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(Photo by ROBERT KILLIPS/Lansing State Journal)
On the march: Keith Harrison, as a major in the Civil War infantry, leads troops Sunday to the rededication program of the Soldiers' Monument Lot at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Lansing.

Re-enactors help rededicate Civil War site at cemetery

Restoration effort honors those who served the Union

Susan Vela
Lansing State Journal

They met in the rain, the women in their hoop skirts and the men in the blue woolens of the Civil War's Union soldiers.

Together, they paraded through Mt. Hope Cemetery and up a hill until they met the others convened for Sunday's rededication of the Soldiers' Monument Lot, where the bodies of 36 Civil War veterans are buried around a tall monument.

About 100 stood in the sprinkling - and then drizzling - rain for a ceremony that included prayers, Civil War tunes, wreath placements and a gun salute.

"It's very important to remember this and recall what these great men gave us," said state Rep. Rick Jones, R-Grand Ledge. "History has been preserved."

The rededication honoring the men and women who kept the nation united through their Civil War sacrifices happened after more than a year's worth of labor and improvements.

The projects involved local businesses, community members, the city of Lansing, Civil War groups, veterans groups and the Lansing/Sunfield Curtenius Guard Camp No. 17 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Sunday ceremony

Sunday's ceremony showed off their efforts, which included the replacement and realignment of headstones, painting a flagpole, power washing the monument, some turf work and the discovery of a grave.

Potterville resident George Bibbings snapped a picture of the performing fife and drum unit.

"I'm all for the United States of America and the recognition of the past and the present," said Bibbings, whose employer, Lansing Board of Water & Light, helped revamp the Soldiers' Monument Lot.

The lot, where improvements will continue, has a total of 48 graves. Nine World War I veterans, two Spanish-American War veterans and one World War II veteran also are buried there.

Learning history

There are about 300 to 400 Civil War veterans buried throughout the cemetery, said Jesse Lasorda, an independent researcher and Lansing resident involved in the work.

"It was wonderful," Charlotte resident Marcia Weiss said of Sunday's ceremony. "We tend to forget what our military does for us."

Andre Blair, 14, of Delta Township has traveled across the nation as a Civil War re-enactor.

In the process, he has learned much about fife and drum units and the experience of black soldiers.

"I enjoy learning about history," said Andre, a member of the fife and drum unit that performed Sunday.

"It helps out in school, too, when we're learning about the Civil War."

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**Grand Army of the Republic Soldiers' Monument Lot Rededication
Mount Hope Cemetery, Lansing, Michigan
October 14, 2007**



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Picture Captions

- 01 Keith Harrison, as a Major in the Civil War infantry, leads troops to the Rededication Program of the Grand Army of the Republic Soldier' Monument Lot at Mt. Hope Cemetary Sunday in Lansing.
- 02 A view of the Grand Army of the Republic Soldiers' Monument Lot during Sunday's rededication ceremony.
- 03 M.C. Langworthy at the Rededication of the Grand Army of the Republic Soldiers' Monument Lot at Mt. Hope Cemetary Sunday.
- 04 Six year-old Elizabeth Seger in period dress at the Civil War monument rededication Sunday.
- 05 A re-enactor of Abe Lincoln, shows up at the Rededication of Civil War monument lot at Mt. Hope Cemetary Sunday.
- 06 One of the graves at the Civil War soldiers lot in Mt. Hope Cemetary that will be replaced soon.
- 07 One of several wreaths are placed at the site of the Civil War soldiers' rededication Sunday.
- 08 Symbols are placed at the site of the monument.
- 09 Geoff Blair, from Lansing, in a Civil War uniform of the United States Colored Troop at Mt. Hope Cemetary at the rededication of the Civil War monument lot Sunday.
- 10 A rifle salute is fired as the Civil War memorial lot is rededicated Sunday.
11. Symbols Guard, Scott Shattuck at the rededication of the Civil War monument lot at Mt.

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Hope Cemetery Sunday. Shattuck is a history teacher from Mason.

12. Taps is played by bugler Mark Heath at the Civil War monument rededication at Mt. Hope Cemetery Sunday.

13. Members of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, Andrew Makell Thomas, 8, and LaVerne Aves prepare to line up to march at the Mt. Hope Cemetery Civil War monument rededication Sunday.

14. Civil War fife and drummer re-enactors, from (L) Todd Rakestraw, David Goodwin, Andre Blair and Tom Emerick during the Civil War monument lot rededication Sunday, at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Lansing.

15. A Civil War re-enactor cleans the firing mechanism of his rifle