



The Railsplitter

The Newsletter of the Department of Illinois

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



Summer 2023

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COMMANDER'S CORNER



The National Encampment will be held in Nashua, New Hampshire from August 3-6. Safe travels are extended to all who plan to attend. The main topics will include Son's membership requirements and Brothers skills set survey.

Shot glasses are on sale to help fund the Stephenson Memorial in Petersburg. The summer is half over and I hope you have all had some time to travel and relax. Stay well and I hope to see you all in Ottawa in October for our midterm meeting.

In Fraternity Charity and Loyalty

Gary Gunderson,

Commander, Department of Illinois

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



We have several bird feeders around our home, and I have once again concluded that they are divided into Liberals and Conservatives. However, when it comes to feeding - they are all Independents. Sparrows will chase finches, and red headed sparrows will chase goldfinches - and they will all chase their own kind off - so that they can get to the feeder. It seems to me that they were all hatched and learned survival in the Capital, where such activity is common.

We must come to the conclusion that Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty requires us to share, help one another, and not put ourselves first. If you agree with me - say AMEN.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty

Chaplain Jerry

On May 11 at the Department's Annual Encampment in Decatur, IL, Brother Gary Gunderson (Camp #2), was elected Dept Commander; Brother Bobby Welch (Camp 39), was elected DSVC; Brother David Wildermuth (Camp #443), was elected DJVC; Brother Don Sherman (Camp #1), was elected DS; Brother Lee Lasseigne (Camp #2), was elected DT; and Brothers Wayne Wehrheim (Camp #67), Richard Hoover (Camp #26), and Joseph Kessler (Camp #4) were elected Council. (APPRECIATION IS EXTENDED TO BROTHERS STEVEN WESTLAKE AND DAVID WILDERMUTH FOR SUBMITTING THIS INFORMATION.) - COURTESY BR CHUCK MURPHY

PATRIOTIC INSTUCTION



Patriotism is a feeling of love, devotion, and sense of attachment to one's country. This attachment can be a combination of many different feelings, language relating to one's own homeland, including cultural, ethnic, political, or historical aspects.

The English word 'Patriot' derived from "Compatriot," in the 1590's, from Middle French "Patriote" in the 15th century. The French word's "Compatriote" and "Patriote" originated directly from the late Latin Patroita "fellow countryman," in the 6th century. Ultimately for the Greek Patriotes "fellow countryman: from Patrios "of one's fathers," Partis "fatherland." The term was originally applied to Barbarians who only held their language, customs, and dedication to their fatherland instead of adapting to their country of residence.

Many people opposed patriotism as these so-called patriots held that their faith and government were one and the same, adhering to no separation of church and state. In some cases, this was true, as church prelates were also members of the governing body of matters of state from these countries. Opponents left to seek a better life in another country.

"I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag"

Simply stated, patriotism is the feeling of love for one's country. Demonstrating patriotism—being "patriotic"—is one of the necessities of being the stereotypical "good citizen." However, patriotism, like many well-intentioned habits, can be harmful when taken to the extreme. Patriotism is the feeling and expression of love for one's home country along with a feeling of unity with others who share those feelings. Though it shares patriotism's love of country, nationalism is the belief that one's country is superior to all others. While considered a necessary attribute of good citizenship, when patriotism becomes politically mandatory, it can cross a line.

"of the United States of America"

The first American patriots were the founding fathers, who risked their lives and fortunes to free the colonies from British rule. The single sentence in The Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." In this statement of rights it was an acknowledgement that every citizen could pursue personal fulfillment, such as ambition and creativity, that would fuel the nation's economy. As a result, the pursuit of happiness became and remains the force behind America's entrepreneurial system of free-market capitalism.

"And to the Republic"

As the Civil War began, white northerners viewed the public's patriotic feelings as a crucial part of the military effort. To cultivate this emotional commitment, they turned to Christianity, with its call for self-sacrifice, and merging love of home and hearth with devotion to the nation. But some questioned whether Northern society had become too focused on a love of money and things to properly rise to the occasion. Soon, though, it became clear that consumerism could be the means of patriotic sentiment. Within weeks of the bombing of Fort Sumter, individuals and businesses would fly the Stars and Stripes. Philadelphia and New York were awash in American flags. At first, they were handmade, but with the great demand meant retailers quickly began stocking mass-produced ones, along with flag pins and Union-themed

jewelry. Soon, printers and publishers filled the market for consumer goods with patriotic and war-themed books, maps, songbooks, and games. As I covered in a previous article one extremely popular product was stationery printed with images of flags, wartime generals, and Lady Liberty. Some merchants sold these items advising consumers “to sustain the government and the flag,” though they were sold purely for profit, not to benefit any wartime efforts. As a side note the cost to mail one of these letters and envelopes to our boys in blue cost \$1.60 in Civil War period money.

“For which it stands”

For the four years of the Civil War, the advocates of racial oppression and political reaction endeavored to destroy the United States. For fourscore years before that, however, they were the country’s most stalwart friends. In the period only later dubbed the antebellum era, Southerners weren’t aching to leave the Union. Instead, they sought to strengthen it, expand it, and further solidify their control of its most powerful and least representative institution: the Senate, the Presidency, and the Supreme Court. Until Lincoln’s election in 1860, many Southern whites, including slaveholders, considered themselves patriotic Americans; even, they incessantly boasted, the most loyal. After their states moved to secede and form a rival Southern nation, Confederates believed they were the ones holding true, if not to the flag they had always revered, at least to what it had always stood for: slavery, states’ rights, and white supremacy. Southern slaveholders, nearly to a man, loved and cherished the Union and were sorry to depart from it. They seceded only to remain loyal to a country and Constitution as they understood it. “If we cannot save the Union, we may save the blessings it enshrines,” one reverend preached in New Orleans in November 1860. “If we cannot preserve the vase, we will preserve the precious liquor it contains.”

“One Nation, Under God, Indivisible”

Shortly after Appomattox, former Confederates were once again offering odes to the glorious Union they had so recently attempted to destroy. This wasn’t hypocrisy; it made sense. While they were proud of the attempt they had made to stand up for their supposed rights, the defeated rebels now recognized that their patriotic forefathers had been right after all. The Union itself offered the best protection for the system of racial subordination and unfree labor they depended upon, which they now sought to re-establish in fact if not in name. In 1867 former Confederate senator Benjamin Hill from Georgia stated that the Union is “the wisest, noblest, and grandest contribution ever made by the human intellect to the science of government.” For Senator Hill and many others, both the United States and the Confederacy were founded on white supremacy. The rebellion that created one had succeeded, the other failed. Wealthy Southerners trusted that the four years of death and suffering would convince Americans in the North never again to challenge the fundamental compromises that had been made in order to enact the Constitution in the first place.

“With Liberty and Justice for All.”

From this short composition it is evident that both sides of the Civil War were comprised of patriotic Americans. Sadly, it had to come to war for both sides to realize that Patriotism can be carried too far.

Respectfully Submitted in F. C. L. Michael Zafran,
PCC and Patriotic Instructor, Dept of Illinois

(As I read Brother Zafran’s very fine article above, I felt inspired to cite “The Pledge of Allegiance”. The pledge is inserted between his paragraphs as a token of respect and to compliment his first-rate effort. - Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy)

SPECIAL NOTICE

Sadly, we regret to inform you that Brother David Wildermuth passed away on July 20, 2023. He was the Department Junior Vice Commander and Camp Commander of Hecker Camp #443 Belleville. More information about Brother Dave will be included in the Fall 2023 edition of the “Railsplitter”. Our hearts go out to his family, his friends, Camp #443, and to all of his Brothers.

CAMP NOTES

Sheridan Camp #2 Aurora



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT ABOVE ARE BROTHER ERIC PRY, CURATOR OF THE AURORA GAR HALL, AURORA DEPUTY MAYOR TRUJILLO, DPI MICHAEL ZAFRAN, NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JEROME KOWALSKI AND, FROM CALIFORNIA, BROTHER FRED C. HALL. BROTHER HALL CEREMONIALLY PRESENTED THE CIVIL WAR DIARY OF HIS GREAT GRANDFATHER, FREDERICK THAYER, PAST POST COMMANDER OF THE GAR HALL, TO ERIC PRY ON MAY 30, 2023. THE DIARY WAS INITIALLY SENT TO THE HALL DURING COVID, BUT BROTHER HALL DROVE TO THE GAR HALL ALL THE WAY FROM CALIFORNIA TO MAKE THE PRESENTATION IN PERSON. WE APPRECIATE BROTHER HALL JOINING US FOR SUCH A SPECIAL EVENT. COURTESY BR MICHAEL ZAFRAN.



IN THESE PHOTOS CAMP 2 BROTHERS PREPARE TO MARCH AND RIDE IN THE 4TH OF JULY PARADE HINSDALE, IL. THERE WAS A LARGE TURNOUT ALONG THE PARADE ROUTE WHICH IS ALWAYS EXCITING TO SEE.



FRATERNITY CHARITY LOYALTY



ABOVE LEFT IS CC LEE LASSEIGNE OFFERING A FEW REMARKS AND ON THE RIGHT ARE CAMP 2 BROTHERS CELEBRATING MEMORIAL DAY AT WEST AURORA CEMETERY IN AURORA.



ON THE RIGHT, STANDING BEFORE THE SEATED BAND, IS DPI MICHAEL ZAFRAN WHO MC'D THE WHEATON, IL 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION IN PLEASANT HILL CEMETERY. IN THE PHOTO BELOW RIGHT IS DSVC BOBBY WELCH, STANDING NEXT TO BROTHER ZAFRAN. BROTHER WELCH WAS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR A MEMORIAL DAY GATHERING AT LINCOLN NATIONAL CEMETERY, AND BROTHER ZAFRAN WAS THE SINGER FOR THE 16TH TIME. THAT BROTHER ZAFRAN CAN REALLY CARRY A TUNE!



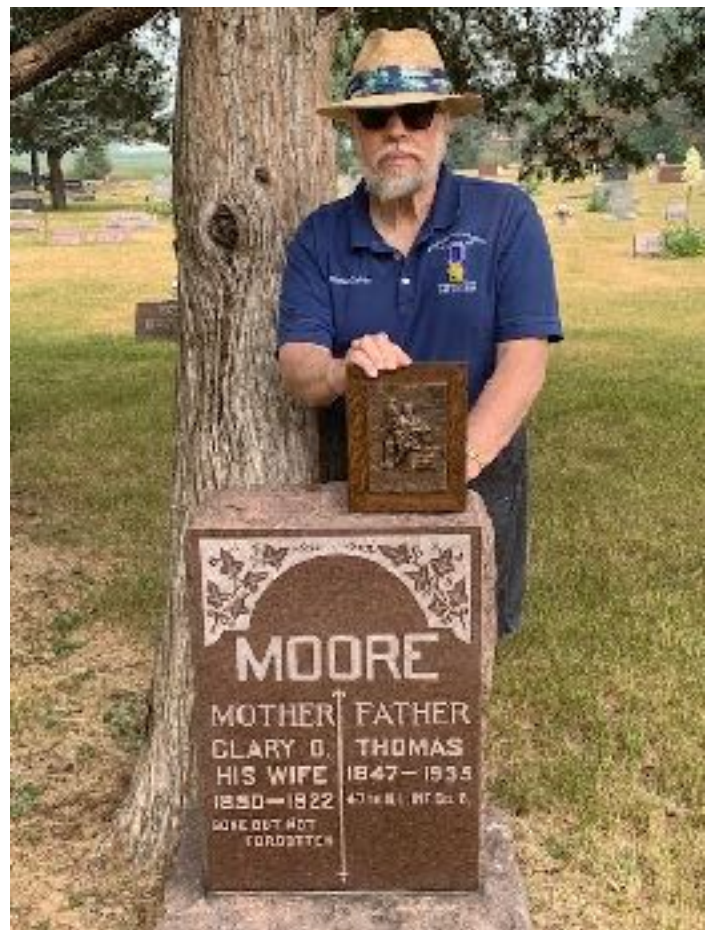
ABOVE DPI MICHAEL ZAFRAN LEADS IN SONG AS CAMP #2 AND OTHER BROTHERS GATHER FOR A MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY AT JEWEL GROVE CEMETERY IN WHEATON, IL. A VERY NICE GROUP PHOTO OF CAMP #2 IS IMMEDIATELY BELOW AT THE TOP OF THE NEXT PAGE. COURTESY BR MICHAEL ZAFRAN.



The Union forever, hurrah boys hurrah!



TO THE RIGHT DPI MICHAEL ZAFRAN IS STANDING AT THE GRAVE OF THOMAS MOORE, LAST VETERAN OF THE CIVIL WAR FROM GRUNDY COUNTY BURIED IN STAPLE CEMETERY, MORRIS, IL. THE BRONZE PLAQUE WAS CREATED BY PDC, BROTHER STUART STEFANY, OF CAMP #1. THE PLAQUE WILL BE ADDED TO MOORE'S COLLECTION AT CARBON HILL, IL HISTORICAL MUSEUM. A CLOSE-UP PHOTO OF THE PLAQUE IS PICTURED BELOW. - COURTESY BR MICHAEL ZAFRAN



McClelland Camp #4 Springfield

A joint endeavor of the 114th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment and Camp 4, eighty-plus attended Memorial Day ceremonies at the GAR mound down the hill behind Lincoln’s Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery. We welcomed and appreciated the participation of a number of Ladies joining us this year from various patriotic organizations. They are identified below.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN THE ABOVE PHOTO IS LYNDA KERSTEIN, REGENT, SPRINGFIELD CHAPTER, NATIONAL SOCIETY, DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION; DEBRA COE, STATE REGENT, ILLINOIS STATE ORGANIZATION, NATIONAL SOCIETY, DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION; JULIE BARNES, ILLINOIS PRESIDENT, UNITED STATES DAUGHTERS OF 1812; CAROL WOOD, MEMBER, UNITED STATES DAUGHTERS OF 1812; DODA STARKEY, ILLINOIS STATE HISTORIAN, NATIONAL SOCIETY, DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION; AND MARY BARRINGER, MEMBER, DAUGHTERS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR. (FOR THE PHOTO AND IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUAL LADIES WE’RE INDEBTED TO LYNDA KERSTEIN). COURTESY BR CHUCK MURPHY

Memorial Day 2023



OLD GLORY AND THE 114TH ARE PICTURED ON THE RIGHT, AND ON THE LEFT IS A PHOTO OF BROTHER (AND MC) RICHARD SCHACHTSIEK IN THE BACKGROUND, AND BROTHER LARRY WERLINE, AKA GENERAL GRANT, OFFERING REMARKS AT THE PODIUM.



A Memorial Day Memory

A generation or so ago, back when I was still in the Springfield labor force - but prior to joining the Order - I was a confirmed but still closeted Civil War buff and every year I would attend Memorial Day ceremonies at the GAR mound at Oak Ridge Cemetery.

Jackie Wright was a fixture at those ceremonies. She was a well-known activist and leader in several Allied Orders, and a tireless supporter of General John A. McClernand. For years, she taught at McClernand elementary school here in town. The school is located on the same site as the McClernand family home once occupied on the northeast corner of 6th and Enos Streets.

Jackie was the first person to expose me to Civil War poetry, and every year she would read all seven stanzas of "The Blue and the Gray", by Francis Miles Finch. A native Oklahoman, her voice had a distinct drawl, and would very nearly quiver as she slowly and passionately read the poem. It was almost as if she personally knew all 600,000 plus who perished in the war.

She passed a few years ago and of course, I had taken her for granted. I wish that I would have recorded her version of the poem. You couldn't help but be touched. Now that I am an old man, I look back upon her with appreciation for exposing me to the solemnity of Civil War poetry. The third stanza from "The Blue and The Gray" is quoted below:

"From the silence of sorrowful hours

The desolate mourners go,

Lovingly laden with flowers

Alike for the friend and the foe;

Under the sod and the dew,

Waiting the judgement-day;

Under the roses, the Blue,

Under the Lilies, the Gray."

Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy



PHOTOED ABOVE IS THE SUVCW LAST UNION VETERAN MEMORIAL AND PICTURED BELOW IS WILLIAM PRATER, THE LAST CIVIL WAR SOLDIER TO BE BURIED IN ADAMS COUNTY, ILLINOIS. THIS PHOTO OF HIM IS FROM THE SEPTEMBER 1, 1944 EDITION OF THE QUINCY HERALD WHIG NEWSPAPER. CAMP 4 CONDUCTED A LAST SOLDIER CEREMONY AT HIS GRAVESIGHT IN THE CEMETERY AT THE QUINCY VETERANS HOME ON JUNE 24. DESPITE HIM BEING AT ANDERSONVILLE FOR SEVEN MONTHS, AND LIVING WITH THE AFTERMATH OF SCURVY AND OTHER MEDICAL MALADIES, HE LIVED TO THE RIPE OLD AGE OF 100, DYING IN DECEMBER 1944. HE DROVE AN OLD FORD AROUND TOWN ON HIS GOOD DAYS, BUT HAD TO WALK OR ELSE NOT LEAVE THE HOUSE WHEN HE FELT BAD. HE SERVED WITH CO, D, 69TH ILLINOIS INFANTRY FOR A FEW MONTHS, AND THEN CO. A, 14TH ILLINOIS CAVALRY.





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT ABOVE AT THE PRATER EVENT ARE EVENT COORDINATOR/BROTHER RICH JONES, SVC LARRY WERLINE, AND CC JOSEPH KESSLER. IMMEDIATELY BELOW IS A PHOTO OF THE AMERICAN LEGION POST #37 HONOR GUARD, AND PICTURED AT THE BOTTOM ARE THE POST'S TWO TRUMPETERS WHO ECHOED THE PLAYING OF TAPS, BETH YOUNG AND RICHARD SCHMITT.

PLEASE NOTE THE ANGLE OF THIS PHOTO IS VERY NEARLY PERFECT. OLD GLORY IS POSITIONED IMMEDIATELY ABOVE WILLIAM PRATER'S GRAVE. AND INSTEAD OF IN THE SHADOW ON THE FACE SIDE OF PRATER'S HEADSTONE, THE STAR SHAPED "LAST SOLDIER" MEMORIAL IS PICTURED IN THE FOREGROUND ON THE RIGHT, "SUNLIT" SIDE OF THE STONE. THERE IS NO AUDIO BUT YOU CAN TELL AS MUCH BY THE SLIGHT GESTURE OF HIS RIGHT HAND - AS YOU CAN BY HIS PARTIALLY OPENED MOUTH - THAT SAM GRANT IS OFFERING A FEW APPROPRIATE REMARKS IN TRIBUTE TO PRIVATE PRATER. AS THOSE GATHERED LISTENED INTENTLY TO GRANT'S MESSAGE, THE COMPANY OF HEADSTONES FORMED UP BEHIND HIM SEEMED EVERY BIT AS ATTENTIVE. IMAGINE THAT GRANT REMAINS AS POPULAR WITH THEIR HEADSTONES AS HE WAS WITH THE CIVIL WAR VETERANS FOR WHOM THE HEADSTONES KEEP WATCH OVER. FOR IN THEIR EYES IT WAS GRANT WHO NEVER WAVERED. IT WAS GRANT WHO TOOK THE OFFENSIVE. IT WAS GRANT WHO MADE THE DIFFERENCE. IT WAS GRANT WHO LED THEM TO VICTORY. AS GRANT HONORED PRATER, HE ALSO PAUSED TO PAY TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM'S FELLOW BLUEBOYS WHO SUCCESSFULLY PERSEVERED TO SAVE THE UNION. (CREDIT WAYNE WIEKNE, OF THE QUINCY HERALD WHIG NEWSPAPER, FOR THE EXCEPTIONAL



Old Glory Camp #6165 Chicago

IN THE PHOTO ON THE RIGHT, A TERRIFIC YOUNG MAN CADET LINCOLN (YOU GOTTA LOVE THAT NAME) CULP RECEIVED OUR PRESTIGIOUS AWARD FROM PDC NICK KAUP AT THE AWARDS PRESENTATION ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 10TH. EACH MILITARY ACADEMY AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS AS WELL AS MANY OTHER MAJOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO THEIR GRADUATING SENIORS. WHEELING HIGH SCHOOL IS ONE OF THE OLDEST JROTC PROGRAMS IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. OUR FUTURE IS IN GOOD HANDS.

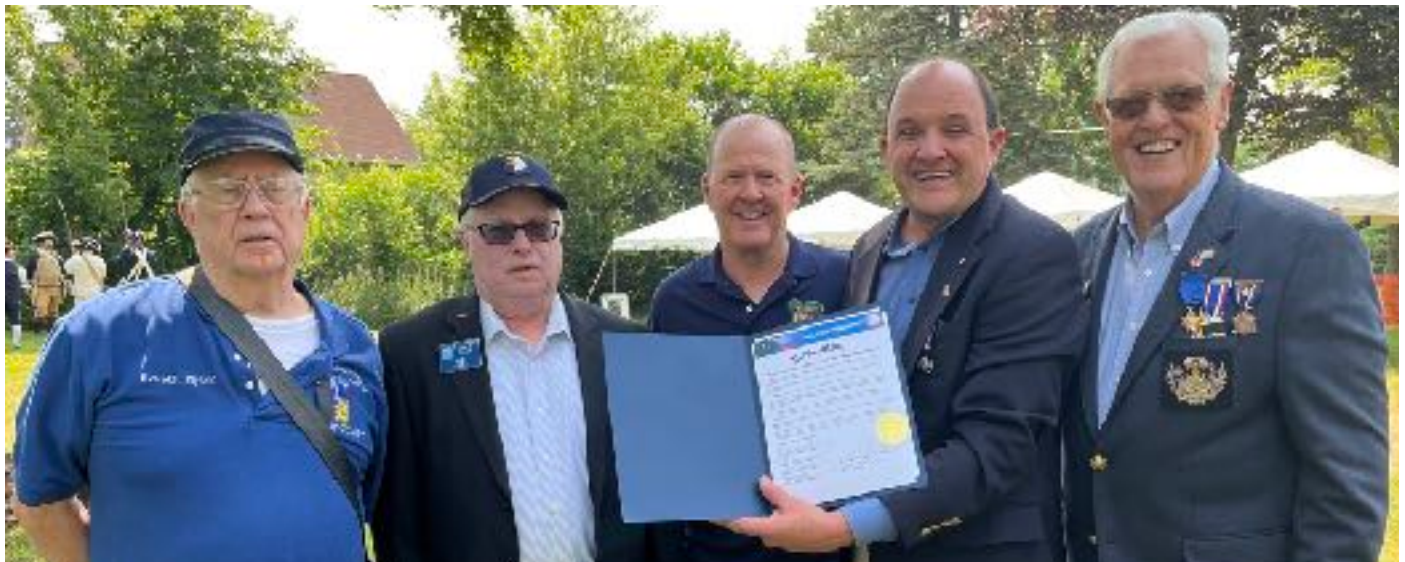
IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, & LOYALTY,
 BROTHER NICK KAUP, PDC
 DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS



ON SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2023 US GRANT CAMP 1863 CELEBRATED ITS ANNUAL FLAG DAY WITH THE CLAYSON HOUSE MUSEUM HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN PALATINE, ILLINOIS. A RESOLUTION WAS GIVEN TO CAMP COMMANDER MIKE GREGORY. THE CAMP RAISED SOME \$360.00 FOR THEIR CAMP FLAG FUND. COLOR GUARDS FROM THE U.S. MARINE CORPS, U.S. COAST GUARD, CHICAGO'S OWN YOUNG MARINES, NJROTC UNIT WHEELING HIGH SCHOOL, LOCAL GIRL AND BOY SCOUT UNITS, SAR UNIT, NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES, AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT AND CAMP SUVCW. CIVIL WAR MUSIC WAS PROVIDED BY ELAINE AND JOHN MASCIALE. FOLDING OF THE AMERICAN FLAG WAS PERFORMED BY THE NJROTC UNIT AND PRESENTED TO A WW2 VETERAN. PICTURED BELOW ARE CAMP MEMBERS PRESENTING THE PROCLAMATION.

In Fraternity, Charity, & Loyalty,
 PDC Brother Nick Kaup

From 1868 to 1970 Memorial Day was celebrated annually on May 30. Congress passed legislation and beginning in 1971, Memorial Day was changed to the fourth Monday in May, converting it to a three day weekend. - Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy





On the left is a photo of the flag being folded. Below is a group photo of the uniformed personnel who participated in the program. It was a splendid event at the Clayson House Museum.

In F.C. and L - PDC Nick Kaup



Brother, PDC, CC Nick Kaup routinely submits a copy of the Union Ridge Cemetery Association newsletter as it always contains articles and announcements relative to its Civil War agenda. Headlines in the newsletter about the Annual Memorial Day ceremonies at Union Ridge are a mainstay and as always, Camp 6165 is in the thick of it. "... 70 plus Civil War soldiers are buried at Union Ridge, one of the oldest cemeteries in Chicagoland." The photo below is of the 1st Illinois Volunteer Light Artillery, Battery L, who fired a Civil War cannon at the conclusion of the proceedings.





ON THE LEFT IN THESE PHOTOS AT UNION RIDGE ARE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JERRY KOWALSKI, HAS SPOUSE, SISTER JOELLEN OF AUXILIARY TENT #3, AND PDC NICK KAUP. IN THE PICTURE ON THE RIGHT ARE A COUPLE OF CHICAGO'S VERY OWN AT PARADE REST. STANDING BELOW AT THE PODIUM CHAPLAIN JERRY IS PRESENTING THE INVOCATION, AND SITTING ON THE FAR RIGHT IS KEYNOTE SPEAKER, BROTHER GENE SALECKER. HIS TOPIC WAS "THE ORIGIN OF MEMORIAL DAY".



“...FOR THE PURPOSE OF STREWING WITH FLOWERS OR OTHERWISE DECORATING THE GRAVES OF COMRADES WHO DIED IN DEFENSE OF THEIR COUNTRY...”

GENERAL ORDER # 11

Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy



In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty
Brother Nick Kaup, PD