

ELISHA DYER CAMP no. 7
Department of Rhode Island
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Elisha Dyer Camp 7 is the oldest Camp under the R.I. Department SUVCW and one of only two RI SUVCW Camps actually started by GAR Civil War Veterans and their sons. The RI Dept. SUVCW was provisionally chartered by the National SUVCW organization in 1886 and was permanently chartered by National in 1888. Past RI GAR Department Commander Theodore A. Barton was the first RI Department SUVCW Commander and he was the founder of the SUVCW in Rhode Island.

Camp 7 was chartered by the National SUVCW in 1909, and founded by Albert M. Bennett, a veteran of Battery E, 1st Regiment, R.I. Light Artillery during the Civil War and member of RI GAR Arnold Post No. 4 for many years after the war. Since the founding of the R.I. Dept. SUVCW in 1886 Camp 7 has had more of its men elected R.I. SUVCW Department Commander than any other Camp in the history of the Department.

R.I. SUVCW Elisha Dyer Camp No. 7 has a rich tradition. It ranks among the oldest SUVCW Camps in the country that actually link to the Civil War through an unbroken existence. Named after two R.I. Civil War Veterans and R.I. Governors, Elisha Dyer Camp No. 7, Rhode Island Department Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is the oldest and largest Camp in the State, serving Providence, Cranston, Warwick, Johnston, parts of West Warwick and Coventry. Camp 7 is also the SUVCW successor Camp to R.I. GAR Arnold Post No.4.

Camp 7 today is one of only two* R.I. SUVCW Camps started in 1909 by the Civil War Veterans of the former Rhode Island Department Grand Army of the Republic, (GAR Arnold Post No.4) for the SUVCW. Therefore, Camp 7 also descends from GAR Arnold Post 4. The GAR was the Veterans organization that represented all Union Civil War Veterans in America. RIGAR Post No. 4, was named after Capt. William A. Arnold by the Rhode Island Civil War Veterans to memorialize the service of Battery A, First Regiment, Rhode Island Light Artillery (Arnold's Battery) which stood its ground on the third day of the Battle of

Gettysburg, on Cemetery Ridge at the focus of Pickett's Charge, and helped to turn the tide of the Civil War; saving America from being permanently divided. The well known skill and deadly accuracy of R.I. Battery A, as well as their coolness under fire, ranked Battery A, of the 1st R.I. Light Artillery Regiment among the very best of the volunteer light artillery units in the Civil War.

CARRYING ON THE MEMORY
OF
R.I. GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC
ARNOLD POST No.4

On September 18, 1926, RI SUVCW Elisha Dyer Camp No. 7 was awarded legal documentation of a court rendered verdict, notarized and legally certified in N.Y. District Court deeming Camp 7 to be the Post 4 designated SUVCW successor to RI GAR Arnold Post No. 4. The document was signed by RI GAR Post 4 Comrades Nicholas Ross, Post 4 Commander, Fernando Jaques, Post 4 Sr. Vice Commander and attested by James McCaffery, Post 4 Secretary; and the action of Post 4 was approved by RI Dept. GAR.

In 1926, the last surviving Civil War Veterans of RI GAR Arnold Post No.4 conveyed all Post 4 property, historical memorabilia, finances and records to Camp 7 for its faithful service. This action entrusted the GAR Post 4 legacy to RI SUVCW Elisha Dyer Camp No.7, naming Camp 7 their true and legal SUVCW successor in Rhode Island. Camp 7 continues to carry on the memory of RI GAR Post 4 today. Camp 7, first began as the children and the uniformed cadet corps of RIGAR Arnold Post No.4 in 1879. When their children grew up they were granted Associate Status in Post 4. By 1900, the Civil War Veterans of RI GAR Post 4 began to ask themselves, who will carry on and decorate the graves of their comrades after they were gone. The children of Post 4 had grown and continued to support their fathers, the men who fought to save the Union, 1861 - 1865, so the Post 4 Comrades began the process of passing their legacy to Camp 7. In 1909, RI GAR Comrades Bennett and Brown officially formed Camp 7 to carry on for Arnold Post 4 as its SofV,USA - SUVCW successor. Who better to carry on for Post 4 than their sons? Camp 7 assisted Post 4 until its last days in the 1930s and continues its sacred duty to Post 4 today.

* - Since the original writing of this history, Elisha Dyer Camp no. 7 is now the only RI Camp to be founded by GAR Members. Note added on 8/6/2011 by James P. McGuire