

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.4, July, 2026

Attention Company!

A message from the Camp Commander

To my Brothers in Camp 18:

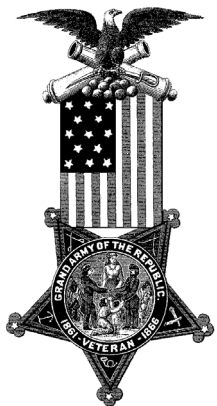
Josie and I hope you all had a great 250th Independence Day holiday with your family members and friends! Happy 250th Birthday America! 🎂

My deepest thanks and appreciation to Brothers Rudy Velasco and Larry Duncan for driving over to LA on the morning of the 4th of July to join Josie and I in the annual flag-raising ceremony at Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial. We served in the joint Honor Guard for the flag-raising ceremony, and afterwards all three of us participated in the firing detail, and I got to break-in my new musket with no mis-fires, every round fired true and loud!

The first half of this year has gone fast, and the next six months will be just as busy! Josie and I, along with Brother Gene Justin, are attending the National Encampment at Gettysburg from 30 July to 2 August. Josie and I are attending the Gettysburg Battlefield tour on Thursday morning, 30 July, then remain in place for the National Encampment meetings on 31 July - 1 August. We are truly looking forward to attending our first National Encampment!

We have a camp meeting on 15 August, where we will discuss the proposed bylaw changes and hopefully vote to adopt the new, draft bylaws.

continued on page 2, see Commander,



Happy Birthday America

We pray Everybody had a Great 4th of July!



Tentative Camp Calendar

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

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

Saturday, August 29 – Headstone cleaning event with Pittenger Camp 21 at Odd Fellows Cemetery, Fallbrook. A few details **on page 2. See "Headstone"**

Saturday, October 17 – Camp Business meeting, American Legion Post 216, Corona. 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, November 7 – Camp 18's Veterans Day Service at Evergreen Memorial Historical cemetery. More info to follow as we get closer to the date.

Saturday, December 5 – Camp Holiday meeting at 10:00 a.m. with Toys for Tots collection. American Legion Post 216, Corona

-----Trivia-----

What was Ulysses S. Grant's real name?

----- Answer on page 5, see Trivia -----



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



Commander continued,

On Saturday morning, 29 August, we are accomplishing a joint community service project with Camp 21 to clean 16 Civil War headstones in Odd Fellows Cemetery in Fallbrook.

Rudy, my wife, Josie, and I are setting up our camp booth at Huntington Beach on Saturday morning, 5 September, for the Huntington Beach Civil War Days. Hopefully several of you can join us and help educate the public on the SUVCW and "The Boys in Blue" in the Civil War!

We have our annual officer elections coming up at our camp meeting in October, and we may set-up our camp booth along with Camp 21 at the Rendezvous in Poway on Saturday morning, 3 October. More discussion to follow!

We are conducting a joint Veterans Day Ceremony with Camp 21 and Tent 97 (DUVCW) on Saturday morning, 7 November, at the GAR/SAW Circle at Evergreen Memorial Park. More to follow on this event!

At our December camp meeting, hopefully we will again participate in collecting/donating toys for the Corona "Spark of Love" Christmas donation campaign, providing Christmas toys for needy children across the city. We will also have our annual Christmas luncheon and Department Commander Wayne Eder will attend our meeting and officially install our elected camp officers.

For your info/awareness, there will not be a Wreaths Across America ceremony at Evergreen Memorial Park this year. I have served as the POC for this ceremony from its inception in 2018 for the past 8 years, and it just became too much work for me to do. I asked both boards of directors for the cemetery to find a new POC and let me help/assist/mentor my replacement, but no one wanted to take on the responsibility, so both board presidents decided not to participate in the program this year.

Again, thank you all for all you do for our Camp, our Department, the National SUVCW and especially "The Boys in Blue!"

In FCL,

John M. Morris
Commander, Camp 18

Headstones details

This headstone cleaning event was brought up at the June camp meeting and five of the Brothers attending expressed interest in participating. Here are a few details;

On Saturday, 29 August, Camp 18 members along with members of Pittenger Camp 21 will meet at Odd Fellows Cemetery in Fallbrook to clean 15 civil War soldier's headstones. The cleaning event is projected to take approximately 2 hours to complete. Start time in 9:00 a.m.

A group lunch has been suggested for after the headstone clean up and maybe a tour of the Fallbrook Historical Society which will be available between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m.

I will have a box of plastic/rubber gloves available for participants but you may want to bring your own gloves and a small soft bristle brush for scrubbing the stones.

The Cemetery address and directions and any final details will be available at the camp's August 15 meeting.

**Welcome New Brother!**

Welcome to new Camp 18 Brother David Jackson of Moreno Valley who was Initiated at the Camp's June 20th meeting.

Brother Jackson joins Camp 18 and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War honoring the Union Civil War service of his Great-Grandfather William Augustus Knapp.

William Knapp, Private in Company I, 190th Pennsylvania Infantry served from August 1861 through August 1864 and honorably discharged at the expiration of term.



Brother Jackson, above & left, initiated By Camp 18 Chaplain Matt Crowder. Welcome!

In Memoriam

It is with Great Sadness that we announce the passing of the Last Real Son of a Union Veteran, Brother William Pool who passed on 7 June 2026 at the age of 101 years. William was the son of Charles Pool who served with the 6th West Virginia Infantry. Brother William was born on January 13, 1925. He was a WWII Veteran seeing action in the Battle of the Bulge.

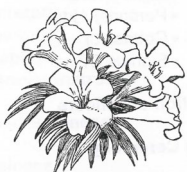
**Brother William Pool****Brother Donald Hotchkiss**

It is with a Heavy Heart that we announce the passing of Donald L. Hotchkiss PCC, who was born 8 April 1954 and passed on 28 June 2026, (72 years). In 2019 Brother Hotchkiss was elected to be the first Camp Commander of the newly Chartered Senator Edward Dickerson Baker Camp 31 in Henderson NV.

Also sad to mention is the passing of Brother John Grant Griffiths, the Great-Great Grandson of Army General and United States President Ulysses S. Grant. Born on 15 July 1938, Brother Griffiths passed on 7 July 2026. His grandfather was Major General Ulysses S. Grant III.

Brother Griffiths was a member of the Irish Brigade Camp #4 in Virginia, Department of the Chesapeake.

It was a pleasure to meet Brother Griffiths at the 2016 National Encampment in Springfield, Illinois. He was a very entertaining individual at the Encampment dinner.

**Brother John G. Griffiths****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

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



Medal of Honor flag Replacement Ceremony

Union soldier Otis W. Smith was born October 4, 1844 in Logan County, Ohio.

During the Civil War, Smith served as a private in the 95th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G.

On December 16, 1864, the 95th Ohio was ordered to assault the Confederates at Nashville TN. During the conflict, Otis Smith was in the advance column and captured



*Medal of Honor
headstone for Otis Smith*

the flag of the 6th Florida Volunteers at Brentwood Hills near Nashville.

For bravery in action, Smith was awarded the Medal of Honor on February 22, 1865. Otis had attained the rank of Corporal before leaving service.

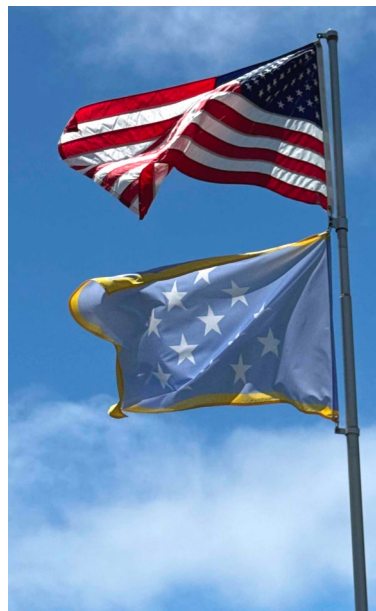
Sometime after the war, Smith relocated to the west coast and settled in San Luis Obispo County. He passed away on March 10, 1923 and is interred in Arroyo Grande Cemetery.

On Saturday, June 13, 2026 the William T. Sherman Camp 28, Santa Barbara, conducted a flag replacement ceremony for the Medal of Honor flag flying above Otis Smith's grave.

The ceremony was attended by Smith's relatives who did not know of his Civil War accomplishments.

A couple of the family's adults attending the ceremony were 2nd Great Grandchildren along with their children – 3rd and 4th Great Grandchildren.

Three SUVCW camps



*Medal of Honor flag flying
above Otis Smith's grave*

were represented by the seven Brothers accomplishing the ceremony; Randall Hawkinson PCC of Sheridan Camp 4, John Morris CC and Rudy Velasco PDC of Stoneman Camp 18, Alex Grzywacki SVC, Guy St.Clair JVC, Everett Lee PCC and Eric Paape of Sherman Camp 28.

Two Sons of Veterans Reserve (SVR) units were represented by these participants; 3rd US Artillery Battery H,

and 1st Calif Cavalry, Co. A.

The Smith family descendants gathered close to the grave to watch Brothers Paape and Hawkinson retrieve the Medal of Honor flag. When the old MOH flag had been lowered and taken off the flag pole, it was folded by Brothers Morris and St.Clair and given to the Smith family descendants at the end of the ceremony.

Brother Paape, with a little help from Brothers Hawkinson and Velasco attached the new MOH flag and ran it up the pole. The remaining Sons of Union Veterans stood at attention and saluted as the flag went up the pole.

The ceremony took about 30 minutes to accomplish and was well received by the family members attending and fun to participate in.



*Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War stand at
Attention and salute as the new MOH flag is raised
above Smith's grave*

179th Annual Flag Raising at the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial

The 179th anniversary commemorating the first 4th of July flag raising in Los Angeles and honoring the U.S.A at 250 years was held on Saturday, July 4th this year, authentically reliving Los Angeles County's first U.S. Independence Day, July 4th, 1847 and the 250th anniversary of the Congressional adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

The raising of the 28-state flag was observed on the grounds of Fort Moore by the 1st United States Dragoons, the Mormon Battalion. N.Y. Volunteers and local Californios.

Continued on page 5, see Ft. Moore,...

Trivia answer from page 1,...

Grant's birth name was **Hiram Ulysses Grant**. The "S" was added due to a clerical error on his West Point application and he was tagged with Ulysses "Simpson" Grant and the name stuck. The "S" is often associated with his mother's maiden name of Simpson. Later he was sometimes called "Unconditional Surrender" Grant.

Ft Moore, continued,...

This event was sponsored by the Fort Moore Memorial Committee and the Fort Moore Garrison; Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and Hilda Solis, first District Supervisor.

Historically, the Mexican – American War was a significant precursor to the American Civil War and to the eventual statehood of California. There are those that say that we could not have effectively fought a Civil War without fighting the Mexican-American War. Our country and our Boys in Blue learned how to fight and wage war in the spirit of Manifest Destiny.

Camp 18 had three Brothers attend and support this event, Larry Duncan, Rudy Velasco PDC and Camp Commander John Morris and each were eager to fire their muskets in support of the ceremony.

The ceremony opened to a very small audience and the enthusiasm among participant was exciting.



Above left, Camp Commander Morris readies himself to fire a test load through his new Armi Sport 1861 Springfield musket while Brother Larry Duncan gets ready for his test fires. It was a great event with no misfires!

Several folks connected to the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial spoke to the audience. The Organizer of a local Californios museum addressed the memorial visitors as well as Paul Hoffman, Commander of the Ft. Moore Garrison and Department Commander Wayne Eder. One of the interesting items that was mentioned

is that, as a young officer with the First Dragoons, George Stoneman attended the original Fourth of July flag raising ceremony at the Garrison in 1847.

Towards the end of the flag raising ceremony, 10 participants dressed in uniforms ranging from Mexican War Infantry, Marines, Californios and Civil War infantry lined up to fire one musket round for each star of the 28 adorning the 1847 American flag, starting with Delaware and then a second round for Pennsylvania and a 3rd round for New Jersey and so on until a final 28th round was fired for the admittance of Texas in 1845.

We are looking forward to next year's annual Fort Moore 4th of July flag raising ceremony.



Sons of Union Veterans attending the ceremony, from the left; Dept. Commander Wayne Eder Camp 21, John Morris CC Camp 18, Bill Harrington CC Camp 2, Kristen Anderson Camp 2, Larry Duncan Camp 18, Rudy Velasco PDC Camp 18 and Wayne Eder II Camp 21.

2026 Camp Calendar**August**

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War National Encampment.

Saturday 15th – Camp meeting, Corona

September**October**

Saturday 17 – Camp Meeting & Officer elections, Corona.

November

Saturday 7th -Veterans Day Service at Evergreen Cemetery, Riverside.

December

Saturday 5th - Camp Holiday meeting & Toys for Tots & Officer Installation.



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