



# The Second NJ Brigade

New Jersey's Civil War Brigade

Spring Issue  
Volume 5, Issue 1

The Second NJ Brigade is a 501c3 non profit organization. The board meets once a month and is represented by members of all Impressions. The Executive Board: President Mike Milling, Vice President Matt Belcastro, Treasurer Lin Kaufer, Secretary Abby Belcastro.



# THE ADVANCE

## Spring Issue



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# 2020 EVENTS

Due to COVID-19, all of our spring and summer events have been canceled for NJ locations.

As of now, our fall programs are still running, and these include:

**September:**  
Cold Springs Village

**October:**  
Wall Township Living History

**November:**  
Barnegat Timeline  
Veterans Day Parade

Remembrance Day

**December:**  
Speedwell Christmas

However, these are subject to change with the state of the pandemic.

Please check the website for updates, as our online calendar is being consistently updated to reflect our partner organizations' cancelations.

What Does MAX Event Mean?

- Max event means we would like you to give priority to these events as they are either our biggest events of the year, a new event that we're trying out, or an event that is giving the brigade a large donation.

What is a PAID EVENT?

- these events provide us a donation that is split evenly between the impressions that attend.
- These donations help pay for supplies & equipment the brigade provides such as tents, food, cooking implements, etc.



# BRIGADE BABIES

We are very excited to announce that the brigade will be adding two honorary members to our lists!

*Natalie Kathleen Milling*

Born May 27th

Congratulations to new parents

Erin and Mike



*Baby Egbert*

Arriving around June 2nd

Congratulations to new parents-to-be,

Julianne and Paul



## Did You Know?



Nowadays, we often symbolize a baby's gender by color:

Blue for boys

Pink for girls

But did you know that during the mid 19th Century, gendered colors didn't exist?

All babies were dressed the same, in white dresses. White was easily bleached when babies soiled their cloth diapers.

Small children (of both genders) would graduate to dresses with short pantalets during their toddler years, with boys only switching to breeches (short pants) around the age of 6.



So where did blue and pink come from? It was actually based on the toddler's hair or eye color. Pink was suggested for brunette or brown-eyed babies, while blue was suggested for blonde or blue-eyed babies.

It wasn't until the 1940s that pink and blue became gender specific, and it wasn't until the 1980s, with the popularity of ultrasounds, that parents utilized the colors to signify baby gender.

# CONTRIBUTING TO SMALL MUSEUMS

One of the best things we get to do in this hobby is help small museums build their attendance by volunteering our time to put on our living history programs.

These are two local museums who heavily rely on attendance to obtain grants that keep their organizations running for future generations. Without attendance, they risk closure. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has prevented us from doing our programs this year, but we are certainly looking forward to being able to help these museums once stay-at-home orders have been lifted! Read on to find out more about these great local gems:

## *Old Wall Township Historical Society*

### **History:**

Devoted to the preservation and education of Wall Township's history through annual local events and lectures, the Old Wall Historical Society has restored and maintained the 19th century Allgor-Barklalow Homestead, the 1855 Blansingburg Schoolhouse, and the 1840 Morris-Allgor-Kittell Wheelwright Shop. The museum is completely volunteer-run, and the board is seeking attendance-based grant assistance to continue maintaining these structures.



### **Our Events:**

We have done a small living history for Old Wall over the last two years, and they liked us so much, they've asked us to expand our programming. So, we will be offering **TWO** events for Wall in the future.

1. Timelines Program - While this program was canceled for 2020, we hope to be able to bring this program to Wall in 2021.

Dust off your Rev War, World War I, or World War II impression and come out for a fun day at this delightful little museum. The volunteers LOVE us, and they will be providing us with lunch.

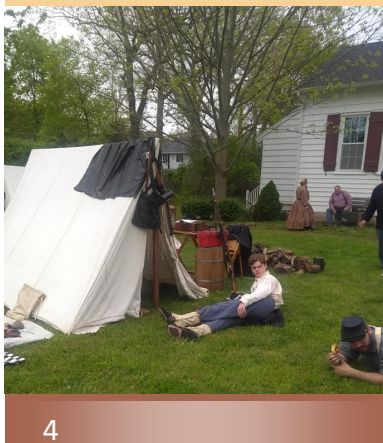
2. Civil War Living History and Skirmish – October 24 & 25 – 10:00 – 4:00 both days. As of now, this program may still run.

We are allowed to camp over-night on the grounds, and sleep in the school house building. The Society will provide lunch for all reenactors both days, and there will be a small skirmish.



Old Wall Historical  
Society  
Address:

1701 New Bedford  
Rd.  
Wall Township, NJ  
07719



## *East Jersey Old Town Village*

### **History:**

Located right across from Rutgers' Football stadium, East Jersey Old Town Village is comprised of sixteen reconstructed and replica 18th and 19th century structures that represent a typical farm and merchant community native to the Raritan Valley. What is now Johnson Park



was once a bustling port on the Raritan River, rich with business and trade. Imports arrived to the area from Europe and the Caribbean, while NJ grown produce was exported down the Raritan River. The community was impacted during the Revolutionary War and survived into the early 19th century when trade shifted to New Brunswick. Remnants of the original community lie buried in Johnson Park, and archaeological excavations have uncovered thousands of artifacts that have assisted the museum in rebuilding its history for patrons.

### **Our Event:**

While our event with East Jersey Old Town was canceled this year, we're hoping to be able to debut our program with them in 2021. In the meantime, they are interested in us sending videos of us demonstrating Civil War activities that they can post on their social media to both help get us some publicity and create virtual history lessons for their patrons.

If you would be interested in sending them a video of your impression, please contact Mike Milling at [millingm@wpunj.edu](mailto:millingm@wpunj.edu) and he will connect you.



East Jersey Old Town  
Village Address:

1050 River Rd.  
Piscataway, NJ 08854



# WHERE DOES ALL THAT MONEY GO?

## Impact of Our Expenses & Donations:

Purchase of new interactive artillery props for school programs.

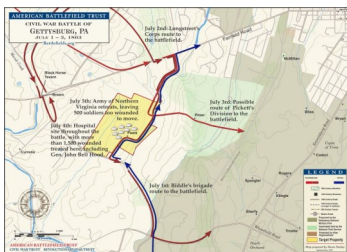
Purchase of interactive wooden rifles for children's infantry drills.

Purchase of food supplies for cooking demos.

Donation for luminaries for all 2D soldiers buried in Gettysburg National Cemetery.



Preservation of battlefield acreage in VA, GA, PA, NJ, and beyond.



Many of you may have noticed that we've had several paid events on our calendars over the last few years. And you may be wondering what happens to the dollars we make after the program is over. Where does it go? What do we do with it?

One of the Brigade's biggest goals is the historical preservation of Civil War history. Part of the way we accomplish this is by educating the public through our programs at small museums, libraries, and schools, and by attending larger Civil War events such as Remembrance Day in Gettysburg, and reenactments.

Everything we do helps keep the stories of the men and women who lived through the Civil War alive, and in turn, keeps their histories in the forefront of our patrons' minds.

We've been incredibly lucky in the past two years to be the recipients of several large grants (thanks to our grant supervisor, Amery Vasso), and we have received a Sibley Tent and civilian fly tent, as well as two new, hand-painted flags that will be unveiled in 2020. As the grants are taking care of some of the high-expense necessities for the brigade, we are able to focus our funds in other areas.



Firstly, the funds we bring in from paid events are divided amongst the impressions that participated in the event. So, for example, if the



infantry, civilians, and cavalry attend a paid living history, the money we make at that event is split equally between the infantry, civilians, and cavalry. The board representation of those impressions can then use those funds to pay for supplies that benefit their specific impression (i.e. the Civilians often use their funds to pay for the food they use in public cooking demos). This allows our organization to provide the proper supplies to create quality programs.

The second way we assist preservation is by donating funds to preservation-specific organizations including the Civil War Preservation Trust, the American Battlefield Trust, and the Gettysburg Foundation.

Our longest standing donations have been to the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), and in the fourteen years we've been donating, **we have given over \$10,000.00** to assist in preserving battlefield land from being developed in Virginia, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and beyond.

For more information on how the American Battlefield Trust, Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), and the Gettysburg Foundation preserve Civil War history, please visit their websites.

~by Abby Belcastro



## CIVIL WAR TRUST

*Saving America's Civil War Battlefields*  
**Civilwar.org**



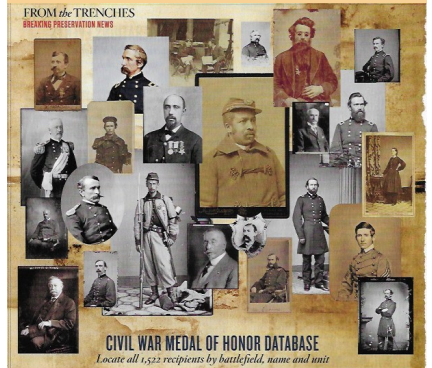
**AMERICAN  
BATTLEFIELD  
TRUST** ★ ★ ★

Battlefields.org

**GETTYSBURG**  
FOUNDATION

Gettysburgfoundation.org

**These sites are also extremely useful resources for research.**



American Battlefield Trust has just launched their Civil War Medal of Honor database that allows you to easily search any medal of honor recipient by clicking on their interactive map.

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/medal-of-honor>

They also offer animated maps, downloadable battlefield apps, and an online magazine.

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war>



# WILLIAM HEXAMER'S KAMERADSCHAFT



William Hexamer in his uniform.

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was a fraternal organization composed of veterans of the Union Army, Navy, Marines, and the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service who served in the Civil War. It was founded in 1866 in Springfield, Illinois, and grew to include hundreds of "posts" across the nation, in many ways the precursor to the modern Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and American Legion.

The G.A.R. became among the first organized advocacy groups in American politics, supporting voting rights for black veterans, promoting patriotic education, helping to make Memorial Day a national holiday, lobbying the United States Congress to establish regular veterans' pensions, and supporting Republican political candidates. Its peak membership, at 410,000, was in 1890, a high point of various Civil War commemorative and monument dedication ceremonies.

Hexamer Post, No. 34, of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR.), was organized April 25, 1872. The Post was named after Major William Hexamer who commanded the First NJ Artillery, Battery A.

Major Hexamer served for most of the war until he was mustered out of duty August 18, 1864 and died of a throat infection at his home in Hoboken, New Jersey on August 25, 1870. He is buried at Grove Church Cemetery in North Bergen, New Jersey.

Hexamer Post charter members were Julius E. Seitz, L. Rottger, P. Freischner, Gottlieb Schmalz, A. W. Lauer, C. Oberst, A. C. Moll, David Lederer, John Mueller, and Elias Honig, all Hexamer's comrades. The Post numbered one hundred and eleven members in good standing by 1884, and regular meetings were held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, at 183 Market Street in Newark.

Sometime in the early 1880's, four members of Post 34, George Aab, Ferdinand Kirchmayr, John Mueller, and Emil Toering, made a pact which *"had its origin from an act of piety to the memory of one of their war comrades."* That pact stated that every Decoration Day (now known as Memorial Day) they would travel to Captain Hexamer's grave and place a wreath in his honor. This tradition continued until two of the original members passed away, at which point additional veterans, upon invitation, were asked to join the Kameradschaft, which is German for Comradeship.

Annually, on May 30, members decorated the graves of their departed comrades until the last GAR member passed.

Hexamer's grave stone at Grove Church Cemetery in Hudson County, NJ

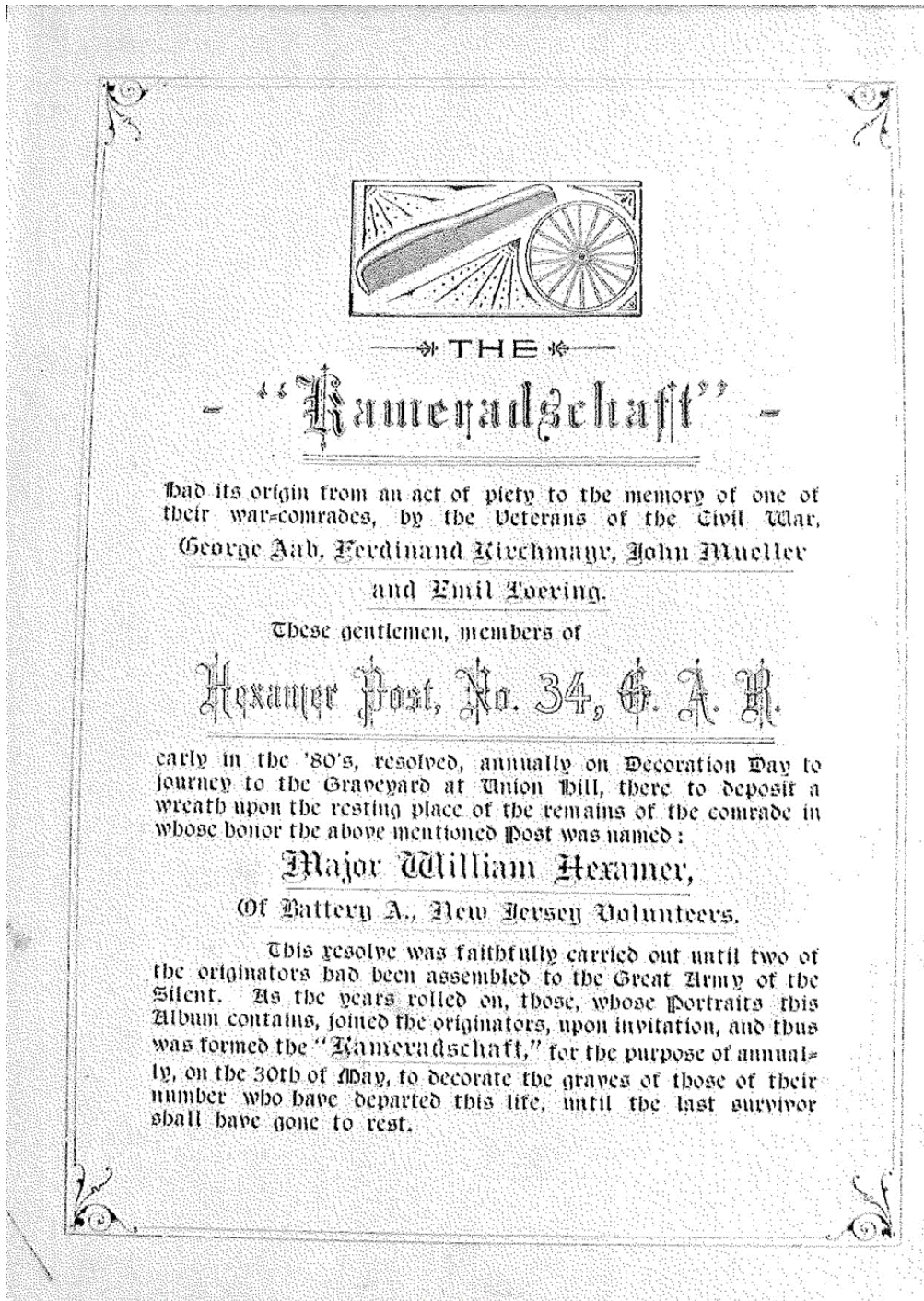




This tradition continues today, with various veterans organizations placing flags on Memorial Day, at the graves of veterans of all wars who have passed on.

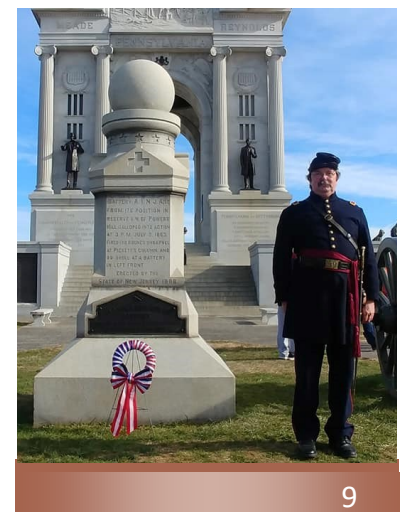
~ By Tim Rack

- Edited by Abby Belcastro



Hexamer's Battery position at Antietam was first commemorated in 1903 with the plaque above. It's located on the North Side of Bloody Lane near the tower monument.

Hexamer also has a monument at Gettysburg, located directly in front of the Pennsylvania monument near the battlefield entrance.



# WHO'S WHO?

Showcasing Our Brigade Membership: Ron Symes



Ron Symes was a loyal visitor to our events for many years, and we were so excited when he finally joined the Brigade as a member. This year, he has officially received his Eagle Scout Award, and to commemorate this milestone, I sat down with Ron to find out what he loves most about the Civil War and what his Eagle Scout project entailed.

**AB: Hi Ron, thanks so much for doing this interview. How long have you been with the Brigade, and how did you find us?**

**RS:** I joined the brigade in 2016 right before my freshman year of high school. I'd been going to Civil War reenactments in Northern NJ since I was 8 years old. After years of going to events, I eventually talked to Greg [Belcastro] about joining and got the paperwork, and joined up.

**AB: What's your favorite thing about Civil War history?**

**RS:** I really enjoy studying the tactics and weaponry used during the Civil War. Also some of the people involved in the wars are very interesting, especially their lives before and after the war.

**AB: What was your eagle scout project? How long did it take you? Can you tell us the process of how you received your award?**

**RS:** At the church I go to, there is a small white garage behind it that has been suffering from water damage for a very long time, due to the fact that it was not built correctly back in the 60s. For my project, I replaced all the rotted wood that was on the inside of the garage, put up vinyl siding on a side that never had it, and installed a gutter to reroute the rain water. The project took about 8 months.

I began filling out paperwork in January 2019, and multiple initial drafts of



Original Scout Symbol



the project were rejected. In May, my project was approved by the eagle board and I collected supplies through June and July. On August 16th-17th I did the actual building and repairs to the garage. After my project was signed off as "complete" by the pastor of the church, I had more paperwork to do. On October 29th, 2019, I went before the eagle board and told them about my project, and answered some other questions. The project was approved and that night I officially became an eagle scout.

**AB: That sounds like a ton of work. I'm sure your church is very grateful for all the long hours you put into to help their building. Anything else you'd like to tell us?**

Some of my other hobbies include doing model trains. Predominantly O scale, but I am trying to get into HO. I've also played guitar for 5 years, and am an absolute *Star Wars* nerd.

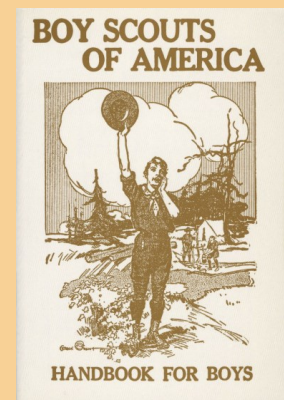


## Interesting Boy Scouts Tidbits:

The Boy Scouts of America began in 1910. The boy scout movement had started in England 3 years before, but a Chicago publisher, William Boyce, was assisted by a London boy scout on his vacation, and felt it was an important organization to start in the U.S.



The British handbook was adapted to American use and *The Official Handbook for Boys* was published in 1911.



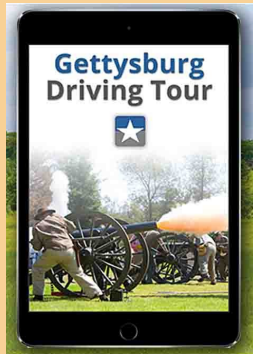
The 1980s boy scout uniform was designed by famous designer, Oscar de la Renta



## OFF THE BEATEN PATH with Bruce Form

### What's the Battlefield Auto Tour?

Gettysburg offers a handy app for your phone with navigation and 16 stops that you can do from your car!



The app will give you GPS directions, audio and videos that adjust to however long you want to spend in each location.

The tour is 90 minutes – 4 hours depending on how long you choose to spend at each of the 16 stops along the way.

Give it a try next time you visit Gettysburg!



In past editions of *The Advance*, I have written articles on various perspectives on Gettysburg. I have tried to bring in places, items, or people of interest that relate not only to the battle that took place here over 155 years ago, but items and issues that are about the town, people and its environs. There are little things that pop up, a piece of data that has to be investigated, or even a rumor about something that may or may not be true. For this article, and for the second time in *The Advance*, I'm combining two of my favorite situations to bring attention to some unnoticed things on the battlefield. First, the adventure in seeking out new items and second, being a retired educator, presenting new things to people so they can learn more.

Walking the battlefield always leads to new discoveries, and what is better in these times of social distancing than to find a nice place to park your car and walk. One such place is right on the Auto Tour at stop #11. Just go to our 7<sup>th</sup> NJ monument (pay your respects), follow the road which leads you to an intersection, turn right, and you head toward the Trostle Farm near where General Sickles lost his leg. One of the sites to see there is General Sickles' Headquarters marker on the right side of the road. It is a typical one with a cannon above a plaque for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps.

For those of you not familiar with HQ markers, they are standard for both Union and Confederate HQ's. Each is an artillery tube with the muzzle facing up, the bottom imbedded on a granite base with a plaque describing which Army or Corps HQ was in command. Unique to the Union Forces HQ marker is the Corps badge designation insignia, is attached to the cannon tube. As you can see the Diamond (or rhombus) shape indicating the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps is there on the tube.



As you look across the road from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps HQ marker, there is a unique stone monument placed on a boulder engraved with the words: "Monument on Culp's Hill". One may think that this is one of the most puzzling monuments on the battlefield. Well it is until you take the time to walk behind it and read why it is there (but not why it seems to be positioned

backwards). It relates to the efforts of the 150<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry of the 12<sup>th</sup> Corps on the evening of July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Traveling further down the road there is a monument with two cannon, one on each side. It is off the road on the left and you have to walk up on the mowed path to get to it (don't forget to use some kind of anti-tick protection.



Gettysburg seems to be tick central these past few years). This monument tells of Battery I of the 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Artillery and their actions on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. What makes this of note is that they were overrun and taken by the 21<sup>st</sup> Mississippi, but almost immediately the position and battery were saved, by the 39<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry, a.k.a. "The Garibaldi Guards."

Behind the monument is what appears to be a flank marker, but upon closer inspection, it is another monument to the 39<sup>th</sup> New York.



It reads: "ON THIS SPOT JULY 2D, 1863, THE 39<sup>TH</sup> NY INFANTRY RECAPTURED THE GUNS AND EQUIPMENT OF BATTERY I, FIFTH US ARTILLERY"

The last offering in this article is something that for those of you who frequent Gettysburg have probably passed by and never taken notice. Whether you have been following the prescribed Auto Tour from the Park Service, or just seeking a way to go from US Rte 30 to West Confederate Avenue or the Fairfield Road (a.k.a. Middle Street). It is on Seminary Ridge as soon as you turn in, on the left at the beginning of the road. It is a very unobtrusive looking stone wall. Why is this significant?

It is one of the few 'original walls' left. Though it was constructed early on July 4<sup>th</sup>, right after the battle ended, Rhodes' Division sent 2 brigades out on July 3<sup>rd</sup> to assist on Culp's Hill while the remainder stayed on Seminary Ridge. The wall above was constructed on Seminary to fend off any Union forces coming up the Ridge. Later in the day on July 4<sup>th</sup>, the remaining troops of Rhodes' Division departed in retreat with the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia after its defeat.

Next time you are traveling across Seminary Ridge (some people refer to it as Seminary Ridge Road) take notice of this often overlooked area.

I look forward to gathering more unique "off the beaten path" items from Gettysburg to share with you in the future.

~by Bruce Form, 2020

~Edited by Abby Belcastro

*To all members of the 7<sup>th</sup> New Jersey and the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Jersey Brigade, from Mira, and Bjorn, (a.k.a. "The Swede"), and me:*

*Be Well and PLEASE Stay Safe.*



## The 2D Board

Is there something you'd like to bring to the Board's attention? A new idea? A new impression? Something that can make the brigade better?

We'd love to hear what you have to say! Please contact your impression head and ask them to bring your idea to the Board's attention. Or, contact president Mike Milling, and ask if you can make a special presentation to the board at one of our meetings.

## COMMITTEES

We have created three new committees as part of our Board this year:

### **Advertising:**

Abby Belcastro  
Paul Egbert  
Amery Vasso  
Brian Zilinski

### **Recruiting:**

Brian Zilinski  
Rich Walker  
Lin Kaufer  
Tim O'Grady

### **Safety:**

Matt Belcastro  
Hans Artz  
Michelle Catona  
Marie O'Grady  
Rich Walker

Have ideas for how we can advertise our programming better, recruit more members, or work on our safety? Please contact our committee members with your ideas!

*Stay Safe & Stay  
Healthy!*

