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National Counselor  
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In answer to a letter from the Commander of the Department of Texas, which was forwarded to me by the Commander-in-Chief, regarding membership issues arising from the inadvertent omission of the definition of a blood relative in the 2014 through 2022 published versions of the Charter, Constitution, and Regulation Chapter V, Article 1. Section 3, I provide the following research and opinion

Research:

1. Upon first learning of the issues brought forward by the department of Texas, I consulted with the Assistant Counselor for the Blue Book and confirmed that the following language had been omitted from Chapter V, Article I, Section 3: Definitions. **“(a) For the purposes of administering Section 5 of the Articles of Incorporation, blood relative is defined as a direct descendant of a brother, sister, half-Brother, or half sister of a veteran. This definition section shall not apply to any brother admitted to membership prior to August 21, 1999”**
2. **An opinion by then National Counselor Richard Orr was found on page 162 of the 2008 Proceedings of the 127<sup>th</sup> National Encampment, which reads as follows:**
  - a. Opinion 8 Series 2007-2008  
No one may be admitted to the SUVCW on the service of a cousin. The C&R and charter are very clear on this matter. The Regulations define collateral as being a direct descendant of a sibling of a veteran. While it is true that blood relative includes anyone with a common ancestor no matter who that common ancestor is, our charter also gives the Order the right to define membership and further limit it. The SUVCW originally only included the eldest son of a veteran. This was expanded to include all sons circa 1900 and further expanded to include collateral descendants in the early 1950's. (I am not providing exact dates as that material is buried in several boxes of historical data on the Sons.) Chapter V, Article I. Section 3: Definitions. (a) For purposes of administering Section 5 of the Articles of Incorporation, blood relative is defined as a direct descendent, or a direct descendent of a Brother, sister, half-Brother, or half-sister of a veteran.” **This definition section shall not apply to any Brother admitted to membership prior to August 21, 1999. The definition does not apply prior to adoption because some Brothers had been admitted as cousins preceding the adoption of this**

**provision to clarify the long standing working definition of collateral. Anyone admitted as a cousin since that date is not a Member but an Associate and all restrictions on Associates apply. An error on the part of a camp in admitting a Brother as a member who does not meet these qualifications does not vacate the regulations. The status of such a Brother must be immediately changed and reported on the proper form to the Department and the Executive Director. The number of permitted associates in a camp still applies.”** Richard D. Orr, PCinC National Counselor 23 September 2007

3. A footnote relating to Brother Orr’s opinion #8, which is labeled as footnote 21, appears on page 36 of the Charter Constitution and Regulations and is attached to Chapter I (Camps) Article II (Membership) Section 1, which reads as follows **“The son of a person who was a cousin of a veteran, not eligible. NC Orr, Op 8, 127th, 162.”**
4. The following is taken from the proceedings of the 108<sup>th</sup> National; Encampment in 1999 page 29

**James Pahl, Constitution and Regulations Committee** Under Chapter V, general regulations, article 1, definitions, the definition of a blood relative be included for the purposes of interpreting section V of the Articles of Incorporation, a blood relative is hereby defined as being a direct or collateral descendent of a Union Veteran, as collateral is defined within these Regulations as uncle, not cousin. Moved and seconded

Discussion. **Richard Orr** Proposes a grandfather amendment to this recently passed change, the grandfather clause means it is only operational from this day forward and has no bearing on those brought into the Order before its adoption.

**Keith Harrison** So moved. It is seconded.

More discussion. **Commander-in-Chief Andrew M. Johnson**

I call for a vote on the amendment to the Regulations. It passes.

Reasoning: Having reviewed the facts presented in the research of our records, it is evident that the intention of the 108<sup>th</sup> and 127<sup>th</sup> National Encampment was to limit full membership to only those with direct decent from a veteran of the Civil War. However, the omission of the definition of blood relative from the Charter Constitution and Regulation during the period from 2014 through 2022 may have created a situation where Brothers of the Order seeing no specific guidance in the regulations defining the blood relative requirement and not being fully cognizant of the multiple and somewhat disjointed notes that are contained in footnote 21 to Chapter I, Article I, Section 1 could have admitted members who were not fully qualified.

Opinion: As a precedent had been established at the 108<sup>th</sup> National Encampment to grandfather in members who had not meet the criteria for full membership as a direct blood relative, and with evidence which points out that our Charter, Constitution and Regulations have not included the definition for blood relatives for the past eight (8) years, I believe it would be proper that a motion be made at the upcoming 141<sup>st</sup> National Encampment to allow anyone who has been brought into the Order after the 133<sup>rd</sup> Encampment in 2014, where the reorganized National Regulations were adopted, until the 141<sup>st</sup> National Encampment of 2022; who was admitted under a cousin to be Grandfathered into the Order, and that the definition / requirement of blood relative not be applied to such brothers.