



MICHIGAN'S MESSENGER

THOSE OTHER CHRISTMASES

The National Tribune, Washington, D. C. – December 23, 1886

Submitted by Mark Hoffman, PCC – Camp 17 and Camp 444

Well, next Saturday will be Christmas.

How, at the mere mention, the mind reverts to other Christmases, the memory of which will not weaken or fade

There was the last Christmas that most of us were to spend at home for four long, bloody years, the last Christmas that hundreds of thousands of our comrades who now sleep in Southern soil were to enjoy with their beloved ones – the Christmas of 1860. Only the young and thoughtless ate their dinner that day with the cheerfulness appropriate to the season for the dark clouds of war were lowering.....

Christmas Day, 1861, saw 527,000 Union soldiers encamped on a line of battle that stretched from the Chesapeake Bay ... to the Territory of New Mexico. Those whose tents lined the Potomac were under the shadow of the severe defeats at Bull Run and Ball's Bluff....

Christmas Day, 1862, saw 699,000 Union soldiers occupying a line which, after severe fighting everywhere was, on an average, two hundred miles further south than at the last Christmas. The nation was shuddering under the awful disaster of Fredericksburg, and Sherman was marching to a similar defeat, though on a much smaller scale, at Chickasaw Bayou. The Army of the Cumberland was enjoying its Christmas in pleasant camps at Nashville, but the next morning was to start for the sanguinary field of Stone River, twenty-five miles away, and a week later 9,000 of its members... lay dead or wounded.

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“TO HER MARTYRS &
HEROES WHO FOUGHT IN
DEFENCE OF LIBERTY AND
UNION”

TUEBOR



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

SONS OF UNION VETERANS
OF THE CIVIL WAR

VOLUME XXXIV, ISSUE II
CHRISTMAS 2025

THOSE OTHER CHRISTMASES, CONT'D

Christmas Day, 1863, saw 611,000 soldiers encamped along the line of battle, which had now shortened very considerably for the rebels had lost nearly one half of the territory that they had held at the outbreak of the war. Things had gone well with our arms since the last Christmas. The victories of Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge and Knoxville had shaken the rebel power to its very foundations, and the end began to be clear.

Christmas Day, 1864, saw 1,000,000 men wearing the blue, with 621,000 of them actually in camp before the enemy. The crowning victories of Franklin and Nashville had destroyed the military power of the rebellion in the West, Sherman had completed his grand march to the sea and made a Christmas gift to President Lincoln of the city of Savannah The Army of the Potomac was lying in the trenches before Petersburg waiting for the last fatal spring at the throat of its old adversary, the Army of Northern Virginia.

Christmas Day, 1865, saw all of us whom the bullet and disease had spared once more under our own roof tree, partaking of the yuletide feast with hearts devoutly thankful for our preservation through perils of war, and for the blessings which a beneficent God had vouchsafed to our country.

A CHRISTMAS AT AND FOR PEACE

Submitted by Rev. Charles Buckhahn, PCC – Department Chaplain

Christmas 2025 finds our nation at peace and not at war with most of the world. However, our nation is experiencing deep divisions here at home. One is reluctant to talk politics with friends who identify with opposite political party for fear of heated debate. To post one's political opinion on social media is to invite angry and uncivil replies. This Christmas calls all of us to place our personal, political ideology and our relationships with others into the light of the Gospel of Christmas for inspection and evaluation. The Christ Child came to save and to unite both Jew and Gentile, the oppressed and the oppressor, the rich and the poor, the Republican and the Democrat, the capitalist and the socialist, the sinner and the saint. The Christ Child came not teach how to cast blame upon others but to teach personal repentance. The Christ Child came not to condemn but to earn forgiveness and salvation for all. The Christ Child came not to divide but to reconcile sinful people to God the Father and to reconcile parents to children, employers to employees, neighbors to neighbors, human beings to fellow human beings. The Christ Child came to show what true love is, to teach it, and to live it. And that love is a forgiving, serving, and sacrificial love.

81 years ago, on Christmas Day, 1944, my Father stood guard outside the German town of St. Nicholas. He had sacrificed civilian life for wartime, Army service. He fought to bring peace to Nazi occupied Europe. John Binnie, my Civil War ancestor, served three Christmases in the fight to save the Union and bring peace to a divided nation. We are called, this Christmas, not to wage war on our fellow citizens who disagree with us, but to use the reconciliation tools the Christ Child has given to us to seek reconciliation and peace. Among those tools are prayer, repentance, forgiveness, gentleness, patience, perseverance, and a love that is sacrificial, serving, and forgiving. With such tools, God will be using us to bring peace to our nation, our communities, and even our families. And isn't peace the grandest Christmas gift of all?

– Chaplain Charlie Buckhahn



CO. A, 14TH MICHIGAN INFANTRY “IRISH RIFLE” – SVR

Submitted by 2LT Robert Payne, PDC, JVCinC

On November 13, 2025, the 14th Michigan Volunteer Infantry, SVR (Irish Rifle), embarked from Durand, MI, on its' annual venture to Gettysburg, PA, to attend the Remembrance Day activities. We have fifteen Brothers, from Camps 7, 17, 20, 67, 135, and 145, plus family members, head to Gettysburg to arrive there by Friday. We were also joined by 2 Brothers who are Dual Members in other Departments join us.

On Friday, we ventured out to the countryside, making stops in Maryland and West Virginia. Stopping first at the Civil War Correspondents Memorial, near South Mountain. We then continued to West Virginia and Harpers Ferry. We, finally, finished out outing at Antietam Battlefield. Our tour was developed, led, and narrated by L. Dean Lamphere, Jr, PDC. The time was well spent and very informative. A big Huzzah to Dean Lamphere.

On Saturday, we made our way to the Michigan section of the National Cemetery and held a memorial service for the men laid to rest in Row I. After participating in the ceremony at the “Wolson Monument”, we proceeded to the beginning of the parade route, where we joined thousands of participants in the parade. Making our way to the 24th Michigan monument, we honored those who gave the last full measure in the fields of Gettysburg on July 1, 1863.

On Sunday, some of the group were treated to a private tour of Neil Ave. also called Lost Avenue, by our friend Dean Schultz, longtime resident and local businessman of Gettysburg. We returned safely on Monday, November 17 through a blustery fall day.



CURTENIUS GUARD CAMP 17

Submitted by Brother Robert Payne, PDC, JVCinC

On Veterans Day, members from Curtenius Guard Camp 17 attended a Veterans Day Ceremony at the Eaton Rapids Veterans Monument, hosted by the GAR Memorial Hall and Museum.



ABOVE (left to right): Robert R Payne, PDC, James B. Pahl, PCinC, Ron Shull, PCC, Marc Bennett.



ABOVE: "Christmas Eve" illustrated by Thomas Nast for Harper's Weekly, 03 January 1863



GILLULY-KINGSLEY CAMP No. 120

Submitted by Brother Elden Davis, JVC-GRO, pictures by Brother Bill Brandon and Paul Scheidler, CC

**21 October 2025, Lakeside Cemetery, Marion Township, Livingston County
Headstone reset.**



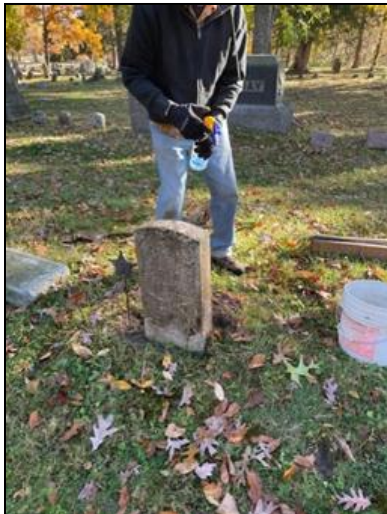
ABOVE LEFT: The stone for Private Warren Baker, Company B, 2nd Michigan Volunteer Infantry. before pulling it from the ground.



ABOVE CENTER: Brother Jim Weeks MC, Dave Pettigrove GD, and Brother Ed Vitez SVC level the stone for Private Warren Baker, Company B, 2nd Michigan Volunteer Infantry



ABOVE RIGHT: SVC Ed Vitez, GD Dave Pettigrove and GRO Elden Davis prepare to reset the headstone for Private Benjamin H. Bashford, Company G, 5th Michigan Volunteer Infantry.



ABOVE LEFT: Brother Elden Davis JVC-GRO sprays down the headstone of Private Merritt S. Havens, Company B, 5th Michigan Volunteer Infantry after straightening and adding a new flag marker.



ABOVE RIGHT: Left to right, Brothers: Elden Davis GRO, Paul Scheidler CDR, Ed Vitez SVC, Jim Weeks MC, Dave Pettigrove GD, and Brother Bill Brandon (not pictured) at the headstone of Private Bashford.

A fourth stone of Private W. W. Roberts, Company Illegible, 5th Michigan Infantry was also cleaned and straightened.



GENERAL ORLANDO M. POE CAMP 444

Submitted by David S. Smith, LM, PDC – Camp 444 Commander

The Fall and Holiday Seasons saw the Brothers of Camp 444 involved in many activities to close out the 2025 campaign.

At the 18 October 2025 Business Meeting, the Brothers of General Orlando M. Poe Camp 444 had the high privilege to honor one of their own with the SUVCW War Medal. Patriotic Instructor Adam Betz was presented the SUVCW War Medal with three service bars. Brother Betz served in the United States Marine Corps and later the United States Army (Michigan Army National Guard) where he retired as a Major. During his service, Brother Betz served in the following campaigns: the Global War on Terrorism, Afghanistan, and Iraq. As Commander Smith noted during the presentation, Brother Betz is one of the rare Brothers in the SUVCW to have earned three service bars. The Brothers gave a warm thank you to Patriotic Instructor Betz for his service to our Nation and to our Camp.



ABOVE LEFT: Commander Smith discussing the unique situation of Brother Betz having earned the SUVCW War Medal with three service campaigns. (Source: JVC/GRO/CWMO Jones)

ABOVE CENTER: Patriotic Instructor Adam Betz' SUVCW War Medal with Service Bars.

ABOVE RIGHT: Patriotic Instructor Adam Betz is presented with the SUVCW War Medal by Commander Smith. (Source: JVC/GRO/CWMO Jones)

Also at the 18 November 2025 meeting, Camp 444 welcomed a new Brother. Brother Carl Noonan was initiated into the SUVCW via a modified long form initiation by his fellow Camp 444 Brothers. Brother Noonan was presented with the SUVCW Badge of the Order along with the Camp 444 Member Badge. Upon completion of the initiation, the Brothers of Camp 444 gave Brother Noonan a hearty welcome aboard. Brother Noonan derives his right of membership from his Great Grandfather, Samuel Ashmore. Mr. Ashmore served in Company F, 9th New York Heavy Artillery from August 1862 until July 1865.



ABOVE LEFT: The Altar

ABOVE CENTER: Brother Noonan receiving an instruction on Patriotism from PI Betz, while JVC/GRO/CWMO Jones, SVC/Sec. Aurand, and Treasurer Welliver look on.

ABOVE RIGHT: Treasurer Welliver serving as Chaplain, prepares to give the oath to Brother Noonan as Commander Smith assists. (Photo: courtesy of JVC/GRO/CWMO Jones)

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GENERAL ORLANDO M. POE CAMP 444 CONT'D



ABOVE LEFT: Commander Smith pins on Brother Noonan's Badge of the Order. (Photo: courtesy of JVC/GRO/CWMO Jones)

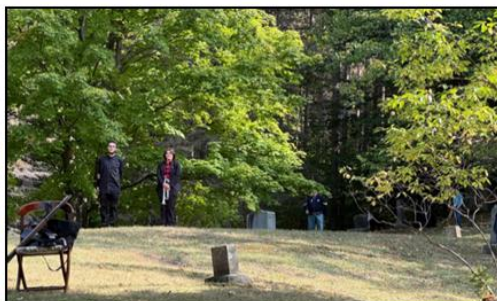
ABOVE CENTER: Commander Smith pins on Brother Noonan's Camp 444 Badge (Photo: courtesy of JVC/GRO/CWMO Jones)

ABOVE RIGHT: Brother Noonan signs the Secretary's book. (Photo: courtesy of JVC/GRO/CWMO Jones)

On Friday, 19 September 2025, the Brothers of Camp paid tribute to two Veterans of the 1st Michigan Engineers & Mechanics, Bailey and James Stanley, a father and son buried in Harrietta's Hillside Cemetery. The Brothers of Camp 444 were joined by the Sisters of Frances Finch Auxiliary 9, and Soldiers of the 507th Engineer Battalion (MIARNG) to provide memorial services for the two Veterans. They were joined by history students of Mackinaw Trail Middle School in Cadillac and their teacher Mr. Luke Rumohr. Additionally, musicians from the Cadillac Bands Program led (Band Director Mr. Charlie Rockwell) volunteered to play Echo Taps. Camp 444 had the honor to host Department of Michigan Commander David Kimble, PCC at the ceremony. Department Commander Kimble generously fell in with the Camp 444 Honor Guard to deliver the three volleys in salute of Bailey and James Stanley. A nice turnout of area community members, including the Cadillac News and the Hillside Cemetery Sexton, were welcomed by the ceremony participants.

The memorial service included poems such as "We Drank From the Same Canteen", inspiring words from Auxiliary No. 9 President Aurand as Chaplain, a father and son Camp 444 Brothers guarding Bailey and James Stanley's gravesites, an ASUVCW Sister in mourning dress at the gravesites, a rousing speech on military service by Patriotic Instructor Betz, demonstration & display of their Colors by Staff Sergeant Picardat and Staff Sergeant Bishop of the 507th Engineer Battalion (MIARNG), three volleys by the Camp 444 Honor Guard, and a moving rendition of Echo Taps by the Cadillac Bands Musicians.

Upon completion of the ceremony, the Brothers of Camp 444 and the Mackinaw Trail Middle School history students moved to the gravesite of John Davis, 8th Virginia Cavalry, CSA for a historical lesson on national reconciliation after the Civil War concluded, with personal examples from Commander Smith's GAR family. Overall, the day was a major success in collaboration, historical and patriotic education, and ultimately remembrance.



ABOVE LEFT: The Colors (Photo courtesy of Br. Carl & Diane Noonan)

ABOVE CENTER: Before the ceremony, the Cadillac Bands Musicians stand ready, while Council J. Walker and Brother Q. Walker guard the gravesites (Photo courtesy of Br. Carl & Diane Noonan)

ABOVE RIGHT: The Vacant Chair with Symbols of the Soldier. (Photo courtesy of Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News)

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GENERAL ORLANDO M. POE CAMP 444 CONT'D



TOP LEFT: The Stanley Memorial Service begins (Photo Courtesy of Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News)

TOP CENTER: Patriotic Instructor Betz discusses the shared experience of military service as the 507th Engineer Battalion looks on (Photo Courtesy of Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News)

TOP RIGHT: SSgt. Picardat and SSgt. Bishop of the 507th Engineer Battalion display their Colors showing the 507th motto "I Cannot See It" (Photo Courtesy of Chuck Bidleman)

ABOVE LEFT: Camp 444 Honor Guard listens to Auxiliary President Aurand (L-R: DC Kimble, JVC Jones, SVC Aurand) (Photo: courtesy of Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News)

ABOVE CENTER: Commander Smith performs the Ritual (Photo: courtesy of Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News)

ABOVE RIGHT: Camp 444 Honor Guard fires a volley. (Photo: courtesy of Carl & Diane Noonan)



TOP LEFT: Camp 444 Honor Guard prepares to fire a volley (Photo courtesy of Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News)

TOP CENTER LEFT: A Cadillac Bands Musician plays Echo Taps (Photo courtesy of Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News)

TOP CENTER RIGHT: SSgt. Picardat and SSgt. Bishop of the 507th Engineer Battalion at Order Arms during Echo Taps (Photo courtesy of Chuck Bidleman)

TOP RIGHT: Commander Smith and Mr. Rumohr shake hands on a successful day and bid farewell upon the students' departure. (Photo courtesy of Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News)

ABOVE LEFT: Patriotic Instructor Betz and Aux. 9 President Aurand share a moment with SSgt. Picardat and SSgt. Bishop after the Memorial Service (Photo: courtesy of Chuck Bidleman)

ABOVE CENTER: Commander Smith, DC Kimble, and JVC Jones give a lesson on national reconciliation to the students (Photo courtesy of Chuck Bidleman)

ABOVE RIGHT: Commander Smith, DC Kimble, and JVC Jones give a lesson on national reconciliation to the students (Photo courtesy of Rick Charmoli, Cadillac News)



GENERAL ORLANDO M. POE CAMP 444 CONT'D



ABOVE: Department Commander David Kimble presents Camp 444 with the 3 National Awards (Abraham Lincoln CinC Award – Best Camp in Order, Marshall Hope Award – Best Newsletter in Order, and Horace Greeley Award – Best Website in Order) after the Stanley Ceremony. From Left-to-Right: Council J. Walker, Br. Q. Walker, Commander Smith, Dept. Commander Kimble, JVC/GRO/CWMO Jones, SVC/Sec. Aurand, and PI Betz.

The 29th of November saw Brothers of Camp 444 volunteer for bell ringing for the Salvation Army at Ebel's General Store in Falmouth. This is the second time the Camp has rung bells at Ebel's and the third time overall. A tip of the kepi or cap to the Brothers of March to the Sea Camp 135 for this idea. It has been a really great opportunity for Camp members to give back to the community, and have another occasion for Fraternity.

The Brothers of Camp 444 will finish out the 2025 campaign with Wreaths Across America at Maple Hill Cemetery in Cadillac on 13 December 2025, with the Camp 444 Christmas Campfire Luncheon afterwards.



LEFT (L-R): Brother Carl Noonan and JVC/GRO/CWMO Kenny Jones bell ringing at Ebel's General Store in Falmouth. SVC/Sec. Dale Aurand, PDC and Commander Smith, PDC are missing from the photo).

Recently, the Michigan National Guard's birthdate was established as 13 November 1708 (<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/17inesZTUJ/>).

Finally, Camp 444's own, Patriotic Instructor Adam Betz was instrumental in the research establishing this date through his position as the Command Historian of the Michigan National Guard. Determining the date of inception is highly significant in the military history of Michigan, the USA, and the Michigan National Guard. This could not have happened without the excellent work of Patriotic Instructor Betz, and the Brothers of General Orlando M. Poe Camp 444 could not be prouder of him.

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GENERAL ORLANDO M. POE CAMP 444 CONT'D

Michigan Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
Information Paper

NGMI-HIS
28 November 2025

SUBJECT: Establishing MING Birthdate – 13 November 1708

The Michigan National Guard traces its origins to a critical moment in early colonial history when Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, founder and commandant of Fort Detroit, initiated the formal enrollment of Native American warriors into structured military units. On 13 November 1708, these militias, drawn from tribes such as the Hurons, Ottawa, Miami, and Potawatomie, became the first officially sanctioned military forces raised within what would become the State of Michigan. This information paper explores the historical context, strategic motives, military developments, and long-term implications of that pivotal date, establishing the Michigan National Guard's official birthdate.

Founded in July 1701, Fort Detroit occupied a critical choke point along the Detroit River. The narrow waterway provided natural surveillance and a defensible position, allowing Cadillac to monitor movement between the upper and lower Great Lakes. His expedition included approximately 100 men and artisans, and immediately upon arrival, he began constructing Fort Pontchartrain. Cadillac envisioned the fort not only as a military bastion but as the economic and political heart of a vast French colonial domain.

Cadillac recognized early that defense of the fort would require strong alliances with neighboring Native American tribes. By 1708, over 400 Ottawa and Miami warriors were already settled near Detroit. Cadillac, concerned by low morale among his French Soldiers due in part to Jesuit interference, proposed formally enlisting Native allies into militias. These warriors would be officered, drilled, and paid as auxiliary troops under French command. Although France, specifically King Louis XIV, approved the proposal, French Canadian authorities resisted full implementation. Nonetheless, multiple sources confirm that militia leaders were active in Detroit as early as 1708, marking the earliest organized military units in Michigan.

During Cadillac's absence, a coalition of tribes from the Lake Michigan region raided Fort Detroit. It was a combined force of French settlers and Native warriors that repelled the attackers. This defense underscored the strategic value of the Native militias. Furthermore, each tribal village stationed near Detroit contributed warriors to barrier forts that served as outer defenses. This coordinated military framework functioned as the first organized, multiracial militia network in the Great Lakes region.

By 1708, Detroit had a nascent, yet functional military organization composed of both settlers and Native militia leaders. The garrison of Fort Pontchartrain included multiple officers and a small cadre of regular soldiers who often took land and became long-term residents. Many French settlers adapted to local conditions and integrated with Native communities, a reality Cadillac noted with the phrase, 'With wolves one learns to howl.'

This intercultural cooperation was critical to Detroit's survival and established a precedent for a community-based, citizen-soldier defense force.

Though not always recognized, Cadillac's 1708 militia structure predates many other military formations in North America. Its formal organization, written proposals, and active defense operations provide sufficient justification to recognize 13 November 1708 as the founding date of the Michigan National Guard. In commemorating this milestone, the Michigan National Guard affirms its legacy as one of the oldest military institutions in the United States.



Governor Whitmer Signs the Proclamation Officially Establishing the Birthdate of the Michigan National Guard



Command Historian: Mr. Adam Betz
Approved by: MG Paul Rogers

CAMP NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS – J. RICHARD GREENE AWARD

Calling on all Camps that would like to be considered for the J. Richard Greene Award for the Most Outstanding Newsletter in the Department to submit them upon each publication to the J. Richard Greene Award Committee comprised of the Department Newsletter Editor (Chairman), Department Chaplain, and the Department Secretary. The e-mail addresses for those officers are as follows:

editor@suvcwmi.org
chaplain@suvcwmi.org
secretary@suvcwmi.org

All Camp newsletters will be collected and reviewed during the prescribed period before the Department Encampment. The Department Newsletter Editor will recuse himself from voting on all Camp newsletters due to any and all conflicts of interest in scoring, and will conduct all other business as required as Chairman of the committee.



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2025 – 2026

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SR. VICE DEPT. COMMANDER	Todd Cordill
JR. VICE DEPT. COMMANDER	Ronald Shull, PCC
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For contact information, see: suvcwmi.org/hq

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