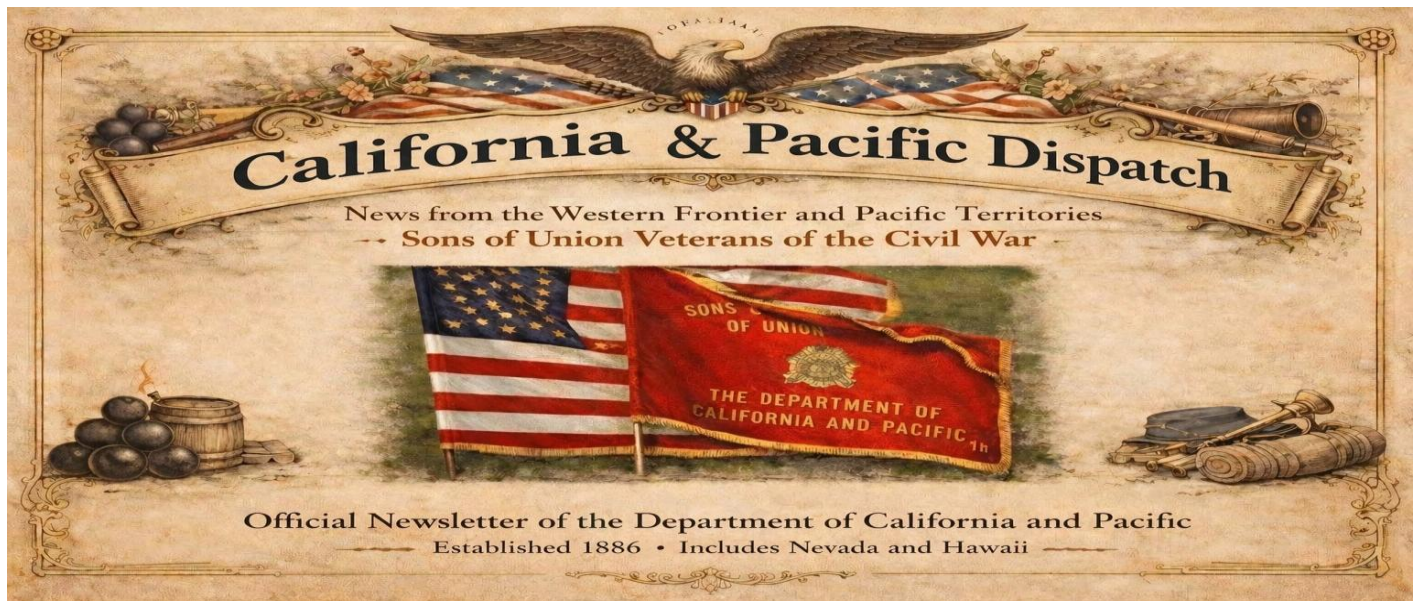




Vol 23 No 2

Summer 2026

Medal of Honor Flag Replacement

Written by John M. Morris Commander, Camp 18
Commander, Co A, 1st CA Cavalry (Dismounted) HQ Guard SVR



On 13 June, members of the Department of California and Pacific and 6th Military District SVR conducted a ceremony to replace the tattered Medal of Honor flag for Corporal Otis W. Smith, Company G, 65th Ohio Infantry at Arroyo Grands Cemetery, Arroyo Grands, CA.

Corporal Smith was awarded the Medal of Honor for actions near Nashville, TN in 1864 which led to Capture of the Flag of the 6th Florida Infantry, CSA.

SUVCW participants conducting ceremony were from Department of California and Pacific, and 6th Military District SVR, Company A, 1st California Cavalry (Dismounted) HQ Guard. From: Camp 4/SVR, 3d US Artillery, Battery H, Randall Hawkinson; Camp 18/SVR, Company A, 1st California Cavalry (Dismounted) HQ Guard, John Morris, and Rudy Velasco; Camp 24/SVR, Company A, 1st California Cavalry (Dismounted) HQ Guard, Eric Paape; Camp 28/SVR Company A, 1st California Cavalry (Dismounted) HQ Guard, Evertt Lee, Alex Grzywacki, and Guy St Clair.

The MOH flag was removed and folded by honor guard, and Eric Paape presented the old flag to members of the Otis Smith family who were present for the ceremony.

How did the Department of California and Pacific come to include all Territories and Possessions of the United States within the Pacific?

Written by Tad D, Campbell, PCinC

In the 2010s, Brother Loran T. Bures, a past Commander of Gen. W. S. Rosecrans Camp No. 2 in Los Angeles, was appointed National Camp-at-Large and Department Organizer.

To accomplish the goals of his office, Brother Bures used the SUVCW's "VISION 2020 Organization Expansion Initiative" as a guide. This initiative was a strategic plan focused on growing the SUVCW through increased membership, expanded departmental jurisdictions, and enhanced structural development. It prioritized strengthening community-based Camps and expanding geographical reach to bolster the Order's presence.

One of Brother Bures' main goals was to make his own office obsolete by ensuring that all states and territories of the United States were included within the jurisdiction of a department.

How was this accomplished? With the concurrence of the leadership of the respective Departments, and the creation of new Departments, those areas not already covered by a Department were added to existing Departments or included upon formation of new Departments.

Such actions included adding North Dakota to the Department of Nebraska, adding Caribbean Territories and Possessions to the Department of Florida, and the establishment of the Department of Columbia, which included the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

On November 1, 2014, Commander-in-Chief Tad D. Campbell issued General Order No. 9, Series 2014-2015, which ordered that our Department's jurisdiction be expanded to include "all Territories and Possessions of the United States within the Pacific, including the Territory of American Samoa, the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Baker Island, Howland Island, Jarvis Island, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Midway Islands, Palmyra Atoll, and Wake Island." The Department would continue to include Nevada and Hawaii, and its name would remain "Department of California and Pacific."

This was not a new concept. There was historical precedence for having territories and possessions in the Pacific attached to the Department of California and Pacific. In 1896, just ten years after the Department was formed, the George F. Wiltze Camp No. 4 in Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands was chartered and assigned to our Department. In 1898 the Admiral Geo. W. Dewey Camp No. 11 was formed in Manila, Philippine Islands and likewise attached to our department.

Thus, our Department has a long history of stewardship over the Pacific.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS MESSAGE

By Dr. Wayne L. Eder, DC



Greetings, Brothers and Friends!

I pray you are all well! This year is moving along quickly. I have enjoyed visiting and chatting with you either in person, electronically, or by phone over the last several months, and I enjoy participating in your events. It was great seeing thirteen of our brothers at the National Encampment in July. It was an honor to report on your activities.

Congratulations to the award recipients at the National Encampment, including:

- Camp 18 & Rudy Velasco – Marshall Hope Award for Best Newsletter
- Jerry Sayre – Camp 21
 - Meritorious Service Award with Gold Star (Medal of Honor projects)
 - David R. Medert Award (Recruitment)
 - Certificate of Recognition (Recruitment)
- Kimberley Sayre – Certificate of Recognition – (Support of Camp 21 and the Department)

Congratulations to our nominees who were not selected; however, we are very proud of your efforts:

- William Harrington – Camp 2 – Certificate of Recognition (Graves Registration)
- Randy Dhindsa – Camp 32 – Certificate of Recognition (“The Boys in Blue” music video)

Congratulations to our SVR members who received promotions or awards from the Sons of Veterans Reserve (SVR):

- Reverend Gary Dickey (Promoted to 1st Lieutenant)
- Fred Hall (Promoted to Captain – Adjutant & subsequently retired)

The Encampment was exciting to say the least. I was honored to be appointed to the National Committee on Civil War Monuments and Memorials, and pleasantly surprised and humbled to receive an SVR promotion to Lieutenant Colonel from Brigadier General Don Darby.

I was hoping to join the Southern California Camps at the Huntington Beach Reenactment on Labor Day weekend. Unfortunately, with the passing of Brother Donald Hotchkiss Jr., PCC – Camp 31, I will need to attend a grave dedication in Tonopah, NV that weekend. Don was an outstanding historian, and he will be greatly missed. We are honored to be wrapping up one of his major projects.

Special thanks to our Department Counselor Daniel Earl and the Department Council for your efforts in replacing our SVC and JVC. Congratulations to our new SVC, Robert Mayer PCC, and JVC, John Morris CC, on their appointments. Thanks also to our Encampment Committee for your hard work as we work toward next year's encampment.

Please continue the strong work each of you is doing to remember the “Boys in Blue”, which reminds me,

THANK YOU to Secretary/Treasurer Randy Dhindsa for creating this music video about the SUVCW. On a related note, if you get the opportunity to watch the SUVCW Memorial University short movie, “The Commander” starring PCinC Kevin Tucker, I assure you it is worth the watch. Both are available on YouTube.

Thanks to each of you for honoring the “Boys in Blue”. I am sure they are looking down from heaven and smiling as we work together to keep their memories alive.

Until next time, stay safe.

Dr. Wayne L. Eder, DC

Department Commander

Department of California and Pacific – National Encampment



California & Pacific Delegates at National Encampment - Jule 30 – August 2 – Gettysburg, PA
At the National Encampment the 6th MD SVR Commander Wayne Eder was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel
by Brigadier General Don Darby at the SVR Breakfast

Photo credits: Ed Norris SUVCW - National Photographer

Department Commander's Schedule

Date	Event	Camp
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September		
9/5	Camp 31 Meeting (NV)	31
9/6	Tonopah, NV Civil War & Span Am War Grave Dedication	31
9/17	Constitution Day, Hemet, CA	18
October		
10/3	Poway Rendezvous, Poway, CA	21
November		
11/7	Veteran's Day Evergreen Memorial Park, Riverside, CA	18/21
11/14	SVR Remembrance Day, Gettysburg, PA	SVR
December		
12/5	1 PM Camp Meeting & Installation, Fallbrook, CA	21
12/12	10 AM Camp Meeting & Installation of Officers, Corona, CA	18

NOTE: The Department Commander's calendar fills up fast! Please contact him to schedule events ASAP! commander@suvpac.org

SUVCW Memorial University

Have you completed a course at Memorial University?
Why not? Please share with new recruits and all Camp Brothers!

Recommended Courses:

For new members – *Introduction to the SUVCW*
For Camp Officers – *Charter, Constitution & Regulations Course*

Enroll Today!

Questions? Contact patrioticinstructor@sucwv.org

4th of July Flag-Raising Ceremony at Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial

Written by John M. Morris Commander, Camp 18
Commander, Co A, 1st CA Cavalry (Dismounted) HQ Guard SVR



The Department of California and Pacific, represented by members of General W.S. Rosecrans Camp 2, General George Stoneman Jr. Camp 18, and Sergeant William Pittenger Camp 21, and the 6th Military District (SVR), represented by the same members in Company A, 1st CA Cavalry (dismounted) Headquarters Guard, participated in the annual Flag-raising Ceremony at Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial on Saturday morning, 4 July 2026, commemorating America's 250th Birthday!

Brothers from the following SUVCW/SVR participated: Camp 2, Bill Harrington and Kristen Anderson; Camp 18: John Morris, Rudy Velasco and; Larry Duncan; Camp 21, Commander (Dr.) Wayne Eder, and Wayne Eder II

Commander of the Department of California and Pacific and the 6th Military District Sons of Veterans Reserve, Lt Col Wayne Eder, gave a speech on how the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 impacted the future of the Civil War, and how the lessons learned by the American Officers who served and fought together in the Mexican-American War were later used to fight against each other when they served on opposite sides of the battlefield in the Civil War.

After his presentation, Lt Col Eder and his son, Wayne Eder II, raised the American flag while members of our Department joined with Mexican-American War reenactors to provide the Honor Guard for the flag-raising ceremony.

At the end of the ceremony, three members (Brothers John Morris, Rudy Velasco and Larry Duncan) served in the joint firing detail and helped fired a total of 28 rounds to honor each state represented on the 28-star flag.

In the group picture above (left) are members of Company A, 1st CA Cavalry (dismounted) are as follows: Department Commander and Commander of the 6th Military District, Lt Col Wayne Eder; Brother John Morris, Brother Bill Harrington, Brother Kristen Anderson, Brother Larry Duncan, Brother Rudy Velasco, and Brother Wayne Eder II

The Commander of the Fort Moore Garrison, Paul Hoffman, invited SUVCW/SVR to participate again next year. So put it on your calendar for next year!

From The Office of Department Senior Vice Commander

Written by Robert J. Mayer Department SVC

Greetings Brothers of the Department of CA and the Pacific. I wanted to start off by thanking the Department Council for putting their trust in me and appointing me to the Office of Department Senior Vice Commander. I would also like to take a moment to say good luck to the new Department Junior Vice Commander John Morris. Since taken the office of Senior Vice Commander I have been working hard planning for the next Department Encampment, and I would like to give everyone an update on how that is going.

With the help of Department Commander Wayne Eder, we had a place to host the meeting and the banquet. This place was going to be the Masonic Lodge in San Luis Obispo, and they agreed to the dates of April 10 or the 17 weekend. We thought this was going to work but since then we have found out that those dates were spring break and the prices skyrocketed to between 300 to 600 a night per room. After the prices that were given to me, I investigated switching the meeting back to March, but the prices given per room were about 170 a night. We agreed that this price was too high. With the help of members of the Department of CA and Pacific we are now looking at other options. I would like to thank all the members that have stepped up and have agreed to help with the search. If anyone has any suggestions or has a lead to a cheaper place to hold the encampment you can reach out to me at Robert.j.mayer1@gmail.com and I will bring to the committee.

This year I also attended the National Encampment that was held in Gettysburg. For the members of the Department that went it was great to see everyone there. The National Encampment I think went well this year besides falling behind due to the recommendations that were voted on. Some great news at the SVR breakfast the 6th Military District Commander Wayne Eder was promoted from Major to LT. Col. Congrats Lt. Col it is well deserved. Another award that was awarded was the camp with the best newsletter nationwide and that went to Camp 18. Congrats Camp 18. I also want to say big congrats to Jerry Sayer, who was awarded many awards for recruiting. Congrats Jerry, I know it is a lot of work and is very well deserved. Also, a congrats to Jerry wife Kim Sayer who was recognized for all the support she gives the Department and the Soans. If I am missing awards, I am sorry but congratulations to everyone that received awards at the National Encampment from the SUVCW or the SVR. Next year's encampment will be held in Tennessee outside of Nashville.

SUVCW Celebrating America 250

Written Rudy Velasco PDC, Camp 18

Brother Ben Hobbins PCC from the Department of Wisconsin is on the National SUVCW America 250 committee and came up with a fund-raising project with Written Rudy Velasco PDC, Camp 18 an America 250 celebration idea while Honoring our Union Civil War forefathers at the same time.

Brother Hobbins contacted Henry Repeating Firearms to inquire about having a ceremonial and collectable rifle produced to honor the Civil War Union Veterans and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The result is a beautifully, precision engraved functioning rifle – the 1860 SUV EAGLE 44-40. The receiver is engraved solid brass, and the capacity is 13 rounds.

The Henry 1860 rifle project and contract runs through 2033, the same number of years as the American Revolution (8) 1776 – 1783, again celebrating America 250.

These Henry repeating rifles will be retailed to the public but there is a special discounted price for SUVCW Brothers. You will have to contact Department Commander Eder for the “Members Only” discount coupon code.

Brother Hobbins ordered his 1860 SUV EAGLE Henry rifle earlier this summer and on August 5th of this year was called to a local gun shop where his new rifle was shipped to for inspection and pick up. This was an exciting experience holding that beautiful collectable rifle with the serial number of SUVEAG000001.



California & Pacific Department Chaplain Rudy Velasco, Brother Ben's daughter – DUVCW Sister Ashley-Anne Hobbins, attended the rifle unboxing and participated in a short ceremony and prayer.

The short ceremony continues with these words; Ladies and Gentlemen, families, patriots, members of the Order, the Henry 1860 SUV Eagle(c) rifle honors a piece of United States history, and President Lincoln's Civil War Boys in Blue, American freedom.

As a tribute rifle, the Henry 1860 rifle takes America back to the rifle's historical, symbolic roles as a commemorative rifle.

Its role today serves America and the Order, as a very collectible, family heirloom and ceremonial tribute rifle, rather than a weapon of war. It is with these truths that we dedicate and present a prayer for this Henry 1860 SUV Eagle(c) tribute rifle today.

Invocation; Almighty God,

We gather here today in reverence and gratitude, standing before this commemorative rifle — not as a tool of war, but as a symbol of sacrifice, courage, and the enduring spirit of those who served the United States during the Civil War, acknowledging American History and the nation's Boys in Blue, and their sacrifices to preserve the United States.

Lord, we remember these men who once bore arms in defense of the nation, freedom, their hearts that beat with steadfast resolve, and the lives that were given so that others might live in freedom and peace.

This rifle stands as a silent witness and tribute to their bravery, a tangible reminder of the cost of liberty, testaments to the American values they upheld, and to the nation that so many gave their last full measures of devotion.

We dedicate this SUVCW 1860 SUV Eagle(c) Henry rifle today:

As a memorial to the fallen, whose voices are now silent but whose legacies speaks through generations of their descendants, our Order and our nation.

As a teaching symbol for all who see it, that they may understand the weight of service and the price of peace and freedom.

As a pledge that we, too, will stand for freedom, flag, country, justice, honor, duty, and the dignity of all people. Bless this rifle, Lord, that it will always serve as a reminder of American History, the courage of men and women that defended the nation, the constitution, freedom, and the ultimate sacrifices made that have sustained the United States to this day.

In closing may all who look upon this tribute rifle be moved to gratitude, fraternity, charity, loyalty to this nation, and be inspired to service, committed to building and preserving a nation where such sacrifices are no longer needed.

Brother Hobbins had to wait another 7 days before he could take his new Henry Repeating Rifle home.

AVAILABLE NOW

1860 SUV EAGLE© 44-40



A Beautiful Ceremonial and Collectible Rifle!

**Precision-made, Precision Engraved,
Highest Quality Firearm with Fancy Stock!**

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ON DISPLAY at our Gettysburg Encampment

www.HenryUSA.com/1860SUV_Eagle

Sgt. William. Pittenger, Camp 21 Happenings

Written by Frank Hall Commander, Camp 21

August Camp Meeting,

When I was sworn in as CC last December, our Camp had 46 members.

We are halfway through our Camp year, and our PDC-JVC Jerry Sayre has brought in 41 new, dues paying members.

In August, we voted in 11 new members, an all-time record high new-member month!

We have been active; Camp members met at Sgt Wm. Pittenger's grave site in March to re-paint the wrought iron fence around the grave site.

We had our Medal of Honor Day celebration at the newly refreshed gravesite.

At our Camp meeting in April, we took our camp and visitors on a tour of the Fallbrook Historical Society, Sgt Wm. Pittenger's home and the Church where he preached. We had a luncheon in the Church Hall with Brad Quinlin as our guest speaker.

PDC-JVC Jerry Sayre has completed the research to have a duplicate Medal of Honor made for Sgt Wm. Pittenger's direct descendant, Anne Wayman. We presented it to her at the Camp Meeting.

We represented our Camp for our 250 Celebration in the July 4th annual Coronado Parade. Brothers Douglas Wright and Dimas Lovato rode, in uniform, in a Mustang Convertible!

On July 18th we celebrated the Memorial Service at the USS Bennington, U S Navy ship that in 1905, had a boiler explosion, killing 66 sailors in San Diego Harbor. One of the sailors was a Civil War Veteran.

This brings us back to our August Meeting and eleven new members.

Camp 21 is very active. We have participated in a Civil War meeting or an event almost every month.

Living History in the Bay Area

Written by Steve Johnson Secretary, Camp 24

In February and July of this year, members of Camp 24 joined reenactors of the 20th Maine at Fort Point to portray the lives of soldiers and civilians in the 1860s. Also present were the Wandering Bow string band playing music of the period, Thaddeus Lowe of the U.S. Balloon Corps (portrayed by Army veteran Kevin Knapp), volunteers from the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz, and ladies representing the U.S. Sanitary Commission.

Many items were on display, including weapons, uniforms, recruitment posters, woodworking tools, and medical instruments shown by brother Frank Avila, Camp 4. And as an NPS Volunteer, I was able to give tours of the fort and narrate its history. The 20th Maine did military exercises and cannon drills.



The goal at this event was to inform people about the history of the fort, how soldiers lived in a garrison situation, and why California was important during the Civil War. The reenactors stayed overnight in the barracks to get a real feel for life at the fort, as they took turns doing sentry duty all through the night.

Another bi-annual Living History Day was held on **Alcatraz Island**, the site of Fort Alcatraz, on July 11th. Visitors (averaging 3,000 a day) were surprised to see Civil War soldiers on the dock as they arrived. Most of the participants were the same as Fort Point.

Visitors were surprised to learn about the importance of California in the Civil War. The large number of visitors gave us the opportunity to inform them about the Civil War history of Alcatraz, and that for most of its history. Alcatraz was a military installation. Brothers from other camps are always welcome to join us. The next Living History Day on Alcatraz will be on October 3rd, just before Fleet Week.



Great-Great Grandson of Ulysses S. Grant Passes Away!

Written Rudy Velasco PDC, Camp 18

OBIT: John Grant Griffiths passed away peacefully at Hughes Home Riverside on July 7, 2026, close to his Fredericksburg home. A retired museum curator and well-known volunteer living history interpreter, John was a member of several historical organizations, both nationally and in the Fredericksburg region.

John was born on July 15, 1938, in Little Rock, Arkansas, to then-Captain David Wood Griffiths, a U.S. Army engineer, and Edith Grant Griffiths, a graduate of Bryn Mawr College. **John's interest in history began early with his family heritage: he was the great-great-grandson of President and General Ulysses S. Grant, the great-grandson of former Secretary of War Elihu Root, and the grandson of Major General Ulysses S. Grant III.**

After graduating from Washington and Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia, in 1956, John attended the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Upon returning to the Washington area, he threw himself into his passion for living history. He was a founding member of the North-South Skirmish Association's 1st Maryland Blackhat's. Later, during the Civil War Centennial, he was a founding member of the First Maryland Regiment.

John continued to participate in living history events throughout his life, including reenactments of the early colonial period, the American Revolution, and the Civil War. He was involved in events celebrating the Bicentennial of the American Revolution, as well as historical commemorations in France and the United Kingdom.

Throughout his life, John spoke with newspapers and magazines about his famous ancestor, President Grant, and enthusiastically promoted an interest in American history to everyone he met. From 1987 until his retirement in 1998, he served as Curator of Ordnance at the Marine Corps Museum in Quantico. Here, his intricate knowledge of historical American weapons proved invaluable.

John lived in Fredericksburg for his final 37 years. Here, he was active in the **Sons of Union Veterans**, the Company of Military Historians, the Welsh Society, and several local Civil War Round Tables and living history organizations.

John is survived by two sisters, Frances Griffiths of Alexandria, Virginia, and Nancy Price of Evergreen, Colorado; two nieces, Jessamine Price and Dr. Eleanor Price (Zach Leach); two nephews, Owen Price (Katy) and Michael Fredenthal; and one grand-niece and two grand-nephews, Olive, Gabe, and Leo.

He was predeceased in death by his brother, Richard, and his sister, Marian.

John was an active member of Sons of Union Veteran of Civil War – Irish Brigade Camp Virginia – Department of Chesapeake (VA,WV,DE,MD).

Forgotten WRC Monument Next to Los Angeles City Hall

Cooperation with L.A. Historians and Preservationists leads to discovery

Written by William Harrington Commander, Camp 2

In Honor of the G.A.R.

By the late 1930's, Stanton Post, 55, G.A.R., the predominant G.A.R. post in the LA area, was down to a handful of members - most in their 90s. Between the mid 1930-40s, the Women's Relief Corps (WRC) as well as the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, commissioned and presented a number of bronze plaques honoring the G.A.R. as well as individual members of the same.

Generally, these plaques were set in front of trees. The following examples were dedicated in Lincoln Park in Long Beach, California during the 73rd Dept of California & Nevada, G.A.R. Encampment, held that year, in Long Beach. Unfortunately, most - if not all - of these plaques are now missing and presumed "lost". The trees that served as living monuments, cut down. I spent a day wandering around Lincoln Park, LB City Hall and the LB public library looking for information regarding their location, where I met and spoke to a Long Beach historian and librarian, who researched the history of the plaques in LB - but never saw a single one.

Some examples of these plaques are shown below:



So, imagine my surprise when I heard about a plaque in Los Angeles, City Hall Park Center that was previously unknown and unregistered with the SUCVW. Alerted by our friends at Esotouric - LA historians and preservationists - to its existence, I immediately drove down to the park and there it was - one of the last original WRC bronze plaques - "in the wild".



The tree and plaque were dedicated in 1938, by Stanton Post 16, WRC, in honor of Dr. Overton H Mennet, Commander-in Chief of the G.A.R. during a ceremony in the park next to City Hall. Then governor of California, Frank F. Merriam, gave the dedication speech where he said in part, "It is especially fitting, that a tree, almost immortal because of its long life, should be chosen to honor our Civil War veterans". That's an

important point. The plaque is not the monument. The monument was the tree - in this case, Coastal Redwood. The plaque was there to identify it as such.

Sadly, the monument was cut down around 2017 - although the stump served as an unofficial park stool for many years. Then, sometime after 2024, the stump was mulched. Now, all that remains is the plaque - without any context to explain why it's there and few who know who it is supposed to memorialize. The cement foundation is damaged, and the plaque itself is scratched - likely run over by a lawn mower or other heavy machinery.

Ideally, another tree could be planted where the original one once stood (perhaps something more practical than Coastal Redwood, such as a California Oak). Or perhaps the plaque should be moved to some place where it would be safe from vandalism and/or theft, and its significance can be understood and appreciated. Currently, Rosecrans, Camp 2 SUVCW is trying to find out which city department is willing to help. Hopefully we'll get an answer soon.

Star-Spangled Banner

Written by Clay Hoffman – Department Patriot Instructor

America's national anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, was inspired by the War of 1812. After observing the British bombardment of Fort McHenry during the Battle of Baltimore in 1814, Francis Scott Key wrote the poem *Defense of Fort McHenry* when he witnessed the American flag flying triumphantly over the fort at dawn.

Key's presence that morning was the result of a unique sequence of events. On August 28, 1814, his friend, William Beanes, a physician who resided in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, was arrested by British forces after the Burning of Washington and the Raid on Alexandria. He was accused of aiding the detention of several British stragglers who were ransacking local homesteads.

Desiring to help his friend, William Beanes, Francis Scott Key traveled, on September 3, from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, where he arrived on the morning of September 4. He located Colonel John Stuart Skinner, an American agent for prisoners of war, who operated a 60-foot sloop-rigged packet ship.

The ship, having a nine-man crew, sailed from Baltimore the next day out through the Patapsco River and then south, down the Chesapeake Bay, with Key and Skinner aboard. The two men rendezvoused with HMS *Royal Oak* on September 6, and learned that William Beanes was aboard HMS *Tonnant*, which was further down the Bay. The next day, Key and Skinner reached the *Tonnant* and went aboard.

While on the *Tonnant*, they secured the release of Beanes after conversing with Major-General Robert Ross and Vice-Admiral Alexander Cochrane. Ross initially refused to release Beanes, but changed his mind after reading letters, provided by Key, which were written by wounded British prisoners of war praising American physicians for their kind treatment.

Having overheard details of plans for the attack on Baltimore, Key and Skinner were prevented from going

ashore until after the battle. From *Tonnant*, the two men were transferred to the frigate HMS *Surprise* on the morning of September 8, and then to a truce vessel, as the fleet progressed up the Chesapeake toward Baltimore.

At first light, on September 13, the British attack began as the 16-ship force commenced firing on Fort McHenry. The bombardment lasted for 25 hours. During the rainy day and through the night, Key witnessed the bombardment while aboard the truce vessel. On the morning of September 14, he saw that the large garrison flag (30 X 42 ft) had been raised over the fort.

When Key set about writing his poem, he recalled that the HMS *Erebus* provided the “rockets’ red glare”, while the heavy-mortar bomb ships HMS *Terror*, *Volcano*, *Devastation*, *Meteor* and *Aetna* provided the “bombs bursting in air”. Approximately 1,500 to 1,800 bomb shells and over 700 rockets were fired at the fort but with minimal casualties. Four men died and 24 were wounded.

After Key and Skinner were released from the fleet, they arrived in Baltimore on the evening of September 14. Having written some of the lyrics on the back of an envelope, Francis Scott Key finished the poem at the Indian Queen Hotel, which was a well-known tavern.

Key’s poem was set to the music of a popular British song and soon became known as the *Star-Spangled Banner*. It was not until 1899, when it was recognized for official use by the United States Navy. On March 3, 1931, the U.S. Congress passed a joint resolution making the song the official national anthem of the United States, which President Herbert Hoover signed into law.

The actual flag that flew over Fort McHenry had 15 stars and 15 stripes and had been made by Mary Young Pickersgill and other workers in her Baltimore home. The flag later came to be known as the Star-Spangled Banner and is on display today at the National Museum of American History.

Presentation of National Meritorious Service Award with Gold Star

Written by Dr. Wayne L. Eder, Department Commander



Jerry Sayre Commander, Camp 21, received the National Meritorious Service Award with Gold Star for his support of Medal of Honor projects from Department Commander Dr. Wayne L. Eder.

Camp 21, USS Bennington Memorial Service

Photo Credit Kim Sayre



Pictured L to R: PCC Mark Goodman, PSVC Doug Wright, Trevor Stolinski, SVC Larry Stolinski, Mike Schooling, CC Fred Hall, Wyatt Roose, PDC Jerry Sayre, and Dimas Lovato – also attending were Steve Circo and Brother Richard Salts (missing from photo)

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