

Stoneman Dispatch

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Of the Inland Empire, Department of California and Pacific

Email: camp18@suvpac.org Web: www.suvpac.org/camp18.html

Volume 17, No.2, March, 2026

Attention Company!

A Message from the Camp Commander

Camp 18 Brothers,

Happy 15th Birthday Camp 18!

On 4 March 2011, our Camp Charter was officially approved and signed, so on 4 March 2026 we, Camp 18, celebrated our 15th anniversary! I will bring a birthday cake to our April camp meeting so we can all celebrate and enjoy desert!

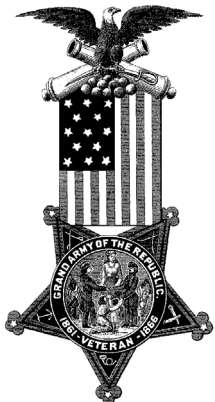
140th Department of California and Pacific Encampment, 6-7 March 2026:

I want to thank Brothers Rudy Velasco, Steve Doyle, Steve Matthews and Gene Justin, as well as the following spouses, Josie Morris and Ellen Doyle, for joining me to attend the 140th Department of California and Pacific Encampment, which was held at the 4-Points Sheraton Hotel in Bakersfield, CA. a couple of weekends ago, (6-7 March). We were honored to have Commander-In-Chief Kevin Tucker attend our department encampment!

Saturday, 7 March, was a busy day starting with the Opening Ceremony and Memorial Service followed by camp and department officer/committee reports and remarks from CinC Tucker in the morning. Our camp authored & submitted two camp-level award nomination packages, which we won (see below). After lunch, department officer elections were held, with the following personal elected and installed as our new

Department of California & Pacific Commander and staff...

Continued on page 2, see Encampment



Tentative Camp Calendar

Saturday, April 18 – Camp Business meeting. American Legion Post 216, Corona. 10:00 am.

Saturday, May 23 – Camp 18 Memorial Day Service and flag placement at Evergreen Cemetery, Riverside. More details to follow as we get closer to the date.

Thursday, April 9 – 161st anniversary of Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. **Possible wreath presentation at Evergreen cemetery.** More info to follow.

Saturday, June 20 – Camp Business meeting. American Legion Post 216, Corona. 10:00 am.

July 30 – August 2 – 145th National Encampment of the SUVCW, Gettysburg PA. More info on page 2.

Saturday, August 15 – Camp Business meeting. American Legion Hall Post 216, Corona. 10:00 am.

-----Triva-----

What did a lucky Union soldier find wrapped around three cigars just before Antietam?

Who was Stand Watie?

Who was referred to as "Old Rosy"?

-----These should be easy ones,... enjoy!-----

Answers on top of page 4



*Dedicated to Preserving the Memory
of the Grand Army of the Republic
And the soldiers who Fought to Save the Union 1861 - 1865*



Encampment continued,

- **Department Commander: Brother Wayne Eder;**
- **Department Senior Vice Commander: Brother Gary Hormel;**
- **Department Junior Vice Commander: Brother Robert Mayer;**
- **Department Secretary/Treasurer: Brother Randy Dhindsa;**
- **Council Members: Brothers Dean Smith, Dan Earl and Rick LaRosa.**

Camp 18 Award Recipients from the 2026 Department of California and Pacific Encampment:

Camp 18 received the Department of California and Pacific Camp Newsletter of the Year Award for 2025; as the editor and author of our camp newsletters, Brother Rudy Velasco accepted the award on behalf of our camp! Thank you, Rudy, for a job well done! You deserved this award!

I nominated Mr. Tim Roche, Evergreen Memorial Historical Cemetery Board of Directors, for the Department of California and Pacific Kirby R. Morgan Award; which basically recognizes non-SUVCW members for their contributions in protecting and maintaining the graves of Union Civil War soldiers. Tim Roche provided outstanding support to our camp during our community service project to clean all 92 Civil War and Spanish-American War headstones, as well as the GAR/SAW monument, at Evergreen Memorial Park in March 2025. He donated all of the cleaning supplies and materials for free to our camp, then joined in with us to scrub, wash and final clean all 92 headstones and the GAR/SAW monument. Tim Roche is one of the best supporters of our camp; he is most deserving of this distinctive honor.

We have our annual Memorial Day Ceremony on Saturday morning, 23 May, and still have a few positions to fill in the script, which we will discuss at our camp meeting on 18 April.

I just want to say thank you to all of you for all you do for our camp and our order! It is my honor to serve as your camp commander.

VR,

John



Clockwise from bottom left, Camp SVC Steve Matthews, PDC Steve & Ellen Doyle, Josie & John Morris CC, PDC Rudy Velasco & Camp JVC Gene Justin after dinner at the Bakersfield Encampment.

Also,... During the encampment meeting, Commander-in-Chief Kevin Tucker addressed the attendees with some comments about California and America 250 - the Promise of 1776.

He mentioned California's roll in preserving the Union, contributing troops during the Civil War and *America 250*, how 1776 gave us Liberty and 1865 gave America "Union."

After dinner there was a raffle and an auction but the real entertainment was a slide presentation by Camp 24 Brother Stephen Johnson about the U.S. Navy and the West Coast just before and during the Civil War.



Above, the Kirby R. Morgan Award certificate presented for Evergreen Cemetery Board member Tim Roche at the Department Encampment.

Continued on page 3,... see More Encampment,....

More Encampment, continued,...

After dinner there was a raffle and an auction but the real entertainment was a slide presentation by Camp 24 Brother Stephen Johnson about the U.S. Navy and the West Coast just before and during the Civil War.

Final thoughts from the Encampment – Thank you Department Sr. Vice Commander Gary Hormel, Department Counselor Dan Earl and the entire encampment committee for organizing and producing this year’s 140th Department Encampment of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Department of California & Pacific!



**General George Stoneman Jr.
Camp 18 Officers**

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Camp Commander, | John Morris |
| Sr. Vice Cmdr, | Steve Matthews |
| Jr. Vice Cmdr, | Joseph (Gene) Justin |
| Sec/Treas, | Rudy Velasco III |
| Camp Council #1 | Michael Emmett |
| Camp Council #2 | Rudolph Velasco IV |
| Camp Council #3 | Benny White |



Above; Camp 18 Brothers attending the Department Encampment, from the left; Camp CMDR. John Morris, Department CMDR. Wayne Eder, Camp 18 JVC Gene Justin and PDC Rudy Velasco. Missing from the photo are Camp attendees PDC Steve Doyle & SVC Steve Matthews.

Appointed

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Camp Chaplain | Matt Crowder PCC |
| Camp Historian | Burt Hogue |
| Camp Guide | vacant |
| Camp Guard | Steve Doyle PDC |
| Graves Registration | Michael Emmett |
| Newsletter Editor | Rudy Velasco III |
| Patriotic Instructor | Benny White |
| Eagle Scout &
JROTC Coordinator | Rudy Velasco III |

If you have something of interest that you would like to add to this newsletter, something that our **Brothers** might enjoy like an article, a photo or a Civil War event, contact the Editor, Rudy Velasco for placement. rev03@dc.rr.com



Lincoln Shrine Open House

This year’s Lincoln Shrine Open House in Redlands, held on 7 February, was a great success for the Shrine and for the SUVCW.

The Shrine reported that they had over 700 attendees.

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War had 4 Southern California Camps represented at the Open House plus the newly instituted Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War – Sophronia Bucklin Tent 97 was also represented.

Thank you, Tent 97 Ladies, our Sisters, Meredith Teague, (Tent President), Debbie Thomas and Melissa Ward for visiting the Camp 18 display and enjoying the Open House. Hopefully we will see these Ladies again, participating with Camp 18 at the Camp Memorial Day Services at the end of May.

Camp 18 Brother Larry Duncan, aka “Dr. Malarkey” put up another great display of a civil war field hospital, complete with

continued on page 4, see SHRINE,...

Shrine, continued...

plastic amputated limbs, a body being operated on and other miscellaneous field hospital necessities.

The Camp 18 display was attended by Camp Cmdr. John & Josie Morris, PDC Rudy Velasco, PCC Matt Crowder and Camp JVC Gene Justin. Our special guests attending the Camp's display were (Orange County) Sedgwick – Granger Camp 17 Brothers Camp Cmdr. Scott McKee and PCC Terry Shaw. It is really nice sharing display space with these SUVCW Brothers.

General Rosecrans Camp 2, Los Angeles, was represented by Camp JVC Brandon Villardi who was participating with the Civil War reenacting artillery group, 1st Pennsylvania Light Artillery, who fired their cannon on the top of the hour, every hour between 11:00 a.m and 3:00 p.m.

Sgt. Pittenger, Camp 21 from San Diego set up a display at the Shrine directly across from Camp 18. Thank you PDC Jerry and Kim Sayre for bringing the Camp 21 display to Redlands. Also attending the display were Dimas Lovato and PCC Wayne Eder.

It was nice to see Auxiliary to Sons of Union Veterans, Department of California President Melinie Caines, who participated in the SUVCW displays. Thank You Mel!

Two units of the Sons of Veterans Reserve were represented at the Shrine, Company G, 5th CA. Infantry – members Jerry Sayre and Dimas Lovato and Company A, 1st CA Cavalry – members Rudy Velasco, Terry Shaw, Scott McKee, John Morris and SVR 6th Military District Commander Wayne Eder.

We have been invited back to participate again at next year's Lincoln Shrine Open House, scheduled for 6 February 2027, we will see you there.

FYI...**2026 National Encampment**

The 145th National Encampment of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Allied Orders will be held in Gettysburg, PA, July 30 – August 2, 2026
Dress: Male business attire, to include jacket, tie, long pants and membership badge. See more at:

<https://suvchw.org/national-encampment>

**-----Trivia answers-----
from page 1**

1) A copy of Lee's orders. Even with that intelligence, McClellan refused to move forward bodley; had he done so, he might have hastened the end of the war.

2) The highest ranking Native American in the Rebel army. Watie was a brigadier general who was largely responsible for the Cherokee alliance with the Confederacy.

3) Union General William Rosecrans was referred to as "Old Rosy".

Memorial Day Information

Camp 18 will conduct our annual Memorial Day Ceremony on Saturday morning, 23 May, starting around 10:00 a.m. at the GAR/SAW Circle. Placing the flags to the Veterans graves will begin at approximately 7:30 a.m. More information to follow asap, Stay tuned! Same Bat channel, same Bat station.

The first JROTC award of the season from General Stoneman has been awarded and mailed to Murrieta Valley High School MCJROTC for Cadet 1st Sgt Glaser.

The award ceremony date is scheduled for 18 April.

Underground Railroad Discussion**A presentation to the
Inland Empire Civil War Round Table**

Last Sunday, 15 March, at the A.K. Smiley Public Library in Redlands, Camp Commander John Morris delivered a report and slide show on his family's participation with the Under Ground Railroad.

In front of an audience of about 30, Commander Morris spoke about his G-G-G Grandfather and G-G-G- Grandmother Abraham and Nancy Morris operating an Underground Railroad Station in Wilkesville, Ohio, helping enslaved people escape to freedom in the north.

Wilkesville is a very small town in south east Ohio.

Continued on page 5, see RAILROAD...

Railroad continued...

Abraham & Nancy Morris were helping the runaways before and during the Civil War.

Abraham was almost hung for being an abolitionist by Confederate General John Hunt Morgan during his Cavalry raid into Southern Ohio in July, 1863 (Morgan's Raid), but he escaped his captors and the family lives on.

Abraham & Nancy had 3 sons that served during the Rebellion with one of them, William M. Morris surviving the war.

Commander Morris had a total 18 relatives that served during the war, including one Medal of Honor recipient, Nelson W. Ward.



Above, Camp Commander John Morris beginning his presentation at the A.K. Smiley Public Library, Redlands.

few passersby would guess that the middle of today's Redlands Boulevard once held a quiet residential parcel at 521 East State Street—just next door to today's Cuca's restaurant on Redlands Boulevard. Yet that lost address was once home to Capt. Joseph Ernest Russell Chedester, a Union veteran whose life traced the arc of the American Civil War, westward migration, civic fraternity, and, remarkably, a burial delayed for nearly a century.



Chedester was born to Thomas Chedester and Rebecca Pierce on September 20, 1847, in Greeneville, Tennessee, in the Appalachian Mountains east of Knoxville. He came of age in a nation on the brink of rupture, growing up in a border region where loyalties were often divided and the consequences of choosing a side were deeply personal. In July 1864, at just sixteen years old, he enlisted as a Union soldier from Tennessee, serving with Battery E, 1st Battalion, Tennessee Volunteer Light Artillery.

Chedester's unit served in the "Department of the Cumberland," a military command encompassing Kentucky and Tennessee and charged with maintaining Union control in a volatile region. His battery drew volunteers from across the state, including areas surrounding Nashville, Memphis, and Knoxville. His service—lasting through August 1865—placed him firmly on the Union side in a deeply divided border state, a decision not without its risks, serving in a region where one was more likely to be personally known.

100 Years Without a Burial: The Peculiar Story of a Redlands Civil War Veteran, Captain Joseph Chedester

By Camp 18 Brother John P. Beall, Vice President,
Redlands Area Historical Society

How does an individual who passed away in 1929 only receive burial in 2023? This strange turn of events is exactly what happened to a Redlands Union Veteran of the American Civil War, who through the efforts of a Des Moines-based non-profit, The Final Salute Project, was finally laid to rest at Veterans' Cemetery in Van Meter, Iowa. Until his remains were rediscovered in a funeral parlor during Covid, his story was untold...until now.

In the shifting landscape of modern Redlands,

Continued on page 6, see Chedester

Chedester continued,

Like so many veterans of his generation, Chedester returned from war to rebuild a civilian life shaped by discipline, duty and endurance.

Capt. Chedester married Margaret Carter in Morristown, Tennessee, on September 16, 1869. In 1872, the couple moved west to Barry, Missouri, near Kansas City, where Joseph pursued both farming and mercantile work while the family raised six children. Period accounts describe him as engaged in poultry and strawberry farming—two enterprises that often went hand in hand, as poultry provided fertilizer for berries and year-round income, a pairing later echoed famously at Knott's Berry Farm and other Redlands-area farming enterprises.

Newspaper articles of the era described Chedester as “one of the most substantial farmers in Clay County.” He also became active in local politics, gaining notice for his steadfast Republican affiliation in a region where such views were uncommon. A 1900 Kansas City newspaper article titled “He Is Lonesome” described him as “the only Republican in his precinct,” underscoring both his political independence and willingness to stand apart from prevailing sentiment.

During their years in Redlands, the Chedesters were active and engaged members of the community. Capt. Chedester remained involved with the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), the influential Union veterans' organization that played a major role in shaping public memory of the Civil War. He appeared frequently in the *Redlands Daily Facts* for representing the Western Region at national G.A.R. conferences, maintaining ties to fellow veterans across the country.

Though technically retired, he also continued his agricultural pursuits. On October 11, 1919, the *Redlands Daily Facts* dubbed him the “Tomato King” for his impressive tomato-growing operation on East State Street. At the age of seventy-two, Chedester was cultivating trellised tomato vines that exceeded ten feet in height and regularly produced fruit weighing up to a pound and a half.

Capt. Chedester's later years bridged Redlands and the Midwest. After Margaret's death in 1927, he traveled to Iowa to visit family, where he met Anna Belle Stombaugh. The two married in 1928. The following year, in 1929, Capt. Chedester died while still in Iowa.

What should have been a quiet burial among



GREAT TOMATOES ON TALL VINES

J. E. Chedester of East State street, Redlands, is going to get the title of “Tomato King,” if he doesn't watch out, and whether he likes it or not. Mr. Chedester is growing tomato vines in his back yard that stretch up on trellises to a height of at least ten feet, and high up on the spreading branches—if tomato vines have branches—are great, luscious looking specimens of the fruit, weighing often as much as a pound and a half. Mr.

CHEDESTER PROPERTY DISPOSED OF IN WILL

Joseph Chedester, of 521 East State street, Redlands, who died while on a visit to Des Moines, Iowa, on August 18, in his will left all his property to his wife, Margaret, and to the three daughters, according to the will which was filed for probate in the superior court. The daughters are Cora Bullard, Lillie Robb and Ada Holdham, all residents of the state of Missouri. The daughters and Mrs. Chedester share equally. There are three sons who do not share in the estate.

For health reasons, the Chedesters eventually moved west again, arriving in Redlands around 1916. By then, Redlands had been attracting Midwestern families for decades, particularly Union veterans drawn by opportunity, healthful climate, and the promise of agricultural success. Whatever Margaret's ailment, the move proved beneficial; she lived another eleven years in Redlands and is buried at Hillside Memorial Park.

family, instead became one of the most unusual chapters of his story.

Exactly why Chedester's remains lay unclaimed from 1929 to 2023 is not entirely known, but it appears to have involved the settlement of his estate and the geographic dispersion of his children. His remains were reportedly held in storage at

Continued on page 7, see Redlands,..

Redlands continued,

Dunn's Funeral Home in Des Moines all the way down to three years ago.

As decades passed, Redlands Boulevard was cut through the former East State Street corridor in the 1930s, erasing the physical footprint of his home. Generations came and went, and the veteran who once lived at the edge of downtown Redlands remained without a grave.

Thank you, Brother JP Beall

Abraham Lincoln's favorite White Cake

Long ago, a certain French caterer in Lexington, Kentucky, made a wonderful white cake in honor of his countryman, Lafayette, who was to pay a visit to the city. The cake was beautifully decorated with flags made of color sugar, with marvelous icing, but the cake itself contained only the whites of the eggs and when cut the cake was snow-white. Thereupon the famous cake baker in the Blue Grass region immediately began making white cakes; and the recipe for the most famous of all was originated in the household of the ancestors of Mary Todd who many years afterward made the cake for Abraham Lincoln after she became his wife, he declared this white cake was the best in Kentucky. Here is Mary Todd's recipe with modern baking instructions included;

1 cupful butter,	Whites of 6 eggs,
2 cupfuls of sugar,	1 teaspoon of vanilla or
1 cupful of milk,	other flavoring as preferred.
3 cupfuls of flour,	1 cupful of chopped
3 teaspoons of	Almonds.
baking powder	

Cream the butter well, add the sugar and cream again, sift flour and baking powder together, add to the butter and sugar alternately with milk. Then stir in the chopped nuts and beat well, finally fold in the stiffly beaten whites of the eggs, pour into a well-greased paper-lined pan and bake one hour (55 – 60 minutes) in a moderate oven (350 degrees). Ice with boiled icing (use your favorite icing recipe) to which you have added half a cupful of candied pineapple and cherries cut into very small pieces.

Enjoy, Thank you Garden Lady

Camp Annual Calendar
general idea/dates may change**2026 Calendar****January****February**

Saturday 7th - Lincoln Shrine Display, Redlands.

Saturday 21st - Camp Meeting. 10:00 am, Corona.

March

6th - 7th – **Friday & Saturday** – 140th Department Encampment, Bakersfield Calif. More info on line at; <https://suvpac.org/encampment/>

Wednesday, 25th – Medal of Honor Day – **no Camp event.**

April

Thursday 9th– 161st Anniversary of Lee's Surrender at Appomattox Court House.

Saturday 18th – Camp Meeting.

May

Saturday – 23rd, Memorial Day weekend Flag Detail and Service at Evergreen Cemetery, Riverside. More information to follow.

June

Saturday 20th – Camp Meeting

July**August**

July 30 – Aug. 2nd -145th National Encampment of the SUVCW, Gettysburg, PA.

Saturday 15th – possible Camp meeting.

September**October**

Saturday 17th – Camp Meeting.

November

Veterans Day Service

December

Camp meeting – date to be announced
Wreaths Across America





*General George Stoneman Jr. Camp 18
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
Newsletter
69586 Borrego Rd.
Cathedral City, CA. 92234*