



**Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War**

**Office of the Commander-in-Chief**

**Donald L. Martin**

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**General Order # 4**

**SERIES 2016-2017**

**5 Sep 2016**

I hereby, with a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority vote of the Council of Administration, issue General Order #4 (as per the Constitution and Regulations Article V, Section 2b) delaying the following actions of the 2016 National Encampment which:

1. established that the SUVCW will officially observe the weekend as that proscribed by the federal government as Memorial Day, in lieu of May 30<sup>th</sup>.
2. created the National Special Committee on Decoration Day.

This delay will be in effect until the assigned Memorial Committee files its report with the 2017 National Encampment.

This General Order is based on the following reasons both individually and combined. I am of the opinion that the preceding motions passed by the 2016 National Encampment are in violation of Chapter VI Article I of the National SUVCW Regulations individually and on several counts.

They are also in conflict with our charge as the heirs of the G.A.R., inasmuch as it violates several GAR Rules and Regulations. While the Opinions and Rulings of the Grand Army of the Republic are not binding on the SUVCW, but as we are to "remember the boys in blue", we strive to adhere to their edicts as much as possible. These ideals of the GAR are presented as a "history lesson" concerning the GAR's views and what they voted on.

I believe the motions passed strongly defeat the intent of the PCinC Mortorff's now rescinded General Order 20 in word and deed which seemed to merely wish to allow more flexibility in our Memorial Day Ceremonies.

**Violations of the SUVCW Constitution and Regulations are as follows:**

**Whereas:** The SUVCW Constitution and Regulations, Article XII, states concerning the Ritual: *"The Ritual of the Order is hereby made a part of the Regulations of the Order and all matters not inconsistent herewith."*

**Whereas:** The SUVCW Rituals and Ceremonials Initiation, Short Form, Chaplin section states:  
*“I, | pledge myself... | to always observe the day | set aside | by the Grand Army of the Republic | as Memorial Day, | sacred to the memory | of the Union Soldiers and Sailors | of 1861 to 1865 | and do all in my power | to persuade others | to do the same;*

**Whereas:** The SUVCW Rituals and Ceremonials Initiation (To be used for Juniors only) states.  
*“I, | pledge myself... | to always observe the day | set aside | by the Grand Army of the Republic | as Memorial Day, | sacred to the memory | of the Union Soldiers and Sailors | of 1861 to 1865 | and do all in my power | to persuade others | to do the same;*

**Whereas:** The SUVCW Rituals and Ceremonials Long Form Initiation Patriotic Instructor States:  
*“You should ..., properly observe all National holidays, and especially Memorial Day on the 30th of May. ...”*

**Whereas:** The SUVCW Rituals and Ceremonials Long Form Initiation, Chaplain States:  
*I... solemnly | pledge myself |... | to always observe the day | set aside | by the Grand Army of the Republic | as Memorial Day, | sacred to the memory | of the Union Soldiers and Sailors | of 1861 to 1865 | and to do all in my power | to persuade others | to do the same; ...“*

**Whereas:** The SUVCW Rituals and Ceremonials Long Form Initiation Camp Organizer states:  
*“I ... voluntarily and solemnly | pledge myself |... | to always observe the day | set aside | by the Grand Army of the Republic | as Memorial Day, | sacred to the memory | of the Union Soldiers and Sailors | of 1861 to 1865 | and do all in my power | to persuade others | to do the same;...”*

**Whereas:** The SUVCW Rituals and Ceremonials MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE MAY 30TH states:  
*It is obligatory upon every Camp to participate in Memorial Day ceremonies, either with other patriotic organizations, or as Camps, in memory of the honored dead of our country. Each member has a special obligation on and to Memorial Day. He shall use his influence in every possible manner for the proper and general observance of this day, that Memorial Day, instituted by the Grand Army of the Republic, shall ever be held sacred by the people of our country.”*

**Whereas:** The SUVCW Constitution and Regulations, Chapter VI, Article I, Repealing Clause and Amendments states:

*Section 2 (a). All proposed amendments to these Regulations must be submitted in writing or electronically to the Commander-in-Chief, Chairman of the Committee on Constitution and Regulations and the National Counselor and received by the aforementioned National Officers and Committee Chairman no later than thirty (30) days prior to the National Encampment at which they are to be considered. Any proposed amendments received less than thirty (30) days prior to a National Encampment cannot be considered until the next succeeding National Encampment.* The motion came from the floor of the 2016 National Encampment rather than in written form. The former C-in-C General published General Order cannot be considered as meeting this requirement as said General Order was rescinded by the Commander in Chief on the floor prior to the motion being made.

***Section 2 (b). Amendments originated by the Committee on Constitution and Regulations shall not be subject to subsection (A).***

The motion did not originate from the Committee on Constitution and Regulations at the 2016 National Encampment.

***Section 3. The Commander-in-Chief may waive the time constraint in Section 2, if a change in law or the Constitution requires the Regulations to be amended.***

The Commander-in-Chief did not waive the time constraint at the 2016 National Encampment.

***Section 4. The National Encampment may waive the time constraint in Section 2 by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and entitled to vote at the National Encampment.***

No such motion was made at the 2016 National Encampment.

***Section 5. The within and foregoing Regulations may be altered or amended at any regular National Encampment by a two-thirds vote of all Brothers present as reported on the roll of the Encampment.***

The motion to officially observe Memorial Day as that proscribed by the federal government, which is in direct conflict was not passed by a two-third majority but rather by a very slim simple majority at the 2016 National Encampment.

### **Grand Army of the Republic rulings on Memorial Day May 30**

**Whereas:** The Grand Army of the Republic Commander-in-Chief John A. Logan's General Order #11 States: ***"The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion ..."***

**Whereas:** At the National Encampment held in Washington, D.C., May 11, 1870, Chapter 5, Article 14, Memorial Day, in accordance with the recommendation of Commander-in-Chief Logan, was incorporated into the Grand Army of the Republic National Rules and Regulations. Chapter 5, Article 14 states: ***"The National Encampment hereby establishes a Memorial Day, to be observed by the members of the Grand Army of the Republic, on the thirtieth day of May, annually, in commemoration of the deeds of our fallen comrades."***

**Whereas:** The following resolution was adopted by the Grand Army of the Republic National Encampment at Baltimore, 1882: ***"Resolved, That the Commander-in-Chief be requested to issue a General Order calling the attention of the officers and members of the Grand Army of the Republic, and of the people at large, to the fact that the proper designation of May 30 is MEMORIAL DAY not Decoration Day and to request that it may be always so called."***

**Whereas:** The following resolution was adopted by the Grand Army of the Republic National Encampment in Providence, 1877: ***"Inasmuch as there have been some differences of opinion as to the intent and meaning of Memorial Day, this Encampment hereby calls attention to the language of Chapter 5, Article 14, of the Rules and Regulations, and therefore, Resolved, that the Grand Army of the Republic seeks thus to preserve the memory of those ONLY who fought in defense of the National Unity."***

It appears that the intent of the GAR was to make Memorial Day JUST a GAR Holiday. With the word ONLY in Italic it further supports that the GAR wanted May 30th as theirs.

**Whereas:** WWE, 1902 Blue Book for the GAR, Opinion #48 of WWD who was Adjutant General W.W. Douglas of Rhode Island who was elected to that position in 1871 and published opinions 3 through 73, dated April 17, 1873, page 49, indicates:

***Memorial Day - Observance of Memorial Day is obligatory. Private circumstances may excuse a comrade from the observance, but a Post that fails or refused should be subject to discipline.***

Ordered this 5th Day of September, 2016.

Donald L. Martin  
Commander-In-Chief  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



Attested:

**Jonathan Davis**  
Secretary, National Order,  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

***The distant rear of an army engaged in battle is not the best place from which to judge correctly what is going on in front. — Ulysses S. Grant***