



# SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR PICACHO PEAK CAMP No. 1 ARIZONA CAMP-at-LARGE



## CAMP NEWSLETTER



**To perpetuate the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic and of the men who saved the Union 1861 to 1865**

October 2015

Camp Web site: [suvcwaz-camp1.org](http://suvcwaz-camp1.org)

**It is official: With the charters granted to the General R. H. G. Minty Camp No. 2 and the General U. S. Grant Camp No. 3, Arizona now has three Camps-at-Large!**



### General R. H. G. Minty Camp No. 2

The application for the camp charter of the General R.H.G. Minty Camp No. 2 headquartered in Tucson, Arizona was approved on July 15, 2015, by then Commander-in-Chief Tad D. Campbell. July 15, 2015 is the official start date of the camp.

*Charter members of the Camp are:*

Robert D. McCord: Commander, Junior Vice Commander  
 Randy D. McNally: Senior Vice Commander, Camp Council, Patriotic Instructor  
 Daniel C. Gordon: Camp Council  
 John R. Conrad: Camp Council, Historian  
 Brian V. Estes: Secretary/Treasurer  
 Gerald N. Bloom  
 Brian P. Conrad  
 Dale H. Hodge  
 Robert H. Haley  
 David A. Swanson  
 David T. Vessels  
 William C. Vessels  
 Zander M. Vessels

### General U.S. Grant Camp No. 3

The application for the camp charter of the General U. S. Grant Camp No. 3 headquartered in Flagstaff, Arizona was approved on September 11, 2015, by Commander-in-Chief Eugene Mortorff. September 11, 2015, is the official start date of the camp.

*Charter members of the Camp are:*

David A. Swanson: Commander  
 Mark J. Haynes: Senior Vice Commander, Chaplain  
 David R. Palmateer: Junior Vice Commander  
 Gerald N. Bloom: Secretary/Treasurer  
 Dale E. Enlow: Camp Council, Historian  
 Edward O. Steinback III: Camp Council  
 Timothy D. Prater: Camp Council  
 Robert E. Archibald Sr: Graves Registration Officer  
 William C. Smith: Color Bearer  
 James M. Heller: Civil War Memorials Officer  
 William C. Bronson  
 David L. McCormack  
 William B. Pribil  
 Richard L. Rice  
 John F. Ruggles  
 Mark F. Swanson  
 Neil E. Swanson

**134<sup>th</sup> SUVCW Annual Encampment at Richmond, Virginia (August 20-23, 2015) and the General R. H. G. Minty Camp No. 2**



(L-R) Commander-in-Chief Tad D. Campbell presenting the General R. H. G. Minty Camp Charter to Camp Commander Robert D. McCord



(L-R) General R. H. G. Minty Camp Organizer Brother John R. Conrad and Camp Commander Robert D. McCord



**General U. S. Grant Camp No. 3 Charter Members Present at the October 24, 2015, Organizational Meeting**



Charter members (back row L-R) David L. McCormack, Edward O. Steinback III, Timothy D. Prater, Mark J. Haynes, Dale E. Enlow, David A. Swanson, (front row L-R) John F. Ruggles, Gerald N. Bloom, Robert E Archibald Jr, William C. Smith (James M. Heller-not pictured).

## Minutes of the August 15, 2015, Camp meeting

Location:

Deer Valley Airport Restaurant

702 W. Deer Valley Rd.

Phoenix, Az.

Our third annual meeting with the Margaret Warner Wood Tent No. 1 took place on August 15, 2015, at the Deer Valley Airport Restaurant. Also present were the Sisters from the Picacho Peak Auxiliary No 1.

Total attendance including guests was 32.

Senior Vice Commander Jerry Bloom presided for the Camp and President Verna Maleski presided for the Tent.

### **Business meeting:**

Initiation of new member:

John Ibrahim Geris of Mesa, Arizona was initiated into the SUVCW and our Camp by Senior Vice Commander Jerry Bloom. Brother John's Civil War ancestor is his 4<sup>th</sup> generation grandfather James Redman Wisner, Co. C, NY 15<sup>th</sup> Engineers Reg't. John's mother Michelle Geris, Sister of the Margaret Warner Wood Tent, and Vern Maleski, President of the Margaret Warner Wood Tent, were also present.



(L-R) Michelle Geris, Jerry Bloom, John Geris, and Verna Maleski

### **Graves Registration Officer Report**

Graves Registration Officer Jan Huber gave a report about his activities since May 16 (the date of his last report) in which he completed 5 graves registration activities. They were submissions of updated information for 5 Union soldiers already registered. They are located in Los Angeles National Cemetery, Fort Bowie, AZ, Herford, AZ, Bisbee, AZ, and Cincinnati, OH.

He also submitted a report from Brother Bob Archibald (a native of Mendocino County, California) who is actively working on graves registrations activities there that follows:

Number of cemeteries reviewed: 19. Number of Civil War soldier burials already registered in Mendocino County when project started: 225;

Updates and/or corrections submitted for existing registrations: 35. Existing registrations reviewed and found to be correct and complete: 37;

New initial registrations: 69;

Number of burials registered in the wrong cemetery within the county: 65. Number of burials registered more than once for the same soldier: 26;

Number of burials incorrectly registered in Mendocino County and buried in a different county: 65

Corrected number of registrations for burials in Mendocino County: 170.



### **Program: Arms that were imported during the Civil War**

Brother David Kampf did his usual masterful job with his presentation of "Arms that were imported during the Civil War." David has been giving talks to our Camp for a decade or more and it seems that he never runs out of interesting topics and this one was no exception.

David had nine imported shoulder arms and a pistol from his collection on display and talked about each one. He also gave an overview of imported arms during the Civil War. Did you know that between July 1861-July 1863 fifty percent of shoulder arms for the Union Army were foreign made? Now you do and those present were the recipients of much more interesting information.

**Great job Brother David Kampf!**



Brother David Kampf



Weapons displayed

**DUES---DUES---DUES**

Brothers, this is the first call for 2016 annual dues. Please use the form contained in this newsletter to submit your dues to Brother Bloom **before December 31, 2015—in fact now would be a great time to do so!**

**New Picacho Peak Camp member**

Eric Andrew Schaeffer of Warrenville, Illinois became a member of the SUVCW and our Camp on June 15, 2015. John’s Civil War ancestor is his 4<sup>th</sup> generation grandfather, Nelson J. Titus, Co H. 87<sup>th</sup> Indiana Reg’t. John is also the grandson of Sister Barbara Metzger, Past President of the Margaret Warner Wood Tent No. 1, DUVCW, and current president of the Picacho Peak Auxiliary No. 1.

**Welcome Brother Andrew!**



**Picacho Peak Camp officer elections**

Camp officer elections will take place on November 14, 2015.

The following Brothers are running unopposed:

- Commander: Gerald N. Bloom
- Senior Vice Commander: Jim Heller
- Junior Vice Commander: David R. Palmateer
- Secretary/Treasurer: David A. Swanson
- Camp Council (3 positions): John Conrad PCC, William Hearter MD and Don Strachota

The names of Camp Brothers appointed to fill “appointed officer” positions in the Camp will be presented at the meeting and listed in the January 2016 newsletter.

As a reminder: Officers in our Camp are

elected/appointed and installed at each November meeting; therefore, once the ceremony is over (not the meeting), the newly elected/appointed officers take charge of the Camp.



**Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, 134<sup>th</sup> Annual Encampment—Richmond, Virginia, August 20-23, 2015: Notes of Encampment**

The annual encampment was attended by Camp Commander John R. Conrad and General R. H. G. Minty Camp Commander Robert D. McCord.

**Attendance:** over 170 brothers attended the Encampment in Richmond, VA, with 154 of those being credentialed delegates. Both Arizona Camp Commanders attended as delegates. One of the delegates was the great great grandson of Ulysses S. Grant. The National Encampment of the ASUVCW occurred at the same time, with over 70 delegates, including one delegate from the Picacho Peak Auxiliary.

**Minty Charter:** CinC Tad Campbell presented the General R.H.G. Minty Camp No.2 charter to Camp Commander Robert D. McCord at the beginning of the proceedings.

**ROTC Program:** recommendation was made to make the ROTC medal, certificate, and ribbon available free of charge effective 1/1/16. This would be considered a charitable contribution and help the tax status of the order. Picacho Peak has in the past demurred from awarding the ROTC awards because of cost, but if there is no cost, the Arizona camps should consider appointing an ROTC Coordinator, perhaps at the Department level. In a related move, the Encampment endorsed and referred to committee to allow sisters in the Auxiliary to present the ROTC award on behalf of the SUVCW.

**Eagle Scouts:** A resolution was passed to explore whether the Eagle Scout recognitions should be funded by national similar to the ROTC Program. This would require action at the 2016 Encampment.

**Department of the Southwest:** It was noted several times before the Encampment by National officers that the General US Grant Camp No. 3 was meeting the same weekend for organizational purposes and that the Department of the Southwest was likely to attend the 2016 Encampment. Formation of a Department requires the request by the three Arizona Camps to the CinC that a Department be formed. In discussions with several National officers, including the incoming CinC, the name Department of Arizona and New Mexico or even New Mexico and Arizona was denied, and the name Department of the Southwest proposed. The new CinC desires to avoid the use of state names in Departments, as evinced by his own

department changing from the Department of Maryland to the Department of the Chesapeake a few years ago.

**Elections:** Eugene Mortoff of Maryland was elected CinC, Donald L. Martin of Ohio as the SVCinC, and Mark R. Day of Virginia as the JVCinC.

Because it voted last, the Camps at Large cast the deciding votes for one of the Council of Administration seats that was won by one vote.

**Dual Members:** An attempt to exempt dual members from paying National per capita assessments for each camp they belong to failed. Dual members are required to pay camp, department, and national dues for each camp. However, a resolution passed that dual members count in determining the required number of members to form a camp.

### **National Auxiliary to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Annual Encampment—Richmond, Virginia, August 19-23, 2015**



Sister Paula Vessels—Picacho Peak  
Auxiliary No. 1, Delegate



### **Civil War Ancestor Biography—James Redman Wisner**

Sister Verna Maleski, President of the Margaret Warner Wood Tent No. 1, submitted the following biography of James Redman Wisner who is also the Civil War ancestor of Sister Michelle Geris of the same Tent and her son, Picacho Peak Camp Brother John Geris.

James Redman Wisner, the son of Moses Carpenter & Elizabeth Ann [Bunce] Wisner, was born in Wayne County, NY, September 29, 1826. He married

Sophonra Wilkinson, daughter of Aaron Wilkinson & Polly Wilkes, September 27, May 1849, in Wayne County.

He enlisted on August 25, 1864 at Auburn, New York. His service record says he was 5 foot 7 inches tall with grey eyes, brown hair and a light complexion.

A farmer by trade. He served as a private in the NY 15th Engineers, Company C. and mustered out of the service on June 13, 1865 at Fort Berry, Virginia.

The 15th Regiment Engineers was organized at Washington, D.C. October 25, 1861, and attached to the Engineer Brigade, Army of the Potomac. The main work of the regiment was that of laying bridges; being known for the for their “pontoon bridges” or floating bridges that could be put up and dismantled then transported by wagon to the next site where there was no bridge for the troops to cross. A floating bridge was constructed by anchoring a series of large, flat-bottomed boats across a waterway and then laying wooden planks across them. The planks (the “chess”) were anchored by side rails and then covered with a layer of soil to protect it and to dampen sounds. Pontoon bridges were extremely important to the outcome of several battles, including Fredericksburg where they were particularly noted for building a bridge over the Rappahannock. They’d marched 8 miles, began work at 11:30 and had a bridge 420 feet long ready for use at 4:30 p.m.

During its long service the men became very proficient in engineering and through its steadiness under fire is said to have lost no bridge material of any kind during the last year of its service. The original members not reenlisted were mustered out at New York in Sept., 1864, and after participation in the grand review at Washington, the other companies mustered out on June 13-14, 1865.

Not much is known of his movements during the war but based on records we know all Companies of the 15th NY Engineers were engaged in siege operations against Petersburg and Richmond June, 1864, to April, 1865. In January 1865, three companies were detached and sent to North Carolina. The remainder of the regiment, including Company C remained at Petersburg until the final surrender and Appomattox Court House April 9 for the surrender of Lee and his army. James received a pension for an injury from a fall he sustained on December 12, 1864 at Petersburg.

James came from a long line of Patriots and “fighting men.” His 5th great-grandfather, Johannes Wisner, the progenitor of the Wisner family in America, was an officer in the Swiss Infantry. He was part of Queen Anne of England’s Swiss contingent commanded by the Prince of Orange that fought in the continuing wars against France. At the war’s end, Queen Anne rewarded 10,000 of the Swiss soldiers for

their service in the war by sending them to the Colonies to start new homes.

With wife Elizabeth [Drumbaugh] and two sons, Henrick and Adam, and fellow soldiers of the Swiss contingent, Johannes arrived in New York around 1710. Some time was spent on Governor's Island till he found work with a Christian Snedikor of Hampstead, Long Island. He was sent by Snedikor to Orange County, New York, to oversee land Snedikor owned in Wawayanda Patent. By late July 1714 he was able to buy land at Warwick, near Mount Eve on what is now the border of Drowned Lands. Johannes and his wife Elizabeth, were the first permanent white settlers in the valley. There is a roadside marker about 1 ½ miles southeast of Florida, NY, with the inscription: "Settlers, first in town of Warwick, Johannes and Elizabeth Wisner, under Wawayanda Patent, 1702, settled here in 1712." Johannes & Elizabeth were married in 1697 in Lake Constance, Switzerland. He was born about 1676 in Zurig, Switzerland and died May 19, 1744 in Florida, Orange, New York at the age of 67 or 68 years. A few of their descendants still live in the area.

James 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandfather, Capt John Wisner SR, grandson of Johannes and Elizabeth, was Captain in the French and Indian Wars and the Revolution. He was holding rank as Captain as early as 1756 in the Colonial forces. His 2,000 acre estate, on what is today the property of the Mid-Orange Correctional Facility, was received directly from the British Crown before the revolution.

James great-great grandfather Capt John Wisner Jr., son of Capt John SR and Ana [Jayne] Wisner, was born in 1741. On October 13, 1775 he was elected Captain in the Florida and Warwick Company, belonging to the Regiment Orange County Minutemen. He was stationed for a while at Fort Constitution and fought in the Battle of White Plains. Washington Irving made the following reference to Capt Wisner in his book, *Life of George Washington*; 'The garrison at the fort consisted of two companies of Col John Clintons regiment and Capt Wisner's company of Minute Men. In all one hundred and sixty rank and file. All miserably armed. ' Capt Wisner's granddaughter would later write that he narrowly missed being captured at Fort Constitution due to being out on maneuvers.

James and Sophronia had three children: Augusta, my 3<sup>rd</sup> grandmother, born August 24, 1850, James Carpenter born January 7th, 1858 and Erissa born August 9th, 1861. They lived in Wayne County until 1866. The family moved from New York to LaSalle County, IL where Augusta met my 3<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather, Allen Griffith. They wed on April 9th, 1868 at the home of her parents in Ottawa, IL.

In February 1881, James and Sophronia, along with their son James, daughter Erissa and son-in-law Thomas Varah, moved to Hastings, Adams County, NE where they bought farmland and lived out the rest of their days surrounded by a large family. Many descendants still live in the Hastings area. Sophronia died May 1st, 1917 and James died February 8th, 1918. They are buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Doniphan, NE. They were married 68 years and five months....a long and happy life together.

James was a member of the Silas A. Strickland GAR Post in Hastings, NE. A newspaper article from the World Herald, Omaha Dec 9, 1909 gave his service in the Civil War and that he'd been the oldest veteran to march in the annual Encampment (Hastings 1908) and at present the 3<sup>rd</sup> oldest veteran in the state of NE.

"Hastings, Neb., Oct 2—Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Wisner celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary Friday at the home of their daughter .... Both have reached the age of 88 years and are yet in splendid health.

"Mr. Wisner . . . was the oldest veteran to march in the parade at the annual encampment two years ago and is now the third oldest veteran living in the state."



James R. and Sophronia Wisner

*Editor's note:* Thank you Verna for a great article! If anybody else wants to submit an article regarding their Civil War ancestor please contact the newsletter editor David Swanson.

### **Camp/Auxiliary meeting—November 14, 2015**

The next meeting will be held at noon on November 14th at the Deer Valley Airport Restaurant, 702 W. Deer Valley Rd, Phx. The Sisters of the Picacho Peak Auxiliary No. 1 are also invited.

We will have our officer election/installation and Commander Conrad will talk about the recently concluded 2015 National Encampment.

**Please make every effort to attend our Camp and Auxiliary meeting!**

### **A standing invitation to join the SUVCW and our camp**

Brothers, please help spread the word about our camp! Male descendants, (son, grandson, great grandson, nephew, grand nephew, great grand nephew, etc.) aged 14 years or older, of a Union Civil War soldier, sailor, marine, or member of the Revenue Cutter Service who honorably served in the Civil War between April 12, 1861 and April 9, 1865, are eligible for membership. A Junior membership for those aged 6-14 (meeting the above requirements) and an Associate membership are also available.

Please contact the Camp Junior Vice Commander for more details and assistance.

### **Address Change**

Brothers, if you change your address, *e-mail address* or phone number please advise our Camp Secretary/Treasurer Jerry Bloom at your earliest convenience.

This will ensure that you get *The Banner*, our Camp newsletter, and additionally this will enable us to contact you.

### **Past Camp Commanders**



Larry Fuller 1995-2003 †  
David A. Swanson 2003-2006  
Robert Hannon 2006-2008 †  
John R. Conrad 2008-2010  
David A. Swanson 2010-2013  
John R. Conrad 2013-2014



### **Camp Officers for 2015**

#### **Commander:**

John Conrad (602) 750-0938  
E-mail: jrconrad@post.harvard.edu

#### **Senior Vice-Commander:**

Jerry Bloom (602) 955-3091  
E-mail: jerrybloom@q.com

#### **Junior Vice-Commander:**

Jim Heller (623-975-4300  
E-mail: jmh7116@aol.com

#### **Secretary/Treasurer:**

Jerry Bloom (602) 955-3091  
E-mail: jerrybloom@q.com

#### **Assistant Secretary/Treasurer**

Don Strachota Jr. (See Camp Council)

#### **Camp Council:**

Ron Jones (480) 834-8036  
David R. Palmateer (928)-978-0066  
E-mail: Palmateer@npgcable.com  
Don Strachota Jr. (480-588-6589  
E-mail: antondon@cox.net

#### **Signals Officer**

Jeff Burgess 602-819-0795  
E-mail: jeffreydavidburgess@gmail.com

#### **Chaplain:**

Mark Haynes (928) 755-3714  
E-mail: haynes9@frontiernet.net

#### **Patriotic Instructor:**

Robert C. Massey (602)-298-2656  
E-mail: rmassey6165@yahoo.com

#### **Eagle Scout Coordinator:**

Dennis Lamb (480) 595-6356  
E-mail: dennislamb@msn.com

#### **Graves Registration**

Jan Huber: (623) 975-4805  
E-mail: jandhuber1933@gmail.com

#### **Civil War Memorials Officer:**

David Swanson PCC (480) 515-2798  
E-mail: swanson1854@yahoo.com

#### **Historian:**

David Swanson PCC (480) 515-2798  
E-mail: swanson1854@yahoo.com

#### **Counselor:**

Bob Young (602) 841-7037  
E-mail: bob.young1@cox.net

#### **Color Bearer:**

David R. Palmateer (928)-978-0066  
E-mail: Palmateer@npgcable.com

#### **Guard:**

Al Harrica (623) 322-5939  
E-mail: dharrica@cox.net

#### **Guide:**

Christopher Beisner (623) 692-8488  
E-mail: cmbeisner@gmail.com

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#### **Newsletter Editor/Publisher**

David A. Swanson

## 2016 ANNUAL DUES

**Please use this form to submit your Picacho Peak Camp 2016 dues. It is important that they be received by December 31, 2015.**

**You can pay at the November 2015 Camp meeting or mail as indicated.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Regular member dues for calendar year 2016 are \$36.00. (Which include national dues of \$23 and camp dues of \$13.) If you are a Life Member see that section below.

Dues enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Life Member dues for calendar year 2016 are \$13. (Life Members are exempt from national dues and only pay camp dues).

Dues enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Dual member dues for calendar year 2016 are \$36.00. Dual members are those with primary membership in other camps who claim dual membership with Picacho Peak Camp. (This is in addition to the regular camp member dues.) If you are a dual member and a Life Member your Dual Member dues are \$13.00

Dues enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Junior dues for calendar year 2016 are \$10.00

Dues enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to Picacho Peak Camp No. 1 SUVCW

Please mail to:

Jerry Bloom, Secretary/Treasurer

4323 N. 28th Way

Phoenix, AZ 85016