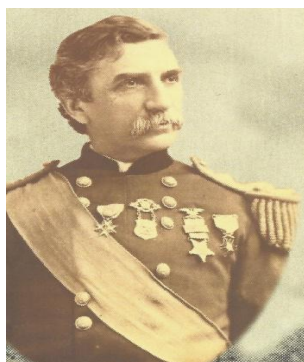




Hartranft Herald

The Newsletter of

Maj. Gen. John F. Hartranft Camp 15

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

www.SuvcwHarrisburgPa.org

Celebrating our **144th** Year serving Harrisburg Area

@ Gen. John F. Hartranft Camp 15 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
<https://www.instagram.com/hartranftcamp15pa/>



Vol 28 No. 07

September

2026



Come to our general meetings and view central Pennsylvania from high atop Reservoir Park!

A newsletter for, about, and by the members of Camp 15!

2026 Hartranft Camp 15	Commander ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Kyle Purchase 2025-2026
Officers and your Staff	Senior Vice Commander ~ ~ ~	Logan Swanger PCC 2021-2026
	Junior Vice Commander ~ ~ ~	Scott Debo, PCC 2021-2026
	Secretary ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Wayne Blattner, PCC 2025-2026
	Treasurer ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	David W. Demmy, Sr. PCC 2007-2026
	Council 01 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Jeffery Smith, PCC 2018-2026
	Council 02 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Wayne Blattner PCC 2023-2026
	Council 03 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Charles Brackbill Jr 2026
	Patriotic Instructor ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Jeffery Smith, PCC 2018-2026
	Chaplain ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Jeffery Smith, PCC 2026
	Graves Registration ~ ~ ~	Logan Swanger 2014-2026
	GAR Historian ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Jeffery Smith, PCC 2018-2026
	Counselor ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Charles Brackbill Jr 2026
	Eagle Scout Coordinator ~ ~ ~	Wayne Blattner PCC 2025-2026
	GAR Highway Officer ~ ~ ~	Gregory E. Kline, PDC 2008-2026
	Guide ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Wayne Blattner PCC 2021-2026
	Color Bearer ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Wayne Blattner PCC 2021-2026
	Guard ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Wayne Blattner PCC 2022-2026
	Webmaster ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Dave W. Demmy, Jr. 2011-2026
	Cadet Program Coordinator ~ ~ ~	Gregory E. Kline, PDC 2011-2026
	Camp Historian ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Wayne Blattner PCC 2020 - 2026
	Longevity Brother ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Late Dave J. Klinepeter PCC 1943-2023
	Praiseworthy Brother ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Late Floyd J. Demmy WWII Veteran
	Praiseworthy Brother ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Late Joseph E. Long, Jr., PDC, Veteran
	Praiseworthy Brother ~ ~ ~ ~ ~	Late Lee F. Walters, PDC, Past Exec Dir.

Camp 15 routinely meets at the National Civil War Museum, at Reservoir Park, Harrisburg, PA, 2 pm, 3rd
Sunday of most months. PA Dept: www.PASUVCW.org National: <http://www.suvcw.org/>

In accordance with General Order 7, March 7, 2022: "Individuals attending events hosted by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, by virtue of their attendance, agree to the usage of their likeness in the *Banner*, any Camp or Department Newsletter, any SUVCW website and/or on any SUVCW Social Media outlet, promotional brochures, or any other SUVCW material."

Membership in our Order does not require a civil war ancestor nor is our Order a reenacting group!

September 2026 *Hartranft Herald* Camp 15 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
Award winning newsletter -- Marshall A. Hope Award presented to Hartranft Camp 2010-2011
Award winning website -- Horace Greeley Award presented to Hartranft Camp 2020-2022
SUVCW Legal heir of and representing the Grand Army of the Republic

Greetings!

Brothers and Sisters in distress

Sister Helen Shireman, great granddaughter to our camp namesake, Maj Gen John F Hartranft, is recovering from an ailment; likewise, Mrs. Bill Jackson, is residing at a special-care facility. Brother Bill is downsizing to a one-bedroom apartment. This current list includes prayers for camp commander Kyle Purchase; Brother David Demmy Sr. as he struggles with some health issues; Camp counselor Chuck Brackbill Jr, ailments;. The family of late Charlotte Walters PDP, upon her recent death. And National Secretary Jim Crane with an ongoing concern! Lastly, brother Wayne B with very recent concern. Please keep all these Brothers and Sisters and their families in your prayers.

September Camp Meeting

Our next meeting is to be conducted on Sunday September 20, 2026, at 2 pm at National Civil War Museum upper level. Commander brother Kyle will have a full agenda to be considered. Brothers, please make every effort to attend and join us for dinner following the business meeting. It is imperative for a full house of brothers to consider the Commander's agenda and several motions that may come before us on the floor; let's have a good kick off to the Autumn season. Come out and enjoy yourself in F, C & L.

Encampments 2026

Reflections on Pennsylvania Department Encampment:

Top news, camp 15 sold 10 SUV CW license plates and 3 belt buckles. Hooray.

Carlisle camp 50 hosted the 2026 event. We had good meeting rooms, good lunches, and a wonderful banquet dinner!

Again, a motion was made to increase PA dues! After some research and pros and cons, the motion was defeated, another hooray. However, encampment registration fee for 2027+ was approved from \$7.00 to \$15.00. Such funds are used to defray encampment expenses.

Thirty-eight brothers present, representing less than 700 brothers of Pennsylvania accepted motions and reports and voted for or against items for 18 out of 22 camps in PA. At least 24 brothers volunteered to be delegates to represent PA at the forthcoming 2026 national encampment at Gettysburg. 24 was a record number of delegates for PA in a great number of years.

Highlites of National Encampment

Largest attendance in decades!

Dept of NE proposed changes to oath of initiation; encampment disapproved.

Dept of OH recommended changing Banner to a mostly electronic distribution, no longer hardcopy for majority of personnel. Again, the encampment disapproved of the idea.

Dept of OK submitted a resolution to create memorial memberships for deceased blood relatives. T was referred to PP committee.

Motion to add Asst Secy and Asst Secy to CCR. Motion failed. Boo hoo.

Joseph Pilkay

Stories from the Dauphin County G.A.R. – Joseph Pilkay, Hartranft Post #58

By Camp 15 Commander Kyle Purchase

When schoolchildren learn about the American Civil War, they may think it occurred a “long time ago,” but there are times where we are reminded that it was not necessarily *that* long ago. **Joseph Jerome Pilkay** is a prime example.

Pilkay, a native of Adams County, was born on July 14, 1839, and worked as a cabinet maker prior to his enlistment in the Civil War. His first term of duty began on April 20, 1861, when he enlisted for 90 days as a private in Co. F of the 25th Pennsylvania Infantry. This tour of duty was of guard duty of President Lincoln’s home in Washington and later duty in Virginia. After his discharge from the 25th in July 1861, Pilkay then re-enlisted in August 1862 as a private (but soon promoted to corporal) in Co. A of Colonel William Jennings’ 127th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment developed in Harrisburg. While he was with the 127th, Pilkay served provost duty in Harrisburg and then the unit served as guards of the Capitol prison in Washington D.C. Pilkay would be discharged from his company in early May 1863. A sibling of his, John Henry Clay Pilkay, was also a soldier in the same company as Joseph. After his military service, Pilkay would apply for and received his pension, with a rate first starting at \$12 per month in 1907, and then (due to a series of pension law changes and updates) by \$50 per month by 1920.

Pilkay would work as a banker for decades in Harrisburg but also served as a clerk for Harrisburg Cemetery, the cemetery where he would eventually be buried in, along with some of his comrades. Pilkay was involved with the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), being one of the first charter members of Post #58 in Harrisburg, which was formed on April 24, 1867. The post would be permitted to change its

name to J. F. Hartranft Post #58 after General John F. Hartranft passed away in 1889. (The G.A.R. prohibited any post from naming itself after someone who was still alive.) The G.A.R. became a political force in the 1880s and 1890s, where they were heavily involved with community and veterans’ affairs, where they advocated for pension legislation, voting rights for African American veterans, beginning the tradition of Memorial Day, and advocated for opening soldier and orphans’ homes.



HARRISBURG'S BOYS IN BLUE HONORED BY KIWANIS
Five Civil War Veterans who were guests of honor yesterday at the annual G. A. R. Memorial Day luncheon of the Kiwanis Club are shown above. From left to right, they are: Charles B. Rhoads, Julius Meredith, D. F. Fisher, Joseph J. Pilkay and John Urich.

Above, Pilkay and other Hartranft Post #58 comrades at a Kiwanis Club function, circa mid-1930s.

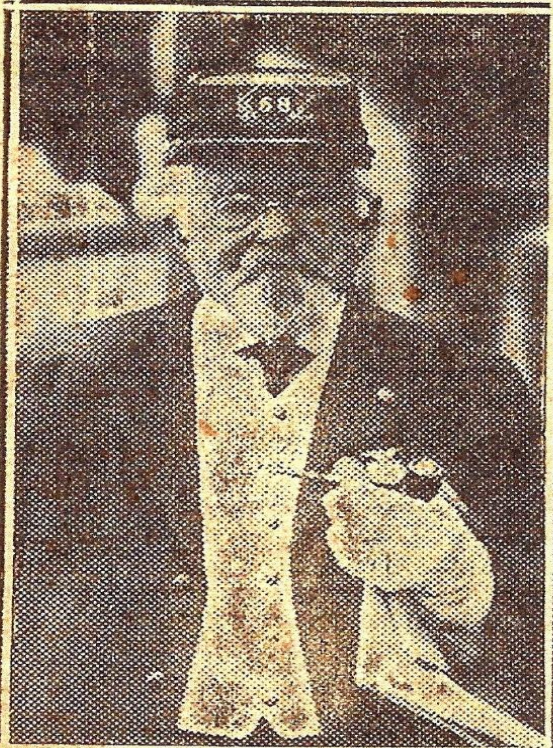


Continued below

Fri. July 13, 1934

PAGE TWO

Joseph J. Pilkay Will Be 95 Years Old Tomorrow



JOSEPH J. PILKAY

Joseph J. Pilkay, lone survivor of the old Lochiel Grays, will observe his ninety-fifth birthday anniversary tomorrow at the home of his son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Harry W. Minnich, 516 Emerald street. He will mark the day by attending to his duties as superintendent of the Harrisburg Cemetery, making his daily visit to the cemetery office.

Mr. Pilkay was born in Petersburg, Adams County, now known as York Springs. After the Civil War he entered the employ of the Harrisburg National Bank, where he served for forty-seven years. Upon retiring on pension, he accepted the position he now holds with the cemetery association.

12

MONDAY EVENING

SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY FINDS ONLY THREE SURVIVORS ENROLLED IN HARRISBURG'S G. A. R. POST

By BETTY BROOKS

Seventy years ago today a group of young men walked into the office of Governor John W. Geary at the Executive Mansion. At that time Post 58, Grand Army of the Republic of Pennsylvania, was organized. This first regular meeting followed in Odd Fellows Hall, at that time located on Second street.

R. A. McCoy was elected first commander, and was installed July 2, of that year. The organization moved its headquarters to 36 North Third street that autumn.

In 1867, seventy posts with 3500 members were founded in Pennsylvania. In 1929, when City Council provided for the Boys in Blue two rooms at City Hall for future meetings there were 190 posts in the State. At one time, however, there were as many as 622 posts in Pennsylvania.

From 1759 to Three

Post 58 had, at one time, 1750 members. Today it has three.

The oldest surviving member is Joseph J. Pilkay, commander. Characteristic of all the members, he has led a full and interesting life. Though in ill health at present, Mr. Pilkay still derives more pleasure in his reminiscences than in any thing else. Mrs. Harry Minnich, his daughter with whom he lives at 516 Emerald street, told me.

Voted For Lincoln

Born July 14, 1840, Pilkay cast his first vote for Abraham Lincoln. Anxious to defend his country when war broke out, he



JOSEPH J. PILKAY

CIVIL WAR VETERANS CLUB'S GUESTS TODAY

Harrisburg Kiwanians will have as guests of honor at the luncheon meeting today at the Penn-Harris Hotel five of the seven surviving members of Post 58, G.A.R.

The five Civil War veterans are: Julius Meredith, 2703 Derry street, who is 100 years old; David F. Fishel, Middletown, who is 96; John Urich, 1926 North street, who is 88; Joseph J. Pilkay, 516 Emerald street, 95, and Charles B. Rhoads, 2436 Derry street, 86.

The two remaining members of the post, Charles Fisher, 1323 North Front street, who is 89 years old, and William F. Starry, 226 South Seventeenth street, 91, will be unable to be present.

Maj. Coleman B. Mark will be the speaker, and a number of National Guardsmen have been invited to attend. The program is in charge of Edward H. Schell and a special G.A.R. Day committee.



HARRISBURG'S BOYS IN BLUE HONORED BY KIWANIS

Five Civil War Veterans who were guests of honor yesterday at the annual G. A. R. Memorial Day luncheon of the Kiwanis Club are shown above. From left to right, they are: Charles B. Rhoads, Julius Meredith, D. F. Fabel, Joseph J. Pilkay and John Ulrich.

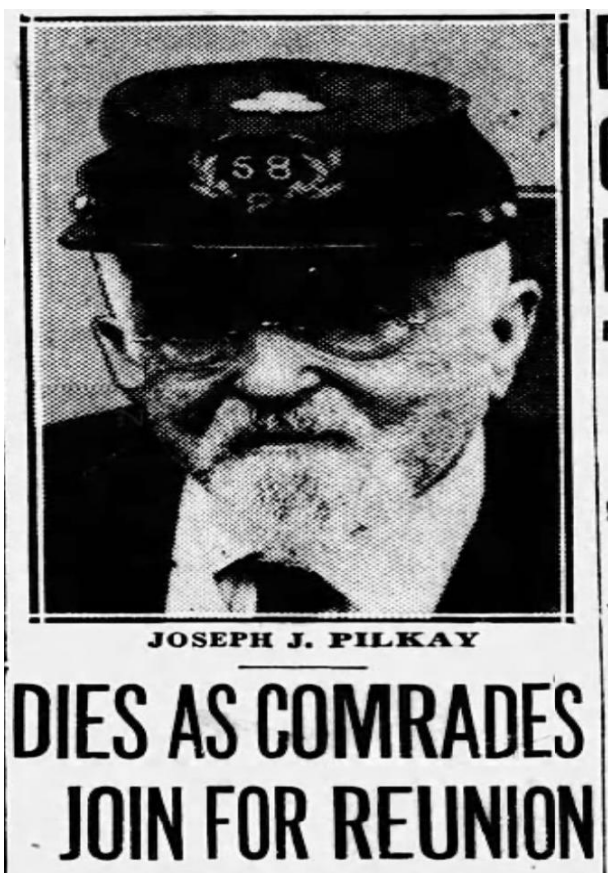
Pilkay died on July 2, 1938, as the reunion in Gettysburg that year was taking place, at the youthful age of 98. He did not personally attend, but his comrades certainly did. Pilkay was laid to rest in the historic Harrisburg Cemetery, not too far from the Capitol building, with members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War serving as pallbearers. As members of the SUVCW, let this story serve as a reminder to keep green the memory of the boys in blue and to teach the younger generations the importance of and the costs of freedom.



MILITARY HONORS AT GRAVE OF HARRISBURG'S OLDEST CIVIL WAR VETERAN

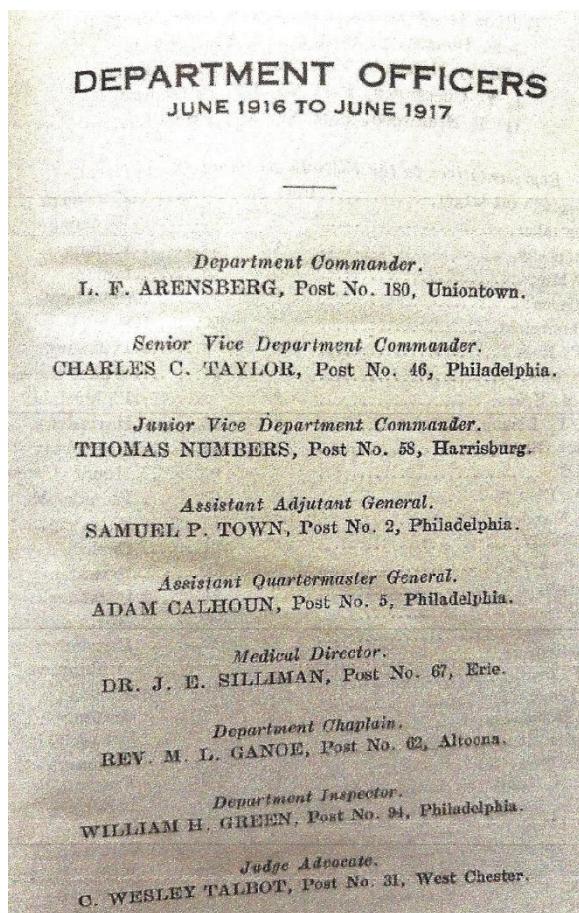
Joseph J. Pilkay, Harrisburg's oldest survivor of the Civil War, who died on Saturday at the home of his son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Minnich, 516 Emerald street, was buried with military honors yesterday afternoon in the Harrisburg Cemetery. Members of Company G, Sixth Regiment, are shown above as they gave a parting salute at the grave.

Co. G of the Sixth Regiment of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, firing volleys over Pilkay's grave.



JOSEPH J. PILKAY

**DIES AS COMRADES
JOIN FOR REUNION**



From the 1918 Proceedings for the Pennsylvania Department G.A.R. Department Encampment, listing the Department Officers from the previous year. Numbers was the Department JVC at the time.

Sources:

Newspapers.com

"Find a Grave – Thomas Zeigler Numbers."

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/83431904/thomas-zeigler-numbers>

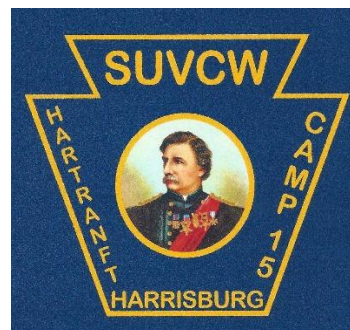
Reprints available upon request!



Attendees of 2026 Pennsylvania Encampment held at Carlisle.



Pennsylvania Attendees of 2026 National Encampment at Gettysburg.
Copies available upon request!



Question: any brothers interested in ordering or re-ordering Camp 15 shirts? Send query to execdir@suvcw.org

Camp 15 on the Road for remainder of 2026



September 18th 6pm NCWM hosts annual event: Cocktails and Cannonballs \$75 per person at Reservoir Park Harrisburg. NCWM members \$50.

September Camp Meeting

Sunday the 20th at 2pm at NCWM upper level.

Kick off for autumn months.

October Camp Meeting

Sunday 18th at 2pm at NCWM upper level. Camp Nominations and Elections today for 2027.

October PA Dept Mid-year event

Saturday October 24th 11 am at Hoss' at Bedford PA see D.O. #4 dtd 31 Aug 2026.

November 7th **Veterans Day** Free Day Saturday, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, at the National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg.

Camp 15, Camp 50 and Camp 503 Holiday event
2nd annual tri-camp holiday banquet event for 2026 is scheduled for **Saturday December 12th at Hoss' Mechanicsburg**, same venue as 2025. Tri-camps = camps 15, 50, and 503. Please mark your calendars now! Email invitations already submitted to brothers and sisters with an email address requesting RSVP.

Be Proud - Wear the Badge



Come out to a meeting and engage with us!

- **The Allied Orders of the GAR:**
- -Woman's Relief Corps Auxiliary to GAR,
- -Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic,
- -Daughters of Union Veterans of Civil War,
- -Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and
- -The Auxiliary to Sons of Union Veterans Civil War.

Camp Officers & authors, the first Friday of each month is the Deadline for submission of stories, events, articles, and photos for *Hartranft Herald*.

Membership Bio Profiles will continue to appear as members submit them.

Complete an e-worksheet, please ask for one – send e-mail request to DoubleD@Demmy.cc

Bring a nephew, uncle, brother, father, grandfather, cousin, your neighbor and all your friends to a Camp meeting! Family and our sisters of the Allied Orders are always welcome!

Camp 15 Established February 11, 1882, in Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty!

God bless you and yours and God bless the USA.

Next edition *Hartranft Herald* will be issued in September time for September meeting.