



STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

# HONOR THE COLORS

*Iowa's Civil War Battle Flags*

Contact Us

Project Process In Progress Gallery Exhibit Capitol Info Home

description staff news contribute merchandise

## NEWS

### Anamosa Flag Returns Home (August 2008)



For two years the community of Anamosa come together to raise the funds needed to stabilize and preserve one of their city's treasures; indeed a national treasure. Forgotten about for many years this flag came to light during the process of building a new community library. This company flag is styled in the pattern of a U.S. National flag. Made of cotton fabric and handsewn by unidentified ladies of the community this flag was proudly carried by the 9th Iowa Infantry during the Civil War (1861-1865). To the men of the 9th Iowa Infantry, this flag became a living, breathing member of the unit. It witnessed along with them the horrors of battle, the cry of fallen comrades and the celebration of victory. This piece of fabric was cherished for the lives it saved, for the precious reminder of home it represented and for the honor of the nation for which she was flown. The soft folds of the fabric still hold the memories of those who served under her.

The Iowa Battle Flag Project staff worked on stabilizing, documenting and preserving this flag for nearly one year. It was a true honor to work on preserving this flag for the wonderful people of Anamosa. We were delighted to return the flag home on August 7, 2008 to its place of honor at the Anamosa Public Library.

### 15th IOWA INFANTRY SCHEDULES REGULAR MEETINGS (December 2007)



Every 3rd Saturday of the month, SHSI's atrium virtually becomes an encampment right out of the Civil War. History comes alive as one walks in the front doors and is met by a Union soldier carrying all his accouterments including his musket. The 15th Iowa Infantry, a group of well established re-enactors, have been coming to SHSI on the 3rd Saturday of each month to educate the public about the life of a soldier during the Civil War. The 15th is put through marching drills and commands by their Captain, Wes Keeler. The public is encouraged to interact with the group and ask questions. Visitors are allowed to rummage through the soldier's haversack to inspect their personal belongings and rations for the day. The 15th Iowa re-enactors are able to provide the public with a great deal of insight into the history of the Civil War and encourage visitors to drill along side of them or just take a better look at the weapons they carried. Come see what a Union soldier looked like and watch how they march and drill. You can be a part of their encampment every 3rd Saturday from the hours of 12:00- 4:00.

## ARCHIVE

*Past press releases of news and events pertaining to the Battle Flag Project and related exhibits.*

News Archive (March-June 2007)  
[Download PDF](#)

News Archive (June-Oct 2006)  
[Download PDF](#)

Adopt-a-flag program is announced  
(7-18-06) [Download PDF](#)

NEH Grant is awarded to project  
(1-31-06) } [Download PDF](#)

New Civil War Survivors exhibit opens  
(1-26-06) [Download PDF](#)

Preserved flag unveiled at Capitol  
(4-20-05) [Download PDF](#)

Donations from military groups  
(3-28-05) [Download PDF](#)

Preservation Lab tours offered (1-8-05)  
[Download PDF](#)

Iowa Questers adopt Hawkeye flag  
(7-30-04) [Download PDF](#)

Preserving veterans memories  
(11-10-03) [Download PDF](#)

Battle flags removed from Capitol  
(1-22-02) [Download PDF](#)

## FLAG DAY GUIDE--CELEBRATE JUNE 14th (June 2008)



 [Download Flag Day Guide](#)

## NEW RESEARCH ON SOLDIERS RELEASED (February 2008)

 [Emmet and George Brockaway](#)

 [Robert Stitt](#)

 [Thomas Jefferson Lewis](#)

 [William G. Donnan](#)

 [Loren Tyler](#)

 [The Bell-Everett Flag](#)

## BATTLE FLAGS ROTATED AT CAPITOL BUILDING (October 2007)

[Download PDF](#) of planned rotation of flags at the State of Iowa Capitol Building in 2008.

On October 30, 2007 the State Historical Society of Iowa rotated battle flags in the State Capitol Building Tuesday, returning the 10th Iowa Infantry Regimental Flag to storage and putting the 9th Iowa Infantry, National, on display.

The event was at 10 a.m. in the Capitol Rotunda. For preservation concerns, the 10th Iowa Infantry Regimental Flag will be stored in the State Historical Building's Battle Flag laboratory and will not be available for public viewing for the next three to four years. The 10th Iowa Infantry was the first regimental flag to go on display at the Capitol after receiving full conservation treatment.

Many of the 260 battle flags in SHSI's collection carry bullet holes and the blood of the soldiers who fought under them. Many of the flags were in extremely poor physical condition when SHSI took possession of them several years ago. Museum conservators rotate the flags into exhibits as they are conserved and properly prepared for public display.

The 9th Iowa, also known as the "Elson Flag," underwent 16 months of conservation treatment. The flag was given to the 9th Iowa Infantry from the Ladies of Boston on July 10, 1862 as a "token of our grateful admiration for the valor and heroism displayed by you on the memorable field of Pea Ridge."

The "Elson Flag" is also a Medal of Honor flag – Sgt. James Elson was awarded the Medal of Honor in recognition of his gallant stand on the edge of Vicksburg. Sgt. Elson's descendent, John Elson of Iowa City, has been invited to attend the rotation Tuesday, when it will be seen by the public for the first time since the 1890s.

The "Elson Flag" will be on display at the Capitol Building through Jan 31, 2008.

**Postscript:** The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Charles H. Huntley, Camp # 114, honorably carried the 9th Iowa into the Capitol and placed her in the rotunda alcove. Several other re-enactors were in attendance to pay homage to the 9th Iowa as well.