

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Lt. Commander Edward Lea U.S.N. – Camp Number 2



Harriet Lane

Summer 2008 Volume 15 Number 2

From the Commander's Tent

It has been a real eye-opener for me these last six months. I had no idea the amount of logistics involved in this job. Starting with arranging speakers and getting people to commit to attending functions, there are quite a few details to attend to. However, the year began on a positive note with a generous donation to the Camp by Brother Robert Julian. Thank you again Brother Julian!

Our first event was the *Battle of El Camino Real* in Madisonville held on the weekend of February 1-3. The highlight of this affair was the Friday school event attended by Brothers Holmes, Cates, LaBrot and Lance. There were a reported 300-400 students in attendance. The booth was manned by Brothers Leach, LaBrot, Hampton, Schulze and me. We plan to review further participation in this affair in the future.

We presented three Jr. ROTC awards this spring. This is a program that opens our eyes to the good side of our young people. I would like to see this expanded in the future. Our Camp also participated in a *Court of Honor* for Eagle Scout Michael Schneider, son of Brother John Schneider. Michael also then became a member of the Camp.

There have been a number of good guest speaker programs given this year and I thank all those who have taken the time to present them. One very positive happening recently is the active participation of our *Auxiliary* in meetings and other affairs. Thank you ladies!

We just completed the *Memorial Day* ceremony and I thank all members who attended. There are more details in my report in this issue. We were honored to be the color guard on May 10th at a ceremony at the grave of Warren White, a Civil War veteran and *Buffalo Soldier* at Bastrop, Texas. There is an article in this issue about this event.

The Department Encampment is being held this Saturday and we will be well represented. I will not be able to attend due to health reasons, but have reason to believe that I will be improving soon.

Yours in F. C. & L.

James S. Hackett

Camp Commander

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Membership Muster

Camp Member

Mr. James S. Hackett – Commander
Mr. David K. LaBrot – Sr. Vice-Commander
Mr. Samuel F. Hampton – Jr. Vice-Commander
Mr. Gary White – Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Robert Lockwood – Patriotic Instructor
Mr. Clifford Dale Cates - Chaplain ^ ^
Mr. Dale H. Leach – Camp Historian
 Mr. Mark H. Andrus
 Mr. Patrick W. Anthony
 Mr. Michael Boyd
 Mr. William D. Burdette
 Mr. William D. Campbell **
 Capt. Chadwick E. Chester
 Mr. Patrick R. Conley
 Mr. Thomas M. Eishen
 Mr. Stephen D. Forman **
 Mr. Maurice Foster
 Mr. David M. Garrett
 Mr. Daniel A. Gillaspia
 Mr. Glenn C. Gillaspia III
 Dr. Albert E. Gunn
 Mr. Rick L. Hammer
 Mr. Steve M. Hart
 Mr. Harrold Henck Jr. ~ **
Mr. Henry G. Herford Jr. ++
 Dr. Stevenson T. Holmes
 Mr. Thomas A. Jackson
 Mr. Thomas I. Jackson
 Mr. Robert Julian ~ **
 Mr. Michael L. Lance
 Mr. Jared S. Lenes
 Mr. Jeffrey S. Lenes
 Mr. John P. Lenes
 Mr. Dean Letzring **
 Mr. Kurt A. Letzring
 Mr. Randall S. McDaniel
 Mr. Kelly P. McNamara
 Mr. Harrison G. Moore IV **
 Mr. Thomas H. Penney
 Mr. James R. Perry
 Mr. Peter V. Pederson
 Mr. Jay M. Peterson
 Mr. Zachery K. Powers
 Mr. Randall D. Scallan - Chaplain
 Mr. John E. Schneider Sr.
 Mr. John E. Schneider Jr.
Mr. Michael Schneider ++
 Mr. Stephen D. Schulze **
 Mr. Jeffrey R. Schurwon
 Dr. Harold E. Secor
 Mr. Scott D. Shuster
 Mr. Bartley N. Stockton
 Mr. Stephen W. Tanner
 Mr. Chapman P. Traylor
 Mr. Nash S. Traylor
 Mr. Kenneth W. Vaughn
 Mr. Glenn A. Webber
 Mr. Charles B. White
 Mr. Robert E. Wickman
 Mr. Patrick M. Young

Civil War Ancestor

Cpl. Thadeus Hendrickson
 Hosp. Steward Louis LaBoret
 Pvt. Samuel Pate Hampton
 Commissary Sgt. William Judson
 Pvt. Chauncey A. Lockwood
 **
 Pvt. Sylvester Leach
 Pvt. Matthew Barth
 Pvt. Jesse Landrum
 Pvt. Thomas Howey
 Pvt. Nathan R. Price
 Cpl. William Moore Campbell
 Pvt. John A. Watts
 Pvt. Ethan Allen Holcomb
 Pvt. Andreas Pfothenhauer
 Pvt. John Henry Arnold
 Pvt. Xavier Henkel
 Pvt. David Montgomery
 Pvt. Martin V. B. Leonard
 Pvt. Martin V. B. Leonard
 Pvt. Edward Gunn
 Pvt. Thomas M. Hammer
 Pvt. Robert Milton Hart
 Pvt. Philip Jacob Appfel
Master at Arms Edwd S. Herford
 Pvt. Warren W. White
 Sgt. Isaac Newton Stubblefield
 Sgt. Isaac Newton Stubblefield
 Pvt. John Walter Stoker
 Pvt. Finas Euen Lance
 Pvt. Wilson Keffer
 Pvt. Wilson Keffer
 Pvt. Wilson Keffer
 Pvt. Alexander McLain
 Pvt. Alexander McLain
 Pvt. Fernando Cortez Nichols
 Pvt. Henry Hilton Wood
 Pvt. William Moore
 Cpl. Thomas Penney
 Pvt. James R. Cook
 1st Lt. Royal B. Decker
 Pvt. William Herbert Trull
 Pvt. Wilson Keffer
 Chaplain Francis M. Byrd
 Lt. Col. Casper Carl Schneider
 Lt. Col. Casper Carl Schneider
Lt. Col. Casper Carl Schneider
 Pvt. Henry Ludwig Schulze
 Pvt. Martin V. B. Leonard
 Pvt. Isaac Secor
 Pvt. John S. Darling
 William R. Reck
 Cpl. Jacob John Tanner
 Cpl. John Anderson Laws
 Cpl. John Anderson Laws
 Cpl. Newton B. W. Vaughan
 Pvt. George D. Webber
 Cpl. John Henry White
 Pvt. Hugh Alexander Hoy
 Pvt. William Young

Service Unit

4th Kentucky Mounted Infantry
 Co E, 12th-Co L, 5th MO State Milit. Cav
 Co. G, 47th Missouri Infantry
 Co. D, 1st New York Mounted Rifles
 Co. H, 14th Wisconsin Infantry
 **
 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry
 Co. B, 52nd Illinois Infantry
 Co. D, 118th Illinois Infantry
 Co. A, 38th Illinois Infantry
 Co. H, 122nd New York Vol. Inf.
 Co. I, 12th Illinois Infantry
 Indep Co Trumbull Guards, OH Inf.
 Co. A, 126th West Virginia Militia
 Co. F, 4th Missouri Infantry
 Co. C, 20th Indiana Infantry
 Co. C, 2nd Illinois Light Infantry
 Co. K, 83rd Indiana Vol. Infantry
 Shields' 19th Indep Batt OH Lt Arty.
 Shields' 19th Indep Batt OH Lt Arty.
 Co. C, 74th NY Inf & Co. G, 40th NY Inf.
 Co. K, 2nd Missouri Light Artillery
 Co. K, 7th Illinois Infantry
 Co. A, 46th Iowa Volunteer Inf.
U.S.N.
 Co. K, 44th U.S. Colored Infantry
 2nd Regiment Texas Cavalry
 2nd Regiment Texas Cavalry
 54th Indiana Infantry
 Co. F, 12th IN Inf. - Co. E, 59th IN Inf.
 Co. B, 8th West Virginia Infantry
 Co. B, 8th West Virginia Infantry
 Co. B, 8th West Virginia Infantry
 Co. E, 7th Michigan Cavalry
 Co. E, 7th Michigan Cavalry
 Co. A, 7th Indiana Infantry
 Co. E, 121st New York Infantry
 Co. K, 63rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry
 Co. G, 8th Illinois Cavalry
 Co. C, 3rd Wisconsin Infantry
 Co. B, 20th Maine Infantry
 Co. D, 26th Massachusetts Infantry
 Co. B, 8th West Virginia Infantry
 184th Ohio Infantry
 103rd New York Infantry
 103rd New York Infantry
103rd New York Infantry
 Co. D, 9th Illinois Volunteers
 Shields' 19th Indep Batt OH Lt Arty.
 Co. D, 28th Massachusetts
 Co. F, 171st Pennsylvania Infantry
 Co F, 74th NY Inf., Co H, 40th NY Inf.
 1st Nebraska Infantry
 Battery B, 1st Btn Tenn. Lt Artillery
 Battery B, 1st Btn Tenn. Lt Artillery
 Co. E, 3rd MN Inf. & Trp K, 2nd MN Cav.
 Co. E, 133rd Illinois Vol. Infantry
 Co. G, 47th Missouri Volunteers
 Co. D, Bracketts Btn, Minn. Cavalry
 30th Regiment, Penn. Militia

Mr. Edward Cotham - Author ##
 Mr. Charles Mitchell - Camp Web Master ##

~ Charter Member ** Past Camp Commander ++ New Member ^ ^ Associate Member ## Honorary Camp Member

Editor's Message

Company A, 8th U.S. Regiment – Sons of Veterans Reserve – OUR Texas unit, commanded by Brother David LaBrot, continues to put on command performances at local events. You all should be proud of how this new unit consistently musters to represent our Camp and our Order. Images of many of these uniformed volunteers are depicted at various events in the following pages. In Addition, webmaster and honorary member, Charles Mitchell, has added a link on the Department website (<http://www.txsuv.org>) to the SVR webpage. Among other things, the *SVR Military District Newsletters* can be viewed from that webpage.

Vintage photographs of Civil War veterans will be new feature for future issues of the *Harriet Lane*. I need contributions of photos from you for this endeavor. Especially desired are old images of family vets *in uniform*. However, ANY photo of a Civil War family hero is desirable. Please include a paragraph or two to describe the photo and/or details about your veteran.

In F. C. & L,

Michael L. Lance

Editor

Camp Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
Tuesday 10 Jun 2008	Monthly Meeting: 7:00 p.m. Speaker: JVC Sam Hampton Topic: <i>Adventure at Pilot Knob</i>	Spaghetti Warehouse, Houston, TX
14 Jul 2008	Monthly Meeting: 7:00 p.m. Speaker: Jana Marsh Topic: Chamberlain	Spaghetti Warehouse, Houston, TX
Aug 2008	No Meeting	--
9 Sep 2008	Monthly Meeting: 7:00 p.m. Speaker: Steve Holmes Topic: Warren White USCT	Spaghetti Warehouse, Houston, TX
14 Oct 2008	Monthly Meeting: 7:00 p.m. Speaker: Michael L. Lance Topic: Medals of the WRC and DUV	Spaghetti Warehouse, Houston, TX

The ***Harriet Lane*** newsletter is published quarterly (Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter). Please send questions, letters, suggestions or corrections concerning the newsletter to: Michael L. Lance, 6303 Craigway Road, Spring, Texas 77389. E-mail mlance1963@charter.net).

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Junior Vice-Commander – Mr. Samuel F. Hampton
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SUVCW Edward Lea Camp #2 website
SUVCW Department of Texas website
SUVCW National website
Sarah Emma Edmonds Detached Tent #4 – DUVCW
National Auxiliary to the SUVCW

<http://www.txsuv.org/lea/index.htm>
<http://www.txsuv.org>
<http://www.suvcw.org>
<http://www.txsuv.org/Lea/auxdata.htm>
<http://www.asuvcw.org>

New Members

Introducing: Michael Kane Schneider is a student living in Houston, Texas. He joins the Camp based on the Civil War service of his 2nd great-grandfather, Casper Schneider. Enlisting as a Captain in the 103rd New York Infantry, Captain Schneider eventually promoted to the rank of Lt. Colonel.

Michael Schneider is a member of *Boy Scouts of America* Troop 848. On March 22, 2008, SVC David LaBrot and Brother Robert Julian, along with *Auxiliary* members Vali Reyes and Norma Pollard attended an *Eagle Scout Court of Honor* at *Clear Lake United Methodist Church* in far south Houston to witness the award ceremony which recognized Michael as having achieved the lofty *Eagle Scout* status. Brother LaBrot presented the deserving Scout with an *SUVCW Eagle Scout Award Certificate*. Michael is the 2nd son of Brother John Schneider Sr. to earn the *Eagle Scout* designation. Congratulations Michael...and welcome to the Camp!

Introducing: Henry Gerald Herford Jr. was born in Delhi, Louisiana, way down south in the land of cotton. He graduated from *Pine Tree High School* in Longview, Texas and then attended *Kilgore Junior College* before transferring to *Louisiana Tech University* where he received his B.S. in Agricultural Education in 1979. In 1987, Henry received a M. Ed. in Agricultural Education from *Mississippi State University*.

Henry taught Vocational Agriculture for 20 years, retiring from teaching in 1999. He had also been in the cattle business since 1971. He is currently a Realtor and an active Republican, having served as Parish Chairman. He now serves as District 20 Louisiana Republican State Central Committee member. His interest in the War for Southern Independence has been ongoing for many years. He is a member of the *Sons of Confederate Veterans* having 3 great-great-grandfathers that fought for the independence of the *Confederate States of America*. Growing up and living in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi he has seen first hand what the REAL HISTORY is. He is the father of 4 girls that share his love for the CSA and the United States. Henry now is proud to proclaim himself a S.O.B. "SON OF BOTH".

Henry joins the Camp based on the service of his great-grandfather, Edward S. Herford. Edward joined the United States Navy in 1853 and eventually served on: the USS *Ontario*, USS *Pennsylvania*, USS *Savannah*, USS *Powhatan*, USS *Germantown*, USS *Mississippi*, USS *Commodore Morris*, and USS *State of Georgia*. Edward was discharged in 1865 with the rank of *Master at Arms*. Henry is proud of his great-grandfather and is proud to be a member of *Sons of Union Veterans*.

Journey to Pine Grove

By Dale H. Leach

And so it was on that cold January day in 1979 when I first began my journey. My father and I trudged back through the snow-drifted country cemetery in Michigan to find the grave of my great-great-grandfather, Sylvester Leach, whom I was later to discover had been a Civil War veteran and a private in the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The occasion was my 31st birthday and I had recently developed an interest in family history. Being a father myself with a 1 year old son, I was thus eager to learn more about my father's family which had always been a great mystery as I grew up. Not the least of which was the perplexity of this man, whose posterity and long decayed remains now lay frozen beneath my feet.



Dale Leach

My avid interest in the Civil War did not originate on that winters day at Pine Grove Cemetery. It was years before, when I made a trip to the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia with my parents and older brother to visit some of my mother's relatives.

As a nine year old, I vividly remember the wonderment I felt at first seeing the numerous Civil war battlefields and relics in an area which, unlike Michigan where I had grown up, was heavily touched by that great war of 100 years before. How enthralled I was to hear the fearful family stories told of hated and much feared Federal troops who once burned and pillaged this beautiful valley that I now stood within. As a wide-eyed boy, little did I realize then the great irony I was later to discover - my paternal great-great-grandfather was among those marching and invading Union army troops of 1864. Nor how he would profoundly affect my life hence forward. A blessing this journey has been to my life since that cold winters day - not only to have glimpsed the life of this admirable man, Sylvester Leach - but also the special people I have been privileged to meet along the way, such as: Lloyd A. Carr, Esther Starr Allen, Naomi Norton Blaine, and many, many more.

The March 2008 Camp meeting was called to order at the Spaghetti Warehouse Restaurant in Houston at 7:03 p.m. by SVC David LaBrot. He ably stood-in for Cmdr. Hackett, who was voice-challenged due to illness. Also in attendance were: JVC Hampton, Secretary/Treasurer White, PCC Schulze, and Brothers Shuster, Wickman, Lockwood, Leach, Holmes, and Lance. Guests Norma Pollard, Vali Reyes, and Betty Hampton, representing the *Ladies Auxiliary*, were also on hand.

After leading the *Pledge of Allegiance*, Brother LaBrot called on Brother Leach to offer an opening prayer. The minutes from the prior meeting were then reviewed. Some necessary corrections were noted, a motion to approve was voiced and seconded, and then the 'ayes' to approve the minutes as amended were voiced in unanimity.

Brother LaBrot then recognized the *Ladies Auxiliary*. President Vali Reyes introduced a Haak Winery Basket that the *Auxiliary* was raffling to raise money to send to our U.S. Armed Forces. The winner of the basket will be drawn at a new annual fundraiser called "President's Tea and Civil War Presentation", which will be held on April 22, 2008 in League City, Texas. Cmdr. Hackett volunteered as guest speaker at the event. Mrs. Reyes also reported that she and two other *Auxiliary* volunteers visited veterans at the VA Hospital on Saturday, March 8, 2008. She also talked about the *Auxiliary's* efforts in the *Girl Scout Award Project*. They have created Silver And Gold Merit Citations for deserving Scouts.



SVC David LaBrot

Treasurer White then reviewed the financial report of the Camp. He stated that 2008 membership dues continued to come in and the Camp was in great shape financially. A motion to accept the report was made and quickly passed.

Then Cmdr. Hackett, representing the *Speakers Committee*, happily reported that monthly guest speakers were lined up through October 2008. PCC Stephen Schulze, representing the *Nominating Committee*, then gave a brief overview of the agenda for the *Department Encampment* scheduled for May 31, 2008 in Corsicana, Texas. He has requested a volunteer from each camp to form a nominating committee to manage nominations for Department Officers. Cmdr. Hackett volunteered from the *Edward Lea Camp*.

SVC LaBrot then announced the opportunity for the Camp to make *Jr. ROTC Award* presentations at a couple area high schools. Several Brothers volunteered to make the presentations at the Rosenberg and Jersey Village schools. In addition, the Camp will be represented by volunteers at the *Eagle Scout Award Ceremony* on March 22nd for outstanding Scout, Michael Schneider, son of Brother John Schneider Sr. Brother LaBrot continued by announcing that he had recently had discussions with the *Jefferson County Historical Commission* about participating in, what he thought was, an upcoming ceremony for the re-opening of *Sabine Pass Battleground State Park*. He later discovered that the 'Opening' was actually a 'clean-up day'! Although recognizing the importance of preserving and maintaining this historically important site, Brother LaBrot wisely deferred the Camp's participation at the park to activities more ceremonial in nature.

PCC Schulze followed by reporting on the activities of the *SVR*. He stated that the dues from *Edward Lea* members had all been received but there were still some members in the north Texas area still unpaid. He is opening a separate checking account for the *SVR*. Brother Schulze also informed the Camp that Brother Lockwood recently joined the Texas *SVR* unit to offset the one member from north Texas who quit – thus the total membership count remains at 21.

Next was the opportunity to review, discuss, and vote on a new membership application. Michael Schneider, a student in Houston, follows his older brother and father in seeking membership in the Camp. "Motion Carried!"

And finally, Brother Leach reported that he had recently ordered the interactive CD, *Hardees School of the Soldier* by mail. He feels this CD will be an advantageous tool for assisting with the training of the new *SVR* unit. He also said that when his CD order arrived, the CD case was empty! He has since re-ordered. Brother Leach then was requested to give an invocation – with the meeting being adjourned by SVC LaBrot at 7:45 p.m.

While the membership and guests took a five minute break, guest speaker James Hackett prepared for his evenings talk. He rearranged a few tables and chairs, set up some display boards, and brought out some of his hand-made fighting ship models. As usual, Brother Hackett's talk was informative, entertaining, and interesting [See details of his talk on the next page].

11 March 2008: All attention was intensely focused on the evening's guest speaker. Camp Commander James Hackett had the floor and, once again, displayed his immense knowledge of America's fighting ships and his model-ship building skills. He began his presentation by passing out a packet of reference pages for the listeners to follow as he spoke and a large folding display board was propped on a table behind him.



Cmdr. James Hackett presenting

He began with a brief overview of the earliest beginnings of armored ships in Europe and their developmental evolution in France and England. He stated that two 'Ironclads' were actually in service in Europe even before the U.S. Civil War – both of which never saw wartime action.

At the eve of the Civil War, American ships were all constructed of wood, including the blockaders. The CSA had no Navy at all – only a few tugboats, ferries, and other assorted watercraft. They soon decided to build ironclads to fight the blockade. As word of this development reached the North, it spread terror. So the North decided to build its own iron-clads. The race for naval supremacy began in earnest!

The Swedish engineer and Patriot, John Ericsson, quickly began work on an iron-clad design for the U.S. Navy. The result was the USS *Monitor* (aka. "cheesebox on a raft") featuring a heavy round revolving iron gun turret on the deck. The turret housed two 11-inch Dahlgren guns, paired side by side.

Meanwhile, the Confederacy was refitting the CSS *Virginia* – which was originally the USS *Merrimack*, a 4,636-ton steam frigate. The USS *Merrimack* had been scuttled by Federal forces at Norfolk, Virginia in April 1861. The Confederates subsequently salvaged the ship and converted her to an armored casemate ironclad – the formidable CSS *Virginia*. A month after being commissioned, the CSS *Virginia* made history in the Hampton Roads area as a result of fierce combat with Union warships – including the newly minted USS *Monitor*.

Brother Hackett eloquently described the Hampton Roads naval battle – which was deemed the greatest victory of the CSA Navy. When the CSS *Virginia* arrived at the battle scene, it fairly easily dispatched several wooden Federal warships - some by ramming - while Union balls from Federal ships and shore batteries simply bounced off her armor. However, the CSS *Virginia* did suffer 21 casualties – including her commander. Later in the day, the Confederate iron-clad retired – with plans for resuming its destruction of the Federal vessels the next day.

However, during the evening, The USS *Monitor* arrived. It had to be towed to the battle area because it was too heavy for its own engines.

The next day, as the battle resumed, the USS *Monitor* stayed between the CSS *Virginia* and her target, the USS *Minnesota*. The opposing iron-clads circled each other at about 4-5 knots - blasting away. The CSS *Virginia* had much weaker salvos because it had expected to fight the more fragile Federal wooden ships. Ammo began to run low. She finally retired from what became, in reality, a stalemate. But the Rebels claimed victory!

The CSA continued to build harbor-bound iron-clads. The Union warships continued to improve and develop in order to travel from point-to-point along the blockade zone. Eventually, a powerful 3-turreted Federal iron-clad was developed.

The CSA was forced to venture to England to purchase sea-worthy ships, but those craft were intercepted by U.S. interests and were never brought into the war. Federal and European ships continued to improve and become even more powerful and effective.

Influenced by those Civil War confrontations, naval warfare was thus changed forever!



Cmdr. Hackett with model of CSS Virginia

Cmdr. Hackett called the April meeting to order at 7:16 p.m. Nine other Brothers were present, including: SVC LaBrot, JVC Hampton, Secretary/Treasurer White, PCC Schulze, and Brothers Leach, Lance, Cates, Lockwood, and Holmes. Seven guests also ventured to the Spaghetti Warehouse in Houston to observe the proceedings. They included: Mark Pike, Linda LaBrot, Martha Class (Sr. Vice-President, *Sarah Emma Edmonds Detached Tent #4*, Houston, TX, *DUVCW*), Vali Reyes (*Auxiliary* President), and *Auxiliary* members Jana Marsh, Norma Pollard, and Betty Hampton. Commander Hackett asked the assembly to rise and then led the *Pledge of Allegiance*. Chaplain Cates followed with an invocation. Cmdr. Hackett then called for everyone to remain standing for a moment of silence in memory of recently deceased Brother C. John Powers and Mrs. Kenneth Vaughn.

The minutes from the previous meeting were then reviewed, discussed, and approved and Brother White followed with the financial report. After mentioning his concern that nearly half the membership was slow with remitting their dues for 2008, the financial report was also approved.

Cmdr. Hackett, also representing the *Speakers Committee*, again reported that guest speakers have been secured for each monthly meeting through October. He was pleased to report that volunteers to speak have been stepping forward as never before! The monthly meetings have definitely become much more interesting and enjoyable as a result.

The agenda then turned to items of 'Old Business'. SVC David LaBrot briefed us on the *Eagle Scout Award* ceremony that honored Michael Schneider, son of Brother John Schneider Sr. Michael is the 2nd son of Brother Schneider to attain *Eagle Scout* status! Vali Reyes and Norma Pollard of the *Ladies Auxiliary* and Brother Julian also attended the ceremony to honor this outstanding Scout.

Brother LaBrot remained standing to report on the Jr. ROTC certificate and medal presented to outstanding Cadet Joshua Campbell at Jersey Village High School on April 3, 2008 [see related story on page 8]. He and Brother Lance attended in uniform. They were impressed with the professionalism and discipline of the large number of deserving cadets.

Brother Holmes then briefed the Camp on his participation in a recent Jr. ROTC Award Presentation at *Lamar Consolidated High School* in Rosenberg, Texas. He related how his name was mistaken for another presenter who had previously cancelled out. Brother Holmes was thus not expected at the event! However, things were worked out and he successfully presented the award to a deserving Cadet.

Cmdr. Hackett then turned the discussion to planning for *Memorial Day* activities at the National Cemetery. He mentioned the possibility that our Camp will not be able to man and fire one of the cannons as in the past. The cannon traditionally used by our Camp is currently out of service undergoing wheel repairs. It may or may not be back in service by *Memorial Day*. Uniformed members of the Camp still expect to team up with Co. A, 13th Regiment U.S. Infantry to make an impressive show of Union blue! Cmdr. Hackett also called for the Camp's tent canopy, banner, and Colors to be set up at the cemetery during the ceremonies.

Brother Holmes was given the floor once again. He related that he was still searching for an optimum date for his annual remembrance ceremony for the *William White Chapter, Sons and Daughters of USCT* in Bastrop, Texas. His plans include conducting a graveside memorial service for his ancestor, Warren W. White, *USCT*. He requested support and advice from the Camp. As a result, May 10th was chosen as the date and several Brothers volunteered to attend and participate in an *Honor Guard* [see related story on page 11].

Brother Lockwood announced details about an April 12, 2008 *Teachers Day* event at *Jesse Jones Park* in Humble, Texas. Brother Lance then rose to introduce the idea of developing a tradition of issuing an event-specific medal at the Camp's annual *Battle of Galveston Commemoration* ceremonies each January. There was interest in the idea, but it was agreed that research was necessary regarding costs and obtaining approvals from National. Brother Lance volunteered to investigate the matter further and report at a later date. A brief report on *Co. A, 8th U.S. Infantry, SVR* was then given by unit Lt. David LaBrot. He stated that the membership roster for 2008 had been submitted to the National organization. He was pleased to report that the numbers were sufficient to maintain the current complement of officers.

Auxiliary President, Vali Reyes, then offered an update on some of the activities of their organization. On April 9, 2008, they visited the *Michael DeBakey Medical Center* on Saturday, April 9th where they passed out Get well, Easter, and Patriotic cards made by the children of *Moody Methodist Day School* in Galveston, Texas. She also announced their new fundraiser - *The First Annual President's Tea and Civil War Presentation*. All proceeds from

(Continued on next page)



L-R: Martha Class, Diana Pollard, Vali Reyes, Betty Hampton, & Jana Marsh

this fundraiser will be donated to our U.S. Armed Forces. She hopes this fundraising activity will become an annual event for the *Auxiliary*. The 'Tea' will be held Sunday, April 27th at 3-5:00 p.m. at *The Generations Tea Room* in League City, Texas. The *Auxiliary* is also working on a *Girl Scout Silver and Gold Award Project*. Outstanding Scouts will receive citations from National honoring their achievements. Ms. Reyes also reminded the Camp that the *Auxiliary* is still currently raffling a very nice *Haak Winery Basket*, which will be won at the April 27th 'Tea'. Jana Marsh then reported on the on-going search for fund-raising ideas. She showed several items the *Auxiliary* plans to sell during *Civil War Weekend* at Liendo Plantation this year. Sr. Vice-Pres. Martha Class (*DUV*) then reported on the success a trio of California high school students are having with a history project competition featuring Sarah Emma Edmonds [story on page 19].

Brother Dale Leach was then given the floor to recap the 3-day camp-out/re-enactment at Port Hudson, Louisiana. He participated at that event with Brother Bob Lockwood and elements of Co. A, 13th Regiment, U.S. Infantry.

At 7:58 p.m., Cmdr. Hackett called on Chaplain Cates to offer a closing prayer, and then gaveled the meeting adjourned. After a brief break, seats were again assumed by all as SVC LaBrot moved to the podium to begin his role as guest speaker. Using a laptop computer, a multi-media projector, and a large screen, he gave an interesting and detailed presentation entitled: *Soldiers of Misfortune – The Sultana Disaster – Part I* [see page 9].

Jr. ROTC Award Presented

By Michael L. Lance

On Thursday, April 3, 2008, I attended a Jr. ROTC Award Presentation Ceremony at *Jersey Village High School* with SVC David LaBrot. Brother LaBrot was scheduled to present a SUVCW certificate and medal to outstanding Cadet Joshua Campbell. I was his support. After some difficulty finding our way to the school, we arrived just in the nick of time! We hurriedly donned the rest of our uniforms at my truck. Then we quickly marched in with me carrying a bayoneted musket and he carried a saber. We entered the building just in time to line up with all the other presenters forming-up to enter the auditorium. There was a line of empty chairs strung across the stage for the speakers to sit. However, they only had one chair for our organization - and there were two of us! So I took a position off to the side and was thus assigned to be the guard for the National Colors.

The award presentations went on and on! I never saw so many awards given out! There were about 50-60 outstanding cadets on hand and most of them won multiple achievement awards. I stood at attention by the flag for about 2 hours. My feet became numb after about 1 hour! I tried to discretely wiggle my toes a bit to start some circulation. That brought very limited relief. Since the speaker's podium was only about 3 feet from me, all eyes in the auditorium were basically on me too. I was stuck! I wanted to lean backward against the wall to relieve my suffering feet, but figured that would not look very good! I had to set an example!

Soon, my shoulder blades began to ache. In addition, it was very hot in the auditorium dressed as we were in our heavy uniforms. Brother LaBrot later said he sweltered while sitting on the stage due to the heat generated by the floodlights. He also later said that when he walked to the podium to make his presentation, his feet squished in his shoes! I could feel sweat running down my back, forehead, and my legs. I was determined not to move! My stomach began to feel uneasy. The speeches continued to go on and on! I continuously reminded myself that "Endure it I must!" FINALLY, the presentations were finished. We dashed for a drink at the refreshment table then decided to make an immediate exit. At my truck, we removed a large portion of our uniforms in order to ride in comfort. In order to do so, I set my digital camera on the top edge of the bed of my truck to free my hands. David did likewise with his fancy leather binder on his side of the truck. We stripped down, jumped in, and drove off. Somewhere along I-10, we realized that he had left his binder on the edge of the bed of the truck. I'll give you one guess where I had left my digital camera. Both items thus became modern 'casualties of war'.



L-R: Michael L. Lance, Cadet Campbell, and David K. LaBrot

SCV David LaBrot volunteered as guest-speaker for the April 8, 2008 Camp meeting. The following is a brief description of his well-done and extremely interesting speech:

The 260 ft. long side-wheeler steamship, *Sultana*, was originally built to carry about 376 passengers. But, on April 27, 1865, she carried more than 2,500 – including about 2,300 Union soldiers. Most of the veterans had been recently liberated from Confederate prisoner-of-war camps. They were very much physically weakened from their ordeal as prisoners. Malnutrition, dysentery, scurvy, and lack of medical treatment, was widespread. The men were crowded into every available inch of space on the steamship. The route was north along the Mississippi River with Cairo, Illinois as the destination for the liberated soldiers. The men were in a celebratory mood and happy to be able to finally return to the comfort of their homes and families.

But disaster would strike at 2:00 a.m. as the *Sultana* reached about seven miles above Memphis, Tennessee. Most of the weary men were sleeping as three of the four massive boilers at the heart of the steamship exploded with volcanic fury. Men were blown from the steamship into the icy river. Many of the men could not swim and those that could were hampered by their heavy woolen uniforms. Portions of the four decks came crashing down - crushing and/or entrapping those below. Survivors of the initial explosion then had to contend with: the massive fires; projectiles and falling materials; groping panicked men and animals; and the churning icy river waters. About 1,700 men lost their battles from the explosion itself or from: being crushed; being drowned; blunt trauma; scalding; hypothermia, or from burning to death by the fire that followed.



SVC David LaBrot

The *Sultana* was much smaller than the *Titanic*, but it carried more people on that fateful day – and the 1865 death count was higher than the *Titanic* disaster. As horrible as it was, the sinking of the *Sultana* is one of our Nation's least-known major disasters. One might ask, "Why is that?" Brother LaBrot believes the loss of the *Sultana* was overshadowed by other important events of the day, including: Lee's surrender (April 9th); Lincoln's assassination (April 14th); Lincoln's funeral and the return of his body Springfield, IL. (April 15th-May 4th); the capture and death of Lincoln's assassin (April 26th); the surrender of Joe Johnson's Confederate army (April 26th); and the nation's general weariness of death and disaster. Brother LaBrot added color to his interesting presentation by reading a few disaster recollections written by *Sultana* survivors. Here is one example:

Pvt. Pleasant M. Keeble, Co. H, 3rd Tennessee Cavalry, had been asleep on the crowded hurricane deck and his brother, John Harrison Keeble, was on the roof of the Texas deck cabin. Waking with a feeling of being strangled by smoke, Pleasant Keeble had time only to rise to his feet before he was swept along by the surge of the crowd, rushing for the safety of nearby stairs. Fearing for the life of his brother, Keeble managed to wedge his back against a stair post railing to stop his downward movement and then work his way up onto the railing. He forced his way onto the top of the mass of humanity and crawled across heads and shoulders until he was back on the hurricane deck. Where his brother John had been sleeping, Keeble found only a gaping hole and one of the collapsed smokestacks. He knew that John was gone forever.

Attempting to save his own life, Keeble, a non-swimmer, located a small box "too small for much support" and climbed down to the main deck. After stripping naked, he threw the box into the river and jumped after it. Holding the box tightly against him, he avoided the drowning crowd by staying close to the Sultana and waited for a large piece of siding to burn away from the side of the boat. When the siding came crashing into the water, Keeble and five other men made their way to it and grabbed hold. Unfortunately, an exhausted mule from the cargo hold also spotted the piece of siding and swam straight toward it. The mule got its front feet on the siding and kept trying to get up on it, almost capsizing the raft. Each time the mule raised itself, Keeble fought it off. Man finally prevailed and the tired mule either drowned or swam off for easier pickings.

Floating downriver on two separate rafts, Keeble and his five companions kept together by holding hands. As they neared a bend in the icy cold river, they suddenly saw a tall Negro man "the tallest I ever saw", Keeble wrote, who was running along the Arkansas bank with a long pole. He directed the survivors to work their way toward shore. They began paddling as the tall rescuer waded out into the water up to his neck and held out the pole. "We took hold of the pole," Keeble wrote, "and he swung us up into the shore. He saved our lives."

After his presentation, Brother LaBrot conducted a Q&A session. He closed by having his wife draw a name from a box to win a book about the *Sultana*. The raffle proceeds were donated to the Camp. Brother Leach was the lucky winner! Everyone was reminded that Brother LaBrot will present Part II of the *Sultana* saga at the next meeting. He hinted that he would present evidence and facts that would support the controversial theory of sabotage!

Civil War Jeopardy

By David Garrett



David Garrett

Answers: It caused two-of-three deaths in the American Civil War. He was deposed as governor for opposing his state's succession. The fifteen innovations developed or used during the war to help each side's cause. Oh, and be sure to put your answer in the form of a question!

Stumped? *Winston Churchill High School* history students weren't. On April 21st, 2008, some ninety American History students at the San Antonio high school attended one of three seminars presented by SUCVW member David Garrett. David was the guest of Mr. Robert Carlos, providing an overview of the Civil War to help juniors prepare for this spring's TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills), passing of which is required for graduation.

"With only one hour, it was impossible to cover the war in any depth," Garrett related. "Instead, I focused on key areas such as: causes of the war, broad strategy, and campaigns having critical strategic and political ramifications. I was also able to blend in human interest stories around the common soldier and camp life, military innovations, and medical care."

Garrett's presentation included showing assorted era projectiles, a bayonet, a model 1861 U.S. Springfield rifled musket and a Model 1860 Roby cavalry saber. "It was a treat for the students to hold and examine these artifacts. So often they're under glass in a museum," Garrett said. Also on hand were ninety servings of hardtack which David's wife, Diane, prepared from an original recipe. Some students were overheard to compare the brittle bread over the school cafeteria's fare.

The students paid particular attention as Brother Garrett related Civil War casualty statistics in terms of the school's student population. "Imagine filling the district's football stadium (ca. 10,000) then wounding every person in it. That's about equal to Confederate casualties at Spotsylvania Court House. Or imagine the Union dead at Gettysburg - that's everyone in this school." "And," as Brother Garrett pointed to one young man, "if you are this class's Color Bearer; well, you better hope you weren't in Miller's cornfield at Antietam."

Then, as the hour ended at each seminar, the class was divided into 'North' and 'South' for a round of Civil War "Jeopardy". Questions for the game were related to the Civil War era and included: What is disease?; Who was Sam Houston?; What are trains, rifled muskets, balloons, ironclads, field hospitals, the telegraph, etc.? Of the three seminars, the 'North' contestants won two-out-of-three. Some things never change!

A Close Call for a Signal Corps Party

In the approaches and siege of Petersburg, the work of the Signal Corps was almost entirely telescopic reconnoitering. An occasional high tree was used for a perch but the country was so heavily timbered that signal towers were necessary. There were nearly a dozen lines of communication and a hundred separate stations. The most notable towers were *Cobb's Hill*, one hundred and twenty-five feet; *Crow's Nest*, one hundred and twenty-six feet, and *Pebbles Farm*, one hundred and forty-five feet, which commanded views of Petersburg, its approaches, railways, the camps and fortifications. *Cobb's Hill*, on the Appomattox, was particularly irritating and caused the construction of an advance Confederate earth-work a mile distant, from which fully two hundred and fifty shot and shell were fired against the tower in a single day - with slight damage, however. Similar futile efforts were made to destroy *Crow's Nest*.

At General Meade's headquarters, a signal party had a unique experience - fortunately not fatal, though thrilling in the extreme. A signal platform was built in a tree where, from a height of seventy-five feet, the Confederate right flank position could be seen far to the rear. Whenever important movements were in progress, this station naturally drew a heavy fire to prevent signal work. As the men were charged to hold fast at all hazards, descending only after two successive shots at them, they became accustomed in time to sharpshooting, but the shriek of shell was more nerve-racking. On one occasion, several shots whistled harmlessly by. And then came a violent shock which nearly dislodged platform, men, and instruments. A solid shot, partly spent, striking fairly, had buried itself in the tree half-way between the platform and the ground.*

**source: The Photographic History of the Civil War, pgs 337-338, The Review of Reviews Co., New York, 1911.*

Bastrop, Texas - A Grave Discovery of History



Steve Holmes in uniform with family

It was a big moment for Pearland resident Steve Holmes as he stood in the midst of some woods in Lake Bastrop acres Saturday, staring at a piece of his own history.

In a small cemetery off FM 1441, which consisted of mostly simple unmarked graves of piled stones, a single U.S. military-issued marker stands in the earth marking the resting place of a Civil War soldier – Warren W. White.

Warren W. White served with the 44th Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops. He fought for the Union in the 1860s and later became a *Buffalo Soldier* before retiring to the Bastrop area.

“He was my great-great-grandfather,” Holmes said. “He died in 1917. I got started looking for his marker when I was researching my mother’s grandmother. That’s how it started. It’s very emotional for me to put that piece together in my past. Here we can identify a person who has a record that can be traced to before the Civil War.”

Holmes had been searching for the marker for six years when he got a call from a cousin in the Bastrop area who said that the marker had been found by Bastrop resident George Rollow and his neighbor, who live near the gravesite. Rollow had placed an announcement in the *Bastrop Advertiser* for any living descendants of White to contact him.

As it turns out, White had had 14 children, with eight people from the third generation of those children still living. Holmes said, “White’s descendants are scattered everywhere from Bastrop to Temple to Houston and make up the 1st Texas Chapter of the Sons and Daughters of the U.S. Colored Troops – Warren W. White Chapter.

“We knew the marker existed, but I couldn’t find anyone in the family that knew where it was,” Holmes said. Holmes’ research shows that White was never a slave, but was born in the half-slave, half-free state of Maryland, where he worked for the Union army and followed them around from his boyhood until he was old enough to enlist.

When the government established the *Bureau of U.S. Colored Troops* in 1863 allowing free black men to enlist, the Civil War was already well under way. White fought and became a P.O.W. until the war’s end in 1865, after which many black fighters became *Buffalo Soldiers*, who became known as fierce Indian fighters, Holmes said. Records show White was discharged from military service in 1870, Holmes said.



Federal Honor Guard Posts the Colors

Steve Schulze, a former Camp Commander with the Houston chapter of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), said Holmes was also a member of his organization and that he was proud to stand beside him Saturday as Holmes uncovered his Civil War ancestry.

“This brings some long overdue attention to the U.S. Colored Troops,” Schulze said. “The Union wouldn’t have won the war without them.”

The Houston chapter of the SUVCW used the occasion to mark the fourth annual celebration of *Freedom Fighters Founders Day* as well as hold a graveside memorial service in honor of White, whom they honored with a ceremony and a three-gun salute.*

...submitted by G. P. Rollow and forwarded by Steve Holmes

* *Source: Reprinted from the Bastrop Advertiser, cover story, Vol. 155, No. 23, Thurs., May 15, 2008, Bastrop, TX.*

Photos submitted by Brother Dale Leach - Additional photo on back page.

The Spaghetti Warehouse in downtown Houston was the venue once again for the May Camp business meeting. It was well attended as usual by eleven Brothers, including: Cmdr. Hackett; SVC LaBrot; JVC Hampton; Sec./Treas. White; and Brothers Schulze (PCC), Shuster, Lockwood, Leach, Lance, Wickman, and Holmes. Six guests also attended, including: Mark Pike and Linda LaBrot; and *Auxiliary* members Vali Reyes (President), Betty Hampton, Jana Marsh, and Norma Pollard.

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Cmdr. Hackett, who then called on Patriotic Instructor Robert Lockwood to lead the *Pledge of Allegiance*. Brother Leach then offered an opening prayer and Cmdr. Hackett followed by offering the Minutes of the previous meeting for review. A motion to accept the Minutes was offered followed by a voice vote of approval. Brother White then reviewed the current Financial Statement. He reported that the Camp is in good shape for the year financially and that funds for paying the National membership dues are available. That report was also approved by a voice vote.

Cmdr. Hackett, representing the *Speakers Committee*, reported that the following guest speakers for our monthly meetings have been confirmed: June – Brother Samuel Hampton; July – Jana Marsh (*Auxiliary*); August – no meeting; and September – Brother Steve Holmes.

Discussion then turned to planning for *Memorial Day*. In order to get decent parking spots, it was agreed that participants should plan to arrive at the National Cemetery about 8:00 a.m. The event is scheduled to start a little earlier this year in order to beat some of the extreme Texas heat. Logistics were worked out to assure that the tent canopy and other supplies would find their way to the cemetery. A show of hands indicated that our Camp would be well represented at this important holiday event.

Brothers Schulze and Shuster then briefed the assembly about the upcoming *Department of Texas Annual Encampment* scheduled for Saturday, May 31, 2008 in Corsicana, Texas. They stated that the *Encampment* would begin at noon and include a tour of the *Pearce Civil War and Western Art Museum* in Corsicana.

Cmdr. Hackett then offered an after-action report about his recent participation in a *Jr. ROTC Award Presentation*. He was followed by Brother Holmes who thanked the volunteers that supported him in honoring his great-grandfather, Warren W. White *USCT*, at a grave marker dedication ceremony in Bastrop, Texas [story on page 11]. He stated that the owner of the old remote graveyard attended the event as well. Our *SVR* contingent, led by Lt. David LaBrot, provided the musket salute to Brother Holmes' ancestor. The local newspaper in Bastrop will publish a story and photo about the affair. Brother LaBrot will also submit the story and a photo to the *Western Dispatch*, the newsletter of the *SVR* National organization.



Auxiliary President Vali Reyes was then given the floor to report on the success of their *First Annual President's Tea and Civil War Presentation* in League City, Texas. She happily stated that the goals of the event were met. About forty persons attended the *Tea*, including Brothers Leach, Schulze, D. Letzring, and Campbell. Ms. Reyes thanked the Camp for supporting the fund-raising raffle and planning has already begun for a repeat of the affair next year. A gift was presented to Brother Leach at the 'Tea' in recognition for his recent trip to Gettysburg, PA.

Front row L-R: Lynda Rendon, Jana Marsh, Valencia Reyes, Diana Campbell, William Campbell, and Marjorie Henck.

Back row L-R: Dean Letzring, Steve Schulze, Dale Leach, and Norma Pollard.

The next item on the agenda was the review, discussion, and motion to accept a New Membership Application submitted by Henry Gerald Herford Jr. Since the required paperwork was complete, his application was quickly put to a vote – and the "ayes" carried the day! Welcome to the Camp Brother Herford [see New Members on page 4].

The next order of business was not as enjoyable. Secretary White reported that several Brothers were very late with remitting their 2008 membership dues. He has made every attempt to contact those affected. Some of the Brothers have committed to catch up with their dues, but several others have not responded to Brother White's communications. A motion was made to suspend the Brothers having the most egregious arrearages. The hope is that those affected will come forth soon and renew their affiliation with the Camp.

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Announcements:

- 1) Patricia Mullenix, Past-National-President of the *Daughters of Union Veterans*, and friend of the Camp, collapsed at the *National Encampment*. We are happy to learn that she has recovered.
- 2) The 3-person team of California high school students whose history competition project features Sarah Emma Edmonds, has advanced to the next level of competition. Our local *DUV* Tent has been a primary source for their research. Their progress is being closely monitored by Sr. Vice-Pres. Martha Class [story on pg 19].
- 3) Brother White received an e-mail from the daughter of Brother Chadwick Chester reporting that he recently fell and broke a hip. He is expected to return home from the hospital by the end of May.
- 4) Linda LaBrot, wife of SVC David LaBrot, presented the Camp with a nice hand-made fabric carrying bag for our flags. A tip of the Kepi goes out to her!



Linda LaBrot

At 7:40 p.m., Cmdr. Hackett called for Brother Leach to offer a closing prayer and the meeting was then adjourned. Everyone remained on the premises to enjoy the evening's presentation by guest speaker, SVC David LaBrot [see story below].

In Memory

It is with great sadness that I inform the Camp of the passing of General Powers. Brother Powers was a Charter Member of the *Edward Lea Camp*, having joined in September 1995 on the service of his ancestor, James Albert Powell, Private, Co. C, 146th Illinois Infantry.

Brother Powers passed away in League City on 16 February 2008 at the age of 77. He was the owner and CEO of *Powers Insurance Agency* in League City and was an active member of the Camp at the time of his death. R I P Brother Powers.

... Submitted by Secr./Treas. Gary White

Soldiers of Misfortune – The Sultana Disaster – Part II

In April, Brother LaBrot gave an interesting presentation about the tragic 1865 sinking of the steamship *Sultana* on the Mississippi River. He concluded his talk at that time with the promise to return in May with Part II giving evidence to shed light on, and intrigue us with, a question: *Accident or Sabotage?* We were NOT disappointed!



SVC David LaBrot presents

Once again Brother LaBrot opened his talk with a short video and followed up with a slide presentation. He reviewed the details about the explosion and sinking of the *Sultana* and reiterated that the disaster was absent from the 'limelight' then (*and now*) due to other major events that occurred around the nation at about the same time. Brother LaBrot stated that by the time the investigators arrived to search for the cause of the disaster, the best reasons they could come up with were, at best, inconclusive!

For 23 years, the disaster remained in limbo. Then it popped up again after a May 1888 article appeared in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. The article cited a St. Louis painter named William Streeter, who claimed that a Confederate mail carrier and blockade runner named Robert 'Lowden' had destroyed the *Sultana* in an act of sabotage. Brother LaBrot shared details about the life of this man, Loudon, with us.

As a young man, Loudon lived in Philadelphia and worked as a painter. About 1850 he killed a man and fled to St. Louis, Missouri. He was eventually tracked down, arrested, returned to Philadelphia, tried, convicted of manslaughter, and sent to *Eastern State Prison*. The prison experience probably hardened him further because that institution was known to "breed maniacs" due to the solitary confinement and harsh conditions. Loudon was

(Continued on next page)

pardoned in May 1854 and released. He traveled back to St. Louis and joined the volunteer *Liberty Fire Company* in St. Louis under an alias. In 1858, when the volunteer fire companies were abolished in favor of professional organizations, the *Liberty Fire House* was burned down – by “some disaffected members.” Louden also married in 1858 and went into the painting business – painting houses, signs – and *steamboats*.

In 1861, as the Civil War heated up, Louden chose the Southern cause, joining the pro-secession *Minute Men*. He rode as a Captain in the Confederate cavalry (and later joined the *James Gang* after the war). Louden was also connected to the secret underground organization “O.A.K.” (*Organization of American Knights*).

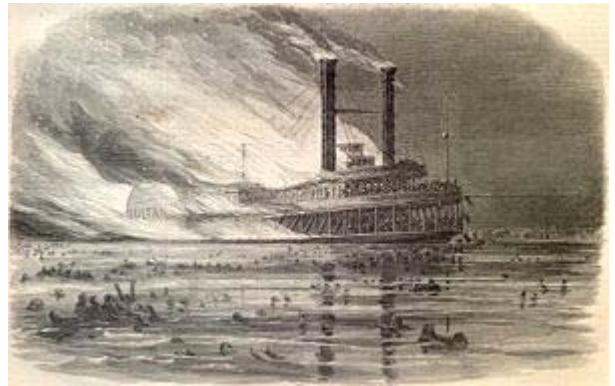
He soon met the ‘Official Confederate Mail Carrier’ for General Sterling Price’s army, Absalom Grimes. Before the war, Grimes had been a steamboat pilot on the Mississippi. Louden and Grimes became partners in smuggling mail back and forth through the Union lines for the Confederacy. In his later memoirs, Grimes said Louden “amused himself burning government steamboats.” While working previously as a fireman, Louden likely became familiar with methods of arson. And his time spent painting steamboats allowed him to learn about their operations and vulnerabilities.

In 1862, Louden was arrested in a saloon while in possession of numerous incriminating letters. He was sent to *Gratiot Street Prison*. The assistant keeper at the prison was none other than William Stretor! Louden was charged with mail carrying and being in the Rebel army. He was found “guilty” and sentenced to be hanged. While sitting in prison, he begged for mercy. Fortunately for him, he got a temporary stay from President Lincoln. However, while being transported by ship from one prison facility to another, Louden jumped overboard and escaped. He went south and apparently resumed his mail smuggling. A wide manhunt for him began.

His partner in sabotage, Absalom Grimes, had also escaped from authorities. The pair apparently reconnected and continued working together destroying Union steamboats along the Mississippi River.

The Sultana on fire – From Harper’s Weekly

Louden appears to have been a calm, professional saboteur who: had the skills, was capable of, had a motive for, and the opportunity and daring to destroy the *Sultana* and the many hundreds of unsuspecting passengers aboard. He was a mail smuggler and a Confederate sympathizer - specializing in sneaking aboard steamboats and destroying them. He was an active member of a group of “organized boat burners” who were responsible for the destruction of at least 60 Mississippi steamboats.



By 1867, Louden had obtained a pardon and returned to St. Louis. He went back to painting – with William Stretor. Later while reminiscing with Stretor, Louden drunkenly related a story about how he had placed a ‘torpedo’ in a fake lump of coal. The ‘torpedo’ was a cast iron core filled with about 10 pounds of powder and covered with tar and coal powder to cleverly disguise it. Did Louden manage to get his fake lump of coal loaded onto the *Sultana* when it refueled at Memphis – just an hour before the explosion? Would he dare risk making up such a story while living in St. Louis, an area probably inhabited by bitter survivors of the disaster or families of the casualties?

In review: Robert Louden was an outlaw (a killer, an arsonist, a ‘boat burner’, and a gang member); a person at war with the Union (a Confederate cavalry Captain, a mail smuggler, and member of O.A.K.), had experience with fires and arson (as a volunteer fireman), gained a working knowledge of steamboats and wooden structures (as a steamboat painter), he was very daring and fearless (as a mail-carrying spy and several bold escapes from custody), he had the opportunity (he went south after escaping from authorities), he had a destructive history (as a destroyer of steamships), and admitted he was the culprit of the *Sultana* disaster (his drunken lump of coal story to Stretor).

Was it “*Accident or Sabotage?*” Officially, the disaster was labeled as an accident – caused by “either a flaw in the boilers, a faulty boiler repair, or negligence in letting the water level fall too low in the boilers.” Any votes for Louden?

Battle of Pilot Knob
By JVC Samuel F. Hampton



"I wanted to make this trip - I looked forward to it. But, I didn't have a clue as to what I was letting myself into. Talk about a new experience, wow! To be honest, my time out on the 'battlefield' with those fine young men was less than stellar. They had a time trying to keep me in line!" ... JVC Samuel F. Hampton

We drove to Ironton, Missouri this past September to see and experience the reenactment of the *Battle of Pilot Knob*. I really wanted to go and thought it would be a lot of fun. Today, the Arcadia Valley in Iron County is a peaceful setting in one of Missouri's most scenic areas. But in 1864, the valley was the scene of one of the largest and most hard-fought battles waged on the state's soil - the *Battle of Pilot Knob*.

Confederate Maj. Gen. Sterling Price invaded Missouri from Arkansas, leading an army of 12,000 men. On Sept. 26-27, 1864, while en route to the St. Louis area, Price attacked the weakly defended Union post of *Fort Davidson* at Pilot Knob. Price's entourage was a ragged lot to say the least. Most of the troops were clothed in tattered rags and several thousand were barefoot. Most had no canteens, cartridge boxes or other military issue. Instead, they carried water in jugs and stuffed cartridges in their shirts and pockets. Tents and blankets were absent. Arms consisted of an endless variety and caliber of rifles and muskets, making ammunition supply in the field nearly impossible. By the time Price reached Missouri, nearly a fourth of his army were without arms.

Fort Davidson was defended by a garrison of 1,450 men led by Gen. Thomas Ewing Jr., the brother-in-law of Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman. The fort lay on the floor of a valley surrounded on three sides by commanding hills. It was situated so that enemy infantry would have to cross hundreds of yards in the open to reach its formidable walls. However, the fort would be vulnerable to any artillery which could be placed on top of the encircling hills.

Price soon became convinced that placing big guns on the mountain would be no easy task. The first attempt at placement resulted in a Confederate cannon being disabled and its gunner killed by the first few volleys from the expert Federal artillerymen. The Confederates lost nearly 1,000 men in attacking the small earthen fort and its 11 cannons. *Fort Davidson State Historic Site* preserves *Fort Davidson* and the Pilot Knob battlefield where so many Confederate and Union soldiers lost their lives. A visitor center there interprets the battle.

Upon finding the battlefield, I began searching for the registration area. Apparently my documents which I had mailed earlier were somehow lost. At length, I was directed to Captain Greg Zelinski, Cmdr. of the *Turner Brigade* - the men in blue - *Company G, 17th Missouri Infantry* - the largest Union reenacting group in eastern Missouri. He was called by many as simply 'Captain Z'! By now the time was getting on into the afternoon. 'Captain Z' was very good natured and asked that I be back in camp, in uniform, by 8:00 Saturday morning. He referred to me as a 'fresh-fish' recruit and for safety's sake, they would need to begin drilling and training me at an early hour.

I traveled nearly an hour the next morning from our motel in a nearby town back to the battlefield. Parking was provided, but a good distance away - walking. Venturing onto the battlefield once again, I could see that the troops of the opposing armies were kept separate from each other - the Confederates on my right - and the Federals on my left. I was wearing my blue Federal uniform and carrying my .58 caliber Springfield musket over one shoulder. I was soon given a different reception, however, upon meeting a fellow re-enactor. I heard, 'Good morning Yank!' by a soldier in gray.



Samuel Hampton

I continued to march onward toward the Union Camp. Armed Sentries were pacing back and forth. I supposed that I would simply continue my march toward the heart of the Union Camp. Some young soldiers, carrying heavy musket rifles, called out to me at a distance to 'HALT'. They were serious! My new blue uniform alone did not satisfy their identification orders and procedures. I quickly perceived this camp was being operated for all practical purposes as an actual U.S. Army Camp of 1864!

I was able to bring to remembrance the name of Captain Zelinski, whom I had only met the day before. A runner, dressed in a soldier's uniform was sent find the Captain and seek approval for my entry. Captain Zelinski himself walked out to meet me and escort me into the camp. I was introduced to Private Steve Neddersen, but to me, he was my personal trainer, my *Drill Sergeant*. He immediately began training exercises with me. He was really a nice guy. The troops were then marched out onto the battlefield sometime after 9:00 a.m.

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Battle of Pilot Knob (continued)

A photographer was standing in the Fort above us, taking pictures. We were told that our pictures were needed to match up with a battlefield not yet explored and searched for artifacts. *Fort Davidson State Park* is in the Arcadia Valley at Ironton, Iron County, Missouri - about 80 miles from St. Louis. The Park, I'm told, contains over 77 acres. Wearing the heavy wool uniforms, we marched all over this large grassy field, carrying the musket rifles. My newly purchased Jefferson brogans felt like there was a rock in one of them!

We made the march - or the climb - up into the remains of the old earthen fort. It was preserved as it was back in 1864. I have to admit I was a 'raw recruit' - new to marching and generally the whole army experience. While climbing up the embankment, holding the musket out in front of me, I lost my footing and allowed the gun barrel to drag the dirt. Not good! The man behind me took the gun, cleared it, and made sure it was safe.

Inside the small earthen fort, there was not space like on the battlefield. The soldiers lined up behind one another. The man on the front line fired and then passed his musket back to the follow behind him for reloading. In this manner, the rifle-fire was continuous. I was placed in the front row due to my general lack of experience.

At about 12:00 p.m., we were given time to rest and have lunch. We were ordered to remove our heavy wool sack coats. That was a relief! Steve Nedderson escorted me to the sutlers tents and recommended additional gear. I was able to purchase rounds already made up! I had been unable to find anyone selling. Minus the hot and heavy coat, I visited the vendors selling 'carnival' food. I decided on a big turkey leg and a cup of banana ice cream. I discovered I really had no appetite for the smoked turkey, but the ice cream was great!

Away from the tents area, I lost track of the time. The camp re-assembled without me. I was too late! I waited out the afternoon battle guarding, if you will, the tents. I really hated missing the action. But perhaps it was all for the best. I think my body was not up to anymore action and marching in the sun!

Memorial Day 2008

The Memorial Day ceremony at the VA cemetery was a big success this year. The weather cooperated and the crowd was larger than ever. The estimated number was 1000+. The *Edward Lea Camp* was well represented by Brothers Schulze, White, LaBrot, Leach, Lockwood, Shuster, Hampton, Holmes and Hackett.

Since the *Ike Turner SCV Camp* was only able to bring one cannon, we had to content ourselves with participation in the parade of Colors. Brothers Leach and Lockwood joined with the 13th U.S. Infantry in marching and the musket salute. The program start time was moved up this year which worked out well getting it over by 11:30 a.m. One sad moment was seeing all the families in the area where the new graves of those killed in Afghanistan and Iraq. The patriotic spirit is alive and well in Houston these days. [Jim Hackett CC](#)



L-R: Gary White, James Hackett, Sam Hampton



L-R: Sam Hampton and Steve Holmes



Top Left: Color Guard forms up.
L-R: LaBrot, Schulze, Hackett, White, Hampton

Top Right: A sea of flags forms as various Veterans organizations assemble into position.

Center: Federal Color Guard at 'Shoulder Arms'. Company A, 13th Regiment U.S. Infantry in front row.

Bottom Left: Federal Color Guard moves forward. 13th Regiment U.S. Infantry Commander Thomas Whitesides at far left calls the cadence.

Bottom Right: Edward Lea Camp #2 Color Guard brings up the rear.
L-R: LaBrot, Schulze, Hackett, Holmes, White, Hampton (mostly hidden).





Top Left: Company A, 13th Regiment U.S. Infantry marches smartly in double-file. Drummer on the left marks the cadence.

Top Right: Thomas Whitesides conducts a safety inspection of the Federal arms.

Center: The Confederate cannon crews fire a salvo.

Bottom Left: Veteran's fire a salute as the Federal Honor Guard stands at 'Shoulder Arms' in the red background

Bottom Right: The Federal Honor Guard fires a Salute to honor our Nation's Veterans.



* Event photos submitted by Mr. and Mrs. David LaBrot

California Students Feature Sarah Emma Edmonds



Martha Class

In early October, I was contacted via the website by a three-student team of 8th graders from Rio Vista Middle School in Fresno, California. They are working on a *History Day Project* featuring Sarah Emma Edmonds - alias Frank Thompson. The team consists of team leader Brionna Mendoza, Gianni McClain and Gabriel Denis-Arrue. They are participating in a *Gifted and Talented* student program at their middle school.

The team has participated in the *History Day Project* competition in California every year since 4th grade. They always choose an influential female in history as their subject. The team has won at the County level every year and those local wins always propel them up to State level competition where they also usually place well.

In order to assist these students this year, I provided them with copies of Sarah Emma Edmonds' obituary and other articles about her from the *Houston Post*. I also arranged for the *Clayton Genealogy Library* in Houston to send them Edmonds' Military Records and Pension file - documents that our Tent had just recently donated to the library. The students also interviewed me via e-mail regarding Sarah Emma Edmonds. In addition, I provided the team with additional sources for information that would be relevant to their *History Day Project*.

Our efforts have proved successful for the students so far. The County level competition was held at Fresno, California on Saturday, March 15, 2008. The team won 1st place in the *Junior Group Exhibit*. In addition, they placed as runners-up in the *Sweepstakes Competition* (Best in Show). So they will once again advance to the State finals which begins May 8, 2008 in Sacramento, California. The goal of the team this year is to advance on to the National level competition - a goal that has eluded them previously. The Nationals will take place in Washington, D.C. The team has ranked previously as alternates to the National competition, but this year they are hoping to go all the way.

The project called for the team to design an exhibit to display their various sources of information. The sources that they use are required to be *primary* records. They fashioned their exhibit as an Army Field Hospital that would be comparable to the one where Sarah Emma Edmonds, posing as Franklin Thompson, would have worked as a nurse during the Civil War. The students also had to write individual papers on Sarah Emma Edmonds for their History class. All three made A's. Their papers mirror those one might see of college students.

I sent them information about the *Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War*. I also mailed them copies of the photos I took of Sarah Emma Edmonds' grave in Washington Cemetery in Houston. Unfortunately, the team did not have enough room to display those photos in their exhibit. I am proud to be listed as one of their sources of information.

Update: 28 May 2008

Dear Brothers,

The 8th graders with the *History Day* exhibit on Sarah Emma Edmonds, alias Franklin Thompson, made it into the California state *History Day* finals. But unfortunately, they didn't win any awards. I am attaching a photo of Gianni, Brionna, & Gaby with the Cockades, made by Vali Reyes, that I had sent them. [Martha Class - Senior Vice-President, Sarah Emma Edmonds Detached Tent #4, Houston, TX, DUVCW](#)



L-R: Gianni McClaine, Brionna Mendoza, & Gaby Denis-Arrue



Remembering Our Veterans



Back Row L-R: Samuel Hampton, James Hackett, Steve Holmes, Stephen Schulze, Dale Leach. Kneeling: David LaBrot