

*Deo adjuvanti non timindin (With God's help, we need not fear)*



# THE DIXON BLUE LIGHT NEWS

Lt. George E. Dixon Camp #1962  
Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV)

[www.scvcamp1962.org](http://www.scvcamp1962.org)

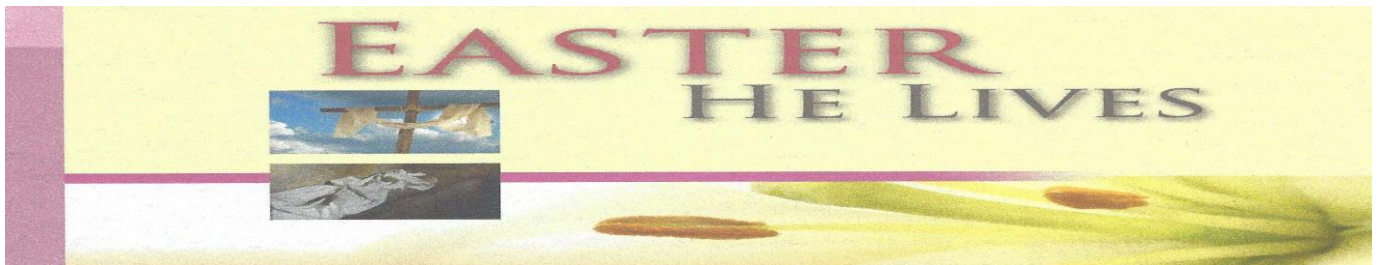
Editor: Lady Sharon Red, Cell 618-622-8949



APRIL 2018



**Celebrate Easter spring time  
enjoy the drive  
and come to our next meeting  
6:30 P. M.  
TUESDAY, APRIL 10  
Belle-Clair Fairgrounds**



## FROM YOUR COMMANDER

*Despite the strange cold weather, hope you had a very enjoyable Easter with your family and friends.*

*We should all be very grateful to the Lord for His resurrection and saving us from our sins.*

*I know I'm grateful to all you loyal members and your many gifts.*

*I would like to especially thank John McKee, our Asst Adjutant, for responsibly stepping in for Gale at the March meeting ... presenting the program, taking the photo and minutes. Thank you so much, John.*

*We have been blessed by the Lord, indeed, and now we need to concentrate on supporting our camp in all its activities – attending the monthly meetings, presenting interesting topics, bringing friends and guests with you, recruiting more members, contacting Mary Biekert (618-972-8190) to volunteer in support of our only fund-raiser--the fall Lee-Jackson Ball, and in May attending the camp picnic and the Memorial Day events at Mound City and Jefferson Barracks.*

*Many thanks in advance for your interest, participation, and hard work. You're the best!*

*Confederately,*

*Ron Lakin*

\*\*\* NEXT CAMP DIXON MEETING \*\*\*  
TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2017 ~ 6:30 p.m.

Belle-Clair Fairgrounds Exposition Center  
200 South Belt East  
Belleville IL

Parking/Entrance on West Side of Building

**PROGRAM:** THE SULTANA  
**SPEAKER:** Adjutant Gale Red  
**REFRESHMENTS:** Compatriot Phil Tate

*Questions? Call Gale Red, Cell 618-622-8949*

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## CAMP DIXON MEETING MINUTES ~ MARCH 13, 2018 Muster

The members and friends of the Lt. George E. Dixon Camp #1962, SCV, conducted their monthly muster at 6:30 p.m. on March 13, 2018 at the Belle-Clair Exposition Center, 200 South Belt East, Belleville IL, this being the 3<sup>rd</sup> Muster of the year for 2018.

**CALL TO ORDER:** 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Commander John Stanton.

**INVOCATION ON "LOVE":** Chaplain Mike Biekert.

**PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS:** 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Commander Stanton. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. flag and Salute to the Confederate flag.

**WELCOME:** Commander Ronald Lakin.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS/GUESTS:** Commander Lakin welcomed New Member, Compatriot Jack Sandford and his wife, Cathy.

**ROLL CALL (195):** Janice Beasley, Mike, Mary, and Caroline Biekert, Bill Boyd, Robert Hardy & Valery Countryman (guest), Walter Hall, Bob Herr, Johnny Kicklighter, Ronald Lakin, John & Jane McKee, Ralph Oelschlager, Dale Rice, Jack & Cathy Sandford, John Stanton, Phil Tate.



**MEETING GROUP PHOTO (L-R)**

**(Seated)** Janice Beasley (and R.Lee), Jane McKee, Ralph Oelschlager, and Robert Hardy

**(1<sup>st</sup> row)** Ronald Lakin, Dale Rice, Caroline Biekert, Bob Herr, Bill Boyd, and Valery Countryman

**(Last row)** Phil Tate, Jack and Cathy Sandford, Johnny Kicklighter, Mike & Mary Biekert, and John Stanton

**Photographer:** John McKee

### PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

**FEBRUARY 13 MEETING MINUTES (Commander Lakin):** Minutes approved by a voice vote with a motion to accept by Bob Herr, seconded by Phil Tate. Motion carried. Minutes accepted.

**FINANCIAL REPORT (Asst Adjutant McKee):** Current balance was reported – no change from previous month, but \$120 in print/mail cost will be due. Approved by a voice vote with a motion to accept by Bob Herr, seconded by Walter Hall. Motion carried. Financial report accepted.

## CAMP DIXON MEETING MINUTES ~ MARCH 13, 2018 Muster (cont'd)

### COMMUNICATIONS

**GALE RED IS ABSENT TONIGHT (Asst Adjutant McKee).** He is at Siteman's for his monthly chemo treatment.

**FOSTER DAUGHTER, LINDSAY (2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Cmdr Kicklighter).** Lindsay had her day in court regarding her father. He was sentenced to 180 years for his crimes (6 counts @ 30 years each, served consecutively).

**JOHN GIDEON** is ill.

### OLD BUSINESS/REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

**MOUND CITY NATIONAL CEMETERY.** Reminder that Saturday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, will our Memorial Day event at the Mound City National Cemetery beginning at 10:00 a.m. It takes about 2 ½ hours to get there, so leave early enough to arrive about 20-30 minutes before it starts. Please put this on your calendars to support. We need you there.

**JEFFERSON BARRACKS NATIONAL CEMETERY.** Also put on your calendars that the Memorial Day event (Monday, May 28) at Jefferson Barracks will begin at 10:00 a.m. We need to be there by 9:30 a.m.

**CAMP PICNIC AND ARTILLERY DEMONSTRATION AT JANICE BEASLEY'S HOMESTEAD, WALSH IL.** Bob Herr arranged with Janice for either May 6 or May 13 (Sunday afternoon), depending upon Janice verifying availability.

**LEE-JACKSON OBSERVANCE (Mary Biekert).** Reported that she is still awaiting an estimate from Bellecourt Manor, but she has reached out to the Grill at the Mansion, O'Fallon IL. Tentative dates are either October 20, October 27, or November 3 (all on a Saturday). Doors would open at 6 pm, with meal at 6:30 pm. She will need some assistance: set-up and tear-down, silent auction donations, and invite people (each to reach 10 people/5 couples).

### NEW BUSINESS

**MEETING PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS.** We need volunteers to do a program for us at our meetings. If you have a subject near and dear to you, please let Adjutant Red know so he can get you on the schedule. If you know of someone who would possibly be a good speaker for us, please let Adjutant Red know that also.

**TRIP TO FORT DONELSON (1<sup>st</sup> Lt Cmdr Stanton).** Wants to know how many people may be interested in a trip to see Fort Donelson. This may entail an overnight stay in Paducah KY. Could combine trip with a regular meeting (subject to SCV rules).

**CIVIL WAR SWAP MEET AT JEFFERSON BARRACKS, MARCH 24.** Those interested in attending should arrive there prior to 9:00 am.



**WAR BETWEEN THE STATES QUIZ by Asst Adjutant John McKee.** He presented 10 things you should know about the War between the States but probably don't.

**REFRESHMENTS** were provided by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Commander Stanton.

**BENEDICTION** was given by Chaplain Biekert.

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, April 10, 2018, 6:30 p.m. at the Belle-Clair Fairgrounds Exposition Center.

**REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED BY** Compatriot Phil Tate.

Respectfully submitted,

*John M. McKee*  
Assistant Adjutant



**153<sup>rd</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE SINKING OF THE SULTANA**  
**This year marks the 153<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the Sultana,**  
**the greatest maritime disaster in US history.**



**The Sultana**

The Sultana was a Mississippi River steamboat paddle wheeler destroyed in an explosion on April 27, 1865. This resulted in the greatest maritime disaster in United States history. An estimated 1,800 of the 2,400 passengers were killed when three of the boat's four boilers exploded and the Sultana sank near Memphis. This disaster received little public attention, as it took place soon after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln and about three weeks after the end of the Civil War.

**THE SULTANA DISASTER by Henry Robert Burke**

Though much smaller than the Titanic, perhaps the most terrible boat disaster in the United States history, was the loss of the Sultana on April 26, 1865 at the end of the American Civil War. The war-weary Union soldiers in the South had but one thought. They wanted to get home! Many had just been released from the horrors of war-prisons like Andersonville, and were waiting in Vicksburg, Mississippi for transportation to their northern homes. Prison camps were hard places, in North and South alike. Many men had died in prison camps, and many of the survivors were semi-invalids. All of them had a feverish desire to get North to their homes and families, where they could get needed care and good food. Unfortunately, they were slated to travel north on the ill-fated riverboat called "The Sultana".

The Sultana was a typical side-wheeler built at Cincinnati in 1863. Registered at 1,719 tons she had a crew of 85. During the American Civil War, she had frequently carried Union Army personnel up and down the river. On March 20, 1864, she had carried a contingent of the 2nd Missouri Colored Infantry Regiment downriver. Sultana's captain, J.C. Mason of St. Louis, had a reputation as a good careful river pilot. On the evening of April 24, 1865, the Sultana made her regular stop at Vicksburg to take on passengers and cargo.

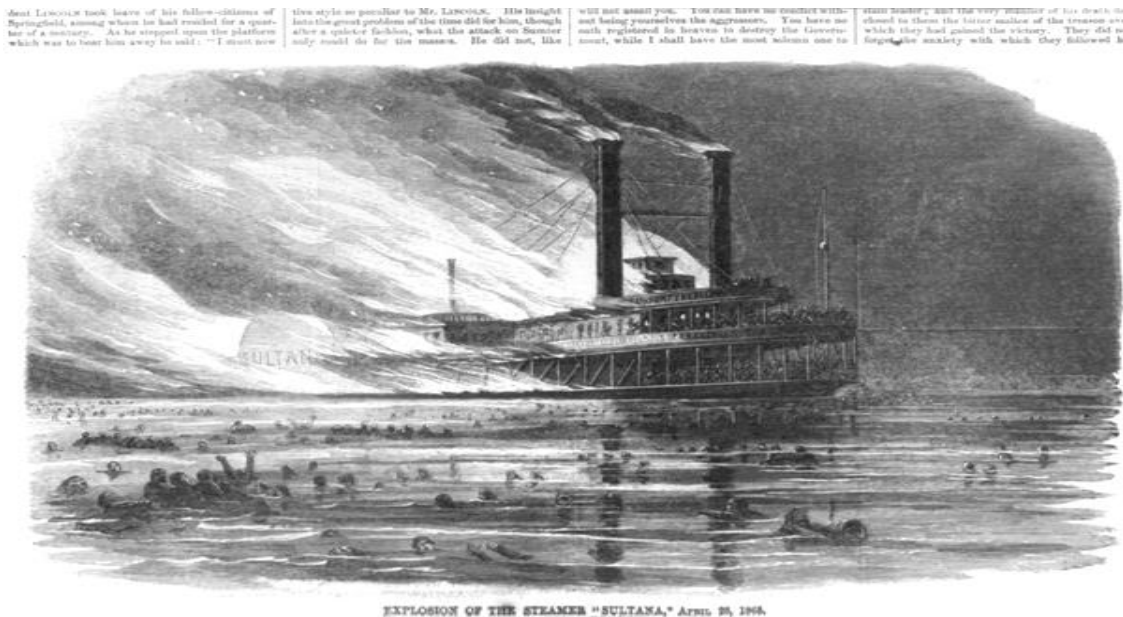
I reiterate that the repatriated Union prisoners of war were desperate to go North on this steamer, so they were allowed to board in almost unmanageable numbers, far beyond the Sultana's rated capacity. Besides the regular passengers and crew numbering about 200, somewhere between 1,800 and 2,000 Union soldiers were finally allowed to board. Altogether, there were about 2,300 passengers and crew aboard the steamer. All available space was literally filled from top to bottom, the steamer could not have carried one more human being.

When the *Sultana* got clear of the wharf and proceeded upstream, she was breasting a current made stronger than usual by flood. Captain Mason seemed to be a bit worried and cautioned the passengers not to crowd to one side of the boat, because there were so many of them it might cause serious trouble. But for 48 hours after casting off the Vicksburg Wharf, the *Sultana* made its way upstream without trouble, making a few scheduled stops and finally on the evening of April 26, 1865, docking at Memphis.

While the *Sultana* was at Memphis, a leaky boiler was discovered. A repair gang was called in to repair the boiler. After taking on coal for fuel, the *Sultana* proceeded up river bound for Cairo, Ill. In fact, most of the servicemen aboard were to disembark there. As she swung 'round a bend about six miles north of Memphis and began to labor her way past a cluster of islands known as the "Hen and Chickens", tragedy struck. The leaky boilers gave out and exploded!

The water in the Mississippi was icy-cold, many of the men could not swim, and there was little wreckage to cling to. People died by the hundreds. Estimates of the number killed ranged from 1,500 to 1,900. Probably a median figure of 1,700 would be about right. In any case, the wreck of the *Sultana* was at the very least, one of the most devastating boat disasters in history, if indeed not the worst. Ohio suffered the greatest loss of lives, with over 700 of her returning servicemen killed.

## Sultana Disaster

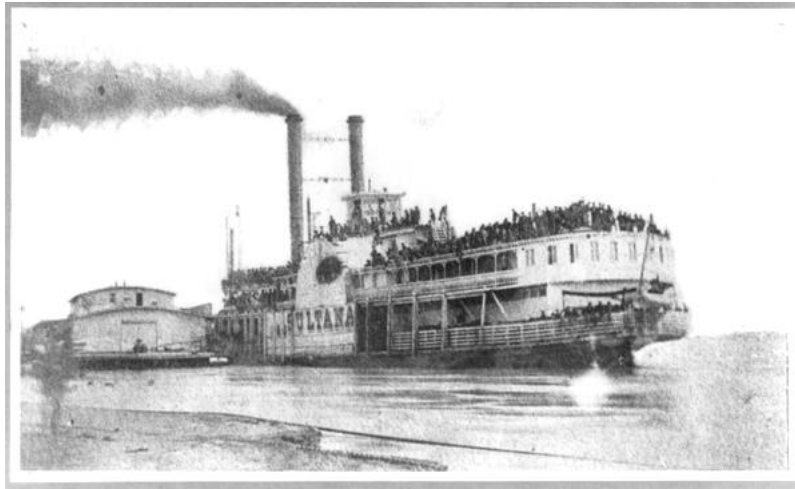


Explosion of the Steamer *Sultana*, April 28, 1865, *Harpers Weekly*, May 20, 1865, Library of Congress

The worst maritime disaster in American history occurred on April 27, 1865, when the steamship *Sultana* exploded and burned on the Mississippi River while dangerously overloaded with passengers. The *Sultana*, a typical side-wheeler coal-burning steamer, was built in 1863. It made frequent trips up and down the Mississippi River between New Orleans and St. Louis during the war, often carrying military personnel. After a regular run from St. Louis, the *Sultana* left New Orleans on April 21 carrying about 100 passengers, assorted goods, and livestock. The ship's engineer discovered leaks in the boilers during a regular stop at Vicksburg on April 24 and hasty repairs were made. Following the repairs, the *Sultana* proceeded to board 1,800 to 2,000 passengers, all repatriated Union prisoners desperate to get home from prison camps at Cahaba in Alabama and Andersonville in southwest Georgia.

The ship stopped in Memphis for more repairs to the boiler, then, at about 1:00 a.m. on April 27, the *Sultana*, now dangerously overloaded, proceeded up-river toward Cairo, Illinois. About seven miles north of Memphis the boilers suddenly burst. The violent and tremendous explosion tore the center out of the vessel, instantly scalding and burning some of the passengers with steam and fire. The blast threw many passengers into the water; however, many remained trapped aboard the ship, where they either perished or were maimed by the heat of the explosion and the collapsing ship.

To escape the burning steamer, some passengers leapt into the river, where they faced hours in the dark, frigid water listening to the shrieks and cries of the injured and dying. The exact death toll remains unknown. Though the official number of deaths is recorded as 1,547, modern historians believe the number could be as high as 1,800, making the *Sultana* disaster even more terrible than the better-known *Titanic* tragedy: slightly more than 1,500 passengers were lost when the much-larger ocean liner sank in the North Atlantic 47 years later.



Last & Only Known Extant Photograph of the *Sultana* & Doomed Passengers, Helena, Arkansas, April 26, 1865, Library of Congress

### Sultana Aftermath, 1865

Within hours of the disaster, Gen. C. C. Washburn, commanding officer at Memphis, appointed a military commission to investigate the tragedy. Three inquiries followed to investigate post-war suspicions that a Confederate bomb had been aboard and reviewing the state of poorly repaired boilers and the impact that overcrowding had in the disaster. The official cause of the explosion was determined to be mismanagement of water levels in the boilers, the ship's listing back and forth in the water due to severe overcrowding, and the faulty repairs made to the boilers days before the disaster. Capt. Frederick Speed was the only official found guilty of any impropriety and was court-martialed. However, the findings were later reversed and no one ever faced official charges.

Surprisingly, the *Sultana* disaster received very little coverage in the contemporary media. This omission was partially due to the public's having become somewhat desensitized to death toll numbers during the Civil War, but more specifically it was due to the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, who had been shot and killed at Ford's Theater on April 14, 1865, only thirteen days before the *Sultana* explosion. Overshadowed by the death of so monumental an individual, the deaths of the hundreds on board the *Sultana* received hardly a mention.

Years later the survivors of the *Sultana* petitioned Congress for a pension, but the request was met with indifference. Funds for the survivors, their families, or a memorial for the incident were not allocated. A group of the survivors met for many years every April 27 and ultimately erected a monument at Mount Olive Cemetery near Knoxville, Tennessee; it reads: "*In memory of the men who were on the Sultana that was destroyed, April 27, 1865, by explosion on the Mississippi river near Memphis, Tennessee.*"

### Captain Frederick Speed

In the aftermath of the *Sultana* explosion, Captain Frederick Speed, federal officer in charge and assistant adjutant general for the Department of the Mississippi, was accused of knowingly overloading the ship seven times over the legal passenger capacity.

After lengthy testimony, a military commission appointed to investigate the tragedy eventually charged Captain Speed with "neglect of duty to the prejudice of good order and military discipline." Speed was the only individual ever to face charges resulting from the incident and, though a court martial eventually found him guilty, the decision was later reversed and the Army closed its investigation. Many officials must have been well aware of the condition of the ship and the overcrowding on board, but ultimately no one was ever formally held responsible for the *Sultana* tragedy.

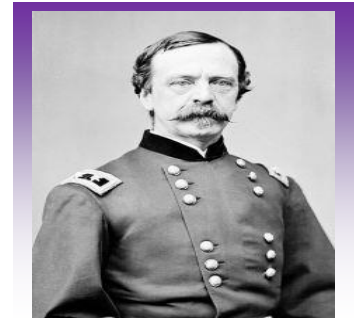
## Little Known Civil War Facts and Stories

- The famed, Welsh explorer, and journalist **Henry M. Stanley - the guy who coined the phrase, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" - served in the American Civil War.** That is not all, he served in three different services. First, he served as a private in the Confederate Army, and was taken prisoner at the Battle of Shiloh in 1862. As a prisoner, he was recruited and joined the Union Army, but was discharged less than three weeks later due to illness. Finally, in 1864 he joined the Union Navy and served aboard the *USS Minnesota*, but he jumped ship in February 1865. I guess he had more important things to do! Therefore, Stanley is possibly the only man to serve in both armies and one navy in the American Civil War.
- When Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, his wallet contained - among other things - **a Confederate States five dollar bill.**
- There was supposedly a **private in the Confederate Army named Abraham Lincoln.**
- **Lincoln was shot at and nearly assassinated during the summer of 1864** (roughly 8 months before his death).
- There **was a Union General named Jefferson C. Davis** (not to be confused with Confederate President Jefferson F. Davis). His name is not known to have caused too much confusion, but on one occasion it did lead to the capture of some Union troops. During the night at the Battle of Chickamauga, approaching Confederate troops said they were "Jeff Davis's troops." Thinking they were General Davis's men come as reinforcements, the Union troops allowed them to come on in and did not realize their mistake until they were told to surrender.
- General Davis is most well-known, however, for getting away with murder. Literally. He served briefly under General William "Bull" Nelson at Louisville, Kentucky; but after a disagreement Nelson dismissed Davis from his command. Soon thereafter, Davis was ordered to return to Louisville and meet with Nelson's superior. Upon doing so, Davis and Nelson met in the lobby of a hotel and had an altercation. Nelson slapped Davis across the face with the back of his hand, and Davis retrieved a pistol from a friend and shot and killed Nelson. Davis was imprisoned and charged with murder; but, due to the need for experienced field commanders, his superiors got the charges dismissed. He never faced prosecution for his crime.
- In **1861** the American Banknote Company of New York City was printing the first issue of the new United States of America "greenbacks." **At the very same time, they were also printing the first issue of Confederate States of America currency.** The US government soon prohibited American Banknote from continuing this practice. To overcome this, they just moved a portion of their operation to New Orleans and continued producing Confederate currency under the *nom de guerre* of Southern Banknote Company.
- Dr. Hunter Holmes McGuire founded St. Luke's Hospital and Training School for Nurses and started the College of Physicians and Surgeons (became the University College of Medicine and is now part of the Virginia Commonwealth University). He also helped found the Medical Society of Virginia and served as president of the American Medical Association. However, **he lost his most famous patient, General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson.**



## Little Known Civil War Facts and Stories (cont'd)

- **Funny story:** During a staff meeting on a particularly cold winter day, the before-mentioned Dr. McGuire noticed that General Stonewall Jackson was shivering. In an effort to fend off a possible chest cold, the doctor produced a bottle of brandy and offered that Jackson and his staff should have some brandy to brace themselves against the winter chill. Jackson, who did not drink, declined the offer. The doctor insisted, saying it could help prevent a cold. "Do you really think so?" asked Jackson. "Indeed I do," replied the doctor. "Then I will!" With that exclamation Jackson filled a tumbler to the brim and knocked off the entire drink in one shot as his staff looked on in wide-eyed amazement. It is said that the General was soon feeling much warmer and was in a much happier frame of mind...
- Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, who had 29 horses shot out from under him during the Civil War, was born on Friday July 13, 1821.
- **Quantrill**, the Missouri Bushwhacker known for burning Lawrence, Kansas, **taught school in Kansas when he was 16.**
- In 1859, Union General Daniel Sickles (right) became the **first person to use the temporary insanity defense**. Not only did he use the defense, but he did so successfully. He was found not guilty of murder due to temporary insanity. He had shot and killed Philip Barton Key II, who was having an affair with Sickles wife. Of interest, the victim was the son Francis Scott Key. **Sickles military career ended at Gettysburg, where he lost his right leg to a Confederate cannon ball. Sickles, however, saved the shattered bones from his leg and donated them to the Army Medical Museum. It is said that for years he would visit his leg on the anniversary of its loss.**
- A very interesting artifact has been found at a number of American Civil War battlefields, including Gettysburg. What is this artifact? It is made up of one Union and one Confederate bullet, the two bullets met in mid-flight between the two lines and fused together. There are a number of such "fused" bullets on display in Civil War museums across the country. One such bullet sold for over 1000 dollars in September of 2012.
- Of all the battles and skirmishes fought during the American Civil War, 11% were fought in the state of Missouri. During 1861, there were more battles and skirmishes in Missouri than in any other state, and throughout the entire war only Virginia and Tennessee saw more action than the state of Missouri. Seems kind of odd since few if any of the major stories from the Civil War come from Missouri.





# NEWS FROM AROUND THE CAMP



**(MARCH 1, 2018) SINCERE SYMPATHY TO COMPATRIOT WALTER HALL** who lost his faithful companion, Lucky, due to congestive heart failure. We hope Walter's (and his little dog Dusty's) grieving hearts heal knowing Lucky is happy in pet heaven. *(The camp sent a condolence card.)*

**(MARCH 13, 2018) GET-WELL WISHES TO COMPATRIOT J. C. (and JoANN) GIDEON** since they contracted a very bad cold and the misery that goes along with it. Missed them at the March meeting, and hope they are feeling better and will join us in April. *(The camp sent a get-well card.)*



**APRIL 27, 2018  
CONGRATULATIONS  
TO  
KNIGHT DOUG & LADY BETTY LAWRENCE  
ON THEIR 38<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary**

We've been missing Doug and Betty at the meetings and hope to see them in April. We wish them a very Happy Anniversary and many more blessed years together. *(The camp will send a congratulatory card.)*

## CAMP CALENDAR OF EVENTS



### APRIL

- 1 EASTER (APRIL FOOL'S DAY)  
**10 6:30 CAMP DIXON MEETING**  
 19 (T) SCV HUNLEY AWARD TO JROTC (MASCOUTAH IL)  
 27 ARBOR DAY  
 28 (T) SCV HUNLEY AWARD TO JROTC (ALTON IL)

### MAY

- 4 (T) SCV HUNLEY AWARD TO JROTC (DUPO IL)  
 5 (T) SCV HUNLEY AWARD TO JROTC (O'FALLON IL)  
 6 or 13 **CAMP PICNIC & ARTILLERY DEMO**  
 (Janice Beasley's Home, Walsh IL)  
**8 6:30 CAMP DIXON MEETING**  
 13 MOTHER'S DAY  
 19 ARMED FORCES DAY  
 26 10:00 SCV MEMORIAL (MOUND CITY IL)  
 28 10:00 SCV MEMORIAL  
 (JEFFERSON BARRACKS MO)

### JUNE

- 12 6:30 CAMP DIXON MEETING**  
 14 FLAG DAY  
 17 FATHER'S DAY  
 21 FIRST DAY OF SUMMER



### APRIL

- 1 J. C. Gideon  
*(from Belleville IL)*  
 2 Nathan Ziebold  
*(from St. Louis MO)*  
 5 Doug Lawrence  
*(from Keyesport IL)*  
 7 John Kruse  
*(from East Setauket NY)*  
 10 Chris Ziebold  
*(from the West Indies)*  
 17 Don Young  
*(from Advance MO)*  
 19 Jim Fulton  
*(from Sawyerville IL)*  
 25 Charles Lee  
*(from Mascoutah IL)*  
 28 John McKee  
*(from Shiloh IL)*

### CAMP DIXON LEADERSHIP

Commander  
 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Commander  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Commander  
 Adjutant  
 Asst Adjutant  
 Chaplain  
 Sgt of Arms  
 Program Chairman  
 Historian  
 Door Greeter  
 Quartermaster

Ronald Joseph Lakin  
 John Douglas Stanton  
 John Wayne Kicklighter  
 Gale Franklin Red  
 John Mitchell McKee  
 Walter Michael Biekert  
 David Francis Schmitt  
 Gale Franklin Red  
 VACANT  
 VACANT  
 VACANT

Cell 618-420-6358  
 618-610-6464  
 618-257-9079  
 Cell 618-622-8949  
 618-416-5072  
 618-972-8190  
 Cell 618-334-6148  
 Cell 618-622-8949