

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR  
OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COUNSELOR

OPINION III – SERIES 2015-2016

I have been requested of the Commander-in-Chief to render an opinion as to the following question: May a Camp be assigned the number zero “0”?

It is my opinion the answer is no.

Article V of our Constitution states each Camp shall bear a name and number. National Regulations Article I, Chapter I, Section 1 states no two Camps within a Department may have the same name or Camp number (with an exception not relevant here) and the Camp number will be assigned by the Department Commander. National Regulations are otherwise silent on this issue.

So the issue at hand is: Is zero a number as contemplated by our previous National Encampments which adopted this provision? When you define numbers by “counting numbers”, then zero is not a number. When you look at it from a “real number” point of view, authorities are divided as to whether it is a number or not. Most mathematical definitions do include zero as a number.

While only advisory in nature and not binding upon our Order, I cannot locate an instance where the Grand Army of the Republic used a zero as a Post number. The Grand Army Blue Book is also silent as to this issue, other than the number would be assigned by the Department Commander.

For the purposes of our Order, it is my opinion the best model to follow is counting numbers and therefore, zero is not an appropriate number for a Camp of the Order.

Respectfully submitted in fraternity, charity and loyalty,

James B. Pahl, PCinC  
National Counselor  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War