



# Gen. Thomas C. Fletcher Camp 47 NEWSLETTER

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of heroes who fought and worked to save the Union. Organized in 1881 and chartered by Congress in 1954, we are the legal successor to the Grand Army of the Republic.



Camp Commander Doug Roussin

## From Commander Roussin

Hi Fletcher Camp.

We finally got to meet without any snow and ice. I am looking forward to spring and all our wonderful activities plan for this year. We have a lot to do getting ready for Memorial Day. Working together the members of the Gen. Fletcher Camp can accomplish a lot. Happy Spring.

Your Commander, Doug

★★★

**Godspeed to those coming back from Shiloh on April 2**

★★★

**Consider Life Membership in the SUVCW!**  
You will be exempt from National and Department dues. [Details here!](#)



**Mark finds a cannon ball.**

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**The Fletcher Camp & Volker Auxiliary on the Move!**

**MARCH 13, GEN. WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN REMEMBRANCE, ST. LOUIS**

The U S. Grant Camp hosted the annual Sherman Remembrance Day at Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis on March 13. Weatherwise, it was a gorgeous day. PDC Walt Busch was the master of ceremonies and other Grant Camp members took leading roles, including dual member, Bob AuBuchon, who helped retire the old banner and place the new one at Sherman’s graveside.

The DUV was well-represented with the National, State, and Julia Dent Tent Presidents (and other officers) participating. Maggie Groethe, Jack’s widow, was also in attendance. My estimate was that there were about three dozen or more there. The post-event collation was at Schlafy’s Tap Room. They didn’t know what hit them.

Other than Brother AuBuchon, Randal Burd, Jr., and Sumner Hunnewell attended the event.

(Photos—Craig Matthews)



**My Civil War Ancestor: Constantine D. Besse, 7th Maine Infantry****SUMNER HUNNEWELL**

I always say that “The Besses never met a war they didn’t like.” Nehemiah Besse, son of the progenitor, Anthony, was a soldier in the King Philip’s War. His son Robert was in the French and Indian War. Robert’s grandson Ebenezer was in the Revolutionary War. Ebenezer’s son Elisha, Sr., was in the War of 1812.

Lois (Dexter) Besse, Elisha’s wife, had 11 children.<sup>1</sup> Of Elisha, Sr., and Lois’s four sons, three enlisted in the Union Army.

- ◆ Pvt. Constantine D. – 7<sup>th</sup> Maine Infantry
- ◆ Capt. Elisha, Jr. – 20<sup>th</sup> Maine Infantry and a veteran of the Mexican War
- ◆ Sgt. Samuel – 2<sup>nd</sup> Maine Cavalry

Constantine D. Besse enlisted at the age of 50 in 1864 for three years. (The enlistment officer was A. P. Davis, who went on to found the SUVCW.) All three of Constantine’s sons enlisted. Only one survived.<sup>2</sup>

- ◆ Pvt. Lyman E. – enlisted 1862, 7<sup>th</sup> Maine Infantry, like his father (died 7 June 1864, buried at Arlington)
- ◆ Pvt. William G. – enlisted 1864, 1<sup>st</sup> D. C. Cavalry; 1<sup>st</sup> Maine Cavalry
- ◆ Pvt. George C. – enlisted 1864, 1<sup>st</sup> Maine Cavalry (Pvt., gunshot wound in the neck, killed in action at Boydton plank road 27 October 1864, buried at City Point National Cemetery)

Constantine’s birth (15 June 1813) was recorded in Ripley, Maine. (To give you an idea of the size of the town, Ripley has never had more than 700 residents at any one time in the last 200 years.) On his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, he married Lucy B. Woodcock, the daughter of William and Lucy (Buzzell) Woodcock. Like many of the families in the area, these were old Plymouth and Massachusetts colony families who made their way to Maine after the Revolution. The censuses show us that he moved to Etna, Maine, in 1850 (laborer) and then to Lewiston, Maine, by 1860.

It’s hard to imagine what would make a 50-year-old man lie about his age (he said he was 44) to join the Union Army as a private, but enlist he did (11 January 1864) in the same Regiment as his son, Lyman E. His other two sons enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Maine Cavalry two weeks later.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Maine was one of Fox’s 300 regiments with the greatest regimental losses: 10 percent of the regiment’s men were killed during the War.<sup>3</sup>

The 7<sup>th</sup> was put into action in May of 1864 at both the Battle of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania, Virginia, then North Anna River, followed by Totopotomoy. In the Spotsylvania engagement, Constantine survived this even though his regiment was bloodied severely with 126 casualties (20 dead, 101 wounded, 5 missing). June would be life-changing.

General Grant said in his memoirs that he had “always regretted that the last assault at Cold Harbor was ever made. I might say the same thing of the assault of the 22d of May, 1863, at Vicksburg. At Cold Harbor no advantage whatever was gained to compensate for the heavy loss we sustained.” It seems that one of those casualties who did not survive was Constantine’s son, Lyman, who died on 7 June (the heaviest fighting happened on 3 June).

Other than the anguish of losing his son, Constantine had suffered severe wounds from the June 3 assault. In an 1866 affidavit he states

I was wounded while in the service...in the line of duty in my right hip first, by a splinter from a rail, which was struck by a canon ball, and afterwards was wounded in the left cheek by a rifle ball, both wounds being received at the battle of Coal Harbor Va. That after being wounded I was carried to the Brigade hospital – from thence next day was carried to the White house Hospital where I remained some 5 days, from then I was carried to Emery Hospital in Washington, where I remaind [sic] a few days, from then I was carried to York Hospital Penn, where I remained until Feb. 1865, from then I was transferred to the 50<sup>th</sup> Co. Veteran Reserve at Harrisburg Penn, where I remained until the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1865 – at which time I was discharged by reason of surgeons certificate of disability.

The wound in his left cheek sounds very benign until you read the doctor’s report.

He received a wound of face, ball entering margins of lower lip carrying away part of the alveolar process of Inf. Maxillary with lower incisors and canine teeth and passing upwards carried away also part of the alveolar process of the upper jaw emerging on the cheek, leaving the jaws somewhat deformed and rendering mastication imperfect. W[oun]ds. have healed and cicatrix not tender.

This is a difficult away to say that the bullet hit the front of his left jawbone tore teeth out of his jaw and proceeded to take out more teeth in his skull before exiting through his left cheek. Not surprisingly, he had a hard time chewing – he lost 11 teeth. The hip and face wounds made him unable to do much physical work. He received disability money for the rest of his life.

He stayed in Lewiston, living with his wife and remaining son in 1870. Ten years later, he was in Wayne, Maine, as a boarder – the “Sick” column of the 1880 census reading “Effect of wounds received in Army.” His wife remained in Lewiston during this time with son, William. They were still married. Constantine’s 1890 veterans census entry still has him in Wayne. He died shortly afterwards on 2 April 1891 and was buried at the Oaks Hills Cemetery in Auburn, Maine.

Lucy outlived him by almost a decade and received a widow’s pension. She died on 31 May 1899 in Auburn and was buried beside her husband.

<sup>1</sup> I am descended from both his first child, Constantine D. Besse, and his third child, Lucy Besse.

<sup>2</sup> I am descended from his only daughter, Amanda Besse.

<sup>3</sup> Constantine had a hard time finding any officers who survived that would corroborate his condition.

## MARCH MEETING MINUTES

### Gen. Thomas C. Fletcher Camp #47 meeting minutes (unapproved)

17 March A. D. 2022, Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1620 Boyd St., De Soto, Missouri

**Attendees: Sons:** Steve Alexander (SVC), Mark Arbuthnot (PI), Bob AuBuchon, PDP Randal Burd, Jr., Billy Hickman, Izaiah Hickman, PDC Sumner G. Hunnewell (Secretary), Don Roussin (Council), PCC Doug Roussin (Commander), Alan Trodus (Treasurer), PDC Chris Warren (JVC)

**Auxiliary:** Susan Breland (Council), Patti McClelland (PI), Kathie Roussin (Vice President), PAP Twyla Warren (Secretary/Treasurer)

The meeting was called to order by Commander Roussin at 6:50 p.m.

Patriotic Instructor Arbuthnot led us in the pledge of allegiance.

Greg Wolk was expected to talk about the Grant Heritage Trail, but he didn't attend. Sumner handed out a paper from Greg that supports the effort. He explained the limits on lobbying. Doug talked about a similar effort that was tried years back but didn't succeed.

Commander Roussin gave a long report, bulleted here.

- He reminded everyone that today was the Warrens' 15th wedding anniversary and to give them a standing ovation when they arrived (which was done).
- The Auxiliary banner was completed and brought to the meeting.
- The Camp received a letter from the county about the American Rescue Plan. We are not sure if we are eligible for this. Doug said he would look into it but we don't expect any positive results (read: money).
- He reiterated the SUVCW General Order regarding photographic and video images.
- The Murphy Camp is the third camp in Arkansas. Bob said that they are up to four and a fifth is in the planning stages.
- He noted the SUVCW General Order about the creation of a committee to review membership qualifications. No one knows what the motivation is.
- Alan Trodus completed the 990N Postcard, which keeps us compliant with the IRS.
- Joan Koechig (DUV) has requested a Color Guard for the DUV June 11 state meeting in St. Charles.

Sumner brought up events from the Department meeting. He said that a committee was formed to review virtual attendance of Department meetings (Randal is chair). He also brought a bag full of National Encampment items that were doled out at the Department meeting. We can do anything we want with this other than sell the official National Encampment medal.

Alan gave his treasurer's report. He showed the replica CSA sword (raffle), cotton kepis (\$7 each), and wool kepis (\$10 each), which will be use for fundraisers. These purchases were approved by the Council.

Chris said he would like to purchase wooden rifles at a discount for demonstrations with kids. We normally sell them for \$15. Bob AuBuchon paid \$10 each for six some time ago. Chris wanted

them for free. The camp spends about \$7 in wood for each one + time crafting them. Mark made the motion that he wanted the Council to set a price and work with Chris. Don seconded. It was agreed that they would be sold for \$10 each. Chris said he could have them made cheaper elsewhere. Mark and Randal paid \$50 each to the Camp for 10 wooden rifles for Chris.

Twyla gave the Auxiliary's report. The National President of the ASUVCW wants the auxiliaries to be connected with others. She has instituted quarterly Zoom meetings with auxiliary presidents. She bragged about our Christmas dinner and that we were like family. The auxiliary has \$938.05 in their bank account. Katherine Wortham and Alice Sago aren't doing well physically and she asked for prayers for them. Christin (?), a friend of Kelly's, is interested in being a new member.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Grant Camp is working on a plaza near Gen. Sherman's gravesite. They are looking at 4"x8" bricks (three lines, 14 characters each). We will bring up buying a brick in a future meeting.

We will organize a Memorial Day activity on Monday, May 30. We agreed to do this at the De Soto City Cemetery. Sumner suggested involving attendees from outside of the camp/auxiliary during the ceremony—taking the cue of what the St. James Camp did. Kathie, Susan, Patti, Mark and Doug will figure out how to do this (flag placement). Alan will purchase 50 U. S. flags.

Doug said that he is still working on the replacement of the Perry V. Fletcher headstone and is hoping that the City Cemetery Board will bear the cost, otherwise we could help pay for it. Sumner asked about VA stones for other Civil War soldiers, identified by Tim Ogle, who have no tombstones in the area. He didn't get much traction, so he will take this on.

Train Days has been canceled because they need a sponsor. There was a concern that we shouldn't be involved with gathering / distributing money, so we will not consider sponsoring it.

Our Department is sponsoring a Missouri Remembrance Day at Shiloh on April 2. Many of our members will be attending.

Doug will be presenting an award to JROTC Cadet Kail R. Dixon (Farmington H.S.) on April 6. He has not heard from Fredericktown. Randal will be presenting at Waynesboro H. S. Sumner reminded everyone about the JROTC Outstanding Cadet award giving by the Department.

There will be a Civil War reënactment in Pittsfield, Illinois, on June 4-5.

Kirkwood will hold their Folk Festival again this year (Sept. 16-18).

Doug had membership forms for the Grand Army of the Republic Civil War Museum and Archive in Philadelphia (recently moved). He spoke highly of it.

#### **FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Bob said that during April 9-10 there would be a living history event at Whitehaven in St.

Louis. Everyone is welcome to participate. It can provide an opportunity for recruitment. There will be a firing demonstration (you must sign a release).

There will be a Spring Drill at 8:30 a.m. on March 19 at Ft. Davidson (Pilot Knob).

Sumner mentioned

- the Lincoln tomb ceremony on April 16,
- a 200th anniversary Grant event in Pt. Pleasant, Ohio, on April 30,
- St. James will have a grave marking on May 14, and
- the National Encampment during August 11-14 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Chris said that Pilot Knob state historical site plans on having events every two weeks through Augustus. In September, there will be a ceremonial driving corps of retreat by the calvary.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. The treats were provided by Susan, Kathie, and Patti.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

### General Thomas C. Fletcher Camp #47 Treasurer's Report for MARCH 2022

Balance from last report (February 2022)	2287.75
Expenditure	
CSA sword for raffle	40.00
Wool Kepi's to sell	72.00
Cotton Kepi's to sell	108.00
Shipping charges for Kepi's	20.00
Income	
2022 SVR dues – Marty Aubuchon	3.00
2022 SUVCW dues – Chris Warren	35.00
2022 SUVCW dues – Sumner Hunnewell	6.00
2022 SUVCW/SVR dues – Dwain & Jeffrey Asberry	76.00
2022 SUVCW/SVR dues – Mark Arbuthnot	38.00
2022 SUVCW/SVR dues Colton Noack	38.00
2022 SUVCW/SVR dues Duncan Noack	38.00
2022 SUVCW/SVR dues John Robinson III	38.00
2022 SUVCW/SVR dues John Griffith	38.00
Donation Jeffrey Asberry	4.00
Current Balance (14 March 2022)	2361.75
Checking Account	2015.96
Cash	291.23
Checks (not yet deposited)	0
Gift cards	54.56
End Balance	2361.75

CSA Sword Raffle results - 62 chances, \$53.00

- Alan R Trodus, Treasurer

## YOUR CAMP OFFICERS

**Commander, Historian:**

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**Senior Vice Commander:**

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**Council Member, Patriotic Instructor:**

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**Council Member:**

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**Secretary, GRO, CW Memorials Officer:**

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**Treasurer:**

Alan Richard Trodus bigalastro@yahoo.com

## YOUR AUXILIARY OFFICERS

**President, Press Correspondent:**

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**Vice President:**

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**Patriotic Instructor:**

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**Council No. 1:**

Colleen D. Warren

**Council No. 2, Patriotic Instructor:**

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**Council No. 3, Chaplain:**

Colissa Alexander lissasong@sbcglobal.net

**Secretary, Treasurer, Press Correspondent**

Twyla D. Warren clementine\_clc@yahoo.com

**Guide:**

Abbie Warren

## CALENDAR

*Camp meetings (6:30 p.m.) at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1620 Boyd St., De Soto, unless otherwise noted.*

16 April, Lincoln Tomb Ceremony 9 a.m., Springfield, Ill.

21 April, Camp Meeting

30 April, Gen. Grant's 200th Birthday Celebration, Point Pleasant, Ohio

14 May, Grave Markings/Lunch, 11 a.m., Ste. Genevieve [St. James Camp]

19 May, Camp Meeting

30 May, Memorial Day, De Soto City Cemetery

4 June, Department Encampment, Jefferson City

16 June, Camp Meeting

**Camp/Auxiliary Meetings**

21 April

19 May

16 June

**March birthdays**

**3rd Douglas Wayne Roussin**

**6th Mark Elmo Arbuthnot**

**25th Jeffrey A. Asberry**

**April birthdays**

**9th Sumner Gary Hunnewell**

**11th Alan Richard Trodus**

**25th Izaiah Hickman**