

# Honoring past and present

(JULY 2005)

**Towanda Eagle Scout project pays tribute to Civil War veterans**

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The Daily/Sunday Review

**WEST BURLINGTON**

Instead of making history, he saved it.

In a ceremony celebrating the rank of Eagle Scout being awarded to Towanda's David Huber and dedicating gravestones honoring seven Union soldiers who were buried in an abandoned Bradford County cemetery nearly a century ago, more than 45 people from all over the state paid tribute to the nation's past and present.

Taps drifted out from a bugle and over the County Home Cemetery in West Burlington, where the seven headstones, adorned with American flags and recently placed flowers, reflected the rare rays of sunlight let in by the forest. Huber put 60 hours of work into the project, including bringing in three headstones for the graves of soldiers who had no markers. Philadelphia's Eric Schmincke, the Pennsylvania Department Commander of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, said Huber's work means more than a merit badge.

"If it wasn't for this young individual who took this project on, these men would have been lost forever," he said. "If you forget about



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**Laura Orshaw plays music at a ceremony honoring a local Boy Scout and seven Civil War soldiers Saturday.**



Review Photos/  
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**TOP: Mike Grayson, left, and Jim Foley perform at a ceremony honoring a local Boy Scout and seven Civil War soldiers Saturday.**

**LEFT: David Huber receives an honor during his Eagle Scout award from his parents, Maggie and Larry Huber.**

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your past, you might as well forget about your future."

Sons of Union Veterans member Steve Hall helped Huber with the project, which got the graves registered in the group's national database. Hall explained the cemetery was basically used for paupers and was abandoned in the 1930s. He said the cemetery has nearly 300 people in it, and that it is probably just a coincidence that the seven soldiers were buried together.

Douglas Deuel, another Sons member, explained members of the group that came to the cemetery traveled from places such as Scranton, Rochester, Ithaca and Pittsburgh. He said the pull of their heritage moves them to travel the long distances they do for ceremonies that can be shorter than an hour.

"We're all descendants of Civil War veterans and we're honoring their sacrifice," he said.

Huber, who will be attending Ithaca College, said he was impressed the people traveled from so far to see the work he had done. He explained he first joined Scouts in seventh grade.

Schmincke said finding the graves and repairing them is a noble way to honor a tumultuous time in the country's history.

"It's good to find them again," he said. "And not just for the historical value. It's that you can pay tribute to them and now you can't forget about them."