



The Parmley Post

Newsletter of Gen James J Byrne Camp 1



Dept of Texas and Louisiana SUVCW

November 2024



COMMANDING OFFICER

My Brothers,
We had a Zoom-only Camp meeting on September 26th. Bro. Mike Belcher gave an interesting presentation on “Galvanized Yankees.” The meeting was attended by five Camp 1 members, including our illustrious Dept Commander, Bro. Timothy Phillips.

In my previous message I stated my desire to have a Veteran’s Day in-person meeting at the GAR monument. My desire remains, but my ability to fulfill it has fled. I cannot meet in Fort Worth on the 11th. I am sorry. Therefore, I now propose a **Zoom-only meeting on Tuesday, November 19th at 7PM**. This will be the meeting where we need to nominate officers for the 2025 Camp year. We have had several speak up already to say they are willing to take certain posts in the Camp. A Brother has volunteered to present on “The Gainesville Hanging” at this upcoming meeting. (Brother you know who you are and just let me know if you are ready!)

I propose our December Zoom-only meeting be held on Tuesday, December 10th at 7PM. This meeting will be where we elect the 2025 officers that have been nominated or proposed.

This point is a repeat of previous messages, and also of several members’ comments who have sent emails on the topic: **We need hands at the helm of this organization -- We need You!** Past Camp Commanders and Officers, you have the experience to know what it takes to keep a Camp alive and strong. Please consider your ability to come back into an active role.

For this newsletter, I did not poll the officers in a timely manner to get their contributions for this edition. Some officer reports are missing – not the respective officer’s fault – instead, all mine!

Please contact me if I may be of service.

I remain, your obedient servant in Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
Butch Durham, Commander



From the Senior Vice Commander

Brothers,

[Commander's / Editor's Note: I did not poll the officers in a timely manner to get their submissions for this newsletter. My apologies to the Senior Vice Commander for this situation.]

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
Michael Belcher, SVC

From the Camp Secretary

[Commander's / Editor's Note: We are again needing to split out the roles of Secretary and Treasurer. We plan to receive nominations for the Secretary position at the next Camp meeting.]

From the Camp Treasurer

[Commander's / Editor's Note: At the time of this writing, we are trying to engage the volunteer services of a Department officer to assist us as Camp Treasurer. That will require the Brother to seek dual membership in our Camp along with his home Camp. That process is currently being researched for a way forward. We hope to have more information on progress along this front at the next Camp meeting.]



From the Camp Graves Registration Officer

Camp 1 GRO Report

After a scenic detour hunting Civil War cousins, I am back at GROing in Tarrant County.

I am up to 82 undocumented bluebellies in Tarrant Co.:
No 82 - John W Wingfield, Regimental Quartermaster, 7th West Virginia Cavalry.

All duly entered into the graves database.

In F, C, & L,
Todd Wilber
Camp 1 GRO

Recent Dispatches !
Comments from our Members regarding
the status of Camp 1 for 2025

[Edited for length only, not for overall sentiment]
[“Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent.”]

Brother Brown: “[Question:] will this Camp continue into 2025? I certainly hope so, but it will require Brothers stepping up to assume leadership roles, or else there will be no viable way to continue. ... [W]e need to discuss this....”

Brother Green: “This camp has been coasting on empty the last few years. I think it is time to put Camp 1 to rest and divide us up between Camp 18 and the new San Antonio camp. I would like to thank [Brother] Butch for keeping the dream alive this year.”

Brother Black: “[Brother Green,] I do not agree. Rather than talk of killing Camp 1, we should be thinking of ways to energize the Camp. ... Closing the Camp has serious consequences for the Camp and the Department of Texas.”

Brother White: “I will ... volunteer for a camp role to keep it going.”

Brother Grey: “The life blood of any Organization is its membership-- educated and engaged. Take a look around and note how many such groups are closing down or thriving. Humbly, I submit, it's all about Connection AND Relevancy. What has this Camp and State / National Organization performed at each applicable level to connect with folks and demonstrate "Value Added" to their lives thereby creating a stronger relationship and subsequent membership-- active and engaged membership-- to support and honor Family, deceased or living?”

Brother Blue: “This Camp, ... geographically, is strung out across Texas, Louisiana, and New Mexico.... This makes it difficult to get together as a Camp. However, distant members generally did not show up even on Zoom meetings, for which notices were sent out in plenty of time to attend. ... In the first few years I was a member, we had numerous functions.... All of these events [were fairly well attended and] are relevant to the mission of the SUVCW. ... Now, this same group of people are older, more infirm, ... and no one is volunteering or stepping up to take on the mantle of leadership. ... Honestly, Camp 1 has been on life support since COVID. We tried for two years to revive it. I cannot with any sense of truth say it succeeded. Draw what conclusions from that as you will.”

Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth Biography



Elmer Ephraim Ellsworth (April 11, 1837 – May 24, 1861)

Elmer Ephraim Ellsworth (April 11, 1837 – May 24, 1861) was known as the first conspicuous casualty of the American Civil War. Ellsworth was born in Malta, New York, grew up in Mechanicville, New York, and lived in New York City. Eventually he moved to Chicago, where he worked as a law clerk. After studying military science in his spare time, Ellsworth became a colonel of Chicago's National Guard Cadets, introducing his men to the Zouave uniforms, which French colonial troops wore.

Ellsworth's unit eventually became a national champion drill team. In 1860, Ellsworth went to Springfield, Illinois, and studied law in Abraham Lincoln's office, helping Lincoln with his campaign for president. Ellsworth went with Lincoln to Washington, D.C., when he was elected. President Lincoln nicknamed Ellsworth "the greatest little man I ever met." Ellsworth helped recruit soldiers after the secession crisis in 1861, raising a volunteer regiment from New York. Ellsworth also traveled and set up a practice in Rockford, Illinois, where he was involved in the recruiting of several militia and cadet units.

It was during this time he met and became engaged to Carrie Spafford, the daughter of a local industrialist and city leader. They did not marry before he left for Washington, taking the New York regiment with him. Ellsworth died shortly after arriving in Washington. On May 24, 1861, the day after Virginia seceded, Ellsworth led his men uncontested down the streets of Alexandria, Virginia, across the Potomac River from

Washington. He ordered some of his men to take the railroad station while he and a few other soldiers went to secure the telegraph office. While doing this, Ellsworth noticed a Confederate flag flying above the Marshall House Inn. He and four others quickly went up the stairs. Ellsworth cut down the flag and was on the way down the stairs when the owner, James W. Jackson, killed him with a shotgun blast to the chest.

Corp. Francis (Frank) Brownell of Troy, New York, immediately killed the innkeeper. Brownell was later awarded a Medal of Honor for his actions. Lincoln was deeply saddened by his friend's death and ordered an honor guard to bring his friend's body to the White House, where it lay in state on May 25, 1861. Ellsworth was then taken to the City Hall in New York City, where thousands of Union supporters came to see the first man to fall for the Union cause. Ellsworth was then buried in his hometown of Mechanicville, New York, in Hudson View Cemetery.

Thousands of Union supporters rallied around Ellsworth's cause and enlisted. "Remember Ellsworth" was a patriotic slogan, and a New York regiment of volunteers (the 44th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment) called itself the "Ellsworth Avengers" as well as "The People's Ellsworth Regiment." Relics associated with Ellsworth's death became prized souvenirs. The Smithsonian and Bates College's Special Collections Library have pieces of the Confederate flag that Ellsworth was removing when he was shot—in 1894, Brownell's widow was offering to sell small pieces of the flag for \$10 and \$15 each. The New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center in Saratoga Springs has most of the flag itself and Ellsworth's uniform, showing the hole from the fatal shot.

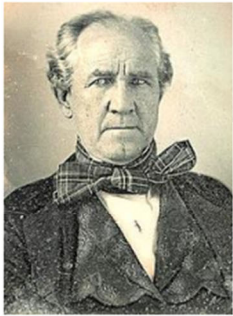
Ellsworth, Wisconsin, is named in his honor. *[as is Camp 18, Dept of Tx & La]*

(as presented on the Camp 18 website https://www.txsuv.org/camp_18/ellsworth.html)

Steamboat House

Huntsville, Texas – Regarded a hero for his leadership role in the *Battle of San Jacinto*, Sam Houston was called a coward 30 years later. How could that be, you ask? In 1861, as governor of Texas, Houston refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy after Texas seceded from the United States, and was forced out of office. In 1862, he relocated in Huntsville, Texas, where he and his family had lived on and off between 1848 and 1858. His departure earned him the animosity and low-esteem reputation of many rebellious Texans.

After arriving in Huntsville, Houston wanted to buy back his old home, the *Woodland Home*, but he did not have enough money to do so. Instead, he rented another nearby house in 1862 nicknamed the *Steamboat House*. The home had gained its unique moniker because of its design - the two-story structure was deliberately fashioned in the shape of a steamboat by the builder. It is one room wide all the way through with three rooms on each floor



Right: **Steamboat House**



The unusual design of the house proved unpopular. The builder was unable to sell or rent it – until Sam Houston (*photo at left*) came along. Because of the *Steamboat House's* ‘ugliness’, the rental amount was in Houston’s price range. Houston and family took residence.

Unfortunately, Houston's health declined during the early months of 1863. In July 1863, chills and fever developed into pneumonia, causing the old general to be bedridden. Then, at dusk on July 26, 1863, while his wife, Margaret, was reading to him from her Bible, Sam Houston died at age 70. His funeral was held the next day in the upstairs parlor of *Steamboat House*. His wood coffin was reportedly made by Union POWs at the Huntsville Penitentiary, for whom Houston had shown concern. Masonic rites were conducted at the burial site at Oakwood Cemetery in Huntsville.

For several years, on the anniversary of Houston’s death, a peculiar offering was waiting at his grave when the sun came up. It was always the same: a plate with six oysters, three sugar cookies and a cup of coffee with three lumps of sugar – foods that Houston liked, according to his correspondence. The identity of the nocturnal gift-giver was kept anonymous – *a whimsical mystery!* editor

[Reprinted courtesy of Lt Cdr Edward Lea U.S.N. Camp 2, Dept of Texas and Louisiana]

National Patriotic Instruction (October 2024 – National Website)

G.A.R. Ritual — Badge Presentation

Most of us are familiar with the SUVCW Ritual for presentation of the membership badge during initiation of a new member. It may be of interest to read how the G.A.R. handled the same ceremony with their initiates. The following is from the 1907 edition of the “Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic”:

COMRADES. In the days of ancient chivalry the candidate for the honors of knighthood was examined in the exercise of arms, in his record of military service; and if duly qualified was given a shield without device, and charged to show such a brave and gracious manliness before God and man that he might win an emblazonry for it.

In these days the members of the Grand Army of the Republic do not need to win any device to designate their chivalrous spirit. They have shown on land and on sea, in war and in peace, the best qualities of genuine knighthood. They uphold, as you have been instructed, three important principles—Fraternity, Charity, Loyalty.

As the emblem of those principles, the Grand Army of the Republic has adopted this badge. It is more honorable than any shield. It is emblazoned with a heroism that was patriotic and with a patriotism that was heroic.



It is made out of cannon captured in a war that seriously affected the financial and industrial prosperity of the country at home and abroad; that cost four hundred thousand loyal lives; that made three hundred thousand Union soldiers and sailors cripples for life; and that left more than a million devoted mothers, widows, sisters and orphans to mourn for their loved ones who did not return.

Your services in the past have been such that you are deemed worthy to receive it. As the representative of the Post, I give it to you.

[The Commander steps forward and pins the badges upon the left breast of the recruits.]

My comrades, wear it over hearts so loyal, so patriotic, so vigilant and so brave that it shall be to others an incentive to the most unselfish patriotism; and to yourselves a guard against everything that can disgrace the past you helped to make honorable and our dead have made sacred, or that can bring shame upon the Grand Army of the Republic.

To your honor as men, as patriots, and as comrades, I intrust it.

It is obvious that the G.A.R. held their badge in very high esteem for the loyalty and sacrifices it represented. We should do the same with our membership badge. Wear it proudly at all events and always . . . remember the Boys in Blue!

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

Tad D. Campbell, PCinC

National Patriotic Instructor

Upcoming 2024 Camp Events (updated details/reminders to follow)

November 19th 7:00PM - Camp Zoom-only meeting; nominations of 2025 Officers; program planned on “The Gainesville Hanging.”

December 10th 7:00PM – Camp Zoom-only meeting; election of 2025 Officers

Camp 1 Officers for 2024

Commander	Butch Durham
Senior Vice Commander	Mike Belcher
Junior Vice Commander	<i>vacant</i>
Secretary/Treasurer	<i>vacant</i>
Camp Council	Paul Kendall, PCC, PDC Craig Reves, PCC Gene Willis, PCC
Patriotic Instructor	<i>vacant</i>
Chaplain	Timothy Phillips, PCC
Graves Registration	Todd Wilber



The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of veteran heroes who fought and worked to save the Union in the American Civil War.

Organized in 1881 and chartered by Congress in 1954, SUVCW is the legal heir and successor to the Grand Army of the Republic. <https://suvchw.org/>

The Department of Texas and Louisiana, SUVCW website may be found here: <http://txsuv.org/>

