



# THE UNIONIST

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SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR



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## DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS AND LOUISIANA



### From the Commander's Tent

Brothers,

I return to this space to provide a summary of what the Department is working on for you.

First, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude for the outpouring of sympathy I received from the Department, Camps, and individual Brothers upon the death of my mother in December. Thank you all so very much.

We continue to receive gratitude and positive feedback from Past CinC Martin for our work at the late National Encampment. It appears that we have indeed made a lasting impression. I wish to reiterate my infinite thanks to all who played a part in making the event so successful.

I am very pleased to report that DSVC/Signals Officer John Vander Meulen has formed a Department Website Steering Committee. This team is working diligently to upgrade and modernize our web presence, streamline our receipt of email, and contain our related costs. Brother John has fully engaged our considerable in-house subject matter expertise, and I am fully confident of success.

Although I was unable to attend the *Battle of Galveston Commemoration* in January, it was, by all accounts, another huge success for the Department, Camp 2, and the SVR. As I hope you all saw, we received a moving message of thanks from CinC Tucker. Well done gentlemen!

Stay tuned for the next edition of the Western Dispatch, the 6<sup>th</sup> Military District SVR newsletter, which will hopefully include coverage of both the National Encampment and Galveston.

As we look forward to the upcoming Department Encampment, please mark your calendars for the weekend of May 16<sup>th</sup>. We will be hosting Senior Vice CinC Daniel Murray. Stay tuned for details as we get closer.

Thank you for your attention and participation.

As always, I remain Your Most Obedient Servant.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brook Thomas".

Brook Thomas  
Commander, Department of Texas and Louisiana



## ADDRESS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KEVIN P. TUCKER

*The following is the Address delivered by Commander-in-Chief Kevin P. Tucker on January 3, 2026 following the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Battle of Galveston Commemoration Ceremony in Galveston, Texas. He gave this Address during the post-ceremony business meeting of Lea Camp #2, prior to installing the 2026 Camp officers.*

“Brothers and Officers-Elect of Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp #2. Look around you for a moment. We are not here by accident. We stand here as inheritors of a sacred trust. A trust forged in sacrifice more than 160 years ago. We are Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Our mission... our purpose is as vital today as it was when the Grand Army of the Republic first placed their legacy in our hands.

“This year, as outlined in General Order #2, we have a clear unmistakable blueprint for action. But for you, the leadership of this Camp, this is more than a directive; it is a challenge. A challenge to rise, a challenge to lead. And to honor our ancestors with true Texas resolve.

“First, Fraternity: Your Camp must be more than just a place where members meet. It must become a rallying point, a center of fellowship. A stronghold of Brotherhood. I call on each of you to recommit yourself to personal engagement; to mentorship, and to make any Brother, new or seasoned, feel welcomed, valued, and uplifted. Unity is not just an idea to us, it is our strength. Let us make that strength unbreakable.

“Second, membership growth and retention: This is not about simply increasing our numbers. This is about extending our legacy. Every Brother is a recruiter. Every conversation is an opportunity. Every story we share is an invitation – an invitation to a man who may not know his connection to the Boys in Blue, but is waiting to discover it. Across Texas, there are voices not yet heard; history not yet uncovered. Men who will find purpose through our Order; if we reach out to them. Let us not grow only in size, but in passion, and in talent, and in commitment.

“Finally, public visibility: We carry one of the greatest stories in our nation’s history. The story of the Union soldier and sailor. A story of courage, of duty, and the preservation of a nation. That story deserves to be heard across every corner of Texas.

“So I challenge you: seek opportunities for ceremonies; build partnerships for education; show up at community events; let people see who we are and what we stand for. And use every digital tool available through Department and Camp websites and in social media. Tell our story clearly. Tell it properly, tell it with conviction. Because if we do not speak for the Union soldier, who will? Officers of the Lt. Commander Edward Lea Camp #2, this is our moment. Let us bring the spirit of fraternity to life. Let us grow our ranks with zeal and purpose. Let us champion our principles with unwavering loyalty. We have been entrusted with the memory of men who saved a nation. Now let us strengthen the Order that keeps that memory alive. In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty, let us make this year the proudest in the history of this camp.

Brothers, forward.... always forward to the work that awaits us. Thank you.”



**Kevin P. Tucker, Commander-in-Chief**



## DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS AND LOUISIANA

***Saturday, January 4, 2026 – Galveston, Texas***

The annual *Battle of Galveston Commemoration* ceremony, the signature event of the *Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp #2* of Houston, was conducted Saturday morning, January 3, 2026. Members of the *Department of Texas and Louisiana* gathered at the historic Episcopal Cemetery in Galveston to attend the 31<sup>st</sup> consecutive annual observance of the January 1, 1863 land/sea clash between Union and Confederate forces which took place on the wharves and waters of Galveston Bay. The Union soldiers and sailors who died during that battle were once again honored and remembered.

The *Lea Camp* welcomed the assistance and participation of members from *Gen. James Byrne Camp #1* of Fort Worth, and *Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth Camp #18* of Dallas. National Commander-in-Chief, Kevin P. Tucker of Massachusetts, also took part in the formal ceremony. In addition, representatives from several other organizations played key roles in the success and grandeur of the event, including: *Sarah Emma Seelye Auxiliary #1 of Houston, ASUVCW*; *Sarah Emma Edmonds Detached Tent #4, DUVCW*; *Co. A, 13<sup>th</sup> Reg't U.S. Infantry*; *MOLLUS*; *DOLLUS*; *Harmony Masonic Lodge #6* of Galveston; *Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne's 7<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry, SCVCW*, and the *UDC*.



**The opening procession was led by Officer-of-the-Day, John E. Schneider, Sr. of *Ellsworth Camp #18* – followed by drummer William Myers of *Lea Camp #2*, who established the marching cadence.**

*... continued on next page*

## DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS AND LOUISIANA (CONTINUED)

As in previous years, the program began near the marble Union monument near the back of the cemetery. As all participants arrived at their positions, John C. Vander Meulen, as Master of Ceremonies, opened the ceremony.

The Color Guard, commanded by John E. Schneider, Sr. of *Ellsworth Camp #18*, then posted the Colors. The Guard included Color Sergeant Donald L. Gates (*Ellsworth Camp #18* and *Byrne Camp #1*), Michael Schneider (*Ellsworth Camp #18*), and Todd Wilber (*Bryne Camp #1*).

After the Colors were posted, Patriotic Instructor Steve Brock led all in the *Pledge of Allegiance*. John Vander Meulen then invited *Lea Camp* Commander Daniel B. Pourreau to the podium to welcome everyone and make introductions.



Left: **Lea Camp Commander, Daniel Pourreau**

Right: **Commander-in-Chief, Kevin P. Tucker**

A stirring address was then given by Commander-in-Chief, Kevin P. Tucker. Afterward, Department Chaplain Stephen D. Schulze called the names of the federal casualties as engraved on the top surface of the Union monument. The ceremonial bell was tolled by Patriotic Instructor Steve Brock after the death roll of each Union ship and army unit was called.



Susan Barry, past President of *Sarah Emma Edmonds Detached Tent #4, DUVCW*, read the poem 'When the Boys in Blue Are Gone.'

The entire assembly then moved to the nearby gravesite of Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea, the namesake of the Houston Camp. The Federal Color and Honor Guards, followed by the Confederate Color Guard led the way, marching to the cadence of the drum.

Right: **Susan Barry, DUVCW**

After all participants and observers moved into position around the Lea grave, the Colors were reposted. Chaplain Richard 'Dick' Gray from *Harmony Lodge No. 6, Masonic Lodge of Galveston* then assumed the podium. He delivered an interesting and entertaining account of the post-battle role of the *Harmony Lodge* Masons in 1863.



As Officer-of-the-Day, John Schneider, Sr. then ceremoniously placed the 'Symbols of the Navy' at the Lea headstone. He then posted Herbert W. Powers as Grave Guard. This action was followed by the placing of wreaths and roses at the headstone. Additional images of the event are on the following pages.

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**DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS AND LOUISIANA (CONTINUED)**



**Participants transitioning from the site of the Union monument to the grave site of Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea, USN.**



**Chaplain Dick Gray  
Harmony Lodge Masons of Galveston.**



**Herbert W. Powers  
Posted as Grave Guard**

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## DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS AND LOUISIANA *(CONTINUED)*



*Clockwise from top left:* Anita Stevens, UDC, places a red rose at the gravestone; Susan Barry, DUVCW, places an evergreen wreath at the headstone; Vali Reyes, Auxiliary, lays a white rose at the headstone; John Vander Meulen places a small U.S. flag at the headstone; and CinC Keven Tucker places a grapevine wreath at the headstone.

Jana Marsh of the *Sarah Emma Seelye Auxiliary*, read the solemn but fitting poem, 'The Unknown Dead'. The poem was followed by a 3-volley musket salute by the Honor Guard, captained by Tommy Attaway, 13<sup>th</sup> Reg't. U.S. Infantry. The unit fired by the drum.

*Right:* Jana Marsh reading 'The Unknown Dead.'

Many thanks are extended from the *Lea Camp* to the volunteers from Camps #1 and #18 for their support and participation – and also to the Allied Orders and other organizations who played a role in the program. *All contributed to the remarkable success of the event!*



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**DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS AND LOUISIANA (CONTINUED)**



**Honor Guard**

*L-R: Officer-of-the-Day, John Schneider, Sr. (Ellsworth Camp #18); Jason D. Hoffman (Lea Camp #2); Michael D. Rappe (Lea Camp #2); Michael L. Lance (Lea Camp #2); Howard Rose (13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Inf.); Daniel B. Pourreau (Lea Camp #2); and Tommy Attaway (Captain, 13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Inf.).*

**"FIRE!"**



*... Report by Michael L. Lance, PDC – Lea Camp #2, Houston  
... Photos by Richard Carson and Robert Riley – Lea Camp #2, Houston*

## GEN. JAMES J. BYRNE CAMP #1 – FORT WORTH

**Sunday, January 18, 2026 – Fort Worth, Texas**

Gen. James J. Byrne Camp #1 hosted their annual Christmas party/business meeting on December 13, 2025 in Fort Worth. During the meeting, the slate of Camp officers for 2026 was duly elected. The officers-elect were then formally installed by Past Dept. Cmdr. Timothy M. Phillips on January 18, 2026. They include:

- |                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ➤ <b>Brian R. Glass, PDC</b>          | Commander                |
| ➤ <b>Beau B. Moore, PDC</b>           | Senior Vice Cmdr.        |
| ➤ <b>Todd Wilber</b>                  | Junior Vice Cmdr.        |
| ➤ <b>Donald L. Gates, PDC</b>         | Secr./Treas.             |
| ➤ <b>Paul L. Kendall, PDC</b>         | Council Member #1        |
| ➤ <b>Timothy M. Phillips, PDC</b>     | Council Member #2        |
| ➤ <b>Clifford 'Butch' Durham, PCC</b> | Council Member #3        |
| ➤ <b>Craig Reves, PCC</b>             | Patriotic Instructor     |
| ➤ <b>Timothy M. Phillips, PDC</b>     | Chaplain                 |
| ➤ <b>Todd Wilber</b>                  | Graves Regis. Officer    |
| ➤ <b>Donald L. Gates, PDC</b>         | Historian                |
| ➤ <b>Todd Wilber</b>                  | Civil War Memorials Off. |
| ➤ <b>Beau B. Moore, PDC</b>           | Eagle Scout Coordinator  |
| ➤ <b>Beau B. Moore, PDC</b>           | Signals Officer          |



**Oath of Office**

**L-R: Todd Wilber, Paul L. Kendall,  
Brian R. Glass, Beau B. Moore,  
Timothy Phillips, Donald Gates.**

Camp Graves Registration Officer, Todd Wilber notes: *"I am at 95 undocumented bluebellies in Tarrant Co."* His six recent 'discoveries' include:

<u><b>Name/Unit</b></u>	<u><b>G.A.R. Membership Affiliation</b></u>
➤ Elisha P. Brown- 39 <sup>th</sup> Missouri Inf.	<i>Parmley Post #4, Fort Worth</i>
➤ Rodney Walker- Co. I, 154 <sup>th</sup> Illinois Inf.	-
➤ William Manchester- Co. H, 9 <sup>th</sup> Illinois Inf.	<i>Sedgwick Post #39 and Parmley Post #4, Fort Worth</i>
➤ Charles H. Putnam- Co. H, 74 <sup>th</sup> Illinois Inf.	<i>Parmley Post #4, Fort Worth</i>
➤ Matthew J. Bryson- Co. D, 25 <sup>th</sup> Iowa Inf.	-
➤ George S. Burchill – Co. C, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Iowa Inf.	<i>Sedgwick Post #39 and Parmley Post #4, Fort Worth</i>

Byrne Camp #1 members Donald Gates and Todd Wilber traveled to Galveston on January 3, 2026 to participate in the annual *Battle of Galveston Commemoration* ceremony hosted by *Lea Camp #2*. Both men served in the Federal Color Guard during the event (*see photo on page 12*).

Gen. James J. Byrne Camp No. 1 continues on a good footing moving into 2026 with twenty-three members and two new prospects. The Camp is currently focused on plans for hosting the *32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Encampment of the Department of Texas and Louisiana* in May 2026. The venue is slated to be the *Texas Ranger Hall of Fame/Museum* in Waco, Texas. In addition, members of the Camp are preparing for conducting *Memorial Day* ceremonies at the G.A.R. monument in Oakwood Cemetery in Fort Worth, Texas.

*... submitted by Beau Moore, PDC and Todd Wilber – Gen. James J. Byrne Camp 1, Fort Worth*

## LT. CMDR. EDWARD LEA CAMP #2 – HOUSTON

**Saturday, January 3, 2026 – Galveston, Texas**

The annual *Battle of Galveston Commemoration* ceremony was successfully hosted and conducted by *Lea Camp #2* on January 3, 2026 (see after-action report on page 5). The *Lea Camp* was supported by members of *Byrne Camp #1* of Fort Worth, *Ellsworth Camp #18* of Dallas, *Sarah Emma Seelye Auxiliary #1*, the *Sarah Emma Edmonds Tent #4, DUVCW*; and *Co. A, 13<sup>th</sup> Reg't, U.S. Infantry*. Commander-in-Chief Kevin Tucker also attended the ceremony and laid a wreath during the program. [Additional photos](#) of the event are posted online by *Lea Camp* photographer Richard Carson.

On December 6, 2025, *Lea Camp #2* Commander Daniel Purreau hosted a Christmas party at his home in N.W. Houston. *Delicious food... door prizes... holiday cheer... good times were had by one and all!*

Congratulations to the newly installed *Lea Camp* Officers for 2026. The installation was held at the Golden Corral Restaurant in Galveston on January 3, immediately following the *Battle of Galveston Commemoration* ceremony. Commander-in-Chief Kevin Tucker was the installing officer. The elected and appointed officers include:



**CinC Kevin Tucker administering the Oath of Office.**

- |                                   |                       |                               |                       |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ➤ <b>Daniel B. Purreau, PCC</b>   | Commander             | <b>Terry T. Sutton</b>        | Civil War Mem. Off.   |
| ➤ <b>Herbert W. Powers, Jr.</b>   | Senior Vice Cmdr.     | <b>Ben C. Bonnett</b>         | Eagle Scout Coord.    |
| ➤ <b>Robert G. Riley</b>          | Junior Vice Cmdr.     | <b>William D. Myers, Jr.</b>  | Color Bearer          |
| ➤ <b>Stephen D. Schulze, PDC</b>  | Secretary             | <b>Jason D. Hoffman</b>       | Guard                 |
| ➤ <b>Jason D. Hoffman</b>         | Treasurer             | <b>Michael L. Lance, PDC</b>  | Guide                 |
| ➤ <b>Stevenson T. Holmes, PDC</b> | Council Member #1     | <b>John Vander Meulen</b>     | Signals Officer       |
| ➤ <b>Michael L. Lance, PDC</b>    | Council Member #2     | <b>Richard J. Carson, Jr.</b> | Public Relations Off. |
| ➤ <b>John Vander Meulen, PCC</b>  | Council Member #3     | <b>Daniel B. Purreau, PCC</b> | Genealogist           |
| ➤ <b>Ronald S. 'Steve' Brock</b>  | Patriotic Instructor  | <b>Michael L. Lance, PDC</b>  | G.A.R. Records        |
| ➤ <b>Stephen D. Schulze, PDC</b>  | Chaplain              | <b>Robert G. Riley</b>        | Webmaster             |
| ➤ <b>Terry T. Sutton</b>          | Graves Regis. Officer | <b>Michael L. Lance, PDC</b>  | Newsletter Editor     |
| ➤ <b>Michael L. Lance, PDC</b>    | Historian             |                               |                       |

## MAJ. GEN. EDWARD O. C. ORD CAMP #3 – SAN ANTONIO

The 2026 elected and appointed officers of *Maj. Gen. Edward O. C. Ord Camp #3* of San Antonio, Texas were duly installed. They include:

- |                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| ➤ <b>Blair G. Rudy, PDC</b>    | Commander           |
| ➤ <b>Larry W. Lockett</b>      | Sr. Vice Cmdr.      |
| ➤ <b>Kevin L. Kanter</b>       | Jr. Vice Cmdr.      |
| ➤ <b>Dustin S. Whittenburg</b> | Secretary/Treasurer |

## BRIG. GEN. JOSEPH BAILEY CAMP #5 – SHREVEPORT

The 2026 elected and appointed officers of *Brig. Gen. Joseph Bailey Camp #5* of Shreveport, Louisiana, were installed February 11, 2026. They include:

➤ <b>Michael A. Heller, PCC</b>	Commander	William M. ‘Bill’ Elliott	Patriotic Instr.
➤ <b>Robbie A. McMahan</b>	Senior Vice Cmdr.	<b>Michael A. Heller, PCC</b>	Chaplain
➤ <b>Tommy Joe ‘T.J.’ Hennigan</b>	Junior Vice Cmdr.	<b>John A. Prime, PCC</b>	Historian
➤ <b>William M. ‘Bill’ Elliott</b>	Secretary/Treasurer	<b>Mark A. Longoria</b>	Guide
➤ <b>Tony L. Vets, Sr., PDC</b>	Council Member #1	<b>Tommy Joe ‘T. J. Hennigan</b>	Color Bearer
➤ <b>Homer Ted Cox</b>	Council Member #2	<b>Homer Ted Cox</b>	Guard
➤ <b>Larry Joe Reynolds</b>	Council Member #3		

## COL. ELMER E. ELLSWORTH CAMP #18 – DALLAS

**Saturday, January 3, 2026 – Galveston, Texas**

*Ellsworth Camp #18* members John E. Schneider, Sr., Donald L. Gates and Michael K. Schneider, traveled to Galveston, Texas on January 3<sup>rd</sup> to participate in the annual *Battle of Galveston Commemoration* ceremony hosted by *Lea Camp #2*. John Schneider served as Officer-of-the-Day, Donald Gates acted as Color Sergeant, and Michael Schneider was the Regimental Flag Bearer – all key roles that contributed to the success of the event.

**L-R: John E. Schneider, Michael K. Schneider, and Donald Gates of *Ellsworth Camp 18*, and Todd Wilber of *Byrne Camp 1*.**



The 2026 elected and appointed officers of *Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth Camp #18* of Dallas were installed on January 21, 2026. They include:

➤ <b>Michael Schneider, PCC</b>	Commander	Richard ‘Rick’ Erder, PCC	Patriotic Instr.
➤ <b>Paul Ridenour</b>	Senior Vice Cmdr.	<b>Larry W. Johnson</b>	Chaplain
➤ <b>Richard ‘Rick’ Erder, PCC</b>	Junior Vice Cmdr.	<b>Paul Ridenour</b>	Graves Registr. Off.
➤ <b>Brook J. Thomas, PDC</b>	Council Member #1	<b>Donald L. Gates, PDC</b>	Historian
➤ <b>Harold L. Sickler, PDC</b>	Council Member #2	<b>Charles W. Sprague, PDC</b>	Civil War Mem Off.
➤ <b>John Schneider, Sr., PDC</b>	Council Member #3	<b>John E. Schneider, Sr., PDC</b>	Eagle Scout Coord.
➤ <b>Donald L. Gates, PDC</b>	Secretary/Treasurer		

*... submitted by Donald L. Gates, Dept. Secretary – Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth Camp 18 - Dallas, Texas*

## PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR'S MESSAGE

The second-highest award the U.S. Army bestows for exceptional valor is the *Distinguished Service Cross* (DSC). Actions that merit this medal must display such a high degree of courage in combat with an armed enemy that only the *Medal of Honor* supersedes them. The DSC is equivalent to the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross, and the Coast Guard Cross.



The Medal is a bronze cross 2" high by 1 13/16" wide, with an eagle in the center and a scroll inscribed with "For Valor". On the reverse, the center of the cross is set off by a wreath where the name of the recipient can be inscribed.

**Left: Army Distinguished Service Cross**

The Cross was first given during WWI, often to soldiers who had received a Certificate of Merit, as this was the only award for gallantry besides the *Medal of Honor*. Some others were awarded *ex post facto* for action during the Philippine Insurrection, the Boxer Rebellion, and the Pancho Villa Expedition.



In contrast, there is the Distinguished Service Medal which is awarded for exceptionally meritorious service, but does not carry the combat requirement of the DSC.

**Left: Distinguished Service Medal**

This "Exceptionally Meritorious Service" speaks strongly to the SUVCW. Whether marching in parades, cleaning cemetery markers, compiling histories, or any of the many projects undertaken by the SUVCW, our order is in a position to shine a light on a formative event in American history.

On the occasion of the United States of America's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday I would like to share with you this inspirational Video: LINK: [https://youtu.be/Rj8dt\\_DYdvw?si=IkWEAhrpSW\\_4omx7](https://youtu.be/Rj8dt_DYdvw?si=IkWEAhrpSW_4omx7)

So, enjoy the video, keep the faith.

... Patriotic Instructor Timothy Phillips, PDC – Gen. James J. Byrne Camp 1, Fort Worth



## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

### “Doer of the Word”

On many a grueling march through the wilds of North Carolina in 1863, Chaplain Charles Andrew Snow of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Massachusetts Infantry gave his horse to a weary foot soldier. By all accounts, the self-sacrificing minister of the Baptist faith enjoyed a reputation as a man of “divine cheer” and a “doer of the word.”



Born in Providence, Rhode Island, Snow grew up in poverty in a family of 18 children. Dropping out of school to work, friends talked him into returning six months later. He did, and went on to Brown University and Newton Seminary in Massachusetts. Ordained in 1858, he became pastor of the Second Baptist Church in Fall River, Massachusetts.

In 1862, Snow helped organize a nine months’ regiment that mustered in as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Massachusetts. The regiment spent the majority of its enlistment in North Carolina.

*Left:* **Chaplain Charles Andrew Snow**

As chaplain, “he won high respect and admiration by his consistent conduct and his spirit of self-denial,” stated one writer.

Years later, when the veterans of the 3<sup>rd</sup> determined to produce a history of their service, Rev. Snow was their choice to write it. He made it as far as profiling Company A before he died in 1903. He was 74. His wife and six children survived him.



... by Stephen D. Schulze, Department Chaplain – Lea Camp No. 2, Houston

## TRIVIA - NAVAL STRATEGY TRANSFORMED

One of the most fascinating episodes of the Civil War was the dramatic clash between ironclad warships at the *Battle of Hampton Roads* in March 1862. This naval engagement marked a turning point in military technology and signaled the end of the era of wooden warships.

The conflict began when the Confederacy converted a scuttled Union frigate into the ironclad *CSS Virginia*. Armored with thick iron plating and equipped with heavy guns, the *Virginia* steamed into Hampton Roads, Virginia, and quickly destroyed two Union wooden vessels, shocking the North and threatening the Union blockade. The following day, however, the Union’s own ironclad, the *USS Monitor*, arrived to confront the Confederate ship. Designed by Swedish-American engineer John Ericsson, the *Monitor* featured a revolutionary rotating turret that allowed its guns to fire in any direction.

On March 9, 1862, the two ironclads battled for hours, pounding one another at close range. Though neither ship achieved a decisive victory, the duel demonstrated that iron-armored ships were the future of naval warfare. Observers around the world, particularly in Britain and France, took notice and accelerated their own ironclad programs. The *Battle of Hampton Roads* not only preserved the Union blockade but also transformed global naval strategy. From that moment forward, wooden fleets were obsolete, and modern naval warfare had begun in earnest on the waters of Virginia.

## VOICES OF THE PAST – MAYOR EXTENDS A WARM WELCOME

*The following is the welcoming speech given by the mayor of Dallas, Franklin Pierce Holland, to a crowd of over two thousand attendees at the evening Camp Fire at Turner Hall on April 21, 1896, during the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Encampment of the Department of Texas, G.A.R. – and the subsequent response by the Dept. Commander.*

“Ladies and Gentlemen: It is always a pleasure to me to welcome visitors to the city, whatever the season of the year and from whatever clime the visitors may hail, and I herewith extend the hand of greeting to the Texas branch of the Grand Army of the Republic and your guests, the United Confederate Veterans, and your industrious auxiliary, the Woman’s’ Relief Corps. The unselfish and conscientious work of these ladies is especially worthy of commendation and I take pleasure in attesting the important aid they render from time to time in the interests of the organizations which I am now addressing.

“You are well and happily met at this season of the year, when the sky is a canopy of opals in the day and a blossom garden at night. It is wise to hold your annual encampment at such a time, for in the spring our spirits are more at harmony with the surrounding elements. You will find Dallas arrayed in most becoming garb and her citizens eager and willing to put to the test their well-merited reputation for hospitality.

“You are entitled to distinguished consideration at the hands of Dallas, and shall have it. Whatever you see that you desire, ask for it and it shall be yours. Whatever you desire that is not visible to the naked eye will be rendered visible, if possible, by the [Dr.] Roentgen ray process, and means will be employed to extract the same for your edification. In short, we will stop at nothing and will insist on everything to make your visit a brilliant epoch in the history of the Grand Army of the Republic.

“I see many grizzled veterans here and I have no doubt that they are capable of holding their own with vigorous young bloods in the duties of the occasion. Physically they may be shattered pillars, but their spirits are as bright as ever. It is meet [sic] that they be accorded all honor, respect and homage, and it shall be our earnest pleasure to promote their interests while dallying in the Texas metropolis. Many of you are strangers, and as strangers, we give you welcome.”

*Department Commander William W. Bostwick of Lyon Post 5 of Denison, responded to the Mayor with:*

“Your Honor, Mayor of the City of Dallas: In behalf of the Department of Texas and those delegates here assembled, I have the honor to accept the generous welcome to which we have just listened, and I wish to assure these comrades and those whom they represent that the Grand Army is here with its patriotic spirit, best looks and kindest feelings. We are here dressed in our best clothes, the uniform of the Grand Army. Those of us who have not the full and entire uniform have the Grand Army button, which represent fraternity, charity and loyalty, and I wish to say to you that we, with you, too, feel a pardonable pride in the city of Dallas as the metropolis of Texas, who are our entertainers, and he who has so eloquently welcomed us, we wish to give every assurance that we are accepting every moment we are here, this generous welcome. Our every presence, Mr. Mayor, indicates that we feel that we are welcome. Since we were invited one year ago, we have been thinking day by day of the time when we would go to Dallas. The Department of Texas, Grand Army of the Republic, is here for two days and will enjoy the hospitality of your beautiful city. In their behalf we accept, and thank you for your generous welcome.”

*... source: 1896 Proceedings of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Encampment of the Department of Texas, G.A.R., pgs. 49-50*

## TRIBUTE TO A G.A.R. VETERAN – CORPORAL MARK PERKINS

**Mark Perkins** was born September 10, 1842 in Maine. His parents, Barzilla and Maria Perkins, were also natives of Maine. Sometime between 1845 and 1850, the Perkins family migrated westward to Mercer County, Illinois, in the far western section of the state.

While Mark's father would eventually take on farming as his livelihood, on October 3, 1850, he was supporting his twenty-seven year old wife and two young children as a general laborer. His neighbors were all farmers. Young Mark was eight years old and his little sister, Ellen, was five.

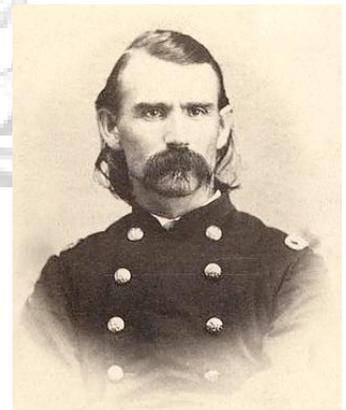
Barzilla Perkins took an interest in the affairs of his adopted farm community and joined the local militia. By 1855, he owned livestock valued at \$450 and could boast of having thirty pounds of wool. Sadly, daughter Ellen was no longer listed as a member of the Perkins household. She would have been about 10 years old that year. The family soon pulled up stakes and moved further westward.

On July 24, 1860, Barzilla Perkins was forty-seven years old and farming in Ozark Township, Anderson County, Kansas, about ninety miles south of Kansas City. Mark was now seventeen years old. The elder Perkins owned a personal estate valued at \$350. Less than a year later, Fort Sumter was fired upon, and the Civil War began.

Young Mark Perkins was soon swept up in the prevailing war fervor in Kansas. He was 18 years old on September 7, 1861 when he became a recruit in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Kansas Infantry regiment of the Union army. This regiment formed at Paola, Kansas, about 50 miles northeast of his home in Ozark township. Within months, on April 3, 1862, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Kansas regiment was combined with the 4<sup>th</sup> Kansas regiment to form the 10<sup>th</sup> Kansas Infantry regiment. Mark served as a Private in companies I and C of the 10<sup>th</sup> Kansas Infantry for a full three-year term, with time credited for his initial service with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Kansas regiment.

As a regiment from Kansas, the 10<sup>th</sup> operated under the reputation of Jayhawkers. It was initially led by Colonel William F. Cloud and saw service in Missouri, Kansas, and the Western Theater. The regiment was involved in the *Battle of Prairie Grove* (Dec 7, 1862) and the *Siege of Vicksburg* (May-July 1863).

*Right: Col. William Fletcher Cloud*



As his term of service expired on September 6, 1864, Private Mark Perkins mustered-out of the army. But since the war was still far from settled, he was compelled to reenlist later the same month. He signed up as a Private in Company H of a veterans regiment, the 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Veteran Volunteer Infantry.

Meanwhile, back home in Kansas, Mark's father had remarried. On July 22, 1863, he wed his second wife, Elizabeth, who brought three young children into the marriage. It is not clear if Mark returned home to 'meet' his three younger step-siblings, Malinda, Nancy, and William after mustering-out. His father and step-mother were still living and prospering on the elder Perkins' farm in Ozark Township in Anderson County, Kansas.

The 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Veteran Infantry regiment was composed of experienced soldiers who had previously served in other regiments and then re-enlisted. Mark was soon promoted to the rank of Corporal, attesting to his military acumen. His second term as a Union soldier ended on February 20, 1866, well after the war ended.

*... continued on next page*

## G.A.R. VETERAN – CORPORAL MARK PERKINS (CONTINUED)

He then finally returned to Kansas to face the challenges of assimilating back into the civilian world. He was twenty-four years old and ready to strike out on his own.

On June 21, 1870, Mark was twenty-seven years old and employed as a farm laborer in rural Deer Creek Township in Allen County, Kansas – about 12 miles south of his father’s homestead. He was still unmarried, and was lodging on the Daniel Smith family farm.

Sometime later during the 1870s, Mark pulled up stakes again and headed south to seek greener pastures and opportunity ... *venturing all the way to Texas.*

On June 15, 1880, Mark Perkins was thirty-eight years old and still unmarried. He now owned a 25-acre farm in Precinct #4 of Taylor County, Texas. His farm was valued at \$100, his livestock was also valued at \$100, and he owned one horse. The 1880 federal census indicates that he was living alone on the farm and could not read or write. His property was most likely associated with the newly established settlement of Buffalo Gap, Texas.

Less than a year later, on March 15, 1881 - and about 15 miles or so to the north - the town of Abilene, Texas was founded. Possibly still seeking those ‘greener pastures’, Mark once again pulled up stakes and moved to Abilene.

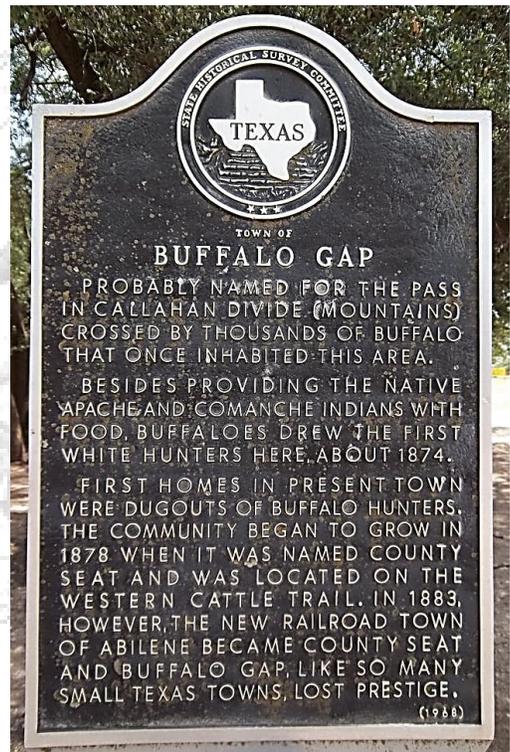
*“He was one of our oldest citizens, coming from Buffalo Gap to Abilene when our town was first laid off.”* (Perkins obituary, Abilene Reporter, May 11, 1900).

Mark was active in the affairs and interests of his new adopted town. His obituary mentions that he was *“one of the charter members of the M. E. Church South, being a steward and one of its best members, rarely missing any service.”*

An item published in *The Taylor County News* of Abilene on June 12, 1885, announced that Mark Perkins had recently been elected as Junior Warden of *Abilene Lodge No. 559 of Ancient Free & Accepted Masons*. This placed him third in command, assisting the Worshipful Master and Senior Warden of the Lodge.

Mark also performed his civic duty when called upon. On September 17, 1888, he was one of the twenty-four citizens named to the regular panel of the petit jury (aka. trial jury) in Abilene.

When the federal population census was taken in Abilene in June 1890, Mark Perkins was forty-seven years old and was interviewed for the *Special Veterans Schedule* of that census. He informed the census enumerator that he had served as a Private in Company C, *10<sup>th</sup> Kansas Infantry*, enlisting on September 7, 1861, and was discharged February 20, 1866 after serving 4 years. He also declared that he did not have any war-related disabilities, but was *“now slightly deaf.”*



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## G.A.R. VETERAN – CORPORAL MARK PERKINS (CONTINUED)

A few years earlier, in March 1885, the *Department of Texas* had been organized as the 38<sup>th</sup> Department of the *Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.)*. Local G.A.R. Posts quickly sprang up in numerous cities and small towns across Texas. In 1893, Civil War veterans living in or near Abilene organized *Lt. Col. William B. Travis Post No. 66*. In his annual report, dated March 20, 1893, the Assistant Adjutant-General of the *Department of Texas, G.A.R.*, stated, (in part):

*"I have corresponded considerably during the past twelve months with the following named ex-Union soldiers, looking to the muster of Grand Army posts at their respective places of residence, resulting in the organization of but one post, viz: Travis Post No. 66, at Abilene."....(John C. Bigger, Ass't Adj't Gen'l - Journal of the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Encampment of the Department of Texas, pg. 32).*

Even though Civil War veteran George A. Serviss of Abilene was named by Mr. Bigger as the contact person in Abilene, Mark Perkins was most likely in the loop. In fact, Perkins served as the Jr. Vice-Commander of the newly formed Post. It would not be a stretch to assume that he was one of the founding (Charter) members. Mark continued as an active and contributing member of the *Post* for several years, serving again as Jr. Vice-Commander in 1894.

Over 200 veterans of the Union Army were reportedly living in and around Abilene in 1890. But only a small percentage of them actually became affiliated with *Travis Post 66*. Lingering hard feelings and misgiving from the late war in that section of the state may have been a factor. Decoration Day (*later renamed Memorial Day*) was established in 1868 by the G.A.R. as a day designated to decorate the graves of soldiers who died in defense of the country. Remembering and honoring their comrades in arms was a priority for G.A.R. members. However, in 1894 Abilene, enthusiasm for such an activity was apparently subdued.

*"Travis Post, No. 66, Abilene – Moses M. Norris, Chaplain, reports: 'There are only a few of us here, and as no minister of this town would consent to conduct services for us, we made no attempt at a public celebration, but held the day sacred in our hearts.'"....(Journal of the 10<sup>th</sup> Encampment of the Department of Texas, pg. 34, 1895).*

Mark Perkins was once again elected by his peers to serve as Jr. Vice-Commander of *Travis Post 66* in 1895. And later that year, he was again named as a panel member of the Petit Jury in Abilene. In December 1896, the veterans of *Travis Post 66* elected Mark as their Sr. Vice-Commander for the 1897 term.

On January 20, 1897, Mark filed for a military pension based on his Civil War service with: Company F of the *3<sup>rd</sup> Kansas Infantry*; Companies C and I of the *10<sup>th</sup> Kansas Infantry*; and Company H of the *4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Veteran Volunteer Infantry*. Apparently, he was unsuccessful in securing a pension. While a pension file card in his name has been found, it only includes an Application Number (*1185685*), but no pension Certificate Number.

Then, for 1898, the members of *Travis Post 66* elected Mark to serve as their Post Commander – the highest office available at the local level. By then, the roster of the *Post* had dwindled to only twelve members. Old age with its limiting infirmities was likely taking its toll. Most of the Civil War veterans were reaching their 60s. As was the custom, Mark dutifully served as Post Commander for just the one-year term.

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## G.A.R. VETERAN – CORPORAL MARK PERKINS (CONTINUED)

In 1899, even though he was no longer a Post officer, Mark continued to stay active in the affairs of *Travis Post 66*. In late April 1899, he was the lone representative from the *Travis Post* to travel from Abilene to Denison, Texas to attend the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Encampment of the Department of Texas. He was credentialed as a voting representative due to his status as a Past Post Commander. But his health soon deteriorated.

For several days in late April and early May 1900, Mark complained of not feeling well. He had taken up lodging in a room above the Abilene Post Office. He had never married and had no other family members nearby. His friends became concerned about his welfare.

Right: Postcard image of the Abilene Post Office, ca. 1900



*"Mr. Perkins is dangerously sick today and his friends are very uneasy about him."...* (The Abilene Reporter - May 4, 1900, morning edition).

*"Mr. Mark Perkins is quite sick and was moved from his room in the post office block Tuesday to the home of J. G. Humphries."...* (The Abilene Reporter – May 4, 1900, evening edition).

On Sunday, May 6, 1900, while attending church, Mark again felt poorly. After the service, he apparently tried to get to his room at the Post Office, but collapsed along the way.

*"...he left the church afterwards being found prone on the steps of the stairway leading to his room over the post office. He was then unconscious and never gave any indication of a return to it before death."...* (Abilene Reporter obituary, May 11, 1900).

Mark apparently lingered in an unconscious state for several days. On May 10, 1900, he quietly slipped away at age 57. He was laid to rest in Abilene Municipal Cemetery in Abilene. His tombstone was likely provided by the local Masonic lodge, evidenced by the prominent Masonic symbol on the top surface.



His *G.A.R.* comrades at *Travis Post 66* apparently did not have the means, inspiration, or influence to provide a VA military headstone for him. His honorable and lengthy military service is not noted anywhere on his tombstone.

And, as mentioned, he did not have any known family members on hand to provide for a family gravestone. It was known at the time of his death that Mark had attempted to locate his long-lost step-sisters, Malinda and Nancy – but was unsuccessful.

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## G.A.R. VETERAN – CORPORAL MARK PERKINS (CONTINUED)

*"Mark Perkins died at 11:00 last night.... being separated from two half-sisters during the war, it is not known how to reach any of his relatives. For twenty years, Mr. Perkins has been seeking some trace of these sisters, but never succeeded in finding any.... His death is profoundly regretted in the city where he leaves many friends. The funeral services were held at the home of Presiding Elder J. S. Chapman at 4:00 p.m. today, the interment, conducted by the Masonic fraternity of which he was an honored member following at the city cemetery, a large concourse of friends and acquaintances attending. Mark Perkins was a good man, and has entered into his reward. Peace to his ashes."* (Obituary - Abilene Reporter - May 11, 1900).



... written by Michael L. Lance, PDC  
Dept./Lea Camp #2 Historian



... research by Terry T. Sutton  
Dept./Lea Camp #2 Graves Regis. Officer

Department of Texas and Louisiana - Feb 2026

**Editor's Note:** Perkins' obituary was published Friday, May 11, 1900. It notes that he attended church on Sunday, which would have been May 6 – and that he died sometime after that Sunday service - indicating that he died sometime late on or after May 6. His gravestone inscription (and Find A Grave memorial) both state that he died on Thursday, May 3 – which must be incorrect. Further, it was noted that he was found unconscious – not deceased - on May 6. The obituary of May 11 states he died 'last night', which implies he lingered in an unconscious condition – probably from Sunday May 6 until Thursday, May 10, 1900. No official death record has been located.....mll

## TRIVIA – “HUNDRED-DAYS MEN”

During the Civil War, the “Hundred-Days Men” were short-term Union volunteers who served for approximately one hundred days in 1864. *"By 1864 the North had suffered an enormous drain upon her resources. She had seen her men sent home from the front, suffering from disease and wounds - pitiful survivors of the battle in which thousands had gone to their deaths. The romance and glamour of war had gone, and the horror of it remained. There was scarcely a family in the North who did not suffer sorrow that cannot be described. There was hardly a fireside that did not mourn for a husband, a brother, or a friend, who went forth with pride, never to return. Under such circumstances the men of the hundred-day service, knowing just what to expect, hastily arranged their affairs, and from their stores, workshops, and farms flocked to the defense of their country in the hour of its direst need."* (from 'A Hundred Days to Richmond' by Geo. Perkins.)

Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa contributed thousands of these short-term enlistees. Most were assigned to guard railroads, supply depots, and POW camps, particularly around Washington, D.C. Though not intended for major combat, some units faced Confederate forces - such as during General Jubal Early's 1864 advance toward the capital. While their service was brief, the “Hundred-Days Men” played a strategic role. They enabled seasoned troops to participate in critical offensives that ultimately weakened the Confederacy. Their contribution illustrates how even short-term volunteers helped shape the Union victory in the war's decisive final year.

## 250<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY MEDAL

The official 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday Medal of the United States is now available for ordering online from the SUVCW Quartermaster Store. The new medal is a Class D medal (see definitions below) and is authorized to be worn through 2033. The cost is \$35 plus shipping.

### Right – 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday Medal of the United States

**SUVCW Badge and Medal Protocol** - When representing the SUVCW at any public event, members are expected to wear the badge of the Order. The only exception to this requirement is when participating in designated work details. The badge is to be worn on the left breast of appropriate dress for the occasion – such as business attire or Civil War-era uniforms. When badges are worn, their group type and order of attachment must be followed. Here are the guidelines:



Group A

Group B

Group C

Group D

As worn on left breast.

**Group A - Membership Badges** – These include: Member, Associate, Junior, Junior Associate, Honorary Member, Commander-in-Chief, Department Commander, Camp Commander; National Officer, and Department Officer badges. The Membership badge is appropriate for wearing on all occasions where Group A identification or recognition of the SUVCW is fitting. It may be worn alone, but not more than one Group A badge may be worn at the same time.

**Group B - Past Honors Badges** – Include: Past Commander-in-Chief, Past Department Commander, and Past Camp Commander badges. A Group A badge and a Group B badge may be worn at the same time, or a Group B badge may be worn without wearing a Group A badge.

**Group C - War Medal and Military Service Medals** – These may *not* be worn alone. When worn, these Group C medals must be accompanied by at least one Group A or Group B badge of the Order.

**Group D - Sons of Veterans Reserve Badges, Encampment/Temporary Badges** - These badges may *not* be worn alone. They must be accompanied by a Group A or Group B badge of the Order. With the exception of SVR badges, Group D badges should be worn on the *right breast during the proceedings of a National or Department Encampment*. Following adjournment of the Encampment, the badge should be moved to the left breast and worn in the Group D badge position.

#### Additional Notes:

- Badges and medals of the *Grand Army of the Republic* may not be worn by members of the SUVCW.
- Miniature badges are allowed only for formal wear. The mixing of regular and miniature badges is not allowed.



Obverse



Reverse

## CIVIL WAR MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS - U.S. ARMY (PART 17)

The Medal of Honor is the USA's highest military honor, awarded for personal acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty. It was first awarded during the Civil War after President Lincoln signed a bill on December 21, 1861, containing a provision for the medal for the Navy.

### Right - U.S. Army version of the Medal of Honor

This issue of the *Unionist* presents Part 17 of a comprehensive review of recipients of the Medal of Honor who served with the U.S. Army during the Civil War – with a brief description of their heroic actions and the wording of their citations.



- **Wells Howard Blodgett – 1st Lt.** – Wells Howard Blodgett was born in Downers Grove, DuPage County, Illinois on January 29, 1839. His parents were early settlers of that county. He became educated in the law, and by 1859, was employed in the Chicago law offices of Republican Party powerbroker Norman B. Judd. In 1860, during the Republican National Convention in Chicago, Blodgett met and became acquainted with presidential nominee Abraham Lincoln.

In 1861, Blodgett was admitted to the Illinois State Bar Association. But the outbreak of the Civil War interrupted his budding career. He immediately enlisted in a hastily recruited unit of Illinois militia, and served as a Private for three months.

### Right: Wells Howard Blodgett



Afterward, Blodgett joined the Union Army. On September 18, 1861, he was commissioned as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in *Company D, 37<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry*. This regiment was assigned to the *Army of Southwest Missouri*, which was tasked with defeating Confederates in that part of the state and in Arkansas.

In late September, 1862, Lt. Blodgett and the men of the *37<sup>th</sup> Illinois* were involved in the *First Battle of Newtonia* in southwestern Missouri. During an attack on a Confederate garrison, the Union forces were initially successful, but were eventually forced back in a rout by superior Confederate numbers. It was during this engagement that Lt. Blodgett earned his *Congressional Medal of Honor*.

He had been dispatched by his commanding officer to deliver an order to a nearby Union cavalry regiment. While making his way to the cavalry unit, he stumbled into a group of about forty Confederates. Instead of taking flight, Blodgett and his lone orderly charged into the group, scattered them, and captured eight prisoners. After-action reports of the event praised his bravery.

In January 1863, Blodgett was promoted to Captain. He continued to serve with the *37<sup>th</sup> Illinois* until March 1863, at which time he was mustered-out to be commissioned by President Lincoln as Major and Judge Advocate of U.S. Volunteers. He served as a Judge Advocate until November 1864, when he was commissioned Colonel and assigned to command the *48<sup>th</sup> Missouri Volunteer Infantry*. He was honorably mustered out of the Army in June 1865.

After the war, Blodgett continued with his law practice. He built a successful career in St. Louis, Missouri,

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## MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS - U.S. ARMY (PART 17 CONTINUED)

and eventually served in the Missouri State Legislature. He also served as general counsel for the Wabash Railroad Company.

Blodgett died May 8, 1929 in Saint Louis, and was buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery in that city. His *Medal of Honor* was issued 32 years later, in Feb 1894. The citation reads:

*The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to First Lieutenant (Infantry) Wells H. Blodgett, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 30 September 1862, while serving with Company D, 37<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry, in action at Newtonia, Missouri. With a single orderly, First Lieutenant Blodgett captured an armed picket of eight men and marched them in prisoners.*

- **Charles Blucher – Corporal** – Charles Blucher was born in Germany in 1842. He immigrated to the U.S. and settled near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. On June 18, 1863, at age 21, Blucher enlisted as a Private with the Union Army from Harrisburg for a 3-year term. His initial service was with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery regiment. This regiment was stationed for garrison duties at Fortress Monroe, Virginia.

In early April 1864, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania Artillery regiment was reorganized at Fort Monroe into a field infantry unit – and designated the 188<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry. Blucher was promoted to Corporal in Co. H of the newly formed regiment, which was assigned to the Army of Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler. The regiment joined operations threatening Confederate defenses at Richmond, Virginia, and their rail lines.

Corporal Blucher assumed responsibilities with the regiment's Color Guard, serving as a Color Bearer. The soldiers of the 188<sup>th</sup> relied on his initiative to sustain offensive momentum against the enemy, which included during the *Battle of Drewry's Bluff*. This battle was fought May 14-16, 1864 against Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard's Confederates who were dug in about seven miles south of Richmond. Blucher, as a Color Bearer on the front lines, was exposed to extreme danger during the ensuing Union assault. He was wounded during the fighting, but recovered enough to remain with his unit.

In Late September, Blucher and his comrades then assaulted Fort Harrison, a key earthwork fortification defended by about 1,000 Confederates. He was the bearer of the regimental Colors. During the advance, Blucher saw the bearer of the National Colors and his guard fall to Confederate fire. Without hesitation, he retrieved the National flag and charged forward through intense fire and planted the flag on the parapet – the first National Colors to mark the captured works.

Blucher mustered out of the Army with his regiment in December 1865. His *Medal of Honor* citation reads:

*The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Corporal Charles Blucher, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 29 September 1864, while serving with Company H, 188<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry, in action at Fort Harrison, Virginia. Corporal Blucher planted first national colors on the fortifications.*

... series to be continued next issue with Part 18

## 2025 - 2026 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AND MEDIA LINKS

### Elected Officers

Department Commander  
Department Sr. Vice-Commander  
Department Jr. Vice-Commander  
Department Secretary/Treasurer  
Department Council Member #1  
Department Council Member #2  
Department Council Member #3

**Brook J. Thomas**  
**John C. Vander Meulen**  
**Clifford F. 'Butch' Durham**  
**Donald L. Gates**  
**Dr. Stevenson T. Holmes**  
**Blair G. Rudy**  
**Paul L. Kendall**



### Staff Officers

Patriotic Instructor **Timothy M. Phillips**  
Chaplain **Stephen D. Schulze**  
Historian **Michael L. Lance**  
Civil War Mem. Off. **Charles W. Sprague**  
Graves Registr. Off. **Terry T. Sutton**  
Counselor **John E. Schneider Sr.**  
Signals Officer **John C. Vander Meulen**

Camp Organizer  
Registrar  
Eagle Scout Coord.  
Newsletter Editor  
Assistant Secretary  
Assistant Signals Off.

**Blair G. Rudy**  
**Daniel B. Pourreau**  
**John E. Schneider Sr.**  
**Michael L. Lance**  
**Paul Ridenour**  
**Larry Joe Reynolds**

### Department Website

### Department Facebook Page

### Department Newsletter:

*The Unionist* newsletter is published quarterly (*Feb, May, Aug, and Nov*).

Send comments, articles, or photos to the Editor at:

[mlance387@gmail.com](mailto:mlance387@gmail.com)



## 2026 CAMP OFFICERS AND MEDIA LINKS

### **Gen. James J. Byrne Camp 1** - Fort Worth, Texas

Camp Commander	<b>Brian R. Glass, PDC</b>	Council Member #1	<b>Paul L. Kendall, PDC</b>
Camp Sr. Vice- Cmdr.	<b>Beau B. Moore, PDC</b>	Council Member #2	<b>Timothy M. Phillips, PDC</b>
Camp Jr. Vice- Cmdr.	<b>Todd Wilber</b>	Council Member #3	<b>Clifford 'Butch' Durham, PCC</b>
Camp Secr./Treas.	<b>Donald L. Gates, PDC</b>		

[Byrne Camp 1 Website](#)

### **Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea, USN Camp 2** - Houston, Texas

Camp Commander	<b>Daniel B. Pourreau, PCC</b>	Council Member #1	<b>Stevenson T. Holmes, PDC</b>
Camp Sr. Vice- Cmdr.	<b>Herbert W. Powers</b>	Council Member #2	<b>Michael L. Lance, PDC</b>
Camp Jr. Vice- Cmdr.	<b>Robert G. Riley</b>	Council Member #3	<b>John C. Vander Meulen, PCC</b>
Camp Secretary	<b>Stephen D. Schulze, PDC</b>		
Camp Treasurer	<b>Jason D. Hoffman</b>		

[Lea Camp Facebook](#)

[Lea Camp Website](#)

### **Maj. Gen. Edward O. C. Ord Camp 3** – San Antonio, Texas

Camp Commander	<b>Blair G. Rudy, PDC</b>
Camp Sr. Vice- Cmdr.	<b>Larry W. Lockett</b>
Camp Jr. Vice- Cmdr.	<b>Kevin L. Kanter</b>
Camp Secr./Treas.	<b>Dustin S. Whittenburg</b>

### **Brig. Gen. Joseph Bailey Camp 5** - Shreveport, Louisiana

Camp Commander	<b>Michael A. Heller</b>	Council Member #1	<b>Tony L. Vets, Sr., PDC</b>
Camp Sr. Vice- Cmdr.	<b>Robbie A. McMahan</b>	Council Member #2	<b>Homer T. Cox</b>
Camp Jr. Vice- Cmdr.	<b>Tommy Joe 'T. J.' Hennigan</b>	Council Member #3	<b>Larry Joe Reynolds</b>
Camp Secr./Treas.	<b>William M. 'Bill' Elliott</b>		

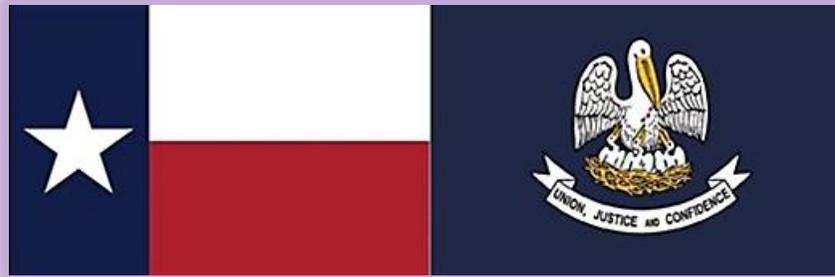
[Bailey Camp Website](#)

### **Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth Camp 18** - Dallas, Texas

Camp Commander	<b>Michael K. Schneider, PCC</b>	Council Member #1	<b>Harold L. Sickler, PDC</b>
Camp Sr. Vice- Cmdr.	<b>Paul Ridenour</b>	Council Member #2	<b>John E. Schneider, Sr., PDC</b>
Camp Jr. Vice- Cmdr.	<b>Richard W. 'Rick' Erder, PCC</b>	Council Member #3	<b>Brook J. Thomas, PDC</b>
Camp Secr./Treas.	<b>Donald L. Gates, PDC</b>		

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HONORING OUR UNION ANCESTORS  
BY  
*KEEPING THEIR LEGACY ALIVE*



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