

**General Orders No. 9
SERIES 2005-2006**
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General Order 009 2005-2006

1. By a majority vote of the Council of Administration, a Press Release was approved for issue to the news media, and State and local government entities.
2. Camps and Departments are directed to give the widest possible dissemination of this press release. The release is as follows:

“The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War wishes to take this opportunity to alert the public to an unfortunate trend in recent years to desecrate Civil War Memorials erected in honor of the men who fought in the Civil War.

The biggest problem centers on Civil War Memorials that include Civil War Cannons. In an all too typical scenario, individuals claiming to represent a Civil War Museum approach local officials they perceive to be responsible for the Civil War Memorial. In point of fact, these individuals are private collectors or persons acting on behalf of private collectors. They make the local officials aware of how valuable the cannon is and suggest it may be in danger of being stolen or damaged. They offer to buy the cannon and place it on display at a museum where it will be safe for everyone to enjoy. They agree to substitute a reproduction so the local community will still have a cannon, and it will require little or no maintenance.

The price offered to the local officials is always far less than the real value of the cannon memorial. However, it is always in the thousands of dollars and the local officials, often being pressured for operating funds, see nothing wrong with the arrangement since they will still have a cannon reproduction for display purposes.

In most cases the local officials, be they government, civic or veterans groups, are unaware that they probably do not hold legal title to the cannon they propose to sell. Most of these Memorial cannons were placed in cemeteries, public squares or community parks by local Civil War Veteran’s organizations (GAR) or their descendants such as the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW). The SUVCW is a Congressionally chartered organization and the legal heir to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). Many of these cannons were either given to the GAR or loaned to the GAR or SUVCW by the United States Government. Those on loan from the United States Government must be returned to the government if they cease to be a Civil War Memorial.

Regardless of ownership, these Civil War memorials should not be desecrated. They are priceless relics placed by our ancestors to remind us of the sacrifices they have made not only for themselves, but also for future generations. The placement of these Civil War Memorials generally involved impressive dedications ceremonies attended by the entire community, including widows and children of fallen soldiers. The understanding everyone had at the time of placement of these Memorials was they would remain as a permanent memorial – not until the community felt an economic need to sell them.

The public would be outraged if a modern memorial to military veterans were to be sold just because it had a monetary value. When the SUVCW discovers the desecration of a Civil War Memorial, it takes an active role in trying to preserve the memorial and recover the cannon. In several cases not only have local officials been embarrassed regarding their actions relating to Civil War Memorials but also in recovering the cannons it proved costly. Those who buy these cannon from local officials are always willing to sell them back; but at a much higher price.

Every community should be vigilant and avoid involvement in trying to enhance their General Funds at the expense of our Civil War veterans.

Ordered this 3rd Day of February 2006

Donald E. Darby
Commander-in-Chief
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Attest:

Michael Bennett, Secretary
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

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