

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



The History of the Sons of Veterans^(a)

by
A.P. Davis, Originator
and
Frank P. Merrill Commander-In-Chief

The Sons of Veterans of the United States of America

The material for the following outline of the origin, organization, purposes, progress and aims of the National Association, now so widely spread and so well known under the above – named simple and highly appropriate official title, has been furnished by Comrade A.P. Davis, the originator of the Order, with the assistance of Brother Frank P. Merrill, the Commander-in-Chief of the Organization, and is approved by the officers of the National Association.

The term “Veteran” would indicate one who was experienced in any art or calling, but more particularly that of war. Therefore, before our late civil struggle of 1861-5 had closed, we had what was termed veteran soldiers and veteran regiments. When the end had come, and the Union no longer required the services of her well-trained and faithful volunteer hosts, those who had passed through the ordeal and were still alive returned to their several homes and vocations as “citizens,” with the feeling that each and all had done something to save and perpetuate a great and good nation; and so it came that in due time, and as it were by common consent, the mantle and title of “Veteran” slowly and surely fell upon all who had drawn a sword or shouldered a musket for our national existence.

(a) Excerpted from: Mottelay P. F. and R. B. Heath. 1884. *The Soldier in our Civil War: A Pictorial History of the Conflict 1861 – 1865, Illustrating the Valor of the Soldier as Displayed on the Battlefield*, Volume 1. J.H. Brown Publishing Company, New York, New York

The "Military Order of the Loyal Legion," the "Grand Army of the Republic," and all of the various army societies which grew out of the late war, had their conception in that feeling of fraternity which ever takes root and springs up among large bodies of men who are, from circumstances one in vocation, especially if the same be hazardous in its nature.

In the foundation and organization of the Loyal Legion, it was deemed best to look to the future as well as the present, and therefore a perpetual feature was engrafted into its organic laws, making proper provision for the transmission of membership from father to son, the rules governing the line of succession being in substance the same or akin to those of the "Society of the Cincinnati," formed at the close of the war for our national independence, with General Washington as its first Commander-in-chief.

In the foundation and organization of the Grand Army of the Republic, no provisions were made looking to a continuation of the Association beyond the termination of the lease of life held by its several members. As it is not at this late day at all probable that any change in the foregoing direction will be deemed expedient, the results will be that, through the wearing effects of time, the membership of the Association will weaken and pass away, and that, when the eyes of the last Comrade are closed in the long sleep of death, the Grand Army of the Republic, with all of its glorious recollections and associations, will have passed away for ever. And still, and though gone never to return, the day is far distant when its influence for the common good will not be felt and appreciated by future generations. The feeling that an omission had been made, and that a deficiency existed in the make-up of the Grand Army of the Republic as regarding the future, has for years existed in the minds of many of its more earnest and faithful workers, and during this time, from various legitimate causes and reasons, no happy or satisfactory solution of the question could be reached.

The idea of a permanent and perpetual organization, composed solely of the sons of deceased or honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, and marines, who served in the Union Army or Navy during our late Civil War, and descending in due time to their eldest male lineal descendants, had its origin in the mind of Comrade A.P. Davis, a member of the Grand Army of the Republic residing in the City of Pittsburg, Pa., and through his agency and exertions the movement was developed and brought to an assured success. After agitating the subject for a number of years, in one form or another, Comrade Davis

became fully convinced that the only right and practical course to take was for the sons of veterans to start and organize as a wholly separate and distinct Order, and then by their merits win their way to popular favor. To this end, during the month of November 1881, Davis Camp No. 1 of the Sons of Veterans of Pennsylvania was organized in the City of Pittsburg, and from this humble commencement of the Organization started out on its national mission of *“Friendship, Charity, and Loyalty.”*

The original elected officers of Camp No. 1 were H.T. Rowley, captain; John H. Seiferth, first lieutenant; and Walter E. Morris, second lieutenant. Shortly after other Camps were organized in the vicinity of Pittsburg, and during the succeeding month of December a charter was obtained for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which was not only good for and covered the whole State, but und United States statute law was valid in any State of the Union.

During the early part of the year 1882, sufficient progress had been made in Pittsburg and vicinity to form a Division Organization, with H.T. Rowley, the senior officer of the Order, as its Commander; Henry W. Orth, Commander of Lieutenant James M. Lysle Camp No. 2, located in Alleghany City, as the second in command; and John A. Woods, Commander of Garfield Camp No. 3, located in McKeesport, Alleghany County, as the third in command.

While the foregoing progress was being made in and about the city of its birth, arrangements were being made by Comrade Davis, and the Order was being spread both East and West. It soon made its way into the adjoining States, and in due time permanent establishments were secured in the same, and they were duly organized as separate Divisions of the Order. These labors were continued for some months, and during the period Comrade Davis discovered that, owing to the magnitude of the work, and through long-standing disabilities, he was incapacitated for vigorously carrying on the same without more substantial support, coupled with experience; and to secure the desired aid, he divided the country into five Grand divisions, and solicited the co-operation and assistance of prominent members of the Grand Army of the Republic.

The results were all that could be desired. Comrade Paul Vandervoort, Commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, developed a

kindly interest, and gave the movement encouragement.

Comrade William E.W. Ross, of Baltimore, Md., the Senior Vice Commander-in-chief, was induced to take charge of and, as their Commander, organize the Second and Fifth Grand Divisions; and Comrade Isaac S. Bangs, of Waterville, Me., Junior Vice Commander-in-chief, consented to perform a like service in the First Grand division. Comrade William J. Maskell, of Chicago, Ill., prominently known throughout the Northwest as an active and earnest worker in the ranks of the Grand Army of the Republic, offered to assume command, and organize the Third Grand Division.

The Fourth Grand division was placed in the charge of Comrade A.V. Bohn, of Leadville, Col., equally well known in Grand Army of the Republic circles in his State and section of the country.

Comrades Ross and Bangs were particularly fortunate in their exertions to establish the Order in their respective localities; and the time and means which all of these gentlemen so freely gave, and the success and substantial results they secured, entitle them to the lasting respect and gratitude of each and every Son of a Veteran.

In the meantime, and prior to the consummation of the foregoing, it was decided that the Order was far enough advanced to have a nominal head and to organize on a national basis. To this end, in July, 1882, H.T. Rowley, as the Senior Camp and division Commander, was duly declared Provisional Commander-in-chief, and the first regular national meeting was called the same day, to be held in the City of Pittsburg, Pa., on the 18th day of the succeeding October.

At this meeting, at which thirteen States were duly represented, a permanent national organization was effected. The various organic laws, ritual, insignia, etc., of the Order, as prepared by Comrade Davis, were unanimously approved and adopted, and the following executive officers elected in due form:

Commander-in-chief, H.T. Rowley, Pittsburg, Pa.

Lieutenant Commander-in-chief, Charles M. Durfee, Decatur, Ill.

Vice-Lieutenant-Commander-in-chief, Wheeler C. Wikoff, Columbus, O.

The meeting having adjourned, the work organization and extension

under the guidance of the Grand Army of the Republic Comrades named, assisted by many other equally earnest and energetic, was vigorously pushed forward. During the balance of the year 1882, and for the next six months of 1883, rapid progress was made in all directions, and the Order gained a substantial foothold in many new localities.

On the 25th day of July, 1883, the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic met in the City of Denver, Col. At this meeting comrade Vandervoort, Commander-in-chief, officially brought the question of the sons of veterans before the Encampment, and, as a result, the Order was, under its legitimate and legal title of the "Sons of Veterans of the United states of America," and, without a single dissenting voice, unanimously recognized as one "*entitled to the confidence and support of all Comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic.*"

On the 6th day of the succeeding August, the second annual meeting of the national body of the Sons of Veterans was held in the City of Columbus, Ohio. At this meeting, twenty-one different State or Division organizations were duly represented, viz.: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Eastern Pennsylvania, Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado.

The proceedings of the meeting were marked by unusual harmony and concert of action on the part of all present.

For various reasons, the delegates present did not deem it wise or expedient at that time to consider or entertain any measures looking to a revision or change in any portion of the organic laws or ritual of the Order, and, in consequence of this feeling, the time of the meeting was in substance devoted to the winding up of the affairs of the retiring administration, necessary legislation for the support of the Order for the coming official year, and the election of new officers.

The following is a full list of the same:

Commander-in-chief, Frank P. Merrill, Auburn, Me.

Lieutenant-commander-in-chief, Augustus Saltzman, St. Joseph, Mo.

Vice Lieutenant -commander-in-chief, Charles C. Morton, Philadelphia, Pa.

Chief-of –staff, Horace L. Wright, Auburn, Me.
Council-in-Chief. Edward J. Thornton, Philadelphia, Pa. Herbert A. Gross, Auburn, Me. Frank H. Challis, Manchester, N.H. Joseph B. McCabe, East Boston, Mass. John A. Wood, McKeesport, Pa. Edgar R. Vincent, Columbus, Oh. George M. Allen, Terre Haute, Ind. G.A. Windmuller, St. Louis, Mo. B.F. Risk, Danville, Ill. F.E. Brown, Denver, Col. Fred H. Storah, Auburn, Me. Well Valentine, Bennington, Vt. S. Ellis Ripley, Livermore Falls, Me. A.S. Libby, Portland, Me. H.F. Baker, Trenton, N.J.

After the installation of the above-named officers, the Commander-in-chief announced the names of the following Brothers as members of his official staff: *Adjutant-general*, Fred L. Edgecomb, Auburn, Me. *Quartermaster-general*, John C. Blake, Auburn, Me. *Judge Advocate-general*, Edmond M. Amies, Altoona, Pa. *Inspector-general*, E.H. Gilkey, Columbus, O. *Chief Mustering Officer*, John J. Miller, Trenton, N.J. *Chaplain-in-chief*, W.R. Byers, Columbus, O. *Surgeon-general*, Edwin R. Bennett, Chicago, Ill. *Chief Ordnance Officer*, Harvey M. Burrell, Leadville, Col.

The business of the meeting being completed, it adjourned on the evening of August 7th, to meet on the call of the Commander-in-chief in the City of Philadelphia, Pa., during the month of August 1884.

In the foregoing, we have in brief outlined the origin of the Order-its history and progress during the first two years of its existence. From an humble start of a single Camp of less than a dozen members, we have seen it grow and spread out to Division or State organizations, and then to Grand Division and National Proportions. Its progress has in all directions been steady and sure, and in all cases its extension and growth has been marked by those features which indicate permanency and lasting success.

In the short space of time named, a firm establishment has been secured in twenty-five (25) States and Territories of the Union, having an active and growing membership of over seventeen thousand: and, in short, the Order has been so kindly received, and is now so well seated and firmly welded to the interests of the old soldier element, that it cannot, under its carefully arranged, full, and complete system, possibly weaken or hesitate in its onward march.

The Grand Army of the Republic was conceived amid the storms and clouds, the trials and dangers, of four long and weary years of civil strife. Born at the close of the contest, it is now in the full noontide hour of its power and glory.

As time has passed on, and from year to year its members, from North to South and from ocean to ocean, have, on the 30th day of May, gathered together and wended their way to the several places where their dead comrades are laid at rest, and have bedecked their graves with the brightest and sweetest flowers of Spring, the question has often been asked, Who will observe these beautiful ceremonies when we have passed beyond? Again, many a thinking Comrade has studied long and deeply as to how his children and descendants could be best and permanently made to fully understand and properly sustain the principles he fought for, and sacrificed so much to maintain. The desire to instruct those who are to follow him, and the people as a whole, so that, as citizens, they may act considerately and well, and at all times consult the common welfare and good, has been strong in his heart, and many an earnest prayer has gone forth, asking for some conclusion that would meet the present requirements and provide for the future.

In the advent of the Sons of Veterans of the United States of America, it is believed that the hope and wish of so many Comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic has been amply answered.

Having proceeded thus far, we will, by request, now present a few of the more important and peculiar features of the Organization, as the same appear in its organic laws and other written work, commencing with the articles on title, principles and objects:

Title.

This Association shall be known as the *Sons of Veterans of the United States of America.*

Principles.

Section 1. A firm belief and trust in Almighty God, and a realization that under His beneficent guidance the free institutions of our land-consecrated by the services and blood of our Fathers-have been preserved, and the integrity and life of the nation maintained.

Section 2. True allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, based upon a respect for and devotion and fidelity to its Constitution and Laws, manifested by the discountenancing of anything that may tend to weaken Loyalty, incite to Insurrection, Treason or Rebellion, or in any manner impair the efficiency and permanency of our National Union.

Objects.

Section 1. To keep green the memories of our Fathers, and their sacrifices for the maintenance of the Union.

Section 2. To aid the members of the Grand Army of the Republic in the caring for their helpless and disabled Veterans; to extend aid and protection to their widows and orphans; to perpetuate the memory and history of their heroic dead, and the proper observance of Memorial Day.

Section 3. To aid and assist worthy and needy members of our Order.

Section 4. To inculcate patriotism and love of country, not only among our membership, but among all the people of our land, and to spread and sustain the doctrine of equal rights, universal liberty, and justice to all.

Membership.

First Class.-The sons, not less than eighteen years of age, of deceased or honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, or marines, who served in the Union Army or Navy during the Civil War of 1861-5, shall be eligible to membership in the First Class; also, upon attaining the prescribed age, the eldest lineal male descendants of deceased members of the First Class, and if there are no descendants, male or female, then the male heirs of such deceased members in the collateral branches of their families in the order of genealogical succession according to the rules of descent.

Second Class.-The eldest sons of living members of the First Class, not less than eighteen years of age, shall be eligible to membership in the Second Class, and upon the death of a member of the First Class, through whom eligibility is derived, a member of the Second Class shall become a member of the First Class.

Third Class.-The eldest sons of living members of the Second Class, not less than eighteen years of age, shall be eligible to membership in the Third Class, and upon the death or advancement to the First Class, of a member of the Second Class, through whom eligibility is derived, a member of the Third Class shall become a member of the Second Class.

Organization.

The several Constituted Bodies of the Association shall be as follows:

First-Of subordinate organizations, known as Camps; each Camp to have an appropriate name and number, providing, however, that no two Camps in the same Division shall be allowed to use the same name and number.

Second-Of State organizations, known as Divisions; providing, however, that the State of Pennsylvania shall be divided into Eastern and Western Divisions, in accordance with an agreement concluded between representatives of each Division; and that all that portion of the State east of the Huntington, and Fulton, shall comprise the Eastern Division; and all that part of the State west of the western boundaries of Tioga, Lycoming, Union, Mifflin, Juniata, and Franklin, shall comprise the Western Division; and that the established boundary-lines shall not hereafter be altered or changed except at the request of the two Divisions, made in due form to the Commandery-in-chief.

Third-Of five Grand Divisions as the same are hereinafter defined and bounded. Fourth-Of the Commandery-in-chief.

Grand Divisions-Construction.-The different Grand Divisions shall be made up and continued as follows; The first will be composed of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. The second, of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia. The third, of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico. The fifth, of North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Indian Territory and Texas.

Commandery-in-chief-Powers and Authority.-The Commandery-in-chief shall be the supreme source of power for the Sons of Veterans, and under its complete and concentrated authority shall make all needful rules and regulations to insure a uniform system in all things, and the permanency and continued success of the Order throughout the whole country. To this end, no form of government, either general or local, shall be considered as legally established until the same has been submitted to and duly approved by the Commandery, at a stated yearly meeting of the same. The Commandery shall, through its proper officers, from time to time publish all necessary orders, and give all detailed instructions necessary to maintain uniformity, and for the information and guidance of all concerned, and shall make it its especial duty to see that in all the different branches of the Order the same are faithfully and fully complied with.

Religion and politics.

The Order being strictly non-sectarian and non-political, the introduction or discussion of sectarian or political topics is strictly prohibited, under penalty of a fine, suspension, or expulsion for the Order.

It shall be the special duty of the Commandery-in-chief to see that the Order fully maintains for all coming time, and in all respects, its claims of being a strictly non-sectarian and non-political association.

Applications for Office.

No officer or past officer of the Order shall, under any circumstances, affix his official signature to any recommendation or application for a political position or of a political character.

Relief Funds.

A Relief Fund for the assistance of needy soldiers, sailors and marines, and the widows and orphans of deceased soldiers, sailors and marines, shall be established by each Camp, and any donations to this fund shall be held sacred for such purposes.

Coat-of-arms.

The following instructions for painting the coat-of –arms of the Order shall be strictly adhered to:

Shield-The field is white; two sabers crossed, points up, in proper colors, ensigned by a wreath of laurels, green; on a chief azure (heraldic blue cobalt); the rising sun, gold; in the disk the monogram S.V. in vermilion; on the white field. Arrange thirteen stars of five points, as in the cut, in vermilion.

Supporters-On the right, a soldier in fatigue uniform (without arms) of 1861-5, viz.: dark-blue blouse, light-blue pants, Zouave cap, cross and waist belts of brown leather. On the buckle the letters U.S. On the left a sailor-navy-blue shirt and pants, black silk necktie and regulation-cap.

Crest-An eagle (American) on rocks in proper colors.

The scroll containing the mottoes are white, shaded at the ends with crimson lake; letters black; the ornaments bordering the shield, and under the same, of gold; the flags, naval and military, with cannon and muskets, all in their proper places and colors.

Seals.

The seals of the Commandery-in-chief, the several Grand Divisions and Divisions, of the Order, shall consist of the full coat-of-arms of the Order, surrounded, for the Commandery, with the words:-Grand division Sons of Veterans, United States of America; and for the several Divisions of the Order with the words:-Division Sons of Veterans, United States of America.

The Camp seals shall consist of the crest of the coat-of-arms, surrounded by thirteen stars, and under the roll shall appear, in Roman numerals, the year of the organization of the Order (to wit, 1881). The whole shall be surrounded with the words: Camp No.____ Sons of Veterans- and the location, town, or city and State, shall be added to the same.

Official Motto, Etc. - The Latin motto, "*Gratia Dei Servatus,*" which appears on the Coat-of-arms of the Order, its Bronze Medal, etc.

reads, when translated into English, "*Preserved by the special favor of God.*"

The sentiment is so entirely appropriate, and it meets the requirements of the case so fully, that it was most cordially received from the start.

On the bar of the Medal or Badge of general membership in the Order, and above the eagle on the crest of the Coat-of-arms, appears in a scroll the Latin phrase, "*Filii Veteranorum,*" which is also expressed under the term, "*Son of a Veteran.*"

The Badge is constructed of fine bronze metal, and is pendent for the bronze bar by a tri-colored ribbon of red, white, and blue.

The coat-of-arms, including mottoes, and all of the foregoing, as well as the iron cross, buttonhole-decoration, and other decorative honors, and various ribbons of the Order, are all from suggestions and designs prepared by Comrade Davis, and the same were, after elaboration by Messrs. Bailey, Banks and Biddle, of Philadelphia, Pa., in due form legally adopted. They are all neat, compact in proportions and outline, and, in general appearance, are specially attractive and suitable to the want of the Order.

Camp Ceremonies.-The camp ceremonies are all simple and beautiful in form, as well as highly expressive and appropriate in their nature.

The hour of meeting having arrived, the commanding officer assumes his seat, the Camp bugler sounds the usual call, the drummer beats an appropriate air, and the officers and members take their respective stations. The commanding officer then satisfies himself that all present are entitled to remain. This being accomplished, the established opening prayer is rendered by the Chaplain, and the following hymn is sung:

God bless our native land!
Firm may she ever stand,
Through storm and night.
When the wild tempests rave,
Ruler of wind and wave,
Do thou our country save
By thy great might!

Drums.-The drums then softly roll, and the commanding officer in due form declares the Camp open for the transaction of such business as may legally and properly come before it.

The regular order of business is then proceeded with. This having been gone through with, and the commanding officer having previously ascertained that no Brother has anything more to offer for the good of the Order, states that, "there being no further business to come before the Camp, we will proceed to close." The Chaplain then asks the blessings of God on the deliberations of the evening, the Doxology is sung, and the drums softly roll. The Commanding Officer then closes the Camp in due form, and the officers and members retire to their respective homes. The muster of recruits, the installation of officers, and other Camp ceremonies, are each and all marked by original and highly interesting features.

The reader will now have, in a general way, a very clear view of the Order, as it now exists. From all of the foregoing it must not be gathered that the course of the organization has been wholly one that has not been beset by obstacles, for such has not been the case. As the Order spread out from its central point, it soon developed and met with opposing elements and influences, who were both anxious and determined that their peculiar views and wishes should prevail. Fortunately, by prudent and judicious treatment and management, these and many other minor obstacles and difficulties have been most happily overcome, and harmony and unity of action to all practical intents is now substantially secured.

It has been suggested that we outline and picture the future of the Order. In approaching this subject, we do so with some hesitation. In all events of more than ordinary importance, and especially in those of the character in hand, it is difficult to look far ahead, and to define what time will bring forth. Various hopes have been indulged in, and various opinions have been expressed.

From one standard authority we quote as follows:

"Major A.P. Davis has builded wiser than he knew. The Sons of Veterans is destined to become the great military organization of this country, while at the same time its devotees, the American youth, will be permeated with that love of our country, that glory in its supremacy,

that thrilling of the senses when its National hymns are sung, that none others not thus reared can know or feel. Through this organization the declining days of the Union veteran will be made pleasant, his record of service to his country preserved, his memory honored, patriotism promoted, while if the dire necessity of the Nation should demand, the Sons of Veterans, uniformed, drilled, and equipped, would come at once to her defense with the glory of their fathers surrounding them, each heart pulsating in unison with the rising and falling of the Nation's emblem; and who would be powerful to prevail against such a host!"

It may be that such will be the case, and that the Sons of Veterans will become the great military organization of the country. It may be that the dire necessity may arise in which they would feel obliged as an organization, and not as individuals, to resort to arms; and still such a conclusion was never reached in the minds of those who are entitled to so much respect and credit for their exertions to establish the Order on a firm, durable basis.

Not as a military organization, but as the great civil *military* society of the country, it is to be hoped, and it is believed, that the Sons of Veterans will long exist, possibly while the life of the nation lasts.

As such, and as a peaceful, unarmed association, they can work no harm, and can accomplish much for the common good.

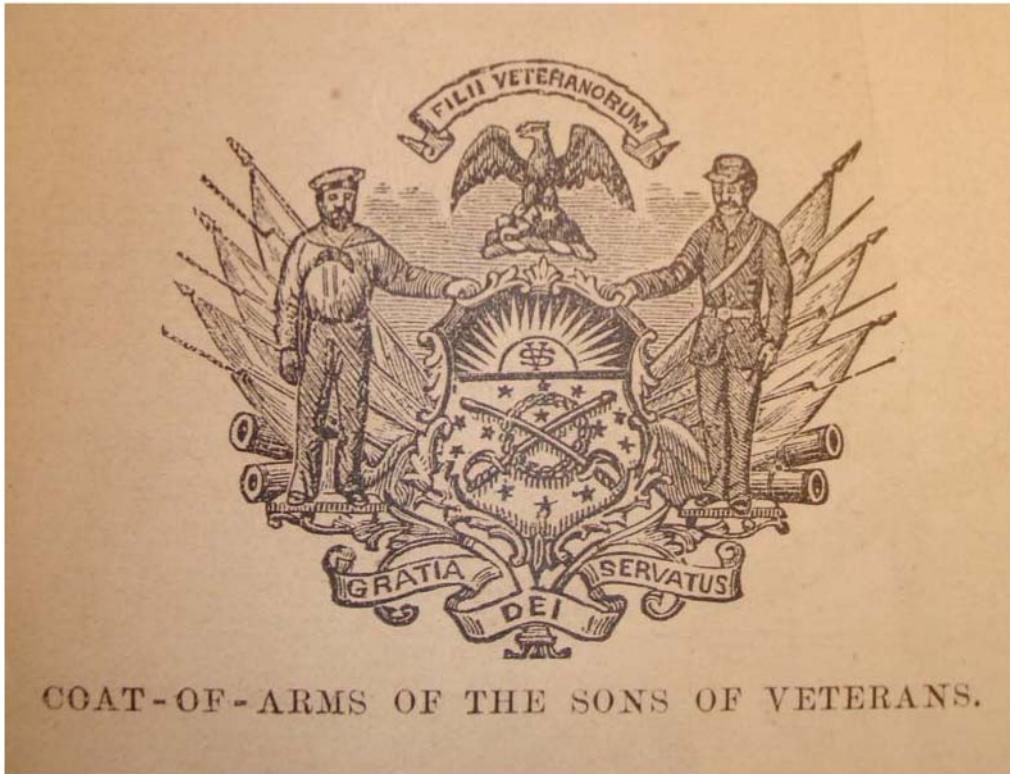
It is not impossible that, in the dim future, and as the wheel of time turns around, there will, in a section of the country or another, be found those who, to suit the wishes of a faction or locality, or to advance their own personal ends, will attempt to ignore the legal authorities under which we live, and destroy our national compact.

In the event that such an unfortunate conclusion should be reached, may we not hope and believe the Sons of Veterans will, as a great non-political and non-sectarian moral power and force, leavening and quickening the whole, rise up in their union and strength, and proclaiming a halt, say: *"Stop! No, you may do as you will. You may legislate as you can, but if you do aught toward blotting out from among the nations of the earth the Union our fathers risked life and limb to save, we will rally to its support, and save it from the Vandal hands of all who are raised against it and seek its destruction."*

Whatever may come in the future, the present is all bright and clear, and we are a happy, united people.

With their principles and objects constantly before them, the Sons of Veterans, with gathering numbers, will move forward and onward, performing with prudence and consideration the obligations which devolve upon them, and fulfilling the mission which the Ruler of all things has in His forethought and wisdom marked out for them.

Note:-The foregoing article traces the history of the Sons of veterans from their birth up to about January 1st, 1884. Since then steady and, especially of late, rapid progress has been made, and at the present date (July 1st, 1884) the Order has a membership in good standing of over 21,000. The First Grand Division was permanently organized by Comrade Bangs, of Maine, December 27th, 1883, at Manchester, N.H., and Frank H. Challis, of that city, was duly elected Commander. Comrade Ross, of Maryland, will permanently organize the Second Grand Division at Philadelphia, Pa., August 26th, and at that date he will retire as Provisional Commander. The Third Grand Division will be permanently organized by Commander Maskell at Chicago, Ill., July 8th, and a Son of a Veteran will then be elected to assume command. It is proposed to establish permanent organizations in the near future in the Fourth and fifth Grand Divisions, and action looking in this direction will be taken at the next meeting of the Commandery-in-chief, which is to be held in Philadelphia, Pa., August 27th. The Order is now, to all practical intents and purposes in the hands of the young men who make up its membership, and at no period in its existence have the prospects been more bright and flattering.



COAT-OF-ARMS OF THE SONS OF VETERANS.



The Iron Cross



A.P. Davis



Frank Merrill



The Gold Cross

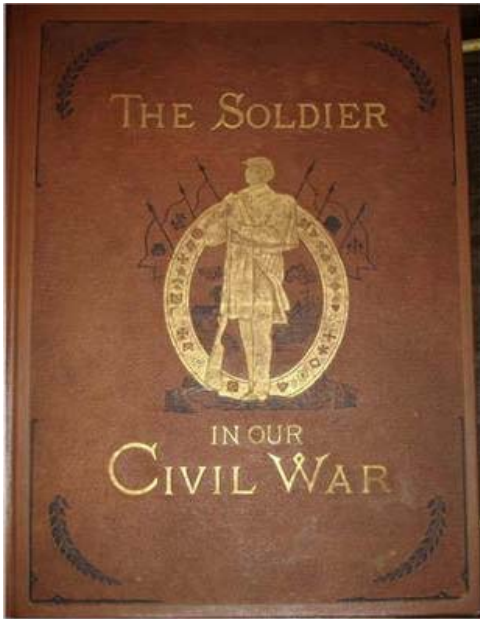


Badge of the Sons

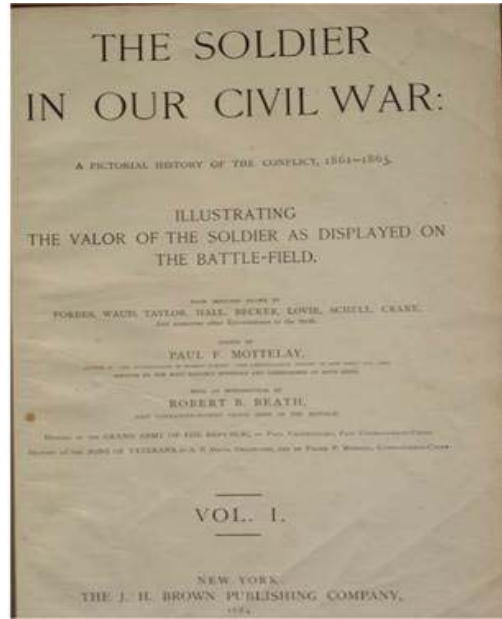


The Gold Star of Veterans

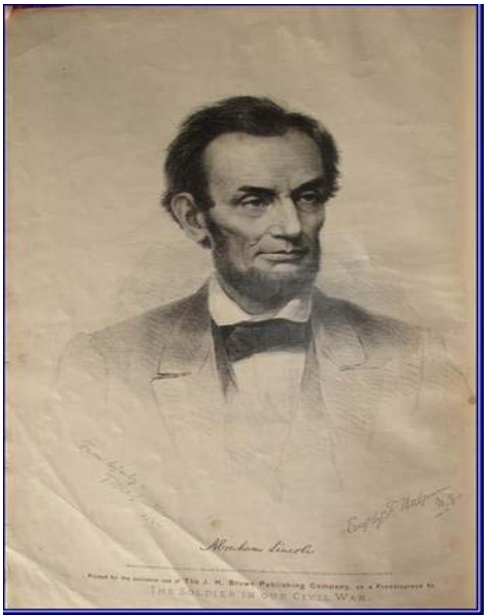
The Iron Cross is the highest decorative honor known in the Order, and the only persons entitled to wear it are the Past Commanders of its several branches, who have, by faithful service, as is duly defined, entitled themselves to the distinction. Each branch is designated by its peculiar ribbon attached to the Decoration. The Gold Cross and Gold Star are more intended as presentation decorations to be bestowed upon certain officers who may, *“by special adherence and devotion to the principles and objects of the Order, the exercise of particular discretion and vigilance in the discharge of their duties, coupled with long and faithful service in the Order, merit some special reward.”* The whole matter of wearing any and all of the decorative honors named is under a carefully arranged system in the hands of the proper legislative bodies of the Order, who pass upon and decide each individual case as it is duly presented to them.



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