



SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR
General Alfred Pleasonton Camp 24

GUIDON NEWSLETTER
May 2026

Editor: Steve Johnson, Camp Secretary
Camp Commander: Gary Hormel

Report on the Department Encampment by Commander Gary Hormel

The 140th encampment of the Department of California and Pacific was held on March 6 & 7 at the Sheraton Hotel in Bakersfield. I took the train to Bakersfield, along with Brothers Steve Johnson and Robert Mayer. It was certainly a relaxing way to travel. On Friday we had a chance to meet brothers from around the state at a social gathering, then the brothers went in small groups to local restaurants. Saturday was the business day, when each camp gave a report about their activities through the past year. It was very interesting to hear what other camps are doing, from marching in parades, to setting up camps at schools, to graveside memorials, to helping with food drives. 10 out of 13 camps in the department were present, with 40 brothers attending.

Following the reports, the brothers voted to elect department officers for 2026. The results were
Department Commander: Brother Wayne Eder (Camp 25)

Department Senior Vice Commander: Brother Gary Hormel (Camp 24)

Department Junior Vice Commander: Brother Robert Mayer (Camp 24)

Department Secretary / Treasurer: Brother Randy Dhindsa (Camp 32)

Council Members: Brothers Dean Smith, Dan Earl and Rick LaRosa (Camp 4)

A pleasant banquet was held Saturday evening, followed by Brother Steve Johnson giving an illustrated talk on the U.S. Navy on the West Coast during the Civil War. It was voted to have next year's encampment at the same hotel.

I am very pleased that we have three new brothers joining our camp, and I look forward very much to welcoming them at our next camp meeting.

Next Camp Meeting is June 27, 2026, at 10 am

Our next meeting will be at Brother Brad Hatton's home, 39256 Cano Court in Fremont. There will be a social hour, and a short camp meeting to discuss upcoming events. We will be inducting three new members into our camp, so please come and join us in welcoming them to Camp 24. The new brothers are: Logan Cornog, a serving member of the U.S. Coast Guard; Rev. Edgar Welty, Jr., a minister of the United Church of Christ; and Ken Cole, a Marine Corps veteran.

As usual our host Brother Brad will set out a delicious luncheon. Please confirm you will be coming by texting Brother Steve at 650-420-9755. Already confirmed are Brothers Hormel, Martin, Johnson, Felton, Hatton, and Ferris.

Camp 24: A Leader in Eagle Scout Awards

Over the past year, members of Camp 24 have awarded 14 Eagle Scout awards from the Sons of Union Veterans, more than all the camps in the department. All but one were awarded in person. These awards honor an Eagle Scout for his/her commitment to service to the community, and are well deserved. The scouts we met had made benches for seniors, shelves for libraries, a new door for a museum, restored a community garden, and much more. We also gave the scouts patches to add to their many patches of deeds accomplished. The scouts and their parents were pleased that we were there, and many thanks to Brothers Gary Hormel, Steve Johnson, Jeffrey Nibert, for taking the time to attend the Courts of Honor and to pass out the awards to these fine young persons. You may be asked to assist in this endeavor in the future.



Brother Jeffrey gives the award to Eagle Scout Ricky Fargo in Pleasanton

Graveside Ceremony in Oakland

Members of 4 (San Jose) and Camp 24 met at the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland on April 25 to conduct graveside memorial services for two Union sailors who recently received the Medal of Honor headstone provided by the Medal of Honor Society of the United States. George Prance was aboard the *USS Ticonderoga* and despite heavy fire from Fort Fisher, returned fire on its batteries to protect Union troops assaulting the fort. Thomas Barton saved the crew of his ship *USS Hunchback* when he quickly doused the burning fuse of a bomb which landed on the deck. The ceremony for these two sailors consisted of a prayer, a reading of their heroic deeds, the placing on their graves an evergreen wreath (symbolizing), a reed wreath (symbolizing) and white roses as a sign of purity of purpose. We were pleased to have Zachary Unger, a member of the Oakland city council, join us for the ceremony. Afterward, we enjoyed a bowl of soup provided by Brother Hartton, and which we shared with a family who happened by.



(from L to R) Ken Felton, Brad Hatton, Gary Hormel, Council member Zackary Unger, Steve Johnson, Glenn Martin, Rick La Rosa at the gravesite of George France

The gravesite of Thomas Barton was in another, unendowed section of the cemetery - meaning it wasn't maintained. So prior to the ceremony the weeds around his headstone were cleared away so he too could be honored. Did these sailors wonder if anyone would remember them? We can be proud to say, yes, we do remember you and your deeds.

Photo by Dan Earl, Camp 4

Memorial Day Services

Brother Johnson will be a guest speaker at the Memorial Day service at the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland at 10 a.m. on Monday, May 25. He will talk about the SUVCW and the role of California during the Civil War. Brothers from our camp are welcome to come. A docent will be giving a tour at 1 pm, which will include a talk about the Civil War soldiers at the G.A.R. plot. Brothers are also invited to attend the ceremonies at the Presidio National Cemetery in San Francisco, in uniform if you wish. The program starts at 10 a.m.

Living History Day on Alcatraz

Postponed from an earlier date in April, the Living History Day on Alcatraz will now be on Saturday, July 11th. If you haven't seen what the event is like, consider coming as a visitor. You will see the exhibits of uniforms, weapons, medical supplies, soldier's equipment, and household goods of the 1860s. You can take a guided historical walking tour, and as a special guest will be given a behind-the-scenes tour of the island. To make a reservation, go to <https://alcatrazcitycruises.com/tickets/>

“... to the support of the Constitution and Laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor.” Abraham Lincoln, 1838