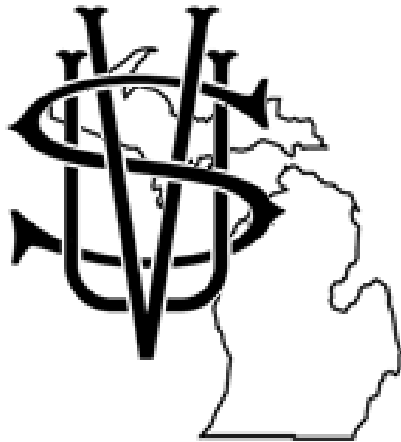


**DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN
SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR**

5-Year Strategic Direction Plan



Submitted by:

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I. Executive Summary

During the 133rd Department of Michigan Encampment held on 06 May 2017, a recommendation was made by the Department Chief of Staff and approved by the Encampment to review the 2006 Strategic Direction document and to update the Strategic Direction Plan for the Department. Upon review, it was decided that the new Strategic Direction Plan should be for 5 years in terms of membership growth and new Camps. It is expected that this Strategic Direction Plan should be reviewed annually to analyze if the Department is approaching the major goals that have been laid out herein, as well as evaluation of the Key Performance Indicators as outlined to determine the overall health of the Department of Michigan and the Camps under its auspices.

It is targeted that the Department reach 3% growth in membership year over year. It is also desired that three new Camps are formed by the end of 2023.

The major goals within this Plan focus on long-term growth, member education, and community outreach. These three areas are critical for the Department and its Camps to move forward and for long-term and sustainable growth. A base foundation must be created through these three focuses. To build from the base, it cannot be stated enough: community outreach, community outreach, community outreach.

Community outreach comes in many ways, and ultimately drives long-term growth. For instance increasing public awareness of the SUVCW, and educating new generations about the Grand Army of the Republic through historical & patriotic talks and programs – to civic and other organizations, schools, etc. Partnering with various entities such as: local communities, Boy Scouts, Veterans organizations, historical and genealogical societies provide more opportunities for public awareness, long lasting collaborations, and potential new members present and more importantly into the future. This builds a solid base foundation to ensure the Order's future.

There are many risks to our Order in the year 2018 that are faced by any number of organizations. Like those other organizations, the Department shares the burden of an increasing average age, and a dwindling total membership. This fact is due in large part to changes in society that do not place a high value on joining organizations, and competing priorities such as growing families, highly stressful jobs, etc. While these items are difficult to surmount, steps such as greatly improving community outreach (including achieving greater public awareness) and providing real value to current members (retention) and prospective members (recruiting) is of the utmost importance.

Another area of utmost importance is the education and mentorship of the Department's membership. This is crucial in the cultivation of new Officers to step up and take leadership positions at the Camp and Department levels. Current and past Officers and long-time members of the Order are indispensable in mentoring future leadership and developing productive and knowledgeable Brothers. More formal education is available through the SUVCW Memorial University. It is highly recommended that current and future leadership complete Memorial University to better acquaint themselves with the rules and regulations of the Order. It is preferred that at least one Brother per Camp have completed Memorial University, as well as a target of 10 – 15 Memorial University graduates across the Department annually.

To accomplish the goals and initiatives set forth in this document, as well as continue to perpetuate the history and legacy of Union Veterans and the Grand Army of the Republic, it will take each and every Brother to ensure that we not only survive, but thrive.

II. Brief Description of the SUVCW

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.

In 1881 the Grand Army of the Republic (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.

III. Mission Statement

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. The Department of Michigan and its Camps serve on the state and local levels to carry out honoring and preservation of said history and legacy of Union Veteran heroes through various means including fellowship, education, and projects.

IV. SWOT Analysis

Strengths
An existing membership passionate and knowledgeable about the GAR and the Civil War
Extensive leadership and guidance available from PCCs, PDCs, and PCinCs throughout Department
Many experienced leaders from the Department, National, and Camp levels throughout the Department
Significant number of Camps throughout southern Michigan
Department Treasury is in good health
Brothers of the Department active and engaged on the National level
Weaknesses
Increasing average age of membership – an aging population within the Order
Decreasing membership in various Camps and the Department as a whole
Public awareness
Low number of Camps in northern Michigan – creates very large Camp geographical areas
Lower knowledge of the C&R, Department Bylaws, etc. by the general membership
Opportunities
Partnering with other historical, genealogical, and Veteran groups, etc. to educate others on the SUVCW and the GAR
Increased public exposure through marketing efforts for grave & monument dedications/rededications
Use of social media to highlight activities, and for various outreach
Programs, essay contests, poster contests, etc. at local schools
Increase relationships with public officials such as mayors, clerks, sextons, managers, etc.
Become acquainted with the main staff of local media – television, radio, newspapers, regional magazines, etc.

Threats
Competing priorities – young families, other organizations, school activities, recreation, work, etc.
Electronic devices – smartphones, tablets, gaming systems, etc.
Social media – heavy participation competes for available free time
Lack of or receding emphasis on historical education
Perception that organizations create “unpaid work” for the individual

V. Long-Term Major Goals

- Achieve 3% growth in membership year over year
- Formation of 3 new Camps, while maintaining the current Camps across the Department
- Annually provide financial support via grants to Camps with worthy projects
- Increase engagement with other Veterans organizations
- Expand cooperation and capitalize on shared objectives with other genealogical and historical organizations
- Improve outreach to local schools and the public
- Encourage participation of all elected Department Officers and the Department Counselor to become graduates of Memorial University
- Mentorship by experienced Brothers at the Camp and Department levels

VI. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The following KPIs should be tracked to determine annual performance of the Department through the various statistics that are readily available. These KPIs serve as a measure to determine whether Camps are growing, engaging with other organizations and their local communities, SUVCW member education efforts, as well as if new Camps are being formed.

Membership KPIs
Annual Membership Numbers per Department Annual Report, Form 35
Annual Membership Numbers per Camp Annual Report, Form 27
Camp KPIs
Annual Camps in Good Standing Numbers per Department Annual report, Form 35
Documents for Forming a Camp, Form 51, Form 52, Form 54, Form 55
Treasury KPIs
Balance on Hand per Department Annual Report, Form 35
Department Operating Budget Performance and Financial Statements
Member Activity Engagement KPIs
Department Patriotic Instructor Annual Report, Form 41
Camp Patriotic Instructor Annual Reports, Form 40
Member Education KPIs
Memorial University Graduates

VII. Wants and Needs of Target Customers (New Members)

Desire to belong to something larger than themselves
Establishing a bigger connection to their ancestors
Shared patriotism and love of country
Fraternity and camaraderie
Civil War historical interests and education
Ceremonies, grave registration and memorial work

VIII. Balanced Scorecard

Strategic Priorities		Strategic Objectives	Performance Measures	Targets	Initiatives
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a healthy Department Treasury Charity to Camp projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase per capita income through new/increased membership Provide aid to Camp's in need of assistance with projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treasury balance Camp project grant applications Camp project grants awarded & total funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – 3% annual net increase in Department Treasury operating balance Annual grant totals are determined based on needs, and reasonable limits to the Dept. Treasury balance (Dept. Council). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Committee formed to develop grant process Grant application created Camps educated on grant process & availability Membership increases through better public awareness for SUVCW and recruitment & retention efforts
Public (Customer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve outreach to schools Improve outreach to the public Build relationships with organizations with shared objectives Increase engagement with Veterans organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased marketing & exposure for SUVCW in Michigan Shared efforts & partnerships with other organizations Expand Civil War & patriotic education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of SUVCW projects, etc. in the media Increased membership Increased partnerships and working relationships with other organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary reporting from Camps on their engagement with schools, Veteran organizations, and other like-minded groups New partnerships with other organizations Increased media articles and stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give presentations to schools, organizations, etc. Hold essay and/or poster competitions with area schools Attend various organizations' meetings Seek opportunities that are shared goals with organizations
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the Department Reinforce Camps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form new Camps Maintain current existing Camps Increase membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Camps formed Total Camps in Department Camp & Dept. Membership annual totals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 new Camps formed by 2023 25 Camps total by 2023 (including the Camp-at-Large) Achieve 3% membership growth, year over year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek and establish new Camps in locations where there are geographical gaps Stabilize Camps by partnering vulnerable ones with stronger ones nearest to them Membership increases through better public awareness for SUVCW Membership increases utilizing Dept. New Member Recruitment & Current Member Retention Report
Learning & Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase knowledge of the SUVCW Constitution & Regulations and Rituals Increase knowledge of the ins & outs of the Order Sustain interest in active participation at the Camp & Department level Dept. Secretary's Handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Memorial University graduates by Dept. & Camp Officers Promote mentorship and expand knowledge via experienced Camp & Dept. Officers Increase interest in serving as a Camp and/or Department Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Memorial University graduates Addition and/or rotation of new Camp & Department Officers Camp Secretaries and Camp Commanders complete review of Department Secretary's Handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one Memorial University graduate per each Camp Average 10 – 15 new Memorial University graduates per year across the Department Each Camp Secretary & Commander should read & thoroughly review the Dept. Secretary's Handbook & the SUVCW Blue Book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of Memorial University with Camps, along with the benefits of completion Distribution of the Department Secretary's Handbook to each Camp Highlight importance of familiarization with the SUVCW Blue Book

IX. Organization Environment Analysis

The status of the Department of Michigan in Q1-2018 is a membership of 478 Brothers, and 22 Camps. Membership has remained stationary to slightly decreasing over the past several years, as has Camp totals (with two Camps turning in their Charters over the past couple of years).

Obtaining new members will require large investment in community outreach and education. For long-term growth, a strong base needs to be developed that future members can be harvested from in the future. Development of interest among younger generations is essential for building a strong base, and can only be accomplished by making the SUVCW's presence known within our schools and surrounding communities.

Another area of community outreach is within our local Veterans' organizations. Finding ways to partner with, aid, and to serve these organizations provides another avenue to engage our communities in meaningful ways that are aligned with the principles of the Grand Army of the Republic. Beyond what has been customary or already established with various Camps across the Department, during the 2017-2018 administrative term, a Military & Veteran Affairs Special Committee was appointed to brainstorm and research various new ways that the Department can engage the aforementioned Veteran organizations. This should only be the beginning.

Establishment of new Camps has been a desirable initiative within the Department over the years, and remains so today. There are several geographical regions within the Department that would be prime targets to establish new Camps. This would aid in serving areas that there is a void, but would also help Camps that have large geographical regions assigned to them for Graves Registration and Civil War Memorials work. Possible areas to investigate for new Camps include Oscoda/Tawas/West Branch, Petoskey/Harbor Springs, Grand Rapids, and Sault Sainte Marie/EUP.

In addition to establishing new Camps, support of struggling Camps is of the most utmost importance to the Department. Steps should be taken by the Department to aid Camps that are in a fragile state through various means. Such steps include:

- A visit and/or communications by the Department Commander or his representative to ascertain in what areas that the Camp can be assisted.
- Partnering one or more Camps within reasonable proximity to the struggling Camp. This would augmentation to the struggling Camp via joint meetings between the Camps, joint ceremonies, and possible dual memberships to help bolster the Camp's membership numbers and potentially Camp Officer shortfalls until new ones can be found and developed.
- If the struggling Camp is not able to continue, consolidation of the remaining Brothers into other Camps within the Department should be attempted at once in the location of their wishes. While losing a Camp is undesirable, if those newly unattached Brothers are able to help strengthen another Camp of their choice, this would be highly welcome after a difficult outcome.

X. Marketing Efforts/Options – how will you get new customers

The biggest challenge to gain new members will be to develop and sustain a solid base where new members can be harvested from in the future. As was aforementioned, development of interest among younger generations is essential for building a strong base. Additionally, it is highly important to gain new members in the meantime to maintain the organization, and to develop and recruit new members. The following efforts should be explored:

- Make a presence in schools through historical and/or patriotic talks and programs
- Generate recognition in schools through essay and poster competitions
- Give historical talks and programs to local organizations and groups
- Initiate contact and build partnerships with local Veterans organizations
- Offer aid and assistance to local Military organizations and support groups
- Write historical and patriotic articles or letters to the editor for local newspapers

- Become acquainted with local television anchors & reporters, radio hosts, and newspaper editors & writers for advertising Camp events, projects, and ceremonies
- Partner with local genealogical organizations on projects such as genealogical research and graves registration
- Partner with local communities to maintain, repair, and rededicate existing Veteran's monuments and graves along with GAR plots
- Partner with local communities to establish new monuments to the GAR and Union Veterans where possible
- Partner with local Boy Scouts to work on projects such as cemetery clean-ups, putting US flags at Veterans' graves, including working with them on Eagle Scout projects, etc.
- Begin a Civil War Roundtable to attract possible members with aligned interests

XI. The Team

Quite simply, the team required to achieve the long-term major goals outlined in Section V of this document include each and every Brother of the Department of Michigan. It begins with the direction and guidance of the Department Commander and the other Department Officers, and then ultimately the direction, guidance, and execution at the Camp level through the Camp Commander and each and every member of the Camps for most goals.

It will take the hard work, networking, communication, and outreach of Brothers on the ground level to achieve the Department's long-term goals. The most efficient and direct path to accomplishing these goals will be through the efforts of Brothers on the local level interacting and partnering with other organizations and the surrounding community.