

Sheridan's Dispatch

General Philip H. Sheridan Camp No. 4
Department of California & Pacific, SUVCW

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FROM THE EDITOR:

If you are a member of Sheridan Camp 4, you should receive with this issue of *Sheridan's Dispatch* a short questionnaire in the form of a postcard. Our camp

records are incomplete and need updating badly. The several questions asked will greatly assist in this effort.

The postcards are already addressed and pre-posted so please complete them and drop them in the mail. It should take only a minute or two. Remember, the camp has already paid for the postage, whether not the postcards are returned. Thanks for your help!

Oak Hill G.A.R. Conservation Program



Members of the NCWA, including our own Brothers Claytor and Pelikan (both at center) of Sheridan Camp

The first annual G.A.R. Veterans Burial Plot Conservation and Memorial Program was held at Oak Hill Cemetery in San José, CA on May 7, 2000.

Oak Hill Memorial Park is the oldest secular cemetery in California (having been in continuous use

since 1839) and covers more than 300 acres. There are over 400 Union veterans buried in the G.A.R. plot!

The event was put on by our camp in cooperation with the California Army National Guard, the National Civil War Association (NCWA), the South Bay Civil War Roundtable, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and San José Boy Scout Troop 578.

Most participants arrived early to help with the clean up of the plot, only to find that cemetery employees had taken the initiative and already had it spruced up. We suspect the idea of public and press being there prompted them to action!

Before the ceremony, the Boy Scouts put an American flag on each of the graves and Brother Don Pray and his wife Josephine placed flowers.

Our Camp Chaplain, Rev. Clark Seum, opened the program, after which representatives of each of the organizations involved made short speeches. Brother Kermit Claytor, a member of our camp and Vice President of the NCWA, spoke, as did Larry Comstock of the South Bay Civil War Roundtable. Camp Commander Dan Bunnell told the history of the SUVCW and related the origin of the song "Taps".

After the speeches, a period bugler played the song and reenactors fired several volleys in salute to the honored dead.

The day proved a success and we plan to make this an annual event!

JVC Bob Kadlec made a very professional video of the event. If you are interested in obtaining a copy, please contact Brother Kadlec via e-mail at <bobkvp@aol.com>.

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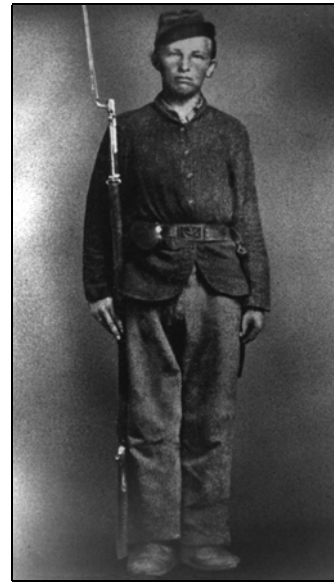
MY CIVIL WAR ANCESTOR

Submitted by JVC Robert J. Kadlec, San José, California

Jacob Stauff was born in Dolgesheim, Germany on Nov. 24, 1843. In 1854, his widowed mother brought the family to the German community of Milwaukee, WI.

On Aug. 12, 1862, at the age of 18, Jacob Stauff enlisted as a Private in Company I (Wenze Guard) of the 26th Wisconsin Voluntary Infantry.

Private Stauff saw his first combat action at the battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863 when the 11th Corps, took up positions on the right flank of the Union line. Although heavily out numbered, the 26th Regiment held on in the face of over-whelming odds until General Hooker ordered General Howard to withdraw his 11th Corps.



Jacob Stauff ready for battle

During the battle on May 2, 1863, Stauff was injured when four Confederate regiments from North Carolina overran his position. In the dark, a mounted horseman ran into Jacob and his left knee was struck by the horse's hoof and dislocated.

Upon arrival at Gettysburg, PA on July 1, 1863, Jacob Stauff was promoted to Corporal for his actions at Chancellorsville. During the next three days of fighting with the Confederates on Cemetery Hill, the 26th Regiment casualty rate was 55%. It was reported that Jacob Stauff might have been wounded during the battle. If he was, his wound may have been slight since there is no record of him having been hospitalized.

On May 15, 1864 Stauff, with General Hooker's 20th Corps for General Sherman's Atlanta Campaign, was hunkered down with his regiment before the Confederate lines at the town of Resaca, GA. When

General Hooker launched his attack, Jacob Stauff raced across the wide field and up the slopes toward the Confederate breastworks of Captain Max Van Den Corput's four-gun artillery battery. A sudden flash from the rebel lines brought a sheet of musket balls and canister rounds ripping through the advancing 26th Regiment's lines. One ball caught the color bearer, wounding him severely and throwing the colors to the ground. In the midst of the fury and chaos of the assault, Jacob Stauff rushed forward and picked up the colors and carried them forward in the assault.

On May 26th Jacob Stauff was promoted to Color Corporal and Color Bearer for his bravery in picking up the flag at Resaca. He would carry the 26th Wisconsin Voluntary Infantry Regiment flag for the remainder of the Atlanta Campaign, during General Sherman's "March-To-The-Sea," and during the Carolinas Campaign at the battles of Averasboro and Bentonville.

On April 12, 1865, word of General Lee's surrender at Appomatox Court House was received. On the 30th, the 26th Regiment began their march north, passing through the defeated Confederate Capital of Richmond, and set up camp in Alexandria, VA. On May 24, 1865, Jacob Stauff, carrying the tattered and battle-worn 26th Wisconsin Voluntary Infantry Regiment flag, led the regimental formation as it passed in the Grand Review down Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and the Capital.



Jacob Stauff - about 1905

After the war, Jacob Stauff became a founding member of the 26th Regiment Association and a member of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). In 1904 he was elected to the position of "Officer Of The Guard" for the year 1905 in Robert Chivas Post Number 2 of the GAR.

He received a pension from the government for his injuries and passed away on Aug. 16, 1910 at the age of 67 years.

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CAMP NEWS

At the last camp meeting, held May 20, 2000, Brother Daniel R. Earl was elected Camp Counselor and Camp Treasurer. Brother Earl presented a proposal to have legislation passed naming a state highway in the San José area in honor of our camp and its namesake, General Philip Sheridan. Brother Earl passed out a copy of the proposed legislation and discussed the process. A committee headed by Brother Earl was formed to facilitate the effort. Brothers Don Pray and Tad Campbell volunteered to participate.

The camp reviewed the G.A.R. Plot Clean Up and Memorial that was held at Oak Hill Memorial Park on May 7, 2000. It was decided that this should become an annual event. JVC Bob Kadlec showed a very professional video that he produced of this year's event. Contact Brother Kadlec if you would like a copy.

Patriotic Instructor Dave Schleeter showed the camp examples of personal checks that can be obtained with Civil War battlefield backgrounds.

Brother Roger Knox of Santa Barbara informs us that in his role as a re-enactor, he has been promoted from Sgt. to 1st Lt., serving as Brigade Adjutant, Union Staff, Union Brigade, Ft. Tejon Historical Association. Congratulations!

CIVIL WAR TRIVIA QUIZ # 3 - ANSWERS (from page 6):

1. More than 300.
2. Each regiment had a color guard of four carefully selected soldiers — two who carried the regimental colors and two who guarded them.
3. President Abraham Lincoln was buried in Springfield, Illinois.
4. The name was used by Confederates from Tennessee to refer to Unionists from Tennessee who joined the Northern army.
5. Rhode Island.

SOURCE: Civil War Quiz and Fact Book, by Rod Gragg, Harper & Row Publishers, NY, 1985.

On the issue of the Confederate Battle flag — 

Letter from our Camp Counselor Daniel R. Earl to National Counselor Hon. James B. Pahl:

Dear Brother Pahl:

I am writing on behalf of the General Philip H. Sheridan Camp No. 4, Department of California and Pacific, concerning Series 1999-2000 General Order No. 4, relative to the display of the Confederate Battle Flag over the State House in Columbia, South Carolina.

This General Order is clearly controversial in nature. Consequently, it is not my intent to add to that controversy, but rather to seek clarification on the constitutionality of the order. As you know, South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges signed into law S. 1266, providing for, *inter alia*, the removal of the South Carolina Infantry Battle Flag of the Confederate States of America from atop the South Carolina State House. In view of this recent action by the State of South Carolina, General Order No. 4 (G.O. #4), and the entire issue, may be moot. However, in the interim, I respectfully ask your indulgence and guidance on this very important matter affecting the Order.

After having made a thorough review of the Constitution and Regulations of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, I have found that, among other things, the most relevant Article, of the Constitution itself, that would apply to the legitimacy of G.O. #4 is Article IV, relative to Religion and Politics.

Article IV requires that “[t]he Order being strictly non-sectarian and non-partisan, the introduction or discussion of sectarian or partisan topics is strictly prohibited.” There is no question that General Order #4 is non-sectarian. That is not an issue here. However, G.O. #4 is manifestly partisan in that it commits the Order to the position of supporting a patently fervent topic. This is exemplified by the language of the Resolution itself: that the SUVCW “strongly oppose the removal of the confederate battle flag, from atop the State House in Columbia, South Carolina” The General Order, by its very nature, presents a *prima facie* partisan position for the Order to embrace. It clearly exacerbates the passionate emotions of SUVCW members, as demonstrated in the tie vote authorizing the Resolution, in an already factionalizing situation. Thus, since General Order #4 involves the introduction and discussion of a partisan topic, which is strictly prohibited by our Constitution, it has been my advice to our camp that this general order violates Article IV of the SUVCW Constitution.

Again, I want to be exceedingly clear that it is not my intent, nor that of the Camp’s, to make this a more controversial issue than it already is. What I am seeking from you, in your capacity as National Counselor, is your official interpretation of the SUVCW Constitution and how it applies to General Order No. 4.

That is, I am contacting you to determine if you hold the same legal opinion as what I have provided my Camp. If it is, finding that General Order No. 4 is indeed unconstitutional, I respectfully request, on behalf of the General Philip H. Sheridan Camp No. 4, the following: 1) that you recommend to Commander-in-Chief Danny L. Wheeler that he rescind

General Order No. 4 as unconstitutional; and, 2) that you recommend to the National Encampment, at Lansing, Michigan this summer, that they repeal the Resolution in support of the display of the Confederate Battle Flag over the State House in South Carolina, as was adopted at the 115th Annual Encampment on 10 August 1996 at Columbus, Ohio. Granted, in light of the recent legislation in South Carolina¹ this entire exercise may be moot, as I indicated earlier. However, in the meantime, I respectfully seek your guidance and legal opinion on the validity of General Order No. 4, irrespective of the South Carolina legislation.

Very Truly Yours in Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
Daniel R. Earl

Response to Camp Counselor Earl from National Counselor Pahl:

Dear Brother Earl:

This is indeed a controversial topic. I fully expect it to be debated on the floor of the National Encampment. However, Commander in Chief Wheeler was under affirmative mandate to issue General Order #4, as this was the position taken by a National Encampment of our Order. Only a subsequent Encampment may rescind this position.

I do not believe our Constitution was violated. When it prohibits our involvement in political issues, this is generally interpreted to mean the support of a candidate for public office. This language is included so as to qualify the organization for tax exempt status. The publications of the Internal Revenue Service and the Internal Revenue Code all seem to indicate that debate of ideas and symbols does not come into the realm of political speech, even when that topic is controversial and is the subject of legislation.

Therefore, I cannot support your conclusion. It is, however, prudent to keep such concepts in mind. If I remember this Encampment correctly, the main motive in the passage of this resolution was to be supportive of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. This stand has in fact gone a long way to enhance our relations with that Order. Just as the comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic sought to mend the fences with their former foes, the SUVCW seeks to promote harmony and cooperation with the descendants of those same former foes, as we find that we have many of the same goals.

I also believe this debate has been healthy for our Order. We find that in disagreement, we still maintain a brotherhood devoted to the memory of the sacrifices of our forefathers. I fully support your right to advocate your belief that our Constitution has been violated - I cannot agree, but my disagreement does not invalidate your argument. It is just another point of view.

I would invite you to make a motion on the floor of the next National Encampment, to have the Encampment disavow its earlier stand and withdraw support. If you or anyone from your Camp is not able to attend, your Camp can pass a resolution to this effect and forward it to National for consideration. You could submit it through the National Secretary, or in the alternative, forward it to me. I would be honored to present it to the Encampment for consideration on your behalf.

In fraternity, charity and loyalty,
Jim Pahl
National Counselor



¹ S.1266, signed by the governor on May 23, 2000.
