indiana Sons of Veterans Corps Badge, dating back to the 1880's when the Sons resembled more of a militia. Most states had their own corps badges in the Sons and this one is unique to Indiana, although the modern pin seen here has the added imagery of our State Flag.

These pins are double clutched, 1.25 inches square and available for \$5.00, plus shipping unless purchased in person.

For order information contact Tim Beckman (email: timbeckman@gmail.com)



Department Communications 2025-2026



Department Order #1: Acknowledgment and courtesies of the new Commander's election. Transfer of headquarters & contact information. Announcement of all Department elected and appointed officers.

Circular #1: Communicates the importance of growth in the Department and the need to adopt a strategy of Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation.

Department Order #2: In tandem with Circular #1 this General Order establishes the following awards for recruitment: The **Oliver P. Morton Award** for Camps & the **Lew Wallace Award** for Brothers that recruit the most members between our annual April encampment. Should there be a tie, both Camps and/or Brothers will receive the award.



Department Order #3: Establishment of two Department Committees, one for the Department's Civil War Nurses Project and the other to review the Department By-laws.

Department Order #4: Announcing the passing of Department Treasurer and Brother Drew Godby

Department Order #5: Announcing the passing of Brother Ernest Eugene Stone

Department Order #6: Appointment of Brother Ronald L. Hyer as Department Treasurer

Department Order #7: Appointment of Brother Brian Mexin as Assistant Department Treasurer

Department Order #8: Notification of Department Mid-Year Encampment

Circular #2 Communicates the need for a social media presence of Camps in the Department

Department Order #9: Deals with installing Camp Officers by the Department Commander

Department Order #10: Appointment of Brother George Franz to Department ROTC Coordinator

Department Order #11: Establishment of a Department Fundraising Committee

Department Order #12: Suspension of William Baumgartner Camp# 33 Charter

Department Order #13: Re-instatement of William Baumgartner Camp# 33 Charter

To read the orders in full, visit suvwin.org and navigate to "Department Orders and Communications"

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of veteran heroes who fought and worked to save the Union in the American Civil War. Organized in 1881 and chartered by Congress in 1954, SUVCW is the legal heir and successor to the Grand Army of the Republic.



The 27th Indiana SVR on route to present colors at the grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln.
From left to right: Tim Beckman, Dennis Hutchinson, Terry Furgason, Fred Leickly and Mike Beck.

SUBMISSIONS

The Indiana Legion is the official newsletter of the Department of Indiana, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, published every quarter. If you would like to contribute an article, column or some small filler content, you can contact the editor at legion@suvcw.org

MEMBERSHIP

If the information is not filled out in the box to the right and you are curious about membership, contact information for officers who can assist you are on page two.

Camp: _____

Location: _____

Contact: _____
