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LOOKING FORWARD TO 2026

Brothers,

As 2025 draws to a close and we prepare to welcome 2026, we stand on the threshold of a momentous chapter in our nation's history. The coming year will mark the 250th birthday of the United States — a milestone that calls us not only to remember our past, but to step boldly into the future shaped by it.

In 1776, our nation was founded on a courageous and transformative idea: that liberty and equality belong to all. Less than a century later, that idea was tested on the fields of the Civil War. Our Union ancestors rose to that test with determination and sacrifice, preserving the Republic and carrying it toward a more perfect realization of its founding promise. The story of America's first 250 years cannot be told without the prominent inclusion of the Civil War, for it was in that crucible that the United States was saved from dissolution. As we look forward to this coming anniversary year, let us draw deep inspiration from their courage.

To help mark this extraordinary year, the SUVCW has issued a commemorative medal celebrating the 250th birthday of the United States. I encourage every Brother to obtain one as a personal keepsake of this historic anniversary, and to wear it proudly at public events. The medal is available for purchase through the **SUVCW Quartermaster's Store** at: <https://suvchw-qm-store.square.site/>

This year will also see the launch of a major national initiative: **"SUVCW 250 for the 250th."** With approximately 250 Camps across the country, we are asking each Camp in the Order to conceive, plan, and host at least one local America 250 event commemorating the Union Army and its enduring place in the story of the United States. Whether it is a memorial program, lecture, school partnership, living history event, or community ceremony, each Camp's contribution will help ensure that the legacy of the "Boys in Blue" is visible and honored across the nation during this historic year.

In the months ahead, National Headquarters will provide guidance, resources, and support to help Camps and Departments participate fully in the 250th commemorations and the **"250 for the 250th"** initiative. But the true strength of this anniversary year — and of our coming gathering at

Gettysburg for the National Encampment — lies in each of you: your dedication, your passion, and your commitment to the mission entrusted to us.

As we prepare to embark on this 250th anniversary year, I ask each Brother, each Camp, and each Department to embrace three renewed commitments:

1. Remember with Purpose

This season of reflection invites us to recommit ourselves to honoring the Union veterans we represent. Let their courage guide us as we share their stories in our communities and preserve the memory of their sacrifices.

2. Teach with Conviction

Throughout the semiquincentennial, our nation will ask: “*How did America endure its greatest test?*”. Let us ensure that the central role of the Union soldier and sailor — in preserving the United States and ending slavery — is told clearly, proudly, and truthfully.

3. Serve with Heart

A new year brings new opportunities to live out “Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty”. Support today’s veterans, serve your communities, and be a visible example of unity and dedication to the principles our ancestors fought to defend.

As the calendar turns, we are reminded that time moves forward — yet legacies endure. The legacy forged on battlefields from Manassas to Appomattox still speaks to us. It calls us to safeguard the Union our ancestors preserved, to tell their story and to carry their ideals into the future.

May this New Year inspire us to rise to the example of our forebears, to remember the nation they saved, and to carry forward their work with pride and purpose.

Wishing each of you a happy and peaceful holiday season, a meaningful close to this year and a hopeful beginning to the next.



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