

**No. R-508. House concurrent resolution commemorating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Grand Army of the Republic.**

(H.C.R.354)

Offered by: Representatives Devereux of Mount Holly, Branagan of Georgia, and Jerman of Essex

Whereas, at the Civil War's conclusion, President Lincoln had promised to care for "those who have borne the burden, his widows and orphans," and

Whereas, although weary and often wounded, Civil War veterans missed the camaraderie and friendship of their fellow soldiers, and formed groups, initially for mutual support and then to serve as a unified political force, and

Whereas, perhaps the largest and most politically effective of the groups was the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), founded in Decatur, Illinois on April 6, 1866, and

Whereas, the membership of the GAR was limited to Civil War veterans who had been honorably discharged from the Union Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or the Revenue Cutter Service, and who had served between April 9, 1861 and April 12, 1865, and

Whereas, local GAR posts, including in Vermont, were often named for a deceased veteran, but no two posts names within a department (usually a state) were identical, and

Whereas, national GAR encampments rivaled national political party conventions, had great influence in the 19th century on the Republican Party, and five U.S. presidents were GAR members, and

Whereas, the final national encampment occurred in 1949, and Albert Woolson, the last surviving GAR member, died at 109 years of age in 1956, and

Whereas, the legacy of the GAR continued through the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, which only admits succeeding generations of Civil War veterans, and through allied orders, including the Women's Relief Corps for which direct GAR-qualified veteran ancestry is not a membership criterion, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Grand Army of the Republic, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Department Commander, Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War and to the Vermont Historical Society.