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National Counselor

June 28, 2021

In answer to a request by the Commander-in-Chief Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War for a Counselor's Opinion regarding a possible conflict between the C&R and a proposed By-laws change being discussed by the Pennsylvania Department Annual Encampment on June 26th 2021 to wit it was proposed to amend the Pennsylvania Department By-laws to include the awarding of the honorary title Emeritus and making provision to create an attachment to the membership badge, which would recognize a Brother for long term service in the office of Secretary or Treasurer.

Investigation, research, and initial action:

1. An initial review of the C&R did not provide a clear answer to the question, and it was thought the C&R was mute on the subject. An opinion was offered and the CinC initially ruled that a suspended device, such as those currently used by Past Department Commanders in some department, which would not be attached to the actual ribbon drape but rather from the top bar could be produced.
2. Following the verbal opinion and verbal ruling by the CinC subsequent review and conversation with the assistant National Counselor for the C&R and other individuals lead to the discovery of a prohibition of such devices on the Membership Badge (Large) which was in a section of the C&R that discussed the wearing of miniature and large medals for dinner dress and other formal occasions and as a result had been overlooked. With this new information it was obvious that the initial verbal opinion and the CinC's ruling were out of order.
 - a. Chapter V (General Regulations) Article VI (Badges and Medals) Section 2 sub para (a) provides the following description of the membership medal, "The badge of the Order consists of a top bar in bronze, inscribed with the words "Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil war." The ribbon shall be as specified below. The drop shall be the insignia of the Order in Bronze..." The C&R is specific as to how the membership badge should look.
 - b. Chapter V (General Regulations) Article IV (Badges and Medals) Section 2 sub para (c) includes the following guidance, "Stars **or other devices may not be worn on the full-**

size badges of this Order, unless specifically allowed in this Article, such as the gold meritorious service star, the silver star of an honorary Member, SVR devices, etc.

- i. This provision found in sub para (c) seems ill positioned in the C&R, as it is buried in a lengthy section which describes the manner of apparel and wearing of miniature / large medals for dinner dress and other formal occasions. It would be better if this information were moved to sub para (a) and made part of the description of the Membership badge. This misplacement of information about the appearance and manner of the membership medal was a contributing factor in the initial, now invalidated opinion and CinC ruling.
3. Additionally, it was discovered that a provision already existed in the C&R which provided for recognition of a brother who had been granted Emeritus Status by their department by allowing him to continue wearing the Department Membership Badge as an expression of honor.
 - a. Chapter V (General Regulations) Article VI (Badges and Medals) Section 2 sub para (b) states, "All elected Department officers, while holding office **or having been granted emeritus status by his department encampment a ribbon with a red center, and the red, white and blue border on each side.**"

Opinion:

1. Based on the information which has been discovered, the initial verbal opinion offered is no longer valid and both it and the initial verbal ruling by the Commander in Chief should be ruled out of order and invalidated.
2. The Pennsylvania Department should be informed of this error and told that the changes to the By-laws involved with production of any sort of device to be attached to the membership medal are not permitted by the C&R unless approved as a change to the C&R by the National Encampment.
3. That the amendment, which they passed, to create an attachment for the membership medal must also be ruled out of order, therefore making it necessary to rescind that amendment from their by-laws.
4. That the Pennsylvania Department Leadership be advised of the existence of the already prescribed method of Honoring a brother they have granted Emeritus status.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty

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