

**United Spanish War Veterans  
Collection, 1898-1960  
Doc 111-Doc 113, MS Size C**

**Camp Histories**

The United Spanish War Veterans, or USWV, served as a fraternal group for qualifying veterans of the Spanish American War and the related conflicts of the Philippine Insurrection and operations on China. As a nationwide organization, the group had a national headquarters and states had departments. The organization broke itself into smaller subdivisions, including local memberships in a group referred to as a "camp." The camps in a particular state or territorial subdivision could unite as a "department" or as a "provisional division." All camps and departments reported to the national organization or "National Encampment." The bylaws of the USWV stated a member could be loyal to his camp, but the prime allegiance had to be to the order. The National Encampment had ultimate legislative authority and judicial powers. They also had authority to collect taxes as necessary, to be in good standing with the organization, subdivisions had to be up to date in paying these taxes. The Commander-in-Chief had full power to enforce the USWV constitution and could disband or suspend departments or camps for neglect or refusal to obey the orders of the National Encampment.

Camps located in any state, territory, district, or possession could be organized into a department by authority of the commander-in-chief. No department could have fewer than four camps. The commander-in-chief also selected the name for the department, usually referring to the locality or territory where the department existed. Just as the national organization held legislative control of the entire body, the department organization held control over the camps that fell under it. Departments could be further subdivided into districts, but no district existed in Vermont. Each department had a commander, a senior vice commander, a junior vice Commander, an adjutant, a quartermaster, an inspector, a surgeon, a chaplain, a patriotic instructor, a marshal, and a historian. Camps elected the commander and vice commanders at the department encampment, the other positions came through appointments by the commander. Elected officials served for one-year terms and installed immediately after election. Appointed officers could serve until a qualified successor was named.

Local groups had to apply to the national encampment to receive a charter and become a camp. Once the group received the charter, they would call a meeting and with a minimum of a four-day notice, recruit any qualified applicants to join the new camp. The first meeting would include the election of a clerk and a treasurer and setting the fee for admission to the camp. A camp name would be chosen, the by-laws adopted, and the election of officers.

Camp names as designated by the members could not be of a living person, unless that person performed a conspicuous service or distinguished himself by great acts of benevolence. No two camps in a department could have the same name. The commander in chief assigned camp numbers and had to approve the name submitted. Applicants for membership had to apply in writing, their eligibility verified, and their character vouched for by a current member in good standing. Once the investigation finished, the general membership of the camp had the opportunity to review the application, discuss the findings, and ultimately vote to accept or reject the applicant via secret ballot. Once accepted, the applicant had to pay the required fees and be mustered into the camp according to a prescribed ritual. Membership could be either annual or by paying a set fee, a member for life.

Membership could be terminated with a discharge. An honorable discharge would allow the member to leave the organization but eligible for re-admittance at a later date. The dishonorable discharge severed

all ties for all time; however, it could be petitioned for revocation or pardon through the national organization.

Camp Officers: Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Officer of the Day, Officer of the Guard, and Trustee. The camp members filled the positions through elections held at the first meeting during the month of December of each year, those elected served for one year from the time of their installation in office. The trustees, however, served for three years. In the first year of a camp's existence, one trustee is elected for one year, a second for two years, and a third for three years. Camp officials reported election results to the Department Headquarters. The Department Commander appointed an officer to visit the camp and hold an installation ceremony at the first stated meeting in January. Camp commanders had the services of a camp adjutant to keep all the required paperwork for the camp. Camps also had a quartermaster to collect dues, make payouts, and take custody of all camp equipment and supplies. Other miscellaneous positions included a patriotic instructor, a historian, a chaplain, color sergeant, and a chief musician.

The camps held their meetings at least once a month but could suspend meetings in July and August if such suspensions were in the camp by-laws. Camp commanders could call for special meetings with proper advance notice to camp members.

Should a camp disband, all the records and property of the camp had to be sent to the department quartermaster or the Quartermaster General to be held in trust should the camp reorganize at some other time, those records could be returned.

In Vermont, information on several camps can be found. At least 15 camps can be identified at some level, the collection contains documents from 13 of them. As the national by-laws stated no two camps could have the same name nor camp number, a few of the camps must have ceased to exist at some point. There are records from two as Camp No. 2 and two as Camp No. 11, as well as two bearing the name Col. E. N. Liscum, once in St. Johnsbury and once in Winooski. There would have been reorganization among the camps as time progressed, limiting membership to actual veterans of the war also limits the life of the organization. Below are names of the camps organized in Vermont by number and the service record of the soldier whose name the camp bears.

**Camp 1:** Harold S. Foyles Camp, Rutland, VT (Private, Company A)

Foyles, Harold F. Resided in Rutland, born in Rutland, enlisted May 11, 1898. Age 20, died of typhoid fever Sep 6, 1898 at Rutland. (Chartered February 25, 1905)

**Camp 2:** Col. E. N. Liscum Camp, St. Johnsbury, VT (US Army) (did not report 1909) Liscum, Emerson H. born July 16, 1841 at Huntington, VT, resident of Burlington at the time he entered the army on Feb 19, 1863. He served as a Lt. Colonel, 24th Infantry, brigadier general of volunteers, and Colonel of the 9th Infantry during the period of the war with Spain. He remained in the service at the close of the war. (Chartered September 16, 1905)

THE REGIMENTAL MOTTO "KEEP UP THE FIRE!"

Origin: It was on 13 July 1900, during the assault on Tientsin, China, in the face of murderous fire that the wounded Regimental Commander, Colonel Emerson H. Liscum seized the National Colors from the fallen Color Sergeant. Colonel Liscum stood fearlessly, directing the attack on the city walls until he too was mortally wounded. His last words to his men were "Keep Up the Fire!"

**Camp 2:** Harry B. Lamson Camp, Barre, VT (Corporal, Company E) (1931, 1937)

Lamson, Harry B., resided in Barre, born in Brookfield, enlisted May 7, 1898. Age 26. Died Aug 20, 1898 at Baltimore, MD on board a hospital train while enroute to Fort Ethan Allen, VT

[note: an undated membership verification request, Timothy J. Hornbrook, Main Street, Montpelier wrote he was a member of the Harry B. Lamson Camp No. **13** in Barre.]

**Camp 3:** Daniel F. Curtin Camp, Brattleboro, VT (Battalion Adjutant, 1st Vt. Vol. Inf.)  
Curtin, Daniel F., 2nd Lieutenant. Resided in Brattleboro, VT, born in Cork, Ireland. Commissioned Feb 7, 1898. Age 31. Died Aug 22, 1898 at St. Vincent's Hospital, East Lake, Tennessee of typhoid fever contracted in the line of duty. (Chartered January 18, 1905) (Disbanded 5/7/54)

**Camp 4:** C.M. Brownell, Burlington, VT (Captain, Company M)  
Brownell, Cornelius M. Resided at Burlington, VT, born in South Burlington. Commissioned Dec 17, 1894. Age 26. Special duty on General Court Martial Jul 20 to Jul 23, 1898. Special Order 1st Div., 3rd Corps, Jul 1898. Absent with leave 10 days from Jul 24, 1898. Special Order No. 47, 1st Div., 3rd Corps. Sick Aug 19 to Aug 21, 1898, in line of duty. Sick in hospital, typhoid fever, Aug 22 to Sep 23, 1898. Sick at Burlington, Vt., Sep 23 to Dec 1, 1898. (Chartered March 8, 1905, recommended revoked December 1909) (letter L.W. Fennell to F. van Buren, 23 Oct 1908, Brownell Camp #4 disbanded after first meeting.)

**Camp 5:** Oliver J. Gisborne, Montpelier, VT (Lieutenant, Company H)  
Gisborne, Oliver J. Resided in Montpelier, born in New York, N.Y. Commissioned Apr 3, 1897. Age 28. (Chartered April 21, 1905, disbanded Jul 1, 1909, surrendered Jun 16, 1909)

**Camp 6:** C. William C. Spafford, Bennington, VT (Musician, Company K)  
Spafford, William C., resided in North. Bennington, born Berlin, NY. Enlisted May 9, 1898. Age 21. Died Jun 1, 1898 of pneumonia contracted in the line of duty at Chickamauga Park, GA. Final statement furnished Adjutant General, Jun 10, 1898.  
(Chartered May 2, 1905, never organized, dropped Jan 13, 1909)

**Camp 7,** Wm. H. Sullivan, Shelburne (Sergeant, Company B)  
Sullivan, William H., resided in St. Albans, born in St. Albans. Enlisted May 5, 1898. Age 22. Died of typhoid fever in hospital at Ft. Ethan Allen, Sep 18, 1898. (Chartered May 24, 1905, members transferred to others, surrendered Oct 1908) (letter L.W. Fennell to F. van Buren, 23 Oct 1908, Sullivan Camp 7 surrendered its charter and consolidated with James W. Flynn Camp.) (Letter from national headquarters, Special Orders No. 45, 1908, dated 19 Dec 1908, Charles Bashaw, Commander of Vermont Department to accept the surrender of charter and assets of Camp 7.)

**Camp 8:** Lamson [assume the same Harry B. Lamson as at Camp 2, above as there is only one Lamson in the roster.] (Chartered January 18, 1905, surrendered 1909)

**Camp 9:** James W. Flynn Camp, Burlington, VT (Private, Company M)  
Resided in Boston, MA, born in Underhill, VT. Enlisted May 12, 1898. Age 22. Died Sep 17, 1898 at Burlington, VT of typhoid fever. Final statements and inventories furnished Adjutant General, Oct 10, 1898. (Chartered May 18, 1907)

**Camp 10:** William C. Spafford Camp, Bennington, VT (Musician, Company K)  
Spafford, William C., resided in North. Bennington, born Berlin, NY. Enlisted May 9, 1898. Age 21. Died Jun 1, 1898 of pneumonia contracted in the line of duty at Chickamauga Park, GA. Final statement furnished Adjutant General, Jun 10, 1898.

**Camp 11:** Howard K. Blair, Newport, VT (Captain, Company L) (1911 first meeting)  
Blair, Howard K. Resided in West Derby, born in Boston, MA. Commissioned Apr 15, 1898. Age 38. Detailed as commander of Detachment of 1st Vt. Vol. Infantry guarding government property at Camp

Olympia, Vt., Sep 4 to Sep 11, 1898. General Order No. 23, Hq. 1st Vt. Vol. Inf. Sep 3, 1898. Relieved of command and ordered home by Capt. H. W. Hovey, 24th US Infantry, Mustering Officer, Sep 9, 1898 on account of sickness in line of duty.

**Camp 11:** Albert W. Farman, Newport, VT (Corporal, Company L)  
Farman, Albert W. Resided in Newport, born in Troy. Enlisted May 6, 1898. Age 23.

**Camp 12:** Col. E. N. Liscum Camp, St. Johnsbury, VT (US Army) (did not report 1909) Liscum, Emerson H. born July 16, 1841 at Huntington, VT, resident of Burlington at the time he entered the army on Feb 19, 1863. He served as a Lt. Colonel, 24th Infantry, brigadier general of volunteers, and Colonel of the 9th Infantry during the period of the war with Spain. He remained in the service at the close of the war. (Chartered September 16, 1905)

**Camp 13:** William F. Starr, Camp, White River Jct., VT (Private, Company G)  
Starr, William F. Resided in White River Jct., born in White River Jct. Enlisted May 9, 1898. Age 22 years.

**Camp 18:** July 9, 1911 letter from VT Dept Commander to David Frechette, Commander of Camp 18, Vt. Div., S. V., St. Johnsbury, Vt.

Service statements from:

“Vermont in the Spanish-American War,” prepared and published under the direction of Herbert T. Johnson, The Adjutant General, by authority of the General Assembly, 1929, Montpelier, VT, 1929.

Harry Harrington  
February 2020  
USWVCampHistories.docx