



# The Railsplitter

*The Newsletter of the Department of Illinois*

*Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War*



Fall 2023

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## COMMANDER'S CORNER



Our mid year encampment took place in Ottawa on Saturday Oct. 21 and the brothers present accomplished a lot. Prior to the meeting the Brothers were able to visit the Boy Scout Museum and the Ottawa Historical Society Museum.

Our regular Department Encampment is scheduled for Saturday May 18 at the GAR Hall in Aurora. Over \$350,000 was spent remodeling the Hall by the village of Aurora. Visitation has increased significantly according to curator and SUVCW member Eric Prior. Save the date for the meeting and tour.

In mid-October I drove to Missouri to visit William Pool, a long-time member of the Illinois Department and the last "Real Son" of our organization. I brought and read him a letter from the National Commander, gave him a Kepi hat to help him keep him warm for the winter, and some Hershey chocolate to sweeten the holiday season. Brother Pool will be 99 on January 19. He reported not having any company from the Sons for a while, and I felt it was essential to visit him sooner rather than later.

Please stay active in your camps over the winter months. As we prepare for the colder weather stay warm and safe. I wish each of you Brothers of the Department a happy and healthy holiday season!

In Fraternity, Charily and Loyalty  
Dept Commander Gary Gunderson

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



In the Book of Ecclesiastes are the thoughts that there is a time for everything under Heaven. Recently a family member has been in a dark place; trouble at work, pain in joints from head to toe, relationship difficulties, depression, anxiety over finances and a milestone birthday. This person needs to turn all of these problems over to God, realizing that the Joy of a Birthday Celebration is a gift from God, who is with you in Good times and in Bad. If you agree with me say "Amen."

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty  
Chaplain Jerry



## **PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTION - "Nine Events leading to the Civil War"**

### **1 - The Compromise of 1850**

In 1849 California wanted to enter the Union as a free state. Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky proposed a package to resolve the dispute. It took the Senate seven months to reject his proposal. Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois offered a proposal to admit California as a free state, established Utah and New Mexico as territories that could decide whether to permit slavery, defined the borders of Texas, abolished the slave trade in Washington DC, and obligated the country to capture and return slaves to their owners. This passed with great opposition by the free states.

### **2 - The Fugitive Slave Act**

An existing federal law of 1793 allowed local governments to seize and return escaped slaves to their owners, and imposed penalties upon anyone who aided their flight. This new version of the law, included in the Compromise of 1850, went much further by compelling citizens to assist in capturing escapees, denying the captives the right to trial, and increasing the penalty for anyone aiding their escape. A fee of \$10 was given to a federal commissioner if the fugitive was returned, but only \$5 if the captured slave was actually a free black.

### **3 - The 1851 Publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin**

Harriet Beecher Stowe's story was initially published in 41 installments. A Boston publisher decided to release it as a two-volume novel which sold 300,000 copies in its first year. A vociferous debate about the book exacerbated the differences between the North and South. Northerners were shocked by the brutal depiction of slavery, which Stowe gleaned from published autobiographies of slaves and stories she had heard from friends of fugitive slaves. Southerners commented that this depiction was terrible, and that it was written to attack the South and their way of life.

### **4 - The Kansas-Nebraska Act 1854**

Senator Douglas introduced another piece of legislation to organize the Territory of Nebraska. The Nebraska territory encompassed not only the present-day State of Nebraska, but also Kansas, Montana and the Dakotas. Douglas offered a compromise which would allow settlers in those territories to decide whether to legalize slavery. It reopened that land to the expansion of slavery and destroyed a long-established political compromise on the issue of slavery in the West. Pro-slavery and anti-slavery activists surged into the territories in an effort to sway the vote and clashed violently in a conflict that became known as "Bleeding Kansas."

### **5 - The Pottawatomie Massacre of 1856**

At a spot near a crossing on Pottawatomie Creek in Franklin, Kansas; John Brown, four of his sons, and several others lured five proslavery men out of their homes with a promise that they would not be harmed, and then slashed and stabbed them with a saber and shot them in the head. Brown's brutality was denounced by Southern newspapers and by some Northern ones as well. This action aroused emotions, so the fighting in Kansas continued for another two years.

### **6 - The Dred Scott Decision in 1857**

Dred Scott was born into slavery. In 1831 his original enslaver died and he was purchased by John Emerson who took him to the State of Illinois and to the territory of Wisconsin, where slavery was illegal according to the Missouri Compromise. John Emerson died in 1842. Several years after that, Scott sued Emerson's widow in federal court, stating that he and his family lived in free territory. In 1847, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the decision that Scott was not entitled to U. S. Citizenship and the protection of the law, no matter where he lived. In the court's view, the Constitution's framers had not intended for Black people to be free, but instead viewed them as property, with "no rights which the white man was bound to respect." The ruling made further political compromise too difficult.

### **7 - John Brown's Raid at Harper's Ferry in 1859**

Brown dreamed of carrying out an even bigger attack, one that would ignite a mass uprising of Southern enslaved people. He and a band of 22 men launched the raid on Harper's Ferry, a town in West Virginia, and captured some prominent local citizens and seized the federal arsenal located there. The following day, Colonel Robert E. Lee arrived with the U. S. Marines. They stormed the arsenal, capturing Brown and killing many of his men. Brown was tried and hanged for his actions. The attack failed to trigger the widespread revolt he envisioned, driving the North and South further apart.

## 8 - The Election of 1860

The election of Abraham Lincoln, the first President to openly oppose slavery, occurred in 1860. Lincoln was opposed by Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky, and John Bell of Tennessee. These three candidates split the vote, leading to Lincoln's victory. Prior to his inauguration, seven southern states seceded from the Union and the Confederate Army fired upon Fort Sumter.

## 9 - Formation of the Confederacy

Less than six weeks after Lincoln's election, the first secession convention met in Charleston, South Carolina. About 60 percent of the 169 delegates were slave owners. They voted unanimously to leave the Union. A total of eleven states comprised the Confederacy. Their leaders didn't realize it, but they were actually hastening the end of the culture they sought to protect. Had these states remained in the Union, slavery as an institution would have almost certainly survived much longer because change at the federal level was slow. We were hastened to war due to the actions of the Confederacy.

Respectfully submitted in F. C. L.

Michael Zafran, Dept PI and PCC Sheridan Camp #2

### EDITOR'S NOTE

*In addition to his fine article immediately above, PI Zafran is also complimented for submitting the sentiment immediately below regarding the late Br Dave Wildermuth and notable others for the gift of "leadership by example" that each embodied. - Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy*

*"On a personal note, I would like to mourn the recent loss of Dave Wildermuth, Dept JVC and Council, who gave so much to our order and to his community. During my years as Patriotic Instructor we've also lost three other men who embodied the spirit of brotherhood that we all can learn from. Past Commander Terry Dyer, Past Commander John Bigwood, and at PH Sheridan Camp #2, Roger Knigge, JVC. They all answered the call through their work to keep alive the mission of the Boys in Blue. Their memory becomes a treasure. Rest in Peace, Brothers."*

Brother Michael Zafran

### APPOINTMENTS

**Ray Limback of Hardenberg Camp #39 Tinley Park and U. S. Grant Camp #1863 Schaumburg has accepted appointment to the post of State Historian. Due to the untimely passing of Brother David Wildermuth, Jeff Kaup has agreed to serve in the role of DJVC and intends to stand for election next year.**

Appreciation is extended to PDC Steven Westlake for clarifying these appointments. - Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy

### RECOGNIZED WITH NATIONAL AWARDS

**PDC Jim Lyon** of E. F. Dutton Camp #49 Sycamore was recognized with the **Cornelius F. Whitehouse Award** by the CinC at the National Encampment in Nashua, New Hampshire. The award is given by the CinC to the most outstanding member with the order during the CinC's time in office. This award is optional and there is no requirement that it be awarded annually, making it extra special.

The CinC bestowed upon **Dept PI Michael Zafran** of Sheridan Camp #2 Aurora, the **Meritorious Service Award** for exceptional service to the order. Brother Zafran commented "... I am honored, and humbled for the recognition by our National Brotherhood. The things I do for our order, whether singing at a ceremony, being the MC for a ceremony, going to a cemetery work day, or writing an article in the Railsplitter I would do without recognition, which I will continue to do as long as physically able."

### ELECTED TO NATIONAL OFFICE

Upon asking **DSVC Bobby Welch** for a comment about being elected to the post of **National Quartermaster**, he referred me to a quote that can be found in the QM Store Website.

"Elected at the 142nd National Encampment to fill the unexpired term of PCinC Donald Shaw, Brother Welch is excited to meet the challenge and looking forward to serving our Order. Brother Welch retired from the US Navy in 2013, as a Chief Equipment Operator after 20 years of honorable service. Since then he has continued to serve in numerous Military, Patriotic and Hereditary Societies. He brings the combined knowledge and professionalism of his military and volunteer service to the position and we wish him the best as he assumes the mantle of National Quartermaster."

### DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS CAMP OF THE YEAR

Hecker Camp #443 Belleville has been selected Camp of the Year.

### THE FALL ENCAMPMENT

On October 21 the Department encamped in Ottawa, Illinois. Pictured below are the 20 Brothers who attended. They are identified on the box on the top of the next page.



SEATED IN THE 1ST ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IS DENNIS MAHLAR, DUTTON CAMP #49 SYCAMORE; BOB KUREK, SHERIDAN CAMP #2 AND U. S. GRANT CAMP #1863 SCHAUMBURG; STEVE AARLI, LOGAN CAMP #26 ROCKFORD; PDC JIM LYON, DUTTON CAMP #49 SYCAMORE; DQ BILL JOHNSON, LOGAN CAMP #26 ROCKFORD; AND PDC TOM OESTREICHER, DUTTON CAMP #49 SYCAMORE. STANDING FORM LEFT TO RIGHT IN THE 2ND ROW IS LARRY WERLINE, MCCLERNAND CAMP #4 SPRINGFIELD; STATE HISTORIAN RAY LIMBACK, HARDENBERG CAMP #39 TINLEY PARK AND U. S. GRANT CAMP #1863 SCHAUMBURG; CC JOSEPH KESSLER, MCCLERNAND CAMP #4 SPRINGFIELD; DC GARY GUNDERSON; DPI AND PCC MICHAEL ZAFRAN, PCC SHERIDAN CAMP #2 AURORA; PDC NICK KAUP, CC OLD GLORY CAMP #6165 CHICAGO; LEONARD CASSARO, LOGAN CAMP #26 ROCKFORD; BARNEY BUCKHOLZ, SHERIDAN CAMP #2 AURORA; AND DEPT CHAPLAIN JERRY KOWALSKI. STANDING LEFT TO RIGHT IN THE 3RD ROW IS PDC, CC CUSTER CAMP #1 STUART STEFANY; ENCAMPMENT SPEAKER LT. COL. TOM BROWN, SVR; DJVC JEFF KAUP, PCC OLD GLORY CAMP #1863 CHICAGO; BRIAN CONROY, HARDENBERG CAMP #39 TINLEY PARK; AND DT LEE LASSEIGNE, CC SHERIDAN CAMP #2 AURORA. APPRECIATION IS EXTENDED TO BROTHER WESTLAKE ONCE AGAIN FOR HELPING TO IDENTIFY OUR BROTHERS.

# CAMP NEWS

## CUSTER CAMP #1 WILMETTE

Pictured on the right standing beside PDC, CC Stuart Stefany, is our newest Custer Camp member, author Gene Salecker. His presentation was on "Vicksburg after the Surrender". He has authored seven books including "The Sultana Disaster". He is a terrific addition to our Camp. - *Courtesy PDC Nick Kaup.*



Photos of the Silas Nichols ceremony below were sent to me from PC-in-C Michaels. Nichols was the Last Soldier to be buried in Lake County The proceedings were held October 7 in Hickory Union Cemetery in Antioch, IL. - *Courtesy PDC Stuart Stefany*

Picture below are event speakers and below right is the stone that the Camp purchased to mount the tablet that Brother Stefany made in honor of Last Soldier Silas Nichols.



**FRATERNITY CHARITY LOYALTY**

## SHERIDAN CAMP #2 AURORA

In the photo on the right is Department Commander Gary Gunderson and Department Treasurer/Camp 2 Commander Lee Lasseigne visiting recently with last Real Son William Pool. Commander Gunderson presented Brother Pool with a letter from CinC Hritsko and a Civil War kepi hat. William is in good spirits and looking forward to his 99th birthday come January. Brother Lee is sitting on the bed to the left of William and DC Gunderson is standing behind Brother Pool. *Photo and story courtesy of CC Lasseigne.*

The photo below is of Brother Zafran holding his Meritorious Service Award. He is certainly deserving. That smile on his face illustrates just how proud he is. Thanks to Brother Michael for submitting the photo. - Courtesy Br. Chuck Murphy



### A MEMORIAL DAY HOLDOVER

ALTHOUGH THOUGHT WAS GIVEN TO INCLUDING THIS IN THE SUMMER 2023 RAILSPLITTER, WE DECIDED AGAINST IT AS GEN. GEORGE PATTON SERVED IN WW2 AS OPPOSED TO THE CIVIL WAR. BUT UPON REVIEW, HIS MEMORIAL DAY QUOTATION IS JUST AS APPLICABLE TO CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS AS TO WW2 DOUGHBOYS. **"IT IS FOOLISH AND WRONG TO MOURN THE MEN THAT DIED. RATHER WE SHOULD THANK GOD SUCH MEN LIVED"**. - COURTESY BR CHUCK MURPHY

## LOGAN CAMP #26 ROCKFORD

On Sunday October 8th, the 815 Stone Scrubbers invited John A. Logan Camp #26 and Mary Logan Auxiliary to participate in an event honoring Civil War Veterans buried at Greenwood Cemetery. Other attendees included Greenwood Cemetery Trustees, local television station WIFR, and guests. During the event, Francis W. Waterman's headstone was the last of 468 Civil War Veterans' headstones cleaned by the group at Greenwood. Auxiliary members Jennifer Mickelson and Carol Dyer were two of the 50+ volunteers helping to clean the headstones. Jennifer mentioned it was a great experience, not only because of the rewarding results, but also learning more about those individuals whose stones we cleaned. There are 64 Civil War Veterans' graves without headstones at Greenwood, and it is a goal of 815 Stone Scrubber's member Janie Jenkin to place headstones at the graves of these veterans. See group photo on top of next page.

**My Country 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty, Of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died!  
Land of the Pilgrim's pride! From every mountain side, Let freedom ring.**



In the group photo above, DQ Bill Johnson is kneeling on the right side w/ blue jacket and hat. Brother Bob Buerger is standing on the far right side in blue uniform and white belt, and CC Steve Anderson is the tall one in the back row on the right behind Carol and Amanda.

In F, C and L  
 Steve Anderson  
 Camp Commander



**E. F. DUTTON CAMP #49 SYCAMORE**

The headstone of A.S. Barker, Co. F, 22nd Iowa Infantry had been missing for over eighty years. The burial site is located at the Fairview Cemetery in DeKalb, Illinois and is also where the last surviving soldier of the county is buried. Through the efforts of PDCs Tom Oestreicher, Jim Lyons, DJVC Lars Jacobson and Brother Carl Drummond, the marker was found beneath the plot, cleaned and reset. Their next project is headstone cleaning at the Elmwood Cemetery in Sycamore, Illinois where 144 Union Veterans including 3 generals are interred.

From left to right in this photo are PDCs Jim Lyon and Tom Oestreicher, and PDJVC Lars Jacobson. Brother Carl Drummond was also on the work detail.



Respectfully submitted In  
 Fraternity, Charity, & Loyalty,  
 Brother Nick Kaup, PDC  
 Department of Illinois  
 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

## BRYNER CAMP #67 PEORIA

In 1904, the City of Peoria ordered closed a small cemetery on the south side of the city. The Moffatt Cemetery started in the early 1800's as a family cemetery by Peoria Pioneer, Aquilla Moffatt, on his homestead at the corner of what is now Griswold and Adams St. It was later enlarged and made a public burial ground in 1874. Mr. Moffatt set aside a portion for veterans of the Civil War. 52 Veterans on total, 49 of whom were from the Civil War, were interred therein.

Over the years the cemetery had become full, causing its closure and it later became unkempt as there was no funding to provide maintenance. In 1920, the Bryner Women's Relief Corps placed a small monument at the edge of the cemetery. This monument stood until at least the 1950's. It was removed after the cemetery was rezoned and sold to developers who assured the city that the people who had been interred there had been moved to other cemeteries. They were not, however, buildings and parking lots were built over the 2500 plus graves. The Monument was found in storage and placed next to the GAR Hall on Hamilton St., but nothing marked the resting places at the old Moffatt Cemetery.

In 2015, while doing his wife's genealogy, Peorian Bob Hoffer discovered the long forgotten cemetery and formed a committee to mark in some way the cemetery and the forgotten who were buried there. Br Joe Hutchinson, PCC and Graves Registration Officer of Bryner Camp 67, was part of the committee. I applied for grants from the National SUVCW grants program and the Dept. of Illinois and raised funds from individuals to purchase a flag pole and a historical plaque (from the Illinois State Historical Society). It would include a list of the names of the veterans buried at Moffatt's. This plaque was one of three plaques as well as a story board that would go on the site of the Moffatt homestead next to the site of the cemetery.

After many fits and starts the funds were raised, ground was donated by the Roofer's Union, who had their hall on the property, and the plaques and flag pole were acquired and erected. After much negotiations and red tape, the city and the park district agreed to own the land and memorials and provide maintenance. On Flag Day, June 14, the memorials were dedicated with many dignitaries present. It is hoped that a future plaza will be constructed around the plaques and flag pole.

The photo at the top is of Br Joe Hutchinson presenting an appreciation certificate to project chair, Bob Hoffer, and the photo below is of the plaques and flag pole.



In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty  
PCC Brother Joe Hutchinson



## HECKER CAMP #443 BELLEVILLE

Entitled “Lest We Forget”, the Camp produces a first-class, very professional newsletter. Camp Secretary, Webmaster, and Newsletter Editor Gerald Sonnenberg (aka Jerry) has graciously authorized the Department of Illinois newsletter to use articles or portions thereof in this, the Fall 2023 issue of the “Railsplitter”. We have never done this before but this month’s issue of “Lest We Forget” includes, among a variety of other interesting articles, items, and photos, a story or two involving Hecker Camp #443s late Commander, David Wildermuth. Dave passed away at the youthful age of 63 on July 20, 2023 and suffice it to say he was one of those Brothers who was known well beyond his Camp for his dedication, enthusiasm, and contributions in furtherance of the Department of Illinois and the National Order. - Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy

On page 8 in “Lest We Forget”, Brother Jerry include’s an article entitled Hecker Camp named Illinois Department Camp of the Year. Included below are some quotes and paraphrases from the article. CC Dave Wildermuth submitted the award based upon “...numerous efforts the camp participated in like assemblies to remember Gen. Sherman, Memorial Day parade, Veterans Day parades and the Worden, Illinois cemetery grave marker dedication event among many other events too numerous to mention.” Editor Sonnenberg added that the Camp thanks the Department for this recognition as “It is definitely something to be proud of”. As an aside, anyone who knew Dave is well aware how proud he was of Colonel Friedrich Hecker, Hecker Camp #443, and his Camp’s Brothers. - Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy

On page 5 Editor Jerry included an article titled Hundreds pay tribute to fallen Hecker Camp commander. Brother Jerry indicated that nearly 400 attended a Celebration of Life event in honor of CC Wildermuth on July 29 hosted by the Fairview Heights, Illinois Fire Department where Brother Wildermuth had previously worked. Yours truly noted that included in the crowd were Camp #443 Brothers, DC Gary Gunderson and three PDCs including Brother Steven Westlake, Brother Nick Kaup and wife Marge, and Brother Jim Lyon and his wife, Sharon. Both Jim and Sharon were good frineds with Dave and his wife, Sheila, and were featured speakers at the event, as was Camp Treasurer Richard Piper. - Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy

Anyone interested in reading Camp #443s newsletter “Lest We Forget” is encouraged to subscribe to the newsletter by emailing [lestweforget1861@outlook.com](mailto:lestweforget1861@outlook.com). In remembrance of Brother Dave, to the right is a file photo of him on the far left beside DC Gunderson, a Springfield, IL Legionnaire, and DT and CC Lee Lasseigne of Sheridan Camp #2.



## OLD GLORY CAMP #1865 CHICAGO

On Thursday, September 28th the Zion Benton High School held its Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Awards program. Our Old Glory Camp #6165, Chicago, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War presented its award. Pictured to the right is Senior Military Science Unit Commander Captain Paul Annexstad, USN (Ret.), Camp Commander Nick Kaup and Awardee Cadet Santiago Camacho.



PDC and CC Nick Kaup graciously forwards the Union Ridge Cemetery Association's newsletter as it generally always includes information about the Camp, and the October 2023 edition is no different. Specifically, there was an article about the upcoming Veterans Day (November 11) program at Union Ridge Cemetery. The article indicated that the featured speaker would be Civil War author and presenter Gene Salecker. His topic was to be about the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Also featured in the proceedings would be Battery "L" of Camp 6165 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The article concluded by indicating that more than 400 veterans are buried there, including 70 plus Civil War soldiers.

This newsletter is so late that we're able to include photos of the actual event described above thanks to PDC Nick Kaup forwarding them to us. it was a beautiful day and many in the neighborhood turned out for the event. Joining Camp #6165 were Wreaths Across America and Chicago's Very Own Marines. Pictured below left is Battery "L" and on the right are Chicago's Very Own Young Marines.



The Veterans Day program at Rosehill Cemetery was co-hosted by Camp #6165, Custer Camp #1 and Battery "A" First IL Vol Artillery Regiment. Below is a photograph of the uniformed attendees and below right is a rather imposing photo of Battery "A". - Respectively submitted In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty, PDC and CC, Brother Nick Kaup.



WE ARE THRILLED BY THE NUMBER OF CAMPS THAT SUBMITTED ITEMS FOR THIS NEWSLETTER. WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS. WE HOPE ALL OF THE DEPT'S CAMPS FEEL FREE TO SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE QUARTERLY "RAILSPLITTER". READING AND/OR SEEING PHOTOS ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN ALL THE CAMPS IS UPLIFTING AND PROMOTES OUR BROTHERHOOD. DON'T WORRY ABOUT WRITING SKILLS, BR CHUCK CAN GIVE YOU A CALL AND HELP CRAFT A WRITE-UP FOR YOU IF YOU LIKE. WITH QUESTIONS OR JUST TO TALK THINGS OVER, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO GIVE BR CHUCK A CALL AT 904.314.0169 OR EMAIL HIM AT MURPHY2067@COMCAST.NET.



## MCCLERNAND CAMP #4 SPRINGFIELD

Just recently, we were made aware that seven Illinois Supreme Court Justices were Civil War veterans. They include **Walter B. Scates**, Major/Lt./Col., 13th Army Corps, Asst. Adj. General; **James Shields**, Brig. General, 2nd Div., V Corps, Army of the Potomac; **Gustavus Koerner**, Aide de Camp, U. S. Volunteers; **Theophilus Lyle Dickey** (T. Lyle Dickey), Colonel, 4th IL Cavalry; **Jacob W. Wilkin**, Private, Co A & C, 130th Ill Inf. - Captain, Co. K, 77th Illinois Infantry; **Jesse J. Phillips**, Captain/Major, 9th Illinois Infantry - Lt. Col., 9th Illinois Cavalry; **James H. Cartwright**, Private, Co. K, 69th Illinois Infantry - Captain, 140th Illinois Infantry. Scates, Shields, and Koerner served in the war after being on the Supreme Court, while Dickey, Wilkin, Phillips, and Cartwright all served in the war before their time on the court. **The source for this information is John Lupton, Executive Director, Illinois State Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission.** Some of you probably recognize a few of these names and though it is coincidental, it is interesting that Dickey was an Ottawa resident and that he practiced law for a time with WHL Wallace, who also was an Ottawa attorney, prior to the Civil War. Our fall encampment this year was held in Ottawa this past October. It all makes the term serendipitous come to mind. - Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy, Camp #4, PI



## Hecker Camp #443

# Bellville is named Illinois Department Camp of the Year

Immediate Past Camp Commander  
the late David Wildermuth

**PERHAPS A GOOD WAY TO END THIS NEWSLETTER - THE FINAL "RAILSPLITTER" OF CALENDAR 2023 - IS TO AGAIN ACKNOWLEDGE THOSE AMONG US WHO HAVE RECEIVED SPECIAL RECOGNITION. ABOVE LEFT IS PDC JIM LYONS WITH HIS NATIONAL BROTHER OF THE YEAR AWARD. ABOVE RIGHT DC GUNDERSON RECOGNIZES PDC STUART STEFANY WITH THE DEPT BROTHER OF THE YEAR AWARD. ON THE LEFT THE LATE DAVE WILDERMUTH'S BELOVED CAMP WAS NAMED THE DEPT'S CAMP OF THE YEAR BY DC GUNDERSON. BELOW LEFT DSVIC BOBBY WELCH WAS VOTED NATIONAL QUARTERMASTER OF THE SUVCW. AND IMMEDIATELY BELOW DPI MICHAEL ZAFRAN IS HOLDING HIS NATIONAL MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD. WE APPRECIATE THESE PHOTOS BEING MADE AVAILABLE BY EACH AWARD RECIPIENT, AND BROTHER, NQ BOBBY. IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY, CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL. - Courtesy Br Chuck Murphy**

