

Commander-in-Chief 2011-2012
Missouri Department Commander 2001-2004
Donald D. Palmer, Jr.
Member US Grant Camp 68

Donald D. Palmer, Jr. of Ballwin, Missouri was elected Commander-in-Chief at the 130th National Encampment of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) in Reston, Virginia on 13 August 2011. In the 130-year history of the SUVCW, he is the first Missourian to be elected Commander-in-Chief.

Don claimed his right to membership through his great-great grandfather, Sylvester J. Alden, who served as a private in Co. D, 11th Iowa Infantry. He has also researched 14 other members of his family known to have served in the Union forces during the Civil War. Don's interest in the Civil War began when, as a child, he was shown an old tin-type photo of his great-great grandfather in uniform as well as letters he wrote home to his wife. A number of these letters were written during Sherman's march to the sea and the subsequent siege of Savannah, Georgia.



Don joined Ulysses S. Grant Camp #68 located in St. Louis, Missouri in December 1997. He served in a number of Camp offices, including Camp Commander in 2000. At the Department level, Don held a number of appointed and elected positions, eventually leading to three terms as Missouri Department Commander from 2001 to 2004. His involvement at the National level began during the 2003-2004 administrative year, serving

as chairman of the GAR Post Records Committee. Since then, he has twice served as National Chief of Staff (2004-2005 and 2006-2007), one term as National Secretary (2007-2010), Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief (2010-2011) and most recently being elected as Commander-in-Chief. Don is also a member of the Sons of Veterans Reserve (SVR), holding a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in Co. A, 2nd Missouri Infantry and also serves as a private in the 1st Missouri Engineers. In addition to his activities associated with the SUVCW and SVR, Don is also active in the Allied Orders Central Region Association, having served as Secretary//Treasurer and as chairman of the Central Region By-Laws Committee. He has also served on the Inter-Veterans Memorial Day Committee for Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery and on the Board of Directors for the Missouri Civil War Museum project at Jefferson Barracks.

Don is the youngest child of Don Sr. and Lucy Palmer. He is a graduate of West High School in Waterloo, Iowa and attended college at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, where he received a B.S. degree in Physics and a M.S. degree in Materials Science and Engineering. He later received a doctorate in Materials Science and Engineering from Washington University in St. Louis. Don's father, a Marine Corps veteran of World War II, taught him early on to learn and honor the family heritage. During his youth, he learned about the exploits of his 10th great-grandfathers.....John Alden, who came to the new world aboard the Mayflower in 1620, and Nicholas Palmer, who was one of the founders of Windsor, the first English settlement in Connecticut in 1636. He would learn about his 5th great grandfather, Israel Alden, a resident of the Berkshires, who served in the Massachusetts Militia during the American Revolution. In addition to his membership in the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Don is also a member of the Sons of the American Revolution (Spirit of St. Louis Chapter), Order of Founders and Patriots of America (Illinois Society) and the Society of Mayflower Descendants (Missouri Society).

Don's interest in airplanes and space travel led to his pursuing a career in the aerospace industry. He began his career in October 1987, joining The Boeing Company (formerly McDonnell Douglas Corporation) in St. Louis,

MO as a Material and Process Engineer. During his career, Don received a commendation from the U.S. Air Force for his work in introducing new technology to reduce maintenance costs associated with aging bomber and tanker aircraft. He was also appointed to a NASA-led committee to investigate new nondestructive testing technologies to evaluate Space Shuttle structures for damage in the wake of the shuttle Columbia accident. Don holds three patents with three pending and has authored over 50 papers published in technical journals and conference proceedings. His string of significant engineering accomplishments was recognized in September 2004 as he was elected a Boeing Fellow. Don also received national recognition, being elected a Fellow of the American Society for Nondestructive Testing in 2010.

Don currently lives in Ballwin, Missouri with his wife Kimberly and children John and Sarah. John is currently a Junior in the SUVCW.