



# **THE BYLAWS OF THE UNITED STATES VOLUNTEERS, Inc.,**

*as Amended and Ratified by a 2/3 Vote of the USV's Member Units and Elected Officials at the Annual USV Business Meeting of January 19, 2008.*

## **ARTICLE I ORGANIZATION NAME**

The name of this organization is the UNITED STATES VOLUNTEERS, INC., hereafter referred to as the USV.

## **ARTICLE II PURPOSE**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the USV is to provide an association of living history organizations that portray military units and civilian personnel from the period of the American Civil War, in order to perpetuate and extend the knowledge of that period through the medium of living history and reenactments of military battles. The USV is a not for profit organization.

## **ARTICLE III PECUNIARY GAIN**

The United States Volunteer, Inc., (USV) does not and shall not afford pecuniary gain, incidentally or otherwise, to any individual member, member unit, military, staff or corporate officer. The USV is organized exclusively for voluntary, charitable, educational and historical research purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c).(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding sections of any future federal tax code. No part of net earnings or other receipts of the organization shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to its members, trustees, officers or other private persons except that the organization is empowered to pay reasonable

compensation for costs incurred for services rendered as approved by the Board of Directors in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purposes clause. No part or activities of the of the USV shall be carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation and the organization shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the USV shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c.) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c.) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code. Upon dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one of more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c.) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a State or local government for a related public purpose.

## **ARTICLE IV DEFINITIONS**

- A. USV: UNITED STATES VOLUNTEERS, INC.
- B. UNIT(S): A living history or military organization including an infantry, artillery, cavalry, medical or other period or military specialty impression, that has paid annual USV unit membership dues as a non-probationary member of the USV consisting of five or more reenactors.
- C. CONGRESS OF THE USV. The Congress of the USV is the democratic legislature and governing body of the USV. The Congress of the USV is comprised of all elected officials of the USV and a representative from each member unit of the USV.
- D. USV BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Subject to the Congress of the USV, the corporate structure and business requirements of the USV shall be administered by the Board of Directors. The Board shall be comprised of all elected military officials of the USV, the Corporate Secretary and Treasurer and a representative of the USV's civilian reenactors.
- E. USV EXECUTIVE SECRETARIATE: Subject to the Congress and Board of Directors of the USV, the daily and field business requirements of the USV shall be administered by the USV Executive Secretariat. The USV Executive Secretariat shall be comprised of the elected Brigade Commander, Treasurer, Secretary, the USV Regimental Commanders (Colonels) and the elected representative of the USV's civilian reenactors. Support staff to the Executive Secretariat is authorized by appointment, subject to the approval of the Board.
- F. REENACTOR(s): A person who provides a historical demonstration of the life and times of our ancestors who lived during the period of the American Civil War, by means of living history and the reenactment of events of the time, in accordance with USV authenticity and military protocols and in accordance with all USV approved safety and other operating guidelines.
- G. USV UNIT REPRESENTATIVE: A voting member of the Congress of the USV. Each member unit shall be represented by a selected member of the unit and may be elected or appointed as determined appropriate by the members of the individual USV member unit.

- H. **LINE COMPANY** The fundamental unit within the USV is the Infantry Line Company, Artillery Battery and Cavalry Troop. Each USV Infantry Line Company shall be comprised of as many unit members as necessary to form a company of not less than 20 rifles on a reasonably consistent basis. Each USV Artillery Battery shall be comprised of 4 to 6 guns on a reasonably consistent basis. Each USV Cavalry Troop shall be comprised of not less than 20 Troops on a reasonably consistent basis
- I. **LINE COMPANY COMMANDER (LCC)** An individual elected to command a “Line Company” in the USV. Each USV Line Company shall be commanded by a USV Line Company Commander at the rank of Captain (O-3). The Line Company Commanders shall be members of the USV Board of Directors. Without exception, each member military unit shall be assigned to a USV Line Company and to an elected Line Company Commander.
- J. **BATTALION**: Not less than four USV Infantry Line Companies may form a Battalion – commanded by either a Lt. Colonel or a Major. Two, but no more than three Battalions may then form a Regiment. In no case shall a USV Infantry Regiment exceed 15 Line Companies.
- K. **USV REGIMENT**: Two to Three Battalions of the USV may form a Regiment - commanded by a Colonel.
- L. **BRIGADE**: Two or more Regiments and independent Battalions of the USV shall constitute the USV Brigade – commanded by the USV’s Brig. General.
- M. **REGIMENTAL AND BATTALION COMMANDERS**: Each USV Infantry, Artillery and Cavalry Regiment shall be commanded by a USV Regimental Commander at the rank of Colonel (O-6). Each Battalion within each USV Regiment and each independent USV Infantry Battalion, shall be commanded by a Battalion Commander at the rank of either a Lt. Colonel (O-5) or a Major (O-4), as approved by the Congress of the USV.
- N. **BRIGADE COMMANDERS**: The Brigade of the USV shall be commanded by a USV Brigade Commander at the rank of Brigadier General (G-1). The Brigade Commander shall be elected annually to command by a majority vote of the Congress of the USV.
- O. **PROHIBITION AGAINST MULTIPLE ENCUMBERENCES**. No elected official of the USV shall encumber more than one elected position within the USV.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE USV**

- A. The size of member military units varies, and to provide an authentic portrayal of period military organizations, the USV is organized into Line Companies, Battalions and Regiments which will

allow for the proper display of period Companies, Battalions, Regiments and the Brigade.

- B. The USV recognizes that unit strength varies from event to event, and the growth of membership in individual military units, within a Line Company, may require the assignment of a second company street to a particular Line Company or even a Unit within a Line Company from time to time. Line Companies or individual units assigned such streets as these do not become a second and separate Line Company on a permanent basis and are represented, for voting purposes, by the original representatives of the Line Company. Permanent Line Companies shall be established or canceled by a majority vote of the appropriate LCCs and unit representatives of the Regiment. Note: No member military unit will be forced to split its individual membership between two or more Line Companies for the purpose of filling the ranks of another Line Company.
- C. The USV recognizes the elected command structure noted in the definitions above. In respect for these elections and as a command and safety issue, individuals from member military units shall not authorize or otherwise wear insignias of rank not approved by the USV when engaged with a USV Line Company, Battalion or Regiment. Subordinate ranks within the Line Company (Lieutenants and non-coms) shall be at the discretion of the Line Company Commander, in cooperation with his Battalion and Regimental Commanders.
- D. No elected USV field grade officer, shall accept a field promotion from an event organizer or otherwise augment their troop strength by the acceptance of non-USV troops, when operating as a USV affiliated Regiment or Battalion, without the express permission of the USV Brigade Commander.

## **ARTICLE VI FUNCTIONS OF THE USV**

- A. The USV, its Board of Directors and its Executive Secretariat shall at all times represent the common interests of the majority of the member units of the USV with other reenactment, Living History and Preservation Groups and outside organizations.
- B. The Congress of the USV shall set and raise dues as confirmed by an annual majority vote of all Unit Representatives and the Board of Directors to provide the following services:
  - 1. Corporate Insurance and Litigation
  - 2. Corporate Mailings
  - 3. USV Newsletter and Web-site Communications
  - 4. Telephone expenses directly related to coordinating efforts pertaining to USV operations.
  - 5. Reserves for event Sponsorship
  - 6. Donation to Preservation

7. The annual business meeting

C. Monitor reenactments and Living Histories:

1. MILITARY:

- a. Represent the USV in military and event support requirements.
- b. Provide an historical and necessary military command structure.
- c. Promote Safety and seek adherence to USV and event Operating and Safety Guidelines, including related reports.
- d. Encourage historical accuracy.
- e. Provide USV Provost assignments, including related reports.
- f. Provide Quartermaster coordination and support to the USV
- g. Take reports and coordinate with event sponsors any disregard for battle scenarios

2. CIVILIAN:

- a. Encourage accuracy.
- b. Provide a supportive environment.
- c. Provide USV Provost assignments
- d. Provide Quartermaster coordination and support to the USV

D. Set the maximum acceptable size of USV Line Companies, Battalions and Regiments.

1. The line company organization of the USV will be based on the total number of soldier reenactors from each member unit assigned to that USV Line Company.
2. The total strength of a line company should not exceed a full strength company of 100 men per 1861 Army Regulations.

E. Units which exceed that number at a given event will "Platoon" their company side by side on the line and in camp.

F. Battalions will be comprised of roughly equal numbers of Line Companies and rifles within a Regiment.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **ADMINISTRATION AND CHAIN OF COMMAND**

A. All member units of the USV recognize that the USV portrays period military and civilian organizations in the context of the American Civil War and, as such, each member military unit and member civilian organization consents to follow the proper requests of the USV's Board of Directors, Executive Secretariat and elected military Chain-of-Command at all living history functions and reenactments.

- B Member units further recognize the need for every day maintenance of the USV as a liaison for coordination between event sponsors, other military and civilian organizations, and the Regiments, Battalions, Line Companies and even units within the USV. To meet these requirements while maintaining a democratic process within, a Board of Directors is established.
- C. The Board of Directors shall be constituted by:
1. The annually elected USV Brigade Commander at the rank of Brigadier General (G-1) shall sit as the President of the USV Board of Directors.
  2. The annually elected Treasurer and Secretary of the USV
  3. Each Regiment's annually elected Regimental Commanders (Lt.Col),
  4. Each Battalion's annually elected Battalion Commanders (Lt. Col / Maj.)
  5. The elected Line Company Commanders of each Line Company of the USV.
  6. The annually elected representative of the civilian reenactors of the USV
- D. The Board of Directors may grow or decrease in number as the number of Line Companies, Regiments and Battalions within the USV change.
- E. Elections to the USV Board of Directors
1. The Brigade Commander, Secretary and Treasurer shall be annually elected to their position by a majority vote of the Congress of the USV.
  2. Regimental, Regimental Battalion and Independent USV Battalion Commanders shall be annually elected by a majority vote of Field Grade Officers, the Line Company Commanders and Unit Representatives of the applicable Regiment in accordance with USV procedures and requirements.
  3. Line Company Commanders shall be nominated by the Line Company's Unit Representatives and confirmed by a majority vote of all Line Company Commanders and Unit Representatives of the applicable Regiment or Independent Battalion.
  4. One representative shall be elected to the Board from among the civilian reenactors of the USV.

F. There is created within the Board of Directors an Executive Secretariat that shall be vested with the daily administration of the USV and its interests. The Executive Secretariat shall be comprised of the Brigade Commander, Secretary, Treasurer, the Regimental Commanders and the Elected Civilian Representative of the USV.

1. The Executive Secretariat may designate and assign certain administrative duties and military rank, in accordance with 1861 Regulations to the Brigade Adjutant, Quartermaster, Safety Officer and the Surgeon General of the USV, subject to the approval of the USV Board of Directors.

G. The Executive Secretariat is authorized to make the following determinations.

1. Temporary/conditional acceptance of a probationary unit into the USV.
2. Temporary assignment/reassignment of a member unit to a Line Company slot.
3. Temporary approval of Regimental, Battalion or Line Company Commanders sufficient to fill vacated or temporarily created slots necessitated by the growth of the USV.
4. Temporary transfer of units within the USV from one Regiment to another.
5. Field and other emergency expenditures that are not otherwise budgeted for and approved by the Congress of the USV at the annual meeting. Field and other emergency expenditures that are in excess of \$500 shall require approval by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
6. Coordination with outside interests as discussed above.
7. Arrange for and schedule an annual USV meeting and an independent financial review to be presented at the annual USV meeting.
8. Temporary removal of a USV Brigade, Regimental or Battalion Commander, staff member or a Line Company Commander for cause. Any person so removed is returned to his member unit for further disposition and service at an appropriate rank.
9. Temporary removal of a member unit or individual unit member from the USV for cause. Individuals, unit members or organizations separated from the USV for cause are removed from the muster of the USV and will not be allowed to fall in within the organizational structure of the USV. Any unit dues paid for the current year will be refunded to the expelled unit. Donations raised for the purpose of Preservation Projects will not be refunded.
10. Temporary removal of a USV elected military officer, unit member or individual unit

member by the Executive Secretariat for cause will result in an immediate removal from the field. The Brigade Commander shall immediately: (1) designate a Judge Advocate from among the elected Line Company Commanders to preside at a USV Court Martial, (2) convene, in cooperation with the designated Judge Advocate for the particular Court Martial, a quorum of not less than 5 elected USV officers, forming a Court Martial. The Officers asked to join the Court Martial shall certify their independence and lack of bias toward the accused. The Judge Advocate designee shall preside and shall assure that all parties are given a voice to the issues before the Court Martial, but shall not vote as a part of the Court Martial. The USV elected military officer, unit member or individual unit member shall be offered a reasonable chance to be present and may defend against any charges made. Final dismissal or other appropriate administrative actions, including reduction in rank, shall be at the 2/3 recorded vote of the Court Martial. Any unit dues paid for the current year will be refunded if unit dismissal is found warranted and at the option of the unit if it opts to leave the USV. Donations raised for the purpose of Preservation Projects will not be refunded.

H. The Board of Directors and its Executive Secretariat shall at all times represent the best common interests of the USV. The Executive Secretariat shall report to the members of the Board of Directors all actions taken. All temporary actions other than those assigned to a Court Martial will be reviewed and voted on as provided by these Bylaws for permanent status by the Congress of the USV.

I. The full Congress of the USV shall cast votes at the annual meetings with regard to:

1. THE PERMENENT ACCEPTANCE OF NEW UNITS INTO THE USV
2. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW REGIMENTS OR BATTALIONS
3. THE ELECTION OF ALL CORPORATE AND BRIGADE OFFICERS
4. MAXIMUM USV EFFORT EVENTS FOR THE ENTIRE ORGANIZATION.
5. APPROVAL OF USV DUES
6. ALL SAFETY AND OPERATING GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES, AMENDMENTS THERETO, AND ANY AUTHENTICITY STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO USV UNITS.
7. AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS OF THE USV.
8. THE PROJECTED ANNUAL USV BUDGET AND THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS OVER THAT OF INCIDENTAL OPERATING EXPENSE FOR UNIT

## MAILINGS AND NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION.

- J. Each authorized voting member of the Congress of the USV and its Board of Directors may cast their votes directly or through written proxy. All proxy voting authorizations shall be sent to the Brigade Commander and Secretary to the Board, in writing (or e-mail), signed by the authorized voter and received before the beginning of the annual USV meeting or any meeting of the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE VIII MEMBERSHIP**

- A Only UNITS are members of the USV.
1. INDIVIDUAL REENACTORS have access to the protections and privileges of the USV by belonging to a UNIT which is a member of the USV.
  2. Elected officials of the USV are members of the USV, to include the Brigade Commander, Treasurer, Secretary, Regimental, Battalion, Line Company Commanders and the civilian reenactor's representative to the Board.
  3. A UNIT becomes a member of the USV after approval by a majority vote of the Congress of the USV.
  4. Membership is open to any American Civil War Living History/Reenactment organization which is willing to comply with these Bylaws and is sponsored into the organization by one or more of the existing Line Company Commanders.

## **ARTICLE IX REMOVAL FOR CAUSE**

*(This Article, as reported in the March 1996 Bylaws, has been cancelled by the USV Bylaws Amendments ratified at the annual meeting of January 8, 2005. The issues surrounding the temporary and permanent removal of units or individual reenactors from the field and from the USV are discussed at Article VII, paragraphs G. 8, 9 and 10, to include the establishment of a USV Court Martial. These changes reflect the growing size of the USV and concerns for the safety of its members. Article IX is held here for future possible use by amendment).*

## **ARTICLE X**

## **TRANSFER AND ASSIGNMENT OF UNITS:**

### **A. New Unit to the USV**

1. Units desiring membership within the USV must indicate their intention in writing to the USV Brigade Commander and will then be assigned to a sponsoring Line Company, Battalion and/or Regiment.
  
2. At the next annual meeting the requesting unit must pay the annual USV dues prior to the sponsor providing his recommendation for membership to the Congress of the USV and a vote will be called for probationary membership for not less than one year.
  
3. If the unit is voted into the USV in probationary status they may remain with the sponsor line company organization. Upon completion of the probationary year (annual meeting to annual meeting), if the unit is capable of fielding at least 20 rifles on a regular bases, it may request a separate line company position. This request must be made in writing for inclusion as an agenda item for the annual USV meeting. If the unit is not voted into the USV in probationary status dues shall be returned to the unit.
  - a. Any unit wishing membership within the United States Volunteers must comply with the requirements as put forth in the By-Laws of the United States Volunteers. That is, they must be able to field a minimum of 5 soldiers, they must be sponsored by an existing full member unit, they shall spend a year on probation before achieving full membership, and they are required to be in good standings as to the payment of dues. During this time the unit will be referred to as a probationary unit. Full member status can only be bestowed upon a unit by a vote of the Congress of the USV voting at the annual meeting. The Congress of the USV may vote to grant full membership, to withdraw the offer of membership, or to extend the probationary period until the next annual meeting.

### **B. Existing USV Units**

1. Member UNITS of the USV desiring a separate line company slot must be willing to move to the Battalion where an open slot exists. Except by a vote of the Congress of the USV, no Regiment in the USV will be organized with more than 15 Line Companies. The only exception to this rule is events where the overall command and event sponsors insist that the USV function as one Regiment. In that event we will operate as left, center and right "wings" based on attendance.
  
2. Units which desire to transfer to another line company must request such transfers in writing to the Executive Secretariat with a copy to the Regimental or independent USV Battalion Commander, if the request is during the reenactment year. Permanent

transfer shall be approved by a simple majority vote of the military service if the request is from one Regiment or independent Battalion to another and by the Line Company Commanders of the applicable Regiment/battalion if within a Regiment - at the next annual meeting.

## **ARTICLE XI MEMBER UNIT INTERFERENCE**

NEITHER the USV nor any of its officers or directors may interfere within the normal everyday operation of its member units when they are not participating as an element of the USV at a given event. The exception to this rule would be indications of serious breeches of the USV safety rules so as to reflect poorly on the USV or to give advice to a unit if the unit requests such advice.

## **ARTICLE XII ANNUAL MEETING**

- A. The Executive Secretariat, acting for the Board and the Congress of the USV will schedule and hold an annual business meeting. This meeting is to be scheduled for one weekend in the month of January or February of each calendar year. The Secretary to the Board of Directors of the USV will advise elected officials of the USV and all unit representatives of the date of the meeting with a proposed agenda at the Remembrance Day formation or no later than December 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.
- B. Any authorized voting member of the Congress of the USV and its Board of Directors wishing to place an item on the agenda must send this request to the Brigade Commander, with a copy to the Board Secretary, no later than the 1st day of January, in order to make the final mailing of the agenda in a timely manner.
- C. An item not on the agenda may be added at the annual meeting as new or additional business at the request of a member of the Congress of the USV and with a simple majority vote of the Board of Directors.
- D. Votes will be held in the following order:
  - 1. Issues affecting the Organization of the USV including: (1) Amendments to the Bylaws, and (2) the actions of the Executive Secretariat.
  - 2. The acceptance of new member units and their representatives.

- 3 NOTE: per paragraph E of this Article, the annual election of the Brigade Commander, Secretary, Treasurer, Regimental and Battalion Commanders and the election of the civilian representative will not be announced until the new unit members and new line Company commanders have voted, either directly or through authorized proxy.
4. Other operational issues before the Congress of the USV, including the establishment of budgets, unit dues, establishment of new procedures or operating guidelines, the establishment of maximum USV participation events
5. Other votes as required

E Procedures for Nominations for elections of Brigade, Regimental, Battalion (field grade) and civilian representative positions within the USV.

1. The Executive Secretariat will designate a Line Company Commander (on a rotational basis) to serve as the Chairman of the USV Election Committee for a given year (annual meeting). A representative from each of the Regiments and independent USV Battalions (Campaign Bn, Sharpshooter Bn, and Artillery) shall form the Committee.
2. The Committee shall confer with the Secretary and Treasurer to determine that the individuals listed as members of the Congress of the USV are in good standing (unit dues have been paid no later than December 31 of any given year in order to vote, no actions of the Court Martial, etc).
3. Upon confirmation of the members to the Congress of the USV, the Committee will send out forms for nominating individuals for election to Brigade Commander, Secretary, Treasurer, Regimental and Battalion Commanders and for the nomination of the civilian representative to the Board. The nominations process shall be not less than 4 weeks in duration.
4. Members of the Congress of the USV may submit nominations for Brigade Commander, Secretary, Treasurer, and the civilian representative. Only those Line Company Commanders and unit representatives within a respective Regiment or independent USV Battalion may submit nominations for field grade positions within that Regiment or independent USV Battalion
5. All nominations shall be in writing. Incumbents shall be deemed to be automatically re-nominated for election to their current position, unless they submit a written withdrawal from the election process.

6. No individual shall encumber more than one USV elected position, e.g., position on the Board of Directors.
7. Upon closure of the nominations period, the Committee shall send out to all nominees, Line Company commanders and Unit Representatives a list of nominees. The Committee will note if nominees are found ineligible and why. An additional two week opportunity to submit nominations will follow this listing and notification.
8. The Committee will confirm the nominations with the nominees and keep a record for USV access.
9. The Committee will prepare ballots to vote for the Brigade Commander, Secretary, Treasurer and for the Civilian representative to the Board for all members of the Congress of the USV. The Committee will also prepare ballots for each vote within a Regiment or Independent USV Battalion for the election of field grade officers by the members of the Regiment or Independent USV Battalion. The Congress of the USV shall then vote - as provided herein - at the meeting site and just before the commencement of the annual USV meeting.
10. The committee will withdraw to determine election results, verify results and then announce the results at the Annual USV meeting. The terms of the elected individuals shall begin immediately. In the event of a tie vote, the Unit Representatives and Line Company Commanders of the respective Regiment or independent USV Battalion shall retire under the supervision of the USV Elections Committee Chairman to vote (again) to break the tie.

F. Procedures for Nominations and Elections of Line Company Commanders:

1. Existing Line Company Commanders do not require re-election, unless a unit representative within the Commander's line company nominates a candidate to run against him. All Candidates for Regimental Line Company Commanders thereafter shall be elected by a majority of the unit representatives and sitting Line Company Commanders within the applicable Regiment. Said nominations and elections shall take place at the regimental meetings and shall be overseen by the Regimental Commander and any appointed staff members. Nominations shall be taken by oral motion and any elections shall be by written ballot.

- G. All candidates for corporate, Field Grade Officers and Line Company Commanders shall be elected by a majority of votes. If a candidate fails to receive a simple majority of the votes cast, e.g. more than two members are nominated for a single position and none receive a majority of votes, then a runoff election will take place between the two candidates that receive the most votes.

**ARTICLE XIII  
AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended by majority vote of the Congress of the USV.

**End**