

# Handbook of Instruction for the Civil War Memorials Officer



## Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

“To perpetuate the memory of the  
Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)  
and the men who saved the Union in 1861 to 1865”

This handbook was created and edited by  
Bruce B. Butgereit, PDC  
Department of Michigan Civil War Memorials Officer

Sources include:  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Ritual,  
National SUVCW website and other history-related sites

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## Introduction

At the dedication of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Grand Rapids, Michigan on September 17, 1885, Major Charles W. Watkins of the 10<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry spoke the following words –

*“...Most nations erect monuments to their great leaders; but today in this memorial we recognize no one above the other, and in ages hence, when every person here has been laid in his final resting place, the stranger within the city’s gates, or the prattling child, as they pass by, may ask, Whose monument is that? And the response will be – That monument is erected in honor of the soldiers of Kent County, whose valor made it possible for us to live today in this beautiful, peaceful and prosperous city, under the stars and stripes, fitting emblem of a Union of States and a Nation’s authority....”*

*...that so long as grass grows and water runs, the deeds of the soldiers will be kept fresh and green in the hearts of the people....”*

One can imagine that similar words were spoken at each of the countless dedication ceremonies for other Civil War Memorials that occurred across the United States.

As a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the words of Major Watkins and others are a challenge to each of us to ensure that we are fulfilling the duties of the Memorials Officer – locating and assessing the Memorials erected in honor of the Grand Army of the Republic and those that helped preserve the Union in 1861-1865 and when necessary, notifying local authorities of the need for restoration or preservation.

This handbook is not the definitive answer to every question but created to serve as a “help” in the duties of the Camp Civil War Memorials Officer.

As in all things, effort must be applied for its success. The content of this handbook should not be read as another demand on your time, but a guide to what can be done as a Memorials Officer of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.



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## **Chapter 1 – The Camp Memorials Officer**

### **A. Job Description:**

#### **Purpose -**

The purpose of the Camp level Civil War Memorials Officer is to coordinate the locating, physical examination of, and recording of all memorials dedicated to Union Civil War soldiers and sailors (outside the care of the National Military Parks, and the U. S. Departments of Defense, or Veterans' Affairs) within their respective geographic boundaries. This includes all sizes of monuments (with or without sculpture), those with Civil War era cannon and inert ammunition, memorial fountains, memorial buildings, memorial windows (stained glass), historical markers, and even small plaques.

#### **Activities -**

To prevent a duplication of effort on the part of a Camp's membership, the Camp Civil War Memorials Officer should: 1) coordinate the search for, physical examination of, photographing of, and recording of Civil War Memorials (as described above) located within the confines of the Camp's geographical boundaries; 2) maintain observation of care and upkeep for "local" Civil War Memorials - and bring any shortcomings to the attention of the property owners and community government where the memorial is located; 3) provide documentation of location and condition of Civil War Memorials (via SUVCW Form CWM 61) to the Department Civil War Memorials Officer.

### **B. Activities in the Camp**

#### **Finding the memorials in your area -**

Before the assessments and before Form CWM 61 can be completed, you must find the location of each Civil War

Memorial in your area.

For most communities, their Civil War memorial is in a prominent location however, there are often smaller memorial markers or tablets not quite as visible. There are of course times when a memorial is stumbled upon that had not been recorded somewhere or that had fallen from memory. Quite often, as a result of the work done by the Woman's Relief Corps, you may find bronze plaques of the Gettysburg Address inside local schools or in church buildings.

In most cases, unless your Camp has completed the search for and identified every memorial within your boundary, your task can be challenging and you are encouraged to partner with others in your quest.

### **Camaraderie -**

There isn't anything that says a Camp Civil War Memorials Officer (or Grave Registration Officer) must work alone. The principles of Loyalty and Fraternity can be reinforced by setting aside certain days when the Camp conducts a search or assessment tour of memorials in their geographic boundaries.

### **Partnering with the Camp Grave Registration Officer & Others**

Numerous memorials are located in community cemeteries and may have been identified by your Camp GRO. By partnering with that officer, your time spent searching may be minimized. Quite often, others are interested in this local history and so every effort should be made to reach out the local historical and genealogical society as well as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Campfire USA.

Be sure to include any other Allied Order when possible. It was our Sister Allied Orders who often erected these memorials to the Grand Army of the Republic.



## Conducting assessments using form CWM 61 –

Too often, a Camp seems to focus solely on the restoration of Civil War memorials, forgetting that the main purpose and activity of the Civil War Memorials Officer is simply to provide a record of existing memorials. (At the same time, if the opportunity exists wherein a restoration effort can be successfully completed, do not hesitate to get involved.)

Form CWM 61 is provided to assist you in providing as accurate an assessment of a memorial as possible.

Form CWM 61: [suvchw.org/ftp/memorial-fi.pdf](http://suvchw.org/ftp/memorial-fi.pdf)

**Note:** The form can be downloaded and saved to your home computer. It can then be sent to the Department Civil War Memorials Officer as an attachment to an email.

## Photos and Documentation –

The information included or recorded on Form 61 provides a detailed assessment of the material and condition of each memorial. To fully assess the monument, it will be important to also provide as much history of the memorial as possible.

### *The form should be accompanied by:*

1. As complete a history as possible. Begin your search at the local library. Ask the local historical society. Conduct an online search – you never know who may have done some work previously.

Include –

- A. Are there any newspaper accounts?
- B. Was a local resident responsible for obtaining the memorial or having it erected?
- C. How much did it cost and who raised the money?
- D. Who was in attendance?
- E. Have there been any changes to the memorial?

G. Was it ever restored?

2. **Quality, high-resolution photos of the entire memorial as well as close-ups of different sections (if the memorial includes such).**

**NOTE:** If possible, do not submit images printed from your home printer as the quality suffers as compared to digital images or digital scans from hardcopy photos.

When a Camp submits the Form CWM 61, please just send me an email of

### **Camp Records –**

As the Ritual states, you are obligated to forward any and all records, photos, and more to Camp Memorials Officer that may be appointed after you.

### **C. Working with the Department Memorials Officer**

*As mentioned in the Activities section of the Job Description of the Camp Memorials Officer, your greatest opportunity will be in sending completed Form CWM 61s to the Department Memorials Officer.*

### **Department Memorial Committees –**

The Department of Michigan has a Memorials committee made up of 1) the Department CWM officer, 2) three aides, and 3) each Camp CWM officer.

Meetings will be held to provide updates and support for the efforts across the Department.

### **Reports –**

There are no official reports required of the Camp Civil War Memorials Officer by the National Organization. Your

Department Civil War Memorials Officer may request an informal update from each Camp but the Form 61's you've submitted should be satisfactory.

**Any changes in appointment of a new Camp Memorials officer should be communicated to the Department Memorials officer.**

#### **D. Civil War Memorial Restoration Projects**

Time, weather, and other factors have provided a great number of opportunities for Camps (and fellow Allied Orders) when it comes to finding memorials that need restoration. Limited funds and a lack of public interest has been the prohibitive factor in why more memorials have not been restored, cleaned and/or preserved.

The fact that others do not seem to care should never stop us as members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. In fact, others apathy should inspire us to action – even if the task is daunting and may take years. When faced with the possible dissolution of the Union, our ancestors could have left the problem for politicians but instead chose to volunteer to do something about actions of the South.

#### **Assemble a Restoration Project Team –**

Most successful efforts in life are brought about by a group or partnership of like-minded individuals. If your Camp is interested in taking on a restoration project; you must first put together a small committee made up of fellow Brothers that will guide the project along. There will be countless hours of work put into the project before one dime is raised or anything done with the memorial.

## **Obtain an assessment and a quote from a professional conservator –**

Before this Restoration Committee can take their ideas and project to the public, you will need to obtain a physical assessment of the memorial and the cost to clean, refurbish or restore the memorial.

Seek a qualified professional who can provide you a list of references and photos from other projects. Be up front with them about your intentions and that nothing will be done to the memorial until all the proper permissions have been obtained and the necessary funds raised. You will probably have to seek a quote from a conservator who is willing to waive any fees to assess the memorial.

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* as these will be the standards applied by any historical commission.

## **Establish partnerships with local governments and other historically-minded organizations –**

Following receipt of the professional assessment and quote, the Restoration Committee should share their vision, ideas and goals with the local government or entity that “owns” the memorial. Part of this process will undoubtedly include going before a city, village or township board or historic preservation commission to gain permission to rehabilitate, restore, or preserve any memorial. Presentations should also be made to local historical or genealogical organizations for their support in the project.

While it may be impossible to implement or get buy-in from local governments and others, every SUCVW Restoration Committee should strive to maintain “ownership” or oversight of the project from start to finish. The additional committee members should be few in number so as to not assume guidance

of the project to such a degree that everything gets bogged down in meetings and discussions and the Sons of Union Veterans are seen as having minimal input.

Strive to be as bold as our ancestors were when called to action but most importantly, you are going to need these people and organizations to help support your fundraising efforts and so it is imperative you find ways to partner and work together.

In making your presentations, you may find that others have never heard of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. How committed you are to the project will help establish a faith or confidence in your Committee.

### **Have a quality/professional Look –**

Your presentation is everything in conducting a fundraiser. Nothing will cause a possible donor to become apprehensive if they believe their donation may not be spent wisely.

People and businesses are more likely to see a project that presents a quality or professional look when asking for support and donations. Getting the word out can take the form of handouts (brochures and flyers) and public displays. These displays should be well-designed and informative about who we are as Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, what we do and what the local Camp is doing, where it meets, etc. Pictures tell a story much better than text alone so be sure you've included some photos of the various events your Camp has done. Having informative brochures are important as the visitor can take it home with them to read further.

Be sure to choose a speaker who is knowledgeable about not only the project but the history of the memorial. It is an added benefit if they are comfortable in speaking to the public.

## **The media can be your friend –**

There is nothing like “free” advertising. Your Committee is encouraged to establish a relationship with the local media. Since most newspapers want to run stories that “sell,” you may have to convince them of the importance of your restoration project and that people enjoy reading about history. Don’t forget the smaller newspapers or the local television stations.

## **Grant Requests and form CWM 62 –**

Each Camp of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is eligible to submit a request for funds from the National organization through the Memorial Grant Application Process by submitting a completed Form CWM 62 to the Memorial Grant Committee.

**NOTE: The grant request cannot be considered until the completed Form CWM 61 has been submitted to the Department Memorials officer and reviewed by the National Civil War Memorials Officer.**

A Camp or Department may request up to \$1,000.  
Form CWM 62: [suvchw.org/ftp/memgrant-fi.pdf](http://suvchw.org/ftp/memgrant-fi.pdf)

**“Together...we CAN do it!”** is a service-learning project that has been a proven success in the classroom.

The program, “Together...we CAN do it!” is simple in concept, accepted by teachers, and not only an excellent way of teaching our students about local Civil War history, but a way to raise funds to restore and preserve our memorials as well.

How the program works:

1. The program can be given to a class or entire school and takes about 1 hour.

2. The main topic could be on the soldier in the Civil War, the ladies back home (most of us know a willing assistant with period clothing), or both.
3. After sharing the living history portion for about 45 minutes, the presentation should then focus on the Civil War memorial your Camp is looking to restore – pictures of both past and present are a big help (many students will not know of what you are talking about until they see it) as well as some local history to bring the memorial to life.
4. Share with the students the costs involved and why it is important to restore the memorial
5. In conclusion, extend to them the opportunity to not only study history, but to preserve it as well. Over the next week, they bring in a can of food with a paper bill of any denomination wrapped around it. After picking up the collection, you deliver the food to a local food bank in the name of the school and you deposit the money into the fundraising account and the school gets the credit.
6. Why this is a success – students learn about history, the teachers are getting outside support, the students are learning to give something back to the community and help those less fortunate, and when the project is complete, they will have the pride in knowing they not only learned about history; they helped save it.

Other methods of getting students involved include having a “penny war,” or a “rock-a-thon” following a living history presentation or assembly. Be creative.

### **A Rededication Ceremony –**

Nothing is more rewarding than to stand in front of a restored memorial and to conduct a rededication ceremony. Nothing is more impressive to a community when you can conduct a ceremony that mirrors the original and uses a ceremony once conducted by the Grand Army of the Republic.

A rededication ceremony template:

[suvchw.org/education/docs/MemorialDedicationService.pdf](http://suvchw.org/education/docs/MemorialDedicationService.pdf)

### **Perpetual care –**

Another way to impress upon the community that you are an organization committed to perpetuating the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic and those that helped preserve the Union 1861-1865 is the willingness of the Camp to help maintain the grounds around a memorial or the memorial itself after the project is complete. Remember, everything is about lasting partnerships.

Continued involvement in maintaining the memorial also helps in keeping assessments on the condition up-to-date.



## **Chapter 2 – The Department Memorials Officer**

### **A. Job Description:**

#### **Purpose –**

The purpose of the Department level Civil War Memorials Officer is to coordinate the 1) locating, 2) physical examination of, and 3) recording of all memorials dedicated to Union Civil War soldiers and sailors (outside the care of the National Military Parks, and the U. S. Departments of Defense, or Veterans' Affairs) within their respective geographic boundaries. This includes all sizes of monuments (with or without sculpture), those with Civil War era cannon and inert ammunition, memorial fountains, memorial buildings, memorial windows (stained glass), historical markers, and even small plaques.

#### **Activities –**

Department Civil War Memorials Officer - To prevent a duplication of effort on the part of Camps within his Department, a Department Civil War Memorials Officer should coordinate a mutually agreeable Camp assignment of Counties within the state(s) represented by his Department. He then should provide guidance to each Camp for the execution of activities described in points 1 through 3, above. It is encouraged that the Department Civil War Memorials Officer be able to maintain a computer database from the information submitted by each Camp, on the SUV CW "Civil War Memorial Assessment Form" (CWM 61). Electronic cataloging and retrieval of Civil War Memorial photo-images is also encouraged. The Department Civil War Memorials Officer will also forward this information to his Department's liaison on the National Civil War Memorials Committee.

## B. Activities in the Department

### Communicating with the Camp Memorials Officers –

“The men must see us today.”



As leaders, we must model the way or demonstrate that we are committed to the success of not only our own projects, but of the projects of those serving under us.

During the height of action at Gettysburg, **Major James Cromwell** of the 124<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry stated, “The men must see us today,” when a captain questioned why Cromell, Col. A. Van Horne Ellis and other officers were on their horses during the battle near Devil’s Den. Major Cromwell knew that the men would be inspired to perform great deeds if they knew their officers were willing to stand with them. The 124<sup>th</sup> did indeed stand firm that day against forces at times three times their number. As a Department officer, you too will face great challenges – no communication, few Form 61’s, and more but you cannot use that as an excuse – you must be seen and heard.

As with most things within the SUVCW, the majority of the work is done at the Camp level. As the Department Memorials Officer, your role is to encourage action and to support the efforts of the Camp Memorials Officer. This should be done using email or the Department newsletter.

### Conduct periodic meetings of the Department Memorials Committee –

By having periodic meetings of the Department Memorials Committee, you make yourself available to answer questions or to provide praise for those who are doing the work of the Order. Nothing motivates like hearing about the successes of others or knowing a leader or officer cares.

As the Department Memorials Officer, you might encourage Camps within a geographic area of the state to conduct similar meetings among the Camp Memorials Officers.

### **Collecting form CWM 61 assessments-**

The purpose of collecting the data on Civil War memorials is to ultimately make it available to the public as part of our challenge to “keep green the memory.” The tool used to collect that data is the CWM Form 61 and is something that Camps should be sending to you at the Department level.

As encouraged in your job description, this data should be compiled into a database and possibly placed online in a searchable format.

After the data is entered into the Department database, the forms should be sent to the National Civil War Memorials Officer.

### **Making the data available to the public via the Internet -**

The Purpose and Objects of the SUVCW includes:

To perpetuate the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic and of the men who saved the Union 1861 to 1865; to assist in every practicable way in the preservation and making available for research of documents and records pertaining to the Grand Army of the Republic and its members...

As the Department Memorials Officer, you should coordinate with the Department Signals Officer to place online at minimum a photo of each memorial and the location (city and county). If more data has been collected, that should be posted as well.

**Please note** - To post memorial photos and locations online without submitting a Form 61 is doing only half of the duties assigned you as the Department Memorials Officer. Likewise, to collect Form 61's without posting the data online, is also only doing half the duties you are tasked with.

### **Supporting restoration efforts of the Camps -**

You are highly encouraged to visit with Camps undertaking a restoration project so that you can answer any questions or just to provide support. You can further inspire others by talking up the efforts of these Camps. Attending Camp meetings are a plus and attending planned restoration efforts and rededications can go a long way to encouraging more participation.

### **Provide an annual report at the Department Encampment -**

You should provide a report of the work accomplished by the Camps over the course of the year. If the report is a little light on substance, then possibly this handbook can provide ways to improve upon that. Your report should reflect your involvement and activities to support the Camp Memorials Officer. The report should include an updated copy of your Department Memorials database.

Again, praise and recognition goes a long way to inspire action in others.

### **Department Records -**

As the Ritual states, you are obligated to forward any and all records, photos, and more to the Department Memorials Officer that may be appointed after you.

## **C. Working with the National Memorials Officer**

### **Reports –**

There are no official reports required of the Department Civil War Memorials Officer by the National Organization. Your National Civil War Memorials Officer may request an informal update from each Department but the Form 61's you've submitted should be satisfactory.

**Any changes in appointment of a new Department Memorials officer should be communicated to the National Memorials officer.**

## Chapter 4 - A Poem

### A MONUMENT FOR THE SOLDIERS

A monument for the Soldiers!  
And what will ye build it of?  
Can ye build it of marble, or brass, or bronze,  
Outlasting the Soldiers' love?  
Can ye glorify it with legends  
As grand as their blood hath writ  
From the inmost shrine of this land of thine  
To the outermost verge of it?

And the answer came: We would build it  
Out of our hopes made sure,  
And out of our purest prayers and tears,  
And out of our faith secure:  
We would build it out of the great white truths  
Their death hath sanctified,  
And the sculptured forms of the men in arms,  
And their faces ere they died.

And what heroic figures  
Can the sculptor carve in stone?  
Can the marble breast be made to bleed,  
And the marble lips to moan?  
Can the marble brow be fevered?  
And the marble eyes be graved  
To look their last, as the flag floats past,  
On the country they have saved?

And the answer came: The figures  
Shall all be fair and brave,  
And, as befitting, as pure and white  
As the stars above their grave!  
The marble lips, and breast and brow  
Whereon the laurel lies,  
Bequeath us right to guard the flight

Of the old flag in the skies!

A monument for the Soldiers!  
Built of a people's love,  
And blazoned and decked and panoplied  
With the hearts ye build it of  
And see that ye build it stately,  
In pillar and niche and gate,  
And high in pose as the souls of those  
It would commemorate!

- **James Whitcomb Riley**

This poem (written about 1887) became the rallying cry to build the Soldiers and Sailors Monument now located on the Circle in downtown Indianapolis, IN.