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A HISTORIC CALL TO SERVICE:
CIVIL WAR CONTINGENT FOR THE 2026 MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Brothers and Living Historians,

The year 2026 marks a singular milestone in our national story: the **250th anniversary of the birth of the United States of America**. Such moments come along only once in a lifetime, and they carry with them a responsibility—especially for those of us charged with preserving and interpreting our nation’s history.

On Monday, May 25, 2026, the **46th Pennsylvania Brass Band** will lead the **Civil War Contingent** in the Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC. This distinguished, 40-piece ensemble performs exclusively on original Civil War-era instruments and is composed of musicians from across the country who are traveling to the nation’s capital to honor the generation that fought to preserve the Union.

The Band has invited the **Sons of Veterans Reserve**, the **Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War**, and allied **Civil War Reenactment Organizations** to join them in forming a unified, uniformed Civil War presence. Their goal—and ours—is to assemble the largest possible contingent of authentic Union impressions for this nationally significant event.

This event is especially meaningful given that **Memorial Day itself is rooted in the Grand Army of the Republic**. In 1868, G.A.R. Commander-in-Chief **General John A. Logan issued General Order No. 11**, establishing “Decoration Day” as a time for the nation to honor the Union dead by decorating their graves with flowers. Marching in a Memorial Day parade—particularly in Washington, DC—connects us directly to the origins of this sacred observance and to the veterans’ organization from which our Order descends.

The 250th anniversary year offers us a **unique and powerful opportunity** to remind the American public that the survival of the United States was not secured in 1776 alone, but was preserved anew between 1861 and 1865 through the sacrifice of the **Union Army and Navy**. Their service upheld the Constitution, preserved the Union, and ensured that the American experiment endured through its gravest internal crisis.

Imagine the impact of a disciplined, dignified Civil War contingent marching through Washington, DC—led by period music—as part of the National Memorial Day parade during this Semiquincentennial year. Imagine, further, what a statement it would make if we could assemble

250 uniformed marchers for the 250th birthday of the nation. Such an achievement would be both symbolic and substantive, demonstrating unity, commitment, and historical stewardship on a national stage.

Participation in this event will:

- Publicly honor the soldiers and sailors who preserved the Union
- Highlight the indispensable role of the Union war effort in safeguarding the nation's future
- Affirm Memorial Day's origins in the Grand Army of the Republic
- Demonstrate cooperation among heritage, music, and living history organizations
- Educate and inspire the public during a landmark year of remembrance

Units and Brothers who are interested in participating or who would like additional details regarding coordination, uniforms, travel, and logistics are encouraged to contact **Joel Cribbs of the 46th Pennsylvania Brass Band** directly:

- **Email:** jaybo45@comcast.net
- **Phone:** 724-331-6864

I strongly urge SUVCW members, SVR units, and Civil War reenactment groups to begin planning now and to discuss participation within your Camps, Departments, and organizations. Opportunities of this magnitude are unique, and the responsibility to answer the call rests with us.

Let us ensure that, during the 250th anniversary of our nation's birth, the generation that preserved it is remembered, respected, and prominently represented.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,



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