

HENRY HARNDEN CAMP #2 NEWS

Winter/Spring 2021

CAMP COMMANDER'S COLUMN

HONORING LAST SOLDIERS

As noted in the last edition of the News, Camp #2 is actively supporting the Last Soldier Marker program of the SUVCW. We have conducted dedications in Barron, Buffalo, Clark, Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Jackson, Jefferson, Marquette, Pepin, Pierce, and Rock Counties. Ceremonies are in planning for Dunn, Polk, Portage, and Taylor Counties for later this year.



Last Soldier Marker



New Camp Commander John Decker (right) at Memorial Day observances at Liberty Pole Hill Park, Town of Brooklyn, Green County, in 2010. Photo by Dan Wietecha.

When I was growing up on Harding Boulevard in Wauwatosa, my best friend, three weeks my junior, lived across the street and two doors down. I was an only child, and I envied my friend's three very cool older brothers. I also envied him for the tintype, on prominent display in their living room, depicting an ancestor in Union Civil War uniform.

I had no idea I had a Union Civil War ancestor. While I was very close to my paternal grandmother, Ethyl Anthony Decker, and she spoke about her childhood in Darlington, Wisconsin, and her mother, Susan Brigit (nee-Kilkelly), she said not a word about her father, Frank Anthony.

My dad, John Anthony Decker, explained to me that his maternal grandparents divorced when his mother was a child, and there was a whiff of scandal in the matter. There was some amusement that our family's Susan B. Anthony was a suffragist and a proponent of prohibition, but she was not THE Susan B. Anthony.

My paternal grandfather, Herman G. Decker, was a U.S. Navy veteran (WWI), as was my dad (WWII). Both were very proud of their service and were active in the American Legion.. My dad was the first WWII vet to be elected Milwaukee County Commander of the Legion and later served as

State Judge Advocate. So there was much discussion of the family's recent service, but Frank Anthony's unsavory reputation shut off any inquiry about his father, Andrus Anthony.

While I was serving as president of the Evansville Grove Society, the local historical society for the Evansville, WI area, my interest in Civil War history was rekindled. Our society decided to undertake some significant activities to commemorate the Sesquicentennial, including weekend-long reenactments and the restoration of our town's Civil War memorials. (The late Meg Jones came to Evansville and wrote an excellent feature-length article about the first "Rally 'Round the Flag" weekend for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel in May 2011.)

Through a series of coincidences I was recruited into Company K of the 2nd Wisconsin Infantry Volunteers, where I made friends with Bill Raftery, Bob Mann, Patrick Lynch, and John Thielmann, all stalwart members of the SUVCW. I decided it was time to collect some dead relatives, as my friends in the genealogy hobby put it. In fairly short order I discovered that my great-great grandfather, Andrus (also spelled Andres) Anthony enlisted on December 4, 1861, was mustered into Company I of the 16th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment at the rank of Private, and was discharged at the same rank on January 20, 1863 due to disability. His older brother, James, was a combat veteran of Company A of the 20th Iowa, and was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic in Iowa after the war.

Service records from the National Archives showed Pvt. Anthony served on detached duty as a surgeon's orderly at the Battle of Shiloh, and returned to his Company for combat during the Siege of Corinth, the Battle of Iuka, and the Second Battle of Corinth. His medical records disclosed he had a painful growth on his chest that made it impossible to carry a knapsack. Sadly, this cancerous growth caused his death in 1866, years before my grandmother was born.

I am glad I was able to bring my ancestor's story to light. The News welcomes your family story for future editions.

-- John Decker

DANE COUNTY'S OTHER LAST SOLDIER



Camp #2 Officers (left to right) John Decker, Fred Campbell, Alan Hembel, and Tom Brodd at Mazomanie Cemetery for the Charles Moulton marker dedication. Photo by Scott Schable.

Camp #2 honored Mazomanie's Charles Moulton with the placement and dedication of a Last Soldier marker, as he was the last Union Civil War veteran to be buried in Dane County. Often, but not always, the last veteran to be buried was the last surviving Civil War veteran in the county. Newspaper files and Civil War articles of the Wisconsin Historical Society show that Dr. Hervie A. Dobson was the last surviving Union Civil War veteran of Dane County. But he is buried elsewhere. His is a unique story.



DR. HERVIE A. DOBSON

Dobson was a resident of the Washington, D.C. area for most of his life, but his last years were spent in Madison, where he was the last surviving member of the Lucious Fairchild Post #11 of the Grand Army of the Republic. Charles Moulton was his comrade in the Post. They, and a small handful of elderly members, drew newspaper attention due to their longevity, continued activity, and the knowledge that the Post would go out of existence upon the death of the last member.

An industrial accident before the Civil War resulted in the loss of one of Dobson's legs. He worked as a political reporter in the Capital, and claimed he was personally known by presidents Lincoln, Johnson, and Grant. He became an employee of the federal government, but it is unclear whether he was a member of the Secret Service. Remarkably, despite his disability, he was mustered into the Regular Army during the Civil War and was assigned to the Veteran Reserve Corps as his first and only service. This service is confirmed by the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Database of the National Park Service.

After the war Dobson became a medical doctor, and practiced as such in the Washington, D.C. area, and later in Dane County. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA PROGRAM DRAWS PARTICIPANTS NEAR AND FAR

The Henry Harnden Camp has been a staunch supporter of the Wreaths Across American program, and has been a leader of the wreath placements and observances each December for the past twelve years at Madison's historic Forest Hill Cemetery. While the coronavirus pandemic affected 2020's program, it went on with active participation of members of the public. Camp Commander Fred Campbell served as master of ceremonies for the programs at the Soldiers Rest section of the cemetery, and at Union Rest. Korean War veteran and Camp Patriotic Instructor William Raftery commanded the Honor Guard, and Camp Chaplain Tom Brodd delivered the invocation and benediction at both ceremonies.

With direction from the Daughters of the American Revolution, members of the public placed wreaths at the Veterans Monument at Soldiers Rest to honor members of each branch of the Armed Services and POW/MIA personnel. Members of the public also placed wreaths at individual gravestones in both sections of the cemetery.

Volleys were fired by uniformed representatives of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Sons of the American Revolution, and by living historians depicting soldiers of WWII, WWI, more recent conflicts, the Civil War, and even the War of 1812.

WISC Channel 3 in Madison covered the event. Video and text are available on the Channel 3000 web site.

Camp #2 was also represented by Bro. Ben Hobbins in the Wreaths Across America programs conducted at the Desert Memorial Park and Palm Springs National Military Cemetery in California. Bro. Hobbins is the Secretary of the Coachella Valley Chapter of the Son of the American Revolution.



*Bro. Ben Hobbins (left) with SAR members Wm. Haines, Gary Bruton, and Ed Oehler.
Photo credit: Coachella Valley Chapter, California SAR.*

NEW CAMP OFFICERS ELECTED

At the conclusion of the Wreaths Across America programs on December 12, Henry Harnden Camp #2 conducted its annual meeting of members. A new slate of officers, nominated at the Camp's November meeting, was elected by unanimous vote. The Camp officers elected were Commander John Decker, Senior Vice Commander Tom Brodd, Junior Vice Commander Ben Hobbins, and Secretary-Treasurer Alan Hembel. Bro. Decker is a recent graduate of the SUVCW's Memorial University officer training program.

The new Camp Council members are Fred Campbell, William Raftery, and Scott Schable. The Council serves as our audit committee and board of directors, and appoints officers in the event of a mid-term vacancy.

Incoming Commander Decker announced that he will appoint the following non-elective Camp Officers: Patriotic Instructor William Raftery, Chaplain Tom Brodd, Graves Registration Officer Scott Schable, Historian John Decker, Civil War Memorials officer John Decker, Eagle Scout Coordinator Ben Hobbins, and Signals Officer Fred Campbell.

In other business, Brothers of Camp #2 unanimously recommended the restoration of the rank and designation of Past Camp Commander to Bro. Bill Parker, who recently transferred from Camp #8 to our Camp. Inter-camp transfers automatically cause loss of rank, but restoration is permitted on recommendation of the new home Camp and approval by subsequent Department Encampment.

Bro. Alan Hembel was congratulated on the award of the rank and designation of Past Department Commander in recognition of his more than ten consecutive years' service as Department of Wisconsin Treasurer. Other Camp #2 members serving at the Department level are Department Senior Vice Commander John Decker and Department Council Member Fred Campbell. Bro. Campbell now has the rank and designation of Past Camp Commander, and congratulations from the News for his outstanding leadership during his now-completed terms of office.

All officers and council members were formally installed by Department of Wisconsin Commander Brian McManus at the Camp's January 16, 2021 meeting, which was held as a combined in-person and Zoom meeting.

BRO. HOBBS TO HEAD LOCAL SAR CHAPTER

Camp #2's new Junior Vice Commander and Eagle Scout Coordinator is, as noted above, the Secretary of the Coachella Valley Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution in California. He is also the incoming President of the Nathaniel Ames Chapter of the SAR in the Madison area. Ames was Wisconsin's last surviving veteran of the American Revolution, and was given the honor of raising the Colors at a Union Meeting and Liberty Pole Raising in Rome Corners, Dane County, Wisconsin in June of 1861. He is buried in the Oregon, Wisconsin Cemetery.

DUES ARE DUE

Annual SUVCW dues for calendar 2021 are now due and payable in the amount of \$30 (no increase from last year). The dues cover your membership at the Camp, Department, and National Level. Please send your check payable to Henry Harnden Camp #2, SUVCW to Bro. Alan G. Hembel, Treasurer, PO Box 620203, Middleton, WI 53562.

AND DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

While dues are not deductible, financial donations to our Camp, the Department or the National Organization are deductible to the full extent allowed by law. After much technical effort, the National Organization of the SUVCW was able to obtain a "blanket exemption" for itself and for constituent Departments and Camps under sec. 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, so long as they are in compliance with requirements for the filing of annual information returns. Department and Camp Treasurer Hembel have kept both on the straight-and-narrow, and has received IRS confirmations of required filings for tax year 2020.

ZOOM INTO THE PATRIOTIC FUNCTION

For many years the C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1 has hosted a Patriotic Luncheon each Winter in Wauwatosa, with a guest speaker of note, to follow the midwinter meeting of the Department of Wisconsin. Covid 19 and local public health regulations have ruled out an in-person gathering this year, so the Department meeting has been cancelled, and the Patriotic Luncheon has been morphed into an on-line Zoom Function. You bring your lunch, we'll provide the speaker to you on line, says Camp #1.

Lincoln historian Dr. Trevor Steinbach will present "The Lincolns – In Sickness and in Health."

The event takes place at 1:00 PM on Saturday, February 6. Further details are available in the latest Camp #1 Newsletter, available on the Department of Wisconsin web site. Pre-registration is required to be able to obtain the link to the program. To register (it's free) visit www.suvcw-wi.org/patriotic_luncheon.

The Patriotic Luncheon has been a significant fundraiser for Camp #1 in years past, and a modest "sponsorship" is requested from those willing to help financially. Checks payable to the C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1 should be mailed to Elizabeth Craig, 3422 N. 79th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53222.

CAMP #2 MEETING SCHEDULE SET

Monthly Camp meetings will be held on the third Saturday of the month in February (the 20th), March (the 20th), April (the 17th), and May (the 15th) from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM. All meetings will be conducted via ZOOM and when practicable at the residence of Camp Senior Vice Commander Tom Brodd, 1527 Jefferson Street, Madison. Email reminders will contain the access code and street address.

Our traditional Memorial Day program will be held at Madison's Forest Hill Cemetery on Monday, May 31, 2021. If the program at the State Capitol takes place this year, Camp #2 will attend there as well. The Department Encampment will be held on June 5, and monthly Camp #2 meetings will resume in September.

COL. HEG STATUE RESTORATION PROGRESSES; CHARGES FILED

Brothers will recall the infamous destruction on the night of June 23-24, 2020 of the statue of Civil War hero Col. Hans C. Heg, which stood on the King Street corner of the State Capitol Grounds since 1926. Fortunately, the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board, which has jurisdiction over all improvements at the Capitol and Governor's Mansion, unanimously approved the restoration and return of the statue, and sufficient funds have been obtained through grants to do the work.

The statue, and replacement parts cast from the duplicate statue in the Town of Norway, Racine County, are now located in Detroit while the work advances. Reinstallation in the early Summer of 2021 is anticipated. Department Commander Brian McManus has alerted us that the rededication ceremony will be an "all hands on deck" event for the Department of Wisconsin.

Felony theft charges were filed on January 6, 2021 against Rodney Clendening of Beloit for his alleged role in damage and carrying off of parts of the statue. An initial court appearance was scheduled for January 19.

If Brothers become aware of any public controversy over the return of the Heg statue they should notify the Camp Commander as soon as possible. Contrary to popular belief, the anonymous vandals who took credit for the desecration of the statue were well aware of Col. Heg's life story, and they damned him as a "settler-colonizer" for his participation in the California Gold Rush.

THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER- HERO OF TWO NATIONS

Born August 3, 1823 in Waterford, Ireland, son of a successful merchant, Meagher was educated in Roman Catholic and Jesuit schools. He developed oratorical skills which later distinguished him as a leader in the Irish nationalist movement.

In 1844 he joined the Repeal Association which sought to repeal the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland. In 1848 he returned from France after studying that country's revolution. With him he brought the first Irish Tricolor flag. Continuing his efforts for Irish freedom he joined the Young Irish Rebellion of 1848 for which he and others were tried for sedition. The insurgents were sentenced to death, but the sentences were commuted to penal servitude in Australia.

Escaping from exile in 1852 he arrived in New York City where he studied law and established the Irish News, a weekly paper dedicated to Irish nationalist issues.

After the shots were fired on Fort Sumter, Meagher recruited what became Company K of the 69th Regiment of New York Militia. The 69th fought at Bull Run, where its first commander was captured and Meagher assumed command. He returned to New York to rally the Irish to the Union cause and to expand the Irish military commitment. Through his efforts Secretary of War Simon Cameron authorized formation of the Irish Brigade.

At first the Brigade included the 63rd, the 88th, and the 69th New York. A non-Irish unit, the 29th Massachusetts was added, but after Antietam was replaced by the mostly Irish 28th Massachusetts. Meagher went on to lead the Brigade to distinguished service at numerous engagements at which the Brigade suffered heavy losses.

At the Battle of Antietam, the Brigade led an attack on Bloody Lane where it lost 540 men and Meagher's horse was shot. Following the Battle of Fredericksburg, which the Brigade entered with 1200, only 240 mustered the next morning.



Irish Brigade Monument at Antietam National Military Park. Photo by John Decker

After the Battle of Chancellorsville Meagher requested permission to return to New York to raise replacements because the Brigade was down to a few hundred effectives. His request was refused but Meagher was promoted to Brigadier General. He served in mostly administrative posts for the balance of the war.

After the war Meagher was appointed Secretary of the Territory of Montana and soon designated Acting Governor. His term was troubled by political wrangling and his attempt to gain support for a State constitution and statehood failed to gain support.

On July 1, 1867 on a trip to Fort Benton he fell overboard from a steamboat and was never recovered. Meagher is remembered in both of "his countries" by a statue at the Montana State Capitol and a similar statue in Waterford, Ireland near his boyhood home.

-- William Raftery

Sources;

A History of Ireland, Peter & Fiona Somerset Fry

Wikipedia. Thomas Francis Meagher

Wikipedia. The Irish Brigade (Union Army)



HENRY HARNDEN CAMP #2

DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

John R. Decker, Commander
143 W. Main Street
Evansville, WI 53536
(608) 882-5528
deckercorp@charter.net

On the Web: www.suvcw.org (Under Departments and Camps)

Find us on Facebook: Henry Harnden Camp #2