



Kevin P. Tucker
Commander-in-Chief
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

58 Forest Street
Wakefield, MA 01880
cinc@suvcw.org



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Engaging Brothers In The Work of The Order

Brothers,

As Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, we are heirs to a noble tradition of **service and remembrance**. We are charged not only with honoring the memory of the Boys in Blue, but also with carrying their legacy into our communities. To fulfill this mission, it is not enough that our Brothers simply attend meetings. They must be engaged in meaningful work that strengthens their bond with our Order and demonstrates our relevance to the world around us.

One of the most effective ways to do this is by giving our Brothers projects to work on. This is more than “keeping men busy.” It is about **inviting every Brother to take ownership of the Order’s mission**. When a Brother organizes a school presentation, helps raise money to restore a monument, researches a veteran’s story, or lends his skills to planning an event, he feels that he is making a personal contribution to our shared cause. This sense of ownership creates pride, loyalty, and lasting commitment.

Projects also build **fraternity**. Brothers working together toward a common goal develop bonds of friendship that cannot be formed by meetings alone. Whether the task is large or small, the act of laboring side by side in Fraternity and Charity strengthens the ties that bind us.

In addition, projects offer opportunities for **growth and recognition**. Many of our members have talents waiting to be discovered — in public speaking, organizing, fundraising, research, or teaching. When we give them meaningful work, we give them the chance to develop these abilities and to be recognized for their efforts. Recognition, even in the simplest form, inspires continued service.

Perhaps most importantly, projects create **visibility and momentum**. Every headstone we clean, every grave we mark, every classroom we visit, and every ceremony we conduct is a story worth telling. These visible results show our communities that the SUVCW is alive and active. They inspire the public to support us, and they often inspire new men to join us.

I urge each of you, as leaders of Departments and Camps, to make this principle central to your leadership. Ensure that **every Brother has the chance to be involved** in some way — whether

through small, short-term tasks or larger, long-term projects. Variety is key: not every man has the same time or ability to give, but **every man can contribute something**. No Brother should ever feel that his membership is idle or that his presence is unnecessary.

Remember this truth: **retention and recruitment are two sides of the same coin**. When Brothers are active, fulfilled, and proud of their work, they remain with us — and they bring others along. By engaging our Brothers in meaningful projects, we secure the health of our Order today and ensure that it will grow stronger for the generations who come after us.

Let us lead with vision, and let us provide every Brother with the **opportunity to serve** in ways that give life to our mission. In doing so, we will honor the memory of our forebears, strengthen our fraternity, and ensure that the sacrifices of the Union soldier are never forgotten.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin P. Tucker".

Kevin P. Tucker

Commander-in-Chief

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Engaging Brothers Through Projects

Sample Ideas for Departments and Camps

Purpose: To strengthen our Order by giving every Brother meaningful work that connects him to our mission of honoring Union veterans, preserving history, and educating future generations.

Heritage & Preservation

- **Headstone Cleaning Days:** Organize Brothers into a group to clean and restore Civil War veterans' graves.
 - **Marker Projects:** Place GAR markers on unmarked graves.
 - **Grave registrations:** Document veterans' graves and enter them into the National database.
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Education & Outreach

- **School Presentations:** Partner with local schools to develop programs to teach local students about Civil War history and the legacy of Union veterans.
 - **Library Displays:** Work with local libraries to set up rotating displays of Civil War artifacts, books, and SUVCW information.
 - **Living History Participation:** Partner with reenactors to share Union soldiers' stories at community events.
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Community Visibility

- **Public Ceremonies:** Organize Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Lincoln Birthday observances.
 - **Parade Participation:** March in local parades with banners, flags, and uniforms.
 - **Press & Social Media:** Share stories, photos, and reports of Camp projects with local newspapers and online platforms.
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Camp Life & Member Involvement

- **Mentorship:** Pair newly recruited Brothers with long-standing Brothers for orientation and mentorships.

- **Research Projects:** Assign Brothers to research local Civil War veterans and publish their biographies.
 - **Small Tasks:** Give every Brother a role — from writing an article to making phone calls, designing flyers, or helping set up chairs at a ceremony.
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Charitable & Service Opportunities

- **Veterans' Support:** Partner with local veterans' organizations for joint projects.
 - **Fundraising for Preservation:** Hold raffles, dinners, or online drives to support Civil War memorial preservation.
 - **Community Service:** Volunteer as a Camp at food banks, shelters, or other community needs in the spirit of Charity.
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Key Principle: Projects should be **varied in size and scope** so every Brother — regardless of time, talent, or ability — can contribute. Even the smallest tasks, when done with Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty, make a difference.