

Commander-in-Chief 2006-2007
James B. Pahl
Member US Grant Camp 68, St. Louis, MO

James B. Pahl of Mason, Michigan was elected Commander-in-Chief at the 125th National Encampment of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on August 12, 2006. He is the 6th from Michigan to serve as Commander-in-Chief. C-in-C Pahl's membership in the SUVCW is through his great-great grandfather, John Boyer, a private in Co. A, 29 th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, who was wounded at Chickamauga.

James is the son of Lawrence J. Pahl and Norma Faust Pahl, born in Jackson, Michigan. His family shortly thereafter moved to Marshall, Michigan, where James was raised, graduating from high school in 1971. Marshall was the residence of escaped slave Adam Crosswhite. After being arrested by Kentucky deputy sheriff's, he was rescued by a group of citizens and spirited off to Canada, while the Kentucky deputies cooled their heels in the Calhoun County Jail. The very active Marshall Historical Society, the prominent GAR hall in downtown Marshall and the several companies of troops Marshall contributed in the war effort, first gave to James his interest in the Civil War.

He continued his education at Kellogg Community College in Battle Creek. After receiving an Associate of Arts in Criminal Justice, he attended Ferris State College in Big Rapids, Michigan, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Law Enforcement in 1975. A few years later, he returned to school and earned a Juris Doctor degree from the



Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan in 1981. He has attended several courses at the National Judicial College, on the campus of the University of Nevada-Reno.

He began a 20-year career in public law enforcement while at Kellogg Community College, retiring as the Chief of Police for the Village of Sunfield in 1992. This included sworn service with the police departments in Ypsilanti, Dewitt, Vermontville and Sunfield.

James was a partner in the law firm of Pahl and Hengesbach, practicing in probate, small closely held corporations, non-profit corporation tax law, construction lien claims and real estate law. His long time law partner, Kathleen Hengesbach is active in the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, 1861-1865.

He was appointed Magistrate of the 55th District Court in March of 1992, retiring in 2013. He served as Deputy Trial Court Administrator for the Eaton County Trial Courts until 2015 when he fully retired. Shortly thereafter, he was again sworn as a Magistrate in the 55th District Court on a part time basis to cover vacations and other absences. He is a training magistrate for the Michigan Judicial Institute, the educational arm of the Supreme Court. He teaches motor carrier law at each new magistrate school. He is currently on the board of directors of the Michigan Association of District Court Magistrates.

He is a member of Lansing Central Free Methodist Church, where he is currently the elected delegate to the East Michigan Annual Conference. He has attended three General Conferences as a delegate. Jim currently serves as the Business Manager for the church. He also has five tours as a short term VISA volunteer missionary to the Dominican Republic and Brazil.

James is a member of the Ingham South Camp of The Gideon's International. He is active in Civil War reenacting, having served as the commanding officer of Co. B., 102nd United States Colored Troops (a.k.a. the 1st Michigan Colored Troops). He is also a member of the Michigan Living History Association, recreating the 16th Michigan Volunteer Infantry. He also reenacts WWI and WWII.

Brother Pahl served some ten years as adjunct faculty at Great Lakes Christian College in Lansing, Michigan, teaching courses in National Government; State & Local Government; Family Law and Non-Profit Tax Law.

Brother Pahl became a member of the Curtenius Guard Camp #17, Department of Michigan on April 24, 1982. He served as Camp Counselor and Camp Secretary

before a year as Junior Vice Commander and then Senior Vice Commander, after which he was elected Camp Commander. He was instrumental in the fund-raising project to obtain a state historical marker for the GAR hall his Camp meets in. He was awarded the Samuel W. Grinnell Award for outstanding service to the Camp.

Brother Pahl was introduced to Department office first as Guard. After several other offices, he was elected Department Commander and installed by then Commander in Chief Lowell Hammer. James re-instituted the Michigan Messenger, the Department newsletter which had been dormant for decades and he began midwinter encampments to train new officers. He was privileged to preside over the installation of three new Camps. He was awarded the Department's Abraham Lincoln Award for outstanding service to the Department.

Nationally, brother Pahl served as National Counselor for 15 different administrations, first appointed to this position by Keith Harrison. He also served as National Treasurer for four years. He was appointed to the National Committee on Constitution and Regulations and eventually became chairman. As chairman of the Special Committee on Digest, brother Pahl was instrumental in the publication of the Digest of the Order, setting down the rulings of Past Commander's-in-Chief and opinions of National Counselors for all published proceedings of the Order. In working on this project, he read almost every past Proceeding of the Order. He is the recipient of the Cornelius Whitehouse Brother of the Year award and has been awarded the Meritorious Service Award with Gold Star. He was elected Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief in 2004 and then Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief in 2005. He currently is the Editor of the Banner, is the National Parliamentarian, Assistant National Treasurer, Assistant National Secretary – Department at Large Secretary//Treasurer and Assistant National Counselor.

Brother Pahl is chair of Michigan's 2022 National Encampment Host Committee and served as a member on the three other Michigan Host Committee's.

Brother Pahl is a dual member of the U.S. Grant Camp #68, Department of Missouri.

Brother Pahl is the Judge Advocate General of the SVR, 1st Sergeant of the 14th Michigan SVR and a high private in the rear rank of the 2nd Missouri SVR.

He resides with his bride of many years, Carol and has three children. His son James is also a member of the SUVCW and daughter Rebecca is a member of the ASUVCW. -----December 2020