

THE WESTERN DISPATCH

The Official Newsletter of the 6th Military District



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Spring 2024

OREGON REMBRANCE DAY

By Lt. Randy Fletcher, SVR



Corvallis - Oregon's commemoration of the 160th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, known as Remembrance Day, was held on Saturday, November 18th at Crystal Lake Cemetery in Corvallis. With the backdrop of the impressive GAR monument a recitation of the Gettysburg Address was delivered by Br. Stephen Holgate, a noted Lincoln impressionist. Cool, dry and partly sunny weather allowed for a comfortable day with about two dozen community members on hand to witness the event. The ceremony began with the arrival of President Lincoln escorted by men of Company B, 71st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry under the command of Capt. Mark Stevens. The opening phrase "Four score and seven years ago" snapped the audience to attention as Br. Holgate began his uncanny impression of our 16th president. Following the address, the President and the SVR led a short procession to the grave of Adolphus Jones, the last Union veteran buried in Benton County. A dedication ceremony was then held for a new plaque commemorating Jones's status as last veteran. A floral presentation by the Ladies of the Mary Lee Baker Auxiliary of the SUVCW was followed by a three volley musket salute by the Sons of Veterans Reserve followed by Bugler D.H. Shearer sounding Taps concluding the morning. The national Remembrance Day ceremony and parade began in 1956 and is led by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, takes place each November in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania Oregon Remembrance Day was founded by the Baker Camp's late Camp and SVR Commander Steve Betschart in 2006. The Baker Camp holds this event annually at different cemeteries throughout western Oregon.

Headstone Dedication



Santa Cruz - On Saturday, September 16th members the 3rd U.S. Artillery, Battery H, SVR participated in a gravestone dedication for Pvt. Henry Barnett of the 113th U.S. Colored Troops who is buried in Santa Cruz, California.

Parades Good for Recruiting

By Capt. Fred Hall, SVR

William Pittenger San Diego Camp 21, is planning for an eventful 2024. We celebrate Medal of Honor Day, March 25th, at Wm Pittenger's gravesite in Fallbrook, CA. Wm. Pittenger was among the first six Medal of Honor recipients. Our Camp has committed to four San Diego patriotic parades to show who we are and celebrate the Boys in Blue. In each parade, we ride in Mustang Convertibles, courtesy of the Mustang Club of San Diego. These are our "ponies". Parades also allow us to reach out for potential members.



Tom Helmantoler and his new SVR member grandson Marley sitting on the rear deck of a Mustang in the 2023 San Diego St. Patrick's Day parade.

UTAH FORMING SVR UNIT

Salt Lake City - We have received notification of intent to form a new unit of the SVR. Company H of the 15th Illinois Volunteer Infantry will be based in the Salt Lake City area and affiliated with Capt. Lot Smith SUVCW Camp #1. Connor Nielson will serve as commander of Company H. Welcome boys!

New SVR Commanding General

Major General Robert E. Grimm has retired as commanding officer of the Sons of Veterans Reserve, a position he has held since 2007. He will retain his rank in retirement. Our new commanding officer is Brigadier General Donald E. Darby who previously served as deputy commander of the SVR.

Bay Area Living History



San Francisco - Battery H, 3rd U.S. Artillery at Fort Point living history day in San Francisco on February 3rd.

From Left to right: Pvt. John, Corp. Randy, 1st Sgt. Steve, Capt. Robert, Corp. Glenn, and Pvt. Ken portraying an infantry 1st Sergeant.

Contribute to the Western Dispatch

Thank you to all who contributed to this edition of the newsletter. Putting an issue together is easy and fun when I have a lot of material from our units. If your unit is not in this edition - make sure you contribute next time.

All SVR units should be participating in Memorial Day services so we should shoot for another newsletter in mid-June. Also, don't forget to post picture to our 6th Military District Facebook page.

Our Public Information Officer, Lt. Randy Fletcher, can be reached at fletcher.randy@comcast.net

HERITAGE OF OUR SVR UNITS

By Capt. Mark Stevens, SVR
Inspector General
6th Military District

Indian Home Guard Regiments

During the early part of the Civil War, the Union Indian Home Guard was a series of volunteer infantry regiments recruited from the Five Civilized Tribes of the Indian Territory to support the Union during the American Civil War.

The leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes signed treaties with the Confederacy at the start of the Civil War. However, many of the tribal members did not support the Confederacy and were driven from Indian Territory with a large loss of life. Many of the "Loyal" Indians volunteered for the Union Army in order to get back their lands from the confederacy.

1st Regiment, Indian Home Guard

Organized at Le Roy, Kansas on May 22, 1862 the regiment consisted of eight companies of Creeks and two recruited amongst the Seminole, with a few Black soldiers.

2nd Regiment, Indian Home Guard

Organized on Big Creek and Five-Mile Creek, Kansas, June 22 to July 18, 1862, consisted of one company each of Delaware, Kickapoo, Quapaw, Seneca, and Shawnee, two companies of Osage, and two of Cherokee.

3rd Regiment, Indian Home Guard

The Third Regiment was formed at Tahlequah and Park Hill in July 1862. Many of its troops had previously fought for the Confederate Army, particularly the First Cherokee Mounted Rifles. Its ranks were filled with Cherokee Pins.

The regiment remained to defend the Cherokee Nation after the Union Indian Expedition retreated from the area in late 1862

The regiment served primarily in Indian Territory but also ventured into Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas. Between 1862 and 1865 the regiments variously participated in the actions at Prairie Grove, Arkansas, and Honey Springs as well as dozens of engagements, skirmishes, and raids.

Organization of a fourth and a fifth regiment was commenced but never completed. The units were mustered out on May 31, 1865. It was mainly due to these Union Indians that the Five Civilized Tribes were able to retain any of their lands following the end of the Civil War.

15th Illinois Infantry

The 15th Illinois Infantry Volunteer Regiment was raised under the Ten Regiment Act. The 15th Illinois Infantry was mustered at Freeport, Illinois, on May 24, 1861. Company H was from Ogle County, IL. The 15 Illinois participated in movements around Rolla Mo. ahead of the Fort Donelson Campaign. By the completion of the Donelson Campaign, was assigned a camp near the Union left wing at Pittsburgh Landing (Shiloh). Both the 15th and 14th IL regiments were ordered to move out to support the heavily pressed General Sherman on the right wing accounts describe heavy fighting at the Hornet's Nest before proceeding on to their defensive position supporting the retreat of the right wing. On the second Day of Shiloh, General Grant took direct command of the 14th and 15th Illinois in the counter attack against P.G.T. Beauregard. The 14th and 15th Illinois volunteer regiments would remain together for the duration of the Civil War.

The regiment was consolidated with the 14th Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry to form the 14th and 15th Illinois Battalion Infantry on July 1, 1864, and was finally mustered out of service on September 16, 1865, at Fort Leavenworth.

Department Encampments

The Department of California & Pacific will hold it's 138th Annual Encampment on April 5th and 6th at the Tropicana Resort and Casino in Laughlin, Nevada. Here is a link for more information:

<https://suvpac.org/encampment/>

The Department of the Columbia will hold it's 10th Annual Encampment on Saturday June 1st at the Oregon Military Museum in Clackamas, Oregon.



COMMANDER'S CORNER

Headquarters Kingman, Arizona

March 2024

Greetings 6th Military District Brothers and Friends!

I pray the New Year finds you, your families, camps, and units well! As always, thank you for making the 6th Military District, Sons of Veterans Reserve what it is today. Without you, there would be no SVR.

Some exciting news: thanks to the efforts of Captain Mark Stevens, we have once again grown. We added two new units in the past year, with Captain Stevens working closely with the unit commanders to bring on the following new units.

Please welcome our new units into our happy family.

- Company H, 15th Illinois Infantry, Salt Lake City, Utah
- Co L, 3rd Indian Home Guard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



There have been some organizational changes in the 6th MD Staff as of 2024. The following are my staff assignments this year:

Chief of Staff - Captain Robert Mayer
Inspector General - Captain Mark Stevens
Adjutant - Captain Fred Hall
PIO - 1st Lt. Randy Fletcher
Chaplain - 1st Lt. Gary Dickey

Please join me in congratulating and thanking Captain Owen Stiles on his retirement after serving as our Inspector General in 2023. We also want to congratulate Major General Robert Grimm on his retirement as the SVR Commander and his replacement Brigadier General Donald E. Darby.

As a reminder, please have all SVR officers, NCOs, and members review our regulations found at: <https://suvcw-svr.org/forms.htm>

As SVR members, I invite you to attend the SVR Breakfast at the annual SUVCW Encampment on 8/23/24 in Lexington, KY. <https://suvcw-svr.org/2024Breakfast-fi.pdf>

For those of you in the Department of California & the Pacific, I invite you to stop by the Hospitality Suite on Friday, April 5, 2024 at the Tropicana Laughlin (NV) Casino Resort. The 6th MD District SVR is sponsoring the Hospitality Suite and this year's entertainment, "An Evening with Major General John Gray Foster, the Forgotten Union General" at the Encampment banquet.

Please remember to honor the Boys in Blue this year at Memorial Day and other events. If you are sponsoring an event, please get in touch with the SVR Chief of Staff to schedule a Staff Officer. If we can make it happen, we will be there.

I wish you a safe, healthy, and prosperous new year. Should you require additional information, please feel free to contact me at jerseyartillery@gmail.com.

In Fraternity, Charity & Loyalty,

Dr. Wayne L. Eder
Major, Commanding
6th Military District SVR

From the Chaplain's Tent

DIFFICULT TIMES

We live in difficult times as a nation. We see this in front of us daily as we read the news, watch our T.V.'s, and listen to our politicians. So many people are against something rather than are for something. Instead of bringing people closer together we find ourselves further apart. And it is not just because this is presidential race year, but it has been a continuing trend. When we think of our ancestors who fought in the Civil War they also saw this same environment of dissolution rather than bringing people closer. How do we get back to being the **UNITED** States of America rather than the divided states of America? I don't have the answer for everyone, but I do have an answer for myself. I truly try to engage people who think and act differently than I do in a middle ground of listening, contemplation, and working with others for the sake of the entire country. I wonder what our Civil War ancestors would think of our current state of our country in which they gave so much to seek to keep it one. No, not in all thinking the same way but all seeking to understand others so we can find our commonalities not just our differences. As a chaplain, I believe in prayer and I pray for our country and all our people to look for the foundation we were formed upon spoken in our Pledge of Allegiance — "... one Nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Let us build on the things that unite us, work on the things that divide us, and be thankful for this great country in which we live.



God Bless Us All

Yours in fraternity, charity and loyalty

Dr. Gary Alan Dickey
Chaplain
6th Military District, SVR

Forgotten Veterans To Be Interred in National Cemetery

By Lt. Randy Fletcher, SVR

Portland - On Saturday, June 1st Company B, 71st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, SVR will be providing the military honors at a funeral service for the unclaimed cremated remains of approximately 30 U.S. military



veterans who have sat in a storage area of a local mausoleum for years, some for almost 100 years. The cremains were never claimed by any family member. The cremains will be interred at Willamette National Cemetery. Among the deceased veterans are four Union Civil War soldiers, a female Army nurse who served in France in WWI, an infant child of a U.S. Navy veteran, and men who served in the Spanish American War, WWI and WWII. The ceremony will be at 10:00 AM in the amphitheater of the cemetery. The Oregon SVR welcomes all SVR units and personnel which would like to participate in the honors. Contact Capt. Mark Stevens for more information cobcorp@aol.com

Amphitheater at Willamette National Cemetery

THE FORGOTTEN GENERAL

By Dr. Wayne L. Eder

The 6th Military District SVR will be hosting this year's banquet entertainment for the Department of California and the Pacific at the Tropicana Laughlin Casino Resort in Laughlin, NV on April 5 & 6, 2024. This year's entertainment will be "An Evening with Major General John Gray Foster, the Forgotten Union General."

Who was John G. Foster? (May 27, 1823 – September 2, 1874) You may be surprised to learn that then Captain Foster was second in command at Fort Sumter during the bombardment of April 12-13, 1861, under Major Robert Anderson. Foster had previously served as commander of Fort Moultrie before the Union soldiers were evacuated to Fort Sumter.

Born in Whitefield, NH, on May 27, 1823, Foster was admitted to and graduated fourth in the Class of 1846. Yes, the Class of 1846, with classmates George McClellan, A.P. Hill, T.J. "Stonewall" Jackson, George E. Pickett, George Stoneman, Jesse Reno, and 52 other classmates. Foster went on to serve in the Mexican-American War and was severely wounded at the Battle of Molino Del Rey and received two brevet promotions for bravery. After the Mexican War, Foster returned to West Point as an instructor prior to their assignment in Charleston as an engineer in 1858, working on the harbor's defenses.

After evacuation from Fort Sumter, Foster met his Excellency Abraham Lincoln, who was impressed with the Captain for keeping the garrison calm during the bombardment. Foster was quickly moved up the ranks and, by October 1861, was appointed as Brigadier General of Volunteers. General Foster served under Major General Ambrose Burnside in the North Carolina Campaign fighting at the Battle of Roanoke Island and New Bern.

Foster developed a friendship with the President, who corresponded throughout the war. By 1863, Foster commanded the Department of the Ohio and Army of the Ohio and later the Department of South Carolina. At the end of the war, he commanded the Department of Florida and was promoted to Major General of Volunteers with a brevet promotion as Major General of the Regular army. From 1871 - 1874, Foster served as Assistant to the Chief of Engineers in Washington D.C. After other field assignments, the brave general eventually succumbed to several war wounds and died in his hometown of Nashua on September 2, 1874.



Major General John Gray Foster

Photo by conservator Martha Cox, New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, 2015.

The Grand Army of the Republic Post 7 in Nashua, New Hampshire, was named in Foster's honor.

HISTORY OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

By Capt. Mark M. Stevens, SVR

Inspector General

6th Military District

In 1777, General George Washington had a problem. The Continental Army at birth was a disorganized rabble of militia from different towns, counties and states, with no experience fighting a major war and no common organization, procedures, drills, uniforms (if any) or equipment. The Continental Army was going against the British, one of the best armies in the world, and Washington was very much aware that his army was in no way ready.

None of the existing European systems of inspecting fit well for the Continental Army. The British was inadequate as it relied on a professional, experienced, highly trained and well-disciplined army; the French because it interfered with the chain of command; and the Prussian as it relied on uniform units and practices. The Massachusetts Bay Colony and Colony of Virginia both had militias with muster masters and muster masters-general respectively serving as inspectors. Elements from all five systems were eventually merged. The massed tactics used required high degrees of training, discipline and extensive drill. The final position was seen as that of a Drill or Muster Master to ensure troop proficiency and with uniform, effective tactics.

On 13 December 1777, Congress created the Inspector General of the Army. The Congressional resolution directed that the Inspector General would:

- *Review the troops*
- *See that officers and soldiers are instructed in exercise maneuvers established by the Board of War*
- *Ensure that discipline be strictly observed*
- *Ensure that officers command properly and treat soldiers with justice*

The first true U.S. Army Inspector General was Baron Frederick William Augustus Von Steuben, recruited by Benjamin Franklin in France in 1777. Von Steuben was a former captain in the Prussian Army. He reported to duty at Valley Forge in February 1778, on a trial basis. He initially spoke no English but quickly impressed everyone with his abilities and hard work to create the training, drills, discipline, and organization of the Continental Army.

In May 1778, he was officially appointed Inspector General of the Army with the rank and pay of Major General. Von Steuben's character, tact and genius overcame a great deal of the Continental Army's field officers' suspicion and resentment of the Inspector General, whose duties as outlined by Congress included "*to report all abuses, neglect and deficiencies to the Commander in Chief.*" As the first inspector general to serve a significant term, he played a large part in defining the role of the position. His book, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, served as the official guide to military training and maneuvers in the United States Army until the War of 1812. General Von Steuben is recognized as the "Father of the Inspector General System," and significantly influenced our Army's ability to fight and win.

On February 18, 1779, the Continental Congress formally created a charter for the Office of Inspector General. It gave the holder of the position the rank of major general and specified the role of the position as "*creating regulations for maneuvers and discipline, periodically inspecting and reporting on the condition of troops and introducing new maneuvers.*"



Baron Frederick William Augustus Von Steuben

THE WESTERN DISPATCH

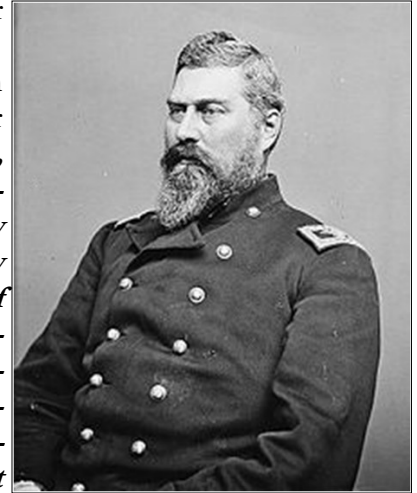
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... History of the Inspector General continued

Upon the outbreak of the American Civil War, all serving inspectors had retired or defected to the Confederate States of America and as a result new inspectors were appointed in 1861. There were many informally appointed field inspectors and by late 1862, "nearly 1,400 other officers were on orders at one time or another to perform various types of inspection duties."

In January 1863, Delos Bennett Sackett was assigned as the head of the Office of the Inspector General, which, until then had not existed. In total, two major generals, seven brigadier generals, 18 colonels, 118 lieutenant colonels, and 149 majors of the regular army served official inspector duty during the Civil War.

How the Army used the IG improved greatly following the Civil War, when the War Department published an order defining the duties of the Inspector General on January 22, 1866 to inspect: ***"the condition as to efficiency, discipline, supplies, etc., of bodies of troops, and the resources, geographical features, lines of communication and supply, the military wants, etc., of any section of the country; the military status in any field of operations; the condition and supply of military materials of various classes; the condition of the administrative or disbursing departments of the service; the efficiency and conduct of military commanders and agents; the cause of failure or delay in movements or operations; of losses by accidents, disasters, etc., and in general, all matters pertaining to the military art or having interest in a military point of view."***



Delos Bennett Sackett

~ United States Department of War, General Order No. 5 of 1866.

Today, the Office of the Inspector General of the United States Army (OTIG) is the agency tasked with investigating the United States Army. Its stated mission is to ***"provide impartial, objective and unbiased advice and oversight to the army through relevant, timely and thorough inspection, assistance, investigations, and training."***

For the Sons of Veterans Reserve, the Inspector General staff position is a vital role. The IG delivers and refines the tools to give full honor and military bearing in our work to represent the men who served.

"The IG implements, manages and directs compliance and conflict resolution programs at the direction of his commander. He advises the commander on issues related to SVR programs and operations, ensuring resources are used effectively and efficiently."

~ Stephen A. Michaels, Col., SVR, National SVR Inspector General



***The insignia of the U.S. Army
Inspector General***

GEOGRAPHY OF THE 6TH MILITARY DISTRICT

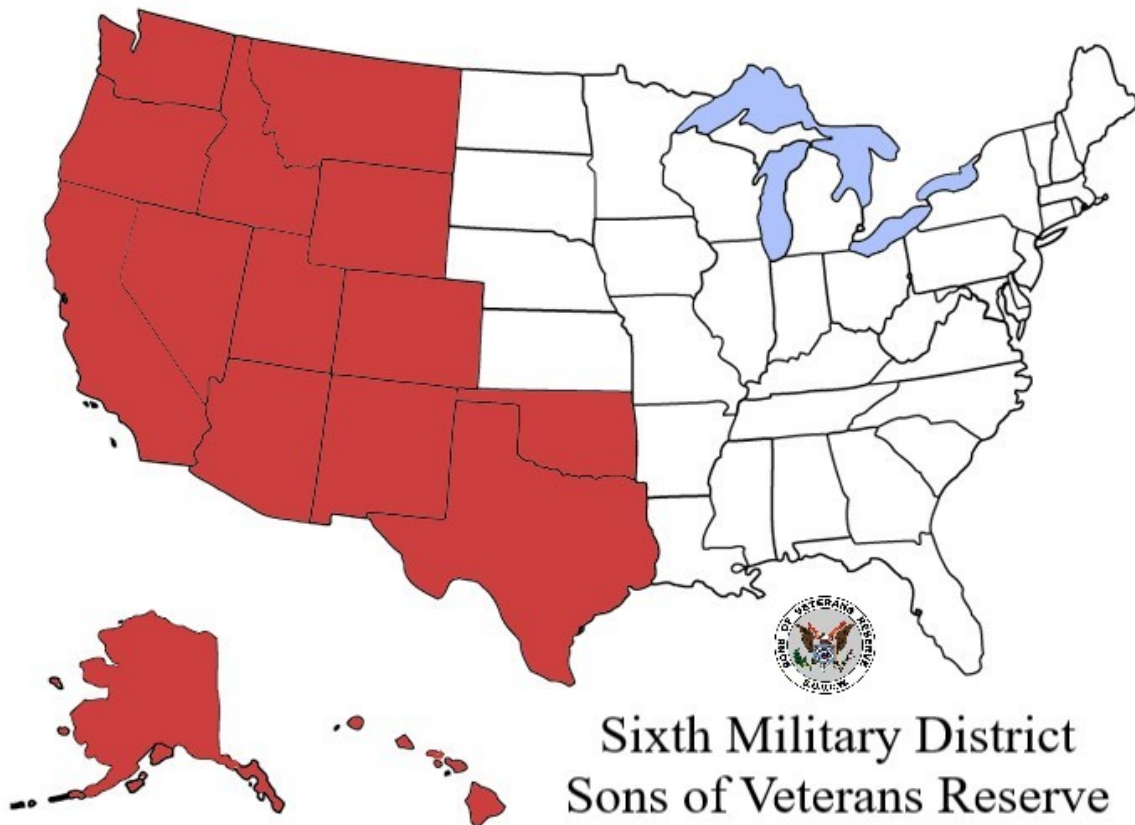
The Sons of Veterans Reserve (SVR) is the ceremonial uniformed military component of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW). SVR Units participate in Civil War related ceremonies, parades, living history programs, and re-enactments. Membership in the Sons of Veterans Reserve is open to any Member, Junior, or Associate of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. To be in the SVR you must be a Member or Associate in the SUVCW.

The SVR structure includes a general staff and seven military districts under the overall command of Brig. Gen. Donald E. Darby of Ohio. The 6th Military District is the largest district geographically. Commanded by Major Wayne Eder of Arizona the 6th stretches from Alaska to Hawaii, from Washington to Montana, from California to Texas.

Final unit strength numbers are due soon but the 6th Military District expects to have 203 total personnel including 13 commissioned officers and 39 NCOs. The 6th has experienced 15% growth over the past two years.

The 6th Military District currently has nine organized SVR units:

- *Battery A, 3rd U.S. Artillery (Nevada)*
- *Battery H, 3rd U.S. Artillery (California)*
- *Company G, 5th California Infantry (California)*
- *Company B, 8th California Infantry (California)*
- *Company C, 8th California Infantry (California)*
- *Company K, 1st U.S. Infantry (Texas)*
- *Company B, 71st Pennsylvania Infantry (Oregon)*
- *Company L, 3rd Indian Home Guard (Oklahoma)*
- *Company H, 15th Illinois Infantry (Utah)*



Sixth Military District
Sons of Veterans Reserve