

Burial/Memorial Introduction

In 1866, Union Veterans of the Civil War organized into the *Grand Army of the Republic* (GAR) and became a social and political force that would control the destiny of the nation for more than six decades. Membership in the veterans' organization was restricted to individuals who had served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Revenue Cutter Service during the Civil War, thereby limiting the life span of the GAR. The GAR existed until 1956.

In 1881, the GAR formed the *Sons of Veterans of the United States of America* (SV) to carry on its traditions and memory long after the GAR had ceased to exist. Membership was open to any man who could prove ancestry to a member of the GAR or to a veteran eligible for membership in the GAR.

In 1925, the SV name was changed to *Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War* (SUVCW), under which its Congressional charter was issued in 1954. Currently, the SUVCW is legally recognized as the heir to, and representative of, the GAR.

Today, the SUVCW operates in 26 Departments, each consisting of one or more states, a Department-at-Large, a National Membership-at-Large, and over 200 community based Camps. The SUVCW currently has over 6,500 members. Among other programs, the SUVCW helps to maintain Civil War monuments, replace Civil War Veteran headstones, and track down, record, and then maintain GAR records.

The service that you are about to witness is the SUVCW Burial/Memorial Ceremony. It is a brief, dignified ceremony that has its geneses from a 1913 Grand Army of the Republic Burial ceremony. Around the center memorial to Jim are four Camp cannon stations from the Grand Army of the Republic Hall in Sunfield. Each station has a banner in front of it. At the front most station stands the Camp Commander designated by the American flag. To either side and behind the Camp Commander are the Camp Chaplain and Camp Color Bearer. Going clockwise to your right is the Camp Patriotic Instructor with a Red station banner with the word Patriotism, Camp Senior Vice Commander with a White station banner with the word Charity, and Camp Junior Vice Commander with a Blue station banner indicating Fraternity.

Standing behind the Patriotic Instructor are members of _____'s Camp and standing behind the Commander are the current and past Michigan Department Commanders and Past National Commanders-in-Chief who have come to pay tribute.

_____, Commander of the _____ Camp, will now begin the [Burial] memorial ceremony.