

Introducing
**THE
SONS OF UNION VETERANS
OF THE CIVIL WAR**

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) is a 501c3 non-profit, fraternal, patriotic and educational organization, instituted to carry on the work of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), which was the largest Union Civil War veterans' organization. Prior to disbanding and before the death of its last member, the GAR officially designated the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War as its successor and heir to its remaining property. The SUVCW is officially recognized as the GAR's legal successor, receiving its Congressional Charter in 1954 (Public Law 605).

MISSIONS

Honoring Union Veterans

The SUVCW is committed to honoring all US veterans who have patriotically served our country in all wars. Our Order encourages and participates with other organizations in the proper observance of Memorial Day (May 30th), (which was established by the GAR in 1868) finds and records the graves of Civil War veterans; inspects the condition of Civil War monuments and memorials, and brings any damage or disrepair to the attention of proper authorities.

Preserving & Perpetuating the GAR

In order to perpetuate the memory of the GAR, the SUVCW assists in the preservation of documents and records pertaining to the Grand Army of the Republic and its members. Our Order also ensures that the condition of signage along U.S. Route 6, the Grand Army of the Republic Highway, is properly maintained. In addition, the SUVCW awards scholarships, provides funding for annual Lincoln Memorial and Lincoln Tomb ceremonies, and sponsors annual Gettysburg Remembrance Day events, which includes the country's largest Civil War parade. Grants for Civil War Memorial preservation are also provided. Meetings and Encampments (conventions) are still conducted in accordance with the traditions and rituals of the GAR.

Patriotic Education

The SUVCW's patriotic education promotions includes teaching patriotism, the duties of citizenship, the principles of representative government, equal rights and impartial justice for all, the true history of our country, and the love and respect for our Flag. Each year, our Order conducts presentations and events at schools and local communities.

ORGANIZATION

The SUVCW has 31 state-level organizations, (Departments) and over 200 local chapters (Camps) across the country. National and Department Membership-at-Large organizations also exist for those eligible who live in areas not yet served by a local Department or Camp.

The highest governing body of the SUVCW is the National Encampment, chaired by the elected Commander-in-Chief. Elected National and Department officers and representatives convene annually at the National Encampment to conduct the business of the Order. Officers at the Camp and Department levels are also elected annually to carry out SUVCW programs.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Organization publishes a quarterly magazine, *The Banner*, containing news of activities throughout the various Departments, and at the National level, along with other items of interest to the membership. Many Camps and Departments also publish periodic newsletters, keeping their members informed of local meetings, programs and events.

ACTIVITIES

Camp and Department activities vary, but all work in support of the organization's missions. Patriotic presentations during regular Camp meetings and historical outings increase the knowledge of the Camp members.

SUVCW members participate in a variety of ceremonies designed to honor Union veterans of the Civil War and veterans of all U.S. conflicts. The most important of these are the annual Memorial Day observances. Other local ceremonies may be held on Lincoln's Birthday, Flag Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day.

Many Camps hold grave rededication ceremonies when a Union soldier's damaged or worn headstone has been replaced. Union soldiers' grave registration efforts are part of a National program to document and record Civil War veterans' graves. Camps and Departments also participate in similar events, when historical plaques and monuments are installed or restored in their communities.

Camps and Departments promote the ideals of good citizenship and patriotism by presenting awards to deserving Eagle Scouts and ROTC cadets.

Our members actively work to preserve Civil War battlefields, artifacts, monuments, historic buildings and records in their communities.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the SUVCW is open to male descendants (sons, grandsons, great-great grandsons, nephews, grand-nephews, great-grand-nephews, etc.) of soldiers, sailors, or marines who were mustered into Federal service and served honorably in, were honorably discharged from, or died in the service of the Union Army or Navy during the Civil War from 1861-1865. Applicants for membership must be at least 14 years of age and must not have been convicted of any felony crime.

In addition, the applicant and his ancestor(s), through which eligibility is claimed, must not have ever borne arms against the U.S. Government. Male descendants, ages 6-14, may join as Juniors with the same stipulations stated above.

The application fee and annual dues rate will vary from one Camp to another. Please note that applicants must also submit photocopies of records that substantiate their ancestor's honorable service to the Union. This may be in the form of the ancestor's military discharge certificate, muster-out report, or pension papers (available from the National Archives). The 1890 Federal Census of Veterans and State Adjutant General's records may also support service.

Those who do not have a known Union ancestor, but wish to support the Order, may join as an Associate. An Associate has the same privileges as a Member, in that he can vote at Camp, Department and National elections and hold any office except Commander-in-Chief. Associates must be at least 14 years of age and have never borne arms against the U.S. Government.

HISTORY

The SUVCW was founded on November 12, 1881, as the Sons of Veterans, U.S.A. by GAR member Maj. August P. Davis of Pittsburgh. The new cadet corps expanded rapidly, training in military drill and tactics. As the GAR's male auxiliary, it also added support to the GAR's efforts for veteran preference in public service hiring and pension benefits. It petitioned Congress to protect the Flag against disrespectful practices.

In 1898, during the Spanish American War, several companies of Sons of Veterans were raised for service. However, a Congressional bill to make the Order a trained military reserve never got out of committee. The Order then elected to become a patriotic education society and changed its name to "Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War."

The Sons of Veterans Reserve (SVR) was created within the organization, keeping the uniformed military aspect of the Order alive. SVR units served with the U.S. Army during World War 1. In recent years, the SVR mission has been historic, ceremonial and commemorative. While some re-enactors belong to the SUVCW and the SVR, these are not re-enactor organizations.

ALLIED ORDERS

The SUVCW is one of five Allied Orders of the GAR. The other four Orders are: Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, Woman's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, 1861-1865.



Visit us on the web at <http://www.suvcw.org>