



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

GUIDON NEWSLETTER  
January 2024

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

**Joint Investiture of Officers of Camp 4 and 24 Held in Fremont**

Brothers from Phil Sheridan, Camp 4 (San Jose) and our Camp 24 met at the home of Brother Brad Hatton, who kindly offered his home and hospitality for the occasion. We were pleased to have the Department Commander, Steve Doyle, come all the way up from Southern California to officiate. The first order of business was to make introductions so we could all get to know one another. The seven members of Camp 4, and eight members of our camp, plus the two guests - Steven Hormel and Joan Nibert - all gave a brief introduction, and members also briefly described their ancestor's service in the war. Then both camps had short meetings (see the attached minutes). The highlight was the ritual of the installation of the officers of both camps, as they took the oath to defend the Constitution, to follow the rules of the Order, and to maintain harmony within the camp with charity and fidelity. Following the ceremony, everyone enjoyed an excellent luncheon provided by Brother Brad, and had a pleasant hour of socializing before having to return home.



Department Commander Steve Doyle speaks to both camps

**Fort Point Living History Day - Saturday, February 3, 2024.**

A full day of activities is planned for the Civil War Day at Fort Point. They include tours of the fort, cannon demonstrations, an 1860s cooking demonstration, military drills by the 20th Maine re-enactors, music by the fife and drum corps as well as by the Fort Point Brass Band

and the Wandering Bow String Band. Lectures will be given on “The Battle of Mobile Bay” by Brother John Gee from Washington State, “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” by Harriet Beecher Stowe (portrayed by Michelle Hall), “The Life of Captain Joseph Stewart, Commander of Fort Point” by Brother Gary Hormel, and “California and the Civil War” by Brother Steve Johnson. Brother Frank Avila will exhibit his medical tools of the 1860s, and Brother Ken Felton will help man the Sons information table. Participants receive parking passes and snacks and coffee are provided throughout the day. If you’d like to participate (we could use the help), please contact the editor.

### **School Visit in March**

Brothers Johnson and Martin will be joining Brother Randy Hawkins (Camp 4), Michelle Hall and NPS volunteer Constance Smith in visiting a large middle school in San Mateo on March 22nd. They will meet the students in the auditorium, and each will give a 10 minute presentation. Topics will be a soldier’s life (Martin), women on the home front (Smith), women on the front lines (Hall), uniforms and equipment (Hawkins), and California and the Civil War (Johnson). There will be an open classroom during the lunch hour where students can come and see up close displays of equipment (no weapons. however). Media will be contacted to give some publicity to the school and to the Sons and the NPS.

### **Book Donations**

A donor has generously donated books to Camp 24, which will be added to our growing lending library. You can request to borrow any of these books by emailing the editor, which you can then pick up at the next camp meeting. Or, if you can’t wait, I will mail the book to you via media mail, which will be about \$5. Here are the titles of some of the books now available:

*Lincoln* by Carl Sandburg (the classic autobiography)

*The War in the Far West* by Oscar Lewis (1961)

*Orphans Preferred* by Christopher Corbett (2003) - the story of the Pony Express

*In the Shadow of the Enemy - the Civil War Journal of Ida Powell Dulany* (2009)

*The World of Stereographs* by William Darrah

*The American Civil War - West Point Military Series*, ed. by Thomas Greiss

*Russell’s Civil War Photographs* by Andrew Russell

*Fighting Men of the Civil War* by William Davis

*The First Battle of Bull Run* (1991) American Civil War Notebook Series

Note: There have been over 60,000 books printed about the Civil War. To see the top 5 recommended by a noted historian, see <https://fivebooks.com/best-books/american-civil-war-drew-gilpin-faust/>

## **ARTICLE: Important California Forts, besides Fort Point and Fort Alcatraz<sup>1</sup>**

**Fort Humboldt, Humboldt County, 1853 - 1856.** Built on a bluff overlooking Humboldt Bay in present-day Eureka, the fort housed the 4th U.S. Infantry which provided protection for settlers and miners from hostile tribes. Ulysses S. Grant was stationed here in 1854 and the boredom and isolation drove him to drink; he eventually resigned his commission and returned to his family in the east. Today the remnants of the fort are maintained by the state of California as a state historic park. Of the fort's original fourteen buildings, only the hospital remains. The surgeon's quarters were re-constructed in the 1980's and a historic garden was planted. To the right is the interior of the surgeon's quarters. Information on the park's operating hours and features can be found at [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=665](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=665)

**Fort Tejon, Kern County, 1854 -1864.** Located on the vital stagecoach road in the mountain pass between southern California and the Great Central Valley, Fort Tejon was established to protect the local friendly tribes and settlers from attacks by more hostile tribes. The fort was the western terminus of the Camel Corps, which operated from 1857 - 1861, and was a station for the Butterfield stagecoach line. First occupied by the First U.S. Dragoons, it was later manned by the 2nd California Cavalry. Today it is a state park and a pleasant rest stop along the Grapevine. Like Alcatraz and Fort Point, Fort Tejon has an active group of re-enactors who sponsor Dragoon and Civil War re-enactments, held regularly. For information. see their webpage: <https://forttejon.org/Index.html> For information on Fort Tejon State Park, go to [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=585](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=585)

**Benicia Barracks, Solano County, 1849 - 1963.** The Post near Benicia became the headquarters of the Department of the Pacific from 1851 - 1857 and the home of the 2nd U.S. Infantry in the West. It became the embarkation center for troops garrisoned in Western forts. During the Civil War it housed California Volunteers. There were eight barracks, married officers' houses, bachelor officers' quarters, a commissary, hospital, stables, and parade ground. It remained a military installation for much of the 20th century. Today the property is now owned by a corporation, but the history of the barracks and arsenal can be found at the Benicia Museum, which also gives tours of the area. For information, go to <http://beniciahistoricalmuseum.org> Several original buildings have been restored, with two being open to visitors. The barracks display a re-created troopers' quarters, and the officers' quarters have furnished rooms of the period.

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<sup>1</sup> Resources: [fortwiki.com](http://fortwiki.com) and [militarymuseum.org](http://militarymuseum.org) Originally appeared in FOCWA newsletter, May 2017

**Drum Barracks, the City of Wilmington, Los Angeles County, 1862 - 1873.** Originally on 60 acres, which was donated to the government by wealthy businessmen to make sure Southern California had a strong Union presence, the fort later became known as Drum Barracks. It functioned mainly to protect the supply depot at Wilmington harbor and to put down any rebellion by the many pro-Confederate groups in Southern California. It was the military headquarters of Southern California and the Arizona Territory. Today only one of the 19 original wooden buildings remain, and it houses a Civil War Museum run by L.A. County. The museum has the third largest Civil War library in the state, and it hosts a monthly book club. <https://thedrumbarracks.org/>

### **More Photos of the Recent Camp Meeting** (thanks to Brother Brad Hatton)



Brothers taking the oath of office. Two brothers touch the Bible and all brothers touch shoulders, spreading out from them

Brother Tad Campbell, Secretary of Camp 4, speaks to the assembled camps. The joint meeting was so successful that more of them has been proposed.

