

Sons of Union Veterans of The Civil War

Office of the Commander-in-Chief

Perley E. Mellor, Commander-in-Chief

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General Order #25

SERIES 2012-2013

3 July 2013

I have included in this General Order a request to amend the Constitution of the SUVCW to be considered at the National Encampment in Milwaukee, WI on August 8 – 10 2013.

Proposal to Amend Article VII, Section 1(c) of the Constitution of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War “Honorary Membership”

I. Background. For more than a year, I have worked closely with two British citizens to discover, identify, and improve the grave of Private William Blazey, 2nd Connecticut Heavy Artillery, who is buried in the Bexleyheath, Kent, England, Cemetery. Their dedication to assisting me in this project has been exemplary and worthy of special recognition. When I consulted the Constitution concerning Honorary Membership, I was surprised to learn that non-citizens are excluded even when they have rendered service to the Order that is worthy of this recognition. While not American citizens, they otherwise meet the criteria and, in my opinion, are worthy of consideration for Honorary Membership.

First, they are not eligible for membership in the Order.

Second, they meet the requirement of eminence, having both received civil honors from Her Majesty the Queen, Queen Elizabeth II, for years of dedicated service to Queen and Country. They have been invested as Members of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE), which was founded by King George V to recognize achievement or service in or to the community which is outstanding in its field and has delivered a sustained and real impact which stands out as an example to others.

Because I believe that Honorary Membership should recognize the contributions of citizens and non-citizens alike, this recommendation offers the following change to the Constitution of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. It is submitted for consideration to the Commander-in-Chief in accordance with the Constitution, Article IX, Page 9.

II. Reference. Article VII (“Membership”), Section 1(c) (“Honorary Members”), Page 6, to wit:

“The Commander-in-Chief, upon recommendation from a Camp, Department, or the National Council of Administration and with the approval of the National Council of Administration, may grant honorary memberships to persons of acknowledged eminence who are especially distinguished for conspicuous and consistent loyalty to the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and who have been active and eminent in maintaining the supremacy of the same and are known not to be eligible for membership in our Order.”

III. Problems. As the criteria are currently defined, Honorary Membership:

1. Rewards good citizenship of notable people without reference to outstanding support of the historic purposes, goals and mission of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.
2. Is limited only to citizens of the United States no matter how praiseworthy or conspicuous are the contributions of non-citizens to the mission of the SUVCW. This is also inconsistent with the policy of admitting non-citizens to membership through consanguineous descent.

IV. Discussion. All awards presented on behalf of the Order and its Commander-in-Chief ought to recognize outstanding contributions to the historic mission of the SUVCW to preserve and promote the memory of the “Boys in Blue” no matter what the criteria for the individual award.

As stipulated, Honorary Membership is not given with reference to contributions to the order, but to important people who are being commended for outstanding citizenship. Because citizenship is limited to Americans only, Honorary Membership cannot be granted to foreign nationals.

While their contributions to the historic mission of the Order may have warranted special recognition, they cannot be even considered for this reward, no matter how deserving.

Furthermore, as specified, there appears to be no mission-oriented purpose for even having the award, even if the Order does gain public recognition when awarding Honorary Membership to some noteworthy person.

V. Proposed Amendment. It is recommended that Article VII, Section 1(c), Page 6, should be amended to read as follows:

“The Commander-in-Chief, upon recommendation from a Camp, Department, or the National Council of Administration and with the approval of the National Council of Administration, may grant honorary membership **to individuals who** are known not to be eligible for membership in our Order **and who meet one of the following criteria:**

1. **American citizens of unimpeachable loyalty and patriotism who have demonstrated outstanding support for the historic mission of the Order, either by a prolonged period of service or for a single outstanding act.**
2. American citizens of acknowledged eminence who are especially distinguished for conspicuous and consistent loyalty to the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and who have been active and eminent in maintaining the supremacy of the same, **either by a prolonged period of service or for a single outstanding act** and are known not to be eligible for membership in our Order.
3. **Foreign citizens of unimpeachable character and eminence who have demonstrated outstanding support for the historic mission of the Order, either by a prolonged period of service or for a single outstanding act, and whose words and deeds demonstrate an appreciation for and support of the historic role played by the United States in promoting peace and liberty throughout the world.**

The National Organization, Departments, and Camps shall not impose the per capita dues, fees, dues, or any other monetary assessment on Honorary Members. Honorary Members are entitled to a free subscription to

the Banner.”

VI. Additional Information.

1. This amendment does not conflict with or violate the spirit of the purposes of the Order as stated in Section III, Federal Charter (1954), or Section 200302, Federal Charter (1998).
2. This amendment will not impact Chapter V (“General Regulations”), Article III (“Badges and Decorations”), Section 3F (“Honorary Member Badge”), Page. 59, because it authorizes the issue of the badge to Honorary Members without reference to criteria. Should it be decided, however, to select a different device for foreign citizens (e.g., oak leaf versus star), a change would be required to the National Regulations in Article 3, Section 2, Page 58.

Respectfully submitted
In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,

Douglas K. Fidler, PhD, PDC, PCC
Junior Vice Commander
Department of Tennessee

Ordered this 3rd Day of July, 2013.

Perley E. Mellor.
Commander-In-Chief
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Attest:

Eugene Mortorff
Secretary,
National Order, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

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