

# TOWN OF VERNON

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### MEDIA ADVISORY

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## New England Civil War Museum and Research Center Celebrates Grand Reopening

### *Civil War Reenactors Will Set Up Camp in Central Park*

**(VERNON, Connecticut)** – The New England Civil War Museum & Research Center will celebrate its grand reopening from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 in Central Park in front of Vernon Town Hall and in the Museum, housed on the second floor of Vernon Town Hall.

“The New England Civil War Museum is a national treasure and we are fortunate to have it here in Vernon,” Mayor Dan Champagne said. “This grand reopening is a great opportunity for people to learn about the museum and its work preserving and telling the story of a defining time in our nation’s history.”

Civil War reenactors will set up camp in Central Park, recreate camp life, fire muskets and drill just like their predecessors did 155 years ago. The reenactors will have children from the crowd of onlookers join them in their drills, said Daniel Hayden Jr., the Commander of Alden Skinner Camp No. 45 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, which operates the museum. Living historians will demonstrate impressions of infantry, artillery, navy, signal corps, and civilians of the time. The event will even include a cannon and a working model of the ironclad ship U.S.S. Monitor.

“This is an event for families, Civil War historians, history buffs and anyone else fascinated by the stories of the farmers, factory workers, craftsmen and other everyday people who went off to war as ‘citizen soldiers’ during perhaps the most extraordinary time in American history,” Hayden said.

The museum will be open for tours and visitors will be able to see the changes made to the museum and its exhibits during the pandemic.

“We’ve changed the format and setup of the museum so that visitors experience the journey of an average soldier during the Civil War, from their enlistment, through their service during the war and then their time as members of veterans organizations,” Hayden said. “The grand reopening is a celebration of all that work and of the museum and what it represents.”

Aside from the Civil War related features, representatives and vehicles from various Town of Vernon Departments will join the celebration along Park Place, as will representatives from UConn ROTC and other local organizations. There will also be a used book sale and raffles, Hayden said.

The Memorial Building, which houses the museum and Vernon Town Hall, was built in 1890 as a memorial to Civil War Veterans. The second floor was dedicated for use by the veterans and served as the meeting place for the local post of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a fraternal organization of Civil War Veterans. The national GAR dissolved in 1956, after the death of its last member.

A successor organization, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, took over the GAR's work of honoring and remembering all Union soldiers. The local camp was established in 1883 and named in honor of Dr. Alden B. Skinner, a local physician who at age 64 volunteered to serve his country and was commissioned surgeon of the 25<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Infantry Regiment. He traveled with the regiment to Louisiana, where he became ill and died in 1863.

Every Memorial Day, members of the camp decorate Skinner's grave and those of 148 Civil War veterans buried at Grove Hill Cemetery in the Rockville section of Vernon. The Camp meets the first Thursday of each month in the museum.

The Grand Reopening Celebration is **FREE** and all are welcome. Regular museum hours are noon to 3:00 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

### **About the Town of Vernon**

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of approximately 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in "New England's Knowledge Corridor" with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870- 3670 or visit [www.vernon-ct.gov](http://www.vernon-ct.gov).

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