

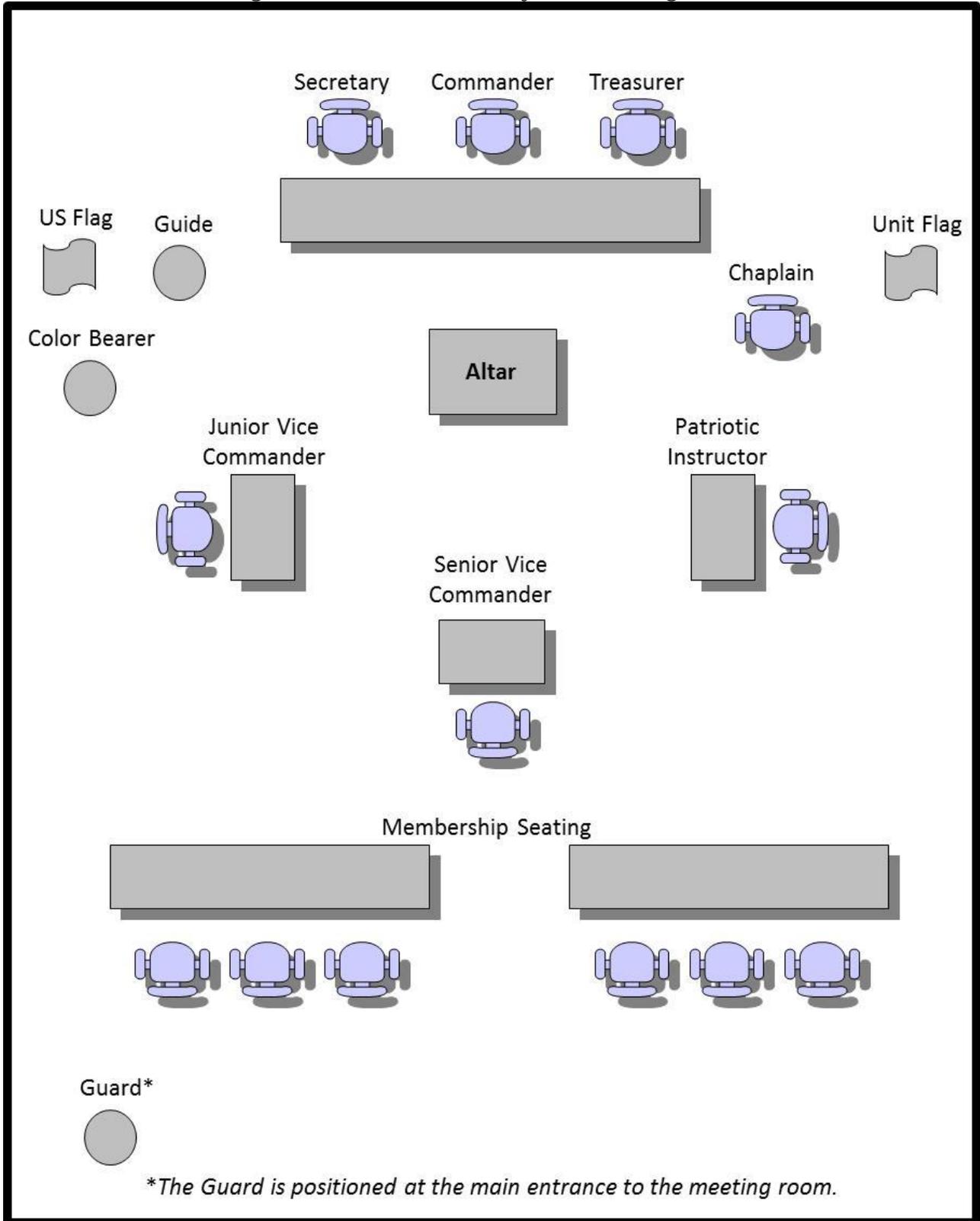
Ritual and Ceremonials



SONS OF UNION VETERANS
OF THE
CIVIL WAR

❧ 2015 Edition ❧

Figure 1. General Plan of the Meeting Room



INITIATION CEREMONY (LONG FORM)

[Not to be used for Juniors]

Guide (at Altar): Commander, I find _____ (*candidates' names*) in waiting, who has (or have) been duly elected.

Commander: Guide, prepare the candidate(s), escort him (them) to the Camp room and present him (them) at the Altar.

[The Guide having conducted a duly elected candidate (or candidates) into the Camp room, the Commander directs the Guide to place in the candidate's right hand a small United States Flag and present him at the Altar. For more than one candidate, an escort and United States Flag is designated for each.]

Guide: Commander, the candidate(s) is (are) at the Altar.

Commander: Guide, conduct the candidate(s) once around the Camp room and to the station of the Patriotic Instructor from whom he (they) will receive a lesson in Patriotism.

Guide: Patriotic Instructor, by direction of the Commander, I introduce to you this (these) candidate(s) for instruction in Patriotism.

Patriotic Instructor: The fall of Fort Sumter was the awaking of patriotism, Love of Country exists in the heart of every American citizen, but it sometimes lies dormant until quickened by an appeal to that sentiment, by a crisis in national affairs. A true patriot's heart beats faster at the sight of his country's colors or the sound of her martial music. A display of patriotism is one of the first objectives of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. With the courage of your newly avowed convictions, you should, therefore, exhibit a patriotic demeanor in your daily life: rise to your feet and stand erect, with hat or cap removed, when our National Anthem, the "Star Spangled Banner," is either played or sung, salute the Flag by removing hat or cap when passing or being passed by the National Colors, "Old Glory," properly observe all National holidays, and especially Memorial Day on the 30th of May. Endeavor to persuade others from devoting that day to sports, games and festivities. Aid in the teaching of loyalty and patriotism in public schools, and to those who were born under other flags, but have come to our land seeking the Brotherhood of liberty in our great and free commonwealth. Any nation which perished from the world, first began to die from a lack of patriotic fire.

Guide, conduct the candidate(s) to the Junior Vice Commander's station where he (they) will be instructed in Fraternity.

Guide: Junior Vice Commander, I am directed by the Patriotic Instructor to present this (these) candidate(s) for instruction in Fraternity.

Junior Vice Commander — Fraternity creates a bond that relates mankind. The golden chain of fraternal love links together in strong embrace the membership of any organization. The Order of Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is bound by ties of more than common strength. Eligibility to its ranks is based on the patriotism and love of Country displayed by our forefathers in the hour of the Nation's greatest peril — a title that comes to us as a sacred and most precious heritage. We are organized, to perpetuate and inculcate the principles for which they offered their lives, and to guard the results which they secured by their services and sacrifices. Inspired by the spirit of fraternity that characterized the comradeship of the men who fought for the holy cause of justice and humanity, our pledge and purpose is to stand together, elbow to elbow, shoulder to

shoulder, as stood the line of Union Blue. In Fraternity (*Note 1*) we greet you, asking, expecting in return from you the same degree of fidelity which we so gladly give.

(Note 1) [At the words "In Fraternity we greet you," the Junior Vice Commander grasps the hand of the candidate, and holds it (or the last candidate if more than one) until the end of the sentence.]

Guide, present the candidate(s) to the Senior Vice Commander for instruction in Charity.

Guide: Senior Vice Commander, I am directed by the Junior Vice Commander to present this (these) candidate(s) for instruction in Charity.

Senior Vice Commander: Charity is one of the most important principles demonstrated by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Charity comes as quietly as the dew of heaven, comforting and making glad the hearts it touches and instilling the giver with noble thoughts and unselfish aims. We, who are able, help those Brothers with failing strength, suffering misfortune or distressed by problems common to this life. Let them lean upon our shoulders, share with us our portion and draw from us inspiration to hope and happiness. How often did the Union soldiers divide their last morsel of food and drink from the same canteen? Sick in camp or wounded in battle, they knew that the kind and loving hearts of their comrades were joined to brave and willing hands, the fevered brow was cooled, the parched lips were moistened and the last moments of the dying were made blessed by the love born of their comradeship and seasoned in the conflict of battle. But our charity should go still further. It should be as broad as the blue vault of heaven itself and as vast as the mind of mankind can conceive. It should be that great charity that makes all a fraternal whole, overlooking the faults and failings of each other. That grand broad charity expressed by Lincoln when he said to the people of this nation then engaged in deadly warfare. "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on."

Guide, conduct the candidate(s) to the Commander's station for instruction in Loyalty.

Guide: Commander, I am directed by the Senior Vice Commander to present this (these) candidate(s) for instruction in Loyalty.

Commander: Loyalty, as exemplified by the Grand Army of the Republic, the Union Soldier, Sailor or Marine of the War of the Rebellion, should always stir our hearts to greater love of country. These men who wore the Union Blue constituted the Grandest Army that ever marched under one flag. Their sacrifices have no parallel, and we, their flesh and blood, would be ungrateful sons of noble ancestors should we fail to revere their sacred memories. As the sun is the center of the solar system around which the earth and all the other units of the system revolve and from which they receive the light and heat and life, so the Grand Army of the Republic is the central luminary of the affiliated patriotic societies; from it our own and all the Allied Orders originated; from it they daily receive the warmth of patriotism and the radiance of loyalty. As the earth in its daily revolutions turns successfully every land and nation to the face of the sun, the light of that great orb falls on no organization having as noble an origin or as worthy a history as the Grand Army of the Republic.

Grand Army of the Republic! That name ripens and enriches with age. Its honors multiply with the years of the nation. Its larger than life influence pervades all public life. It is the standard of comparison for all heroic and loyal endeavor. States and cities have built for it memorial halls and imposing monuments. The nation guards and cares for the final resting places of its loyal dead and remembers those who perished at sea. Poets, artists, sculptors and historians have made lavish use of the beauties of art and literature to record and preserve their fame.

The most beautiful service performed by the members of the Grand Army of the Republic was the

placing of flowers upon the graves of their departed Comrades. Now that the last Veteran has joined his Comrades on the other shore, we, their sons, shall on each Memorial Day, decorate their graves with the flowers that grew in the soil they preserved to freedom and place a flag of the United States of America on the grave of each deceased veteran of a war engaged in by the United States of America. The proper observance of that day and its sacred memories, you are admonished to remember.

Commander: Guide, conduct the candidate(s) to the Altar where he (they) will receive the obligation from the Chaplain.

[The Guide presents the candidate(s) at the Altar, where he relieves the candidate of the small Flag (or the candidate on the right if there is more than one), returning it to him after the obligation.]

[The Color Bearer will convey the flag to the candidate's right side.]

[The Chaplain proceeds to the Altar.]

*[The Commander gives **three raps** ***.]*

Chaplain: You are now at the Altar of the Order of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War for obligation, and I assure you that in taking this obligation it will not conflict with any duty you may owe your God, your country, or yourself. If you are willing to proceed, place your left hand upon the Bible, say "I", pronounce your name and repeat after me:

I, _____, in the presence of the Great Creator | and the witnessing members | of this Camp, | hereby voluntarily and solemnly | pledge myself | to support and defend | the Government of the United States of America, | to offer my life | if need be | to preserve the Flag | from being lowered in defeat; | 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, Sailors and Marines | of 1861 to 1865 | and to do all in my power | to persuade others | to do the same; | to be faithful | in all the duties of citizenship, | to be obedient | to the law of the land, | to obey the Constitution and Regulations of this Order, | and to promote actively | its objectives and interests | always and everywhere, | So help me God.

[Chaplain returns to his station.]

*[Commander seats the Camp (**one rap** *).]*

Guide (*addressing the candidates*): — Brothers, on seeking admission into this, or any other Camp of Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War while in session, approach the entrance door and give an alarm of three raps. The door will be opened by the Guard to whom you will present your membership card. You will then be admitted to the Camp room. You will approach the Altar and salute the Commander (or Senior Vice Commander if the Commander is engaged) and being recognized, be seated. In retiring from the room do likewise. On arising to speak, say "Commander" and salute and proceed when recognized. In crossing the floor always cross in the rear of the Altar except as required in ritualistic work. One rap of the gavel calls the Camp to order and seats the same when standing, two raps of the gavel calls up the Officers, and three raps calls up the entire Camp.

[The three principal Officers should demonstrate the three raps as the Guide mentions them.]

In seeking admission into any Camp of which you are not a member, in addition to the foregoing, you will give your name and number of your Camp and the office you hold in the Order, if any.

Whenever the United States Flag is passing in a formal manner, as on parade, members of the Order will salute it by removing hat or cap, when not in military uniform, the head dress in the right hand, forearm against the breast. When not wearing a head cover, the right hand will be placed over the

heart. This will not apply when the Flag is flying from a staff, but only when supported by a Color Bearer. Members of Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War who are United States Armed Forces servicemen or veterans may render a hand salute. On all occasions when the National Anthem, the “Star Spangled Banner,” is played or sung, members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War should stand at attention, with hat or cap removed, unless in military uniform. In that case you should render a hand salute. Members of Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War who are United States Armed Forces servicemen or veterans may render a hand salute.

Commander: Guide, conduct the candidate(s) to this station for the Flag Charge.

[This may be given by any Brother whom the Commander may choose for that purpose.]

Brother(s), with the obligation you have taken upon yourself comes your full membership in our honored Order. If deep in your heart there lives the love of freedom, and of patriotic devotion to the principles and institutions for which your forefather fought, then no personal danger, no selfish consideration, can quench that love and make you prove ungrateful or disloyal to the Flag of the United States of America.

And what of this Flag you have borne through our ceremonies? There are no words that can picture its transcendent glory. It had its birth amid the thunders of battle, while fathers, sons and brothers fought, and mothers, wives, daughters and sweethearts prayed – for freedom. The crimson of those stripes was caught from the best blood that was poured on Freedom’s altar. The prayers of the purest souls that ever faced the Great White Throne were woven into its bars of gleaming white. Its field of blue is a fragment of heaven itself, where God’s glittering stars of eternal hope for man are set. Born of the conflict of our national freedom, that Flag has maintained in every hour of its history its one grand ideal of liberty. It witnessed the sufferings and the triumphs of a patriot army; under it rode Washington, and before it Burgoyne and Cornwallis laid down their arms. It became the representation of the richest principles of free government that the ages have yet unfolded, and under it our beloved nation achieved peace, plenty and honor.

Later on, it dipped into the darkness of treason’s mad attempt, and plunged into the volley, smoke and deadly clash, to save our blood-bought Union and to banish the crime of slavery in our fair land. Now almost obscured by the clouds of defeat, now gleaming bright in victory, it flashed along the crimson crests of Gettysburg, and treason’s mad attempt received its mortal wound. Like a pillar of flame it led our hosts through the mists, up the rocky steps to Lookout Mountain; and achieved a victory above the clouds, as if rebuking treason before the very Throne of God. It lit up the dark recesses of the Wilderness, and wherever it appeared the faces of the dying patriots reflected back its glory. Four red years it rode the crested wings of war, and emerged at Appomattox with no stripe obscured and no star erased.

This glorious banner has been the beacon of liberty and of material and spiritual progress, not to our land alone, but to the oppressed and unfortunate of every race and ethnic background. Its splendor is reflected in the lives and the love of millions from other lands, who here have found those blessings of freedom and happiness which were denied them by the countries of their birth. Over tropic seas and polar wastes it has been borne by its gallant sons — to ports of the Orient and to far off islands of the Pacific — and everywhere its inspiring folds are hailed as the symbol of freedom, enlightenment, and civilization for all mankind. To Cuba it brought independence; the weaker republics of the continent it has protected from foreign aggression; its eagles are the terror of tyranny and its stars the hope of free peoples throughout the earth. Then, when armed and arrogant autocracy combined to extend its inhuman and barbarous rule over the people of the world, America, inspired by the immortal example of Lafayette, sent thousands of her sons under the Star Spangled Banner to battle for Liberty’s cause on the war torn fields of France and Flanders. And,

there, and on the high seas, righteous victory attended our heroic Soldiers, Sailors and Marines, until they returned with our beloved banner resplendent with new honors, adding to the imperishable glory won by our fathers under Abraham Lincoln, in the War for the Union. Its glories never end or die. Always an emblem of peace, it is by the same token the emblem of victory. It led to glorious triumph, our forces in the windswept deserts of Africa; it inspired to deeds of undying fame our heroes in the olive groves of Italy; it was temporarily lowered at Corregidor to a treacherous and dastardly foe, and then appeared in sweeping victories to grace the islands, not in conquest, but in righteousness to save the helpless and oppressed, as it did later in southern Korea and attempted to do in Vietnam and Somalia and accomplished so resoundingly in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. No flag that floats today, on earth, holds out so brave a hope for all mankind, or sheds such radiant light upon the path of human life. Let us then entwine each thread of the glorious fabric of our Country's Flag around our hearts, and catching the spirit that breathes upon us from the battles and victories of American's sons, let us resolve that now and forever, we will stand for that Flag and the principles and institutions it symbolizes. It has waved over our cradles: — let us make the high resolve that, unchanged and unstained as it came from the hands of our fathers, it shall wave over our graves.

[Commander displays badge in hand so that candidate(s) may note the explanation of its meaning.]

Commander: I now display to you the badge of our Order. The inscription, "Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War," reminds us of our high estate and of our duty to our Country. We are the Sons of Union Veterans. May we prove ourselves worthy of this title. The ribbon is a union of red, white and blue, the colors of our Country's Flag: The red signifies the unstinted streams of blood, shed that the blessings of a free government might be our heritage, and that our own blood is pledged to preserve that which we so gladly have received; the blue tells us of that true faith and allegiance which our fathers held to their Country and to each other, and exhorts us to be ever mindful of their example; the white speaks of that peace which, with honor, may our Country ever enjoy.

The motto, "Preserved by the Grace of God," reminds us that without the over-ruling hand of an all wise Providence the sacrifices of our fathers could have availed nothing, and that God's favor alone can secure the preservation of our liberties.

Like the eagle, may we be quick to discover our Country's needs, strong in its defense and swift to carry out the objectives of our Order.

May you wear your badge long and proudly, and may it ever be a guiding star to you, in the discharge of your duties in private life and as a Son of a Union Veteran.

Commander: Guide, conduct the candidate(s) to the Secretary's desk to sign the Camp's membership book, and present him (them) again to this station.

Commander (To candidates): As Commander of this Camp and on behalf of its members, I congratulate you and welcome you to our Order.

Camp (In unison): Welcome, in FRATERNITY; Welcome in CHARITY; Welcome in LOYALTY.

[The Guide faces new member(s) toward the Camp in front of Commander's station.]

Commander: Officers and Brothers, I take pleasure in introducing Brother(s) _____ bound to us by the sacred ties of Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty. Let us give him (them) a Brotherly welcome.

[A short recess is optional. Refer to General Instruction.]