

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SUVCW**

Welcome to the Organizational Structure of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of veteran heroes who fought and worked to save the Union in the American Civil War. Organized in 1881 and chartered by Congress in 1954, SUVCW is the legal heir and successor to the Grand Army of the Republic.

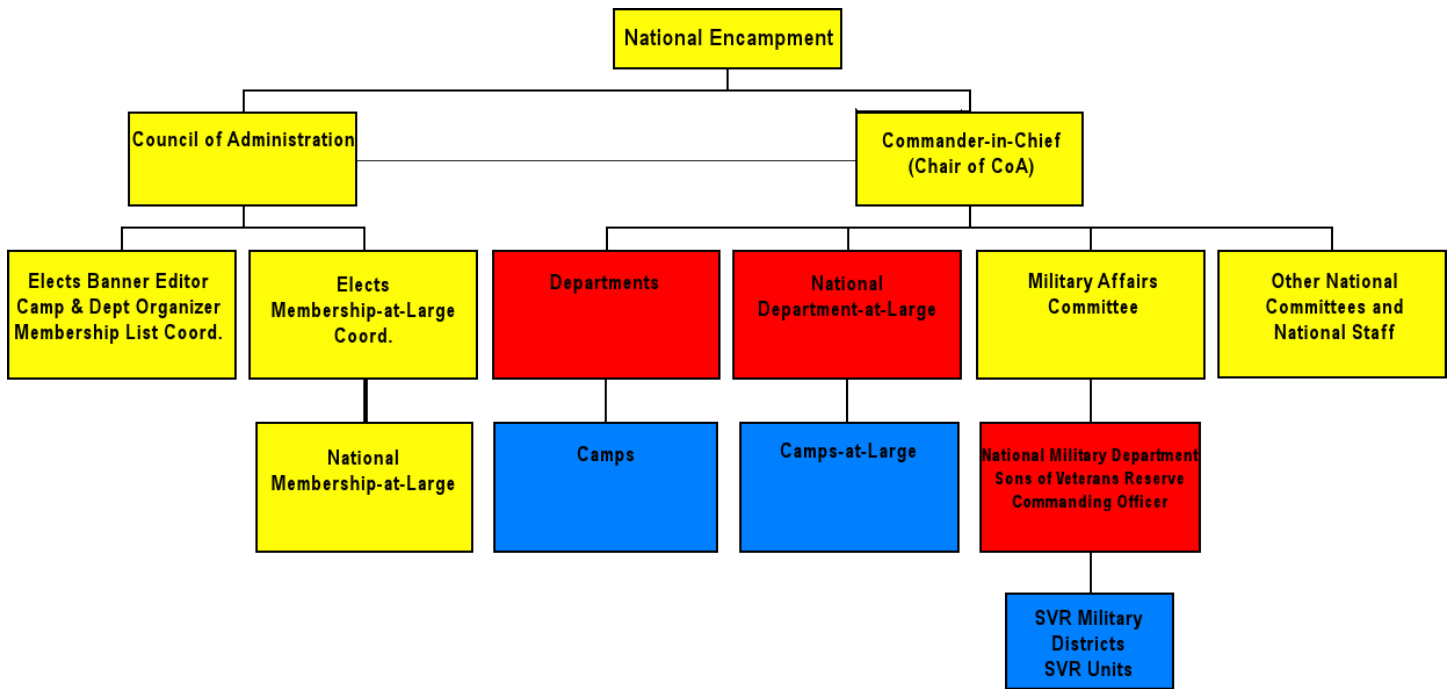
In 1866, Union Veterans of the Civil War organized into the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and became a social and political force that would control the destiny of the nation for more than six decades. Membership in the veterans' organization was restricted to individuals who had served in the Army, 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 later years, men who did not have the ancestry to qualify for hereditary membership, but who demonstrated a genuine interest in the Civil War and could subscribe to the purpose and objectives of the SUVCW, were admitted as Associates. This practice continues today.

Many GAR Posts sponsored Camps of the SV. In 1925 the SV name was changed to Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), under which its federal charter was issued in 1954. The SUVCW is legally recognized as the heir to, and representative of, the GAR.

Today, the National Organization of the SUVCW, headed by an annually elected Commander-in-Chief, oversees the operation of 26 Departments, each consisting of one or more states, a Department-at-Large, a National Membership-at-Large, and over 200 community based camps. More than 6,360 men enjoy the benefits of membership in the only male organization dedicated to the principles of the GAR — Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty. It publishes “The BANNER” quarterly for its members. The SUVCW National Headquarters is located in the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Structurally, the organization is centered on the camp and its support with the other layers of responsibility as outlined below:



## NATIONAL

The highest governing body of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is the National Encampment, chaired by an officer of the corporation, whose title is Commander-in-Chief. Officers and Departmental representatives convene annually at the National Encampment, usually in August, to conduct corporate business and to elect officers.

## DEPARTMENTS

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War has 29 state-level organizations, called Departments, representing 36 states and over 200 local chapters, which are called Camps, across the country. A National Membership-at-Large is also available for those who live in states that are not yet served by a local Camp.

## CAMPS

Local chapters of the Order are known as Camps. They are the backbone of the SUVCW. Some may be as small as to have only the constitutionally required minimum, others may be quite large. Most fall somewhere in between. New SUVCW camps may request the assignment of the name and number of a former Camp if it expects to serve the same general area as its predecessor. Otherwise, the Camp may choose any name that will relate the camp to the community it serves or to the Camp's proposed activities. General Headquarters will assign the Camp with a number.