

THE GAR

The Grand Army of the Republic GAR Veterans Organization was a "male" Veterans organization. All women who contributed to the war efforts in some way (such as nurses, the Christian Commission, the Sanitary Commission, Abolitionists, Suffragettes, Vivandiers, War Production Workers or the Wives, Sisters and Mothers of the Veterans), became members of the Women's Relief Corps (WRC), which was the auxiliary to the GAR, or they became members of the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic (LGAR). The LGAR were the wives, sisters & mothers. GAR Veterans admired the work of the WRC so much they often said the only thing closer to them were the "Cudies" they came home with after the war. In Victorian America, obviously that didn't set very well with their wives. Thus, the LGAR was formed. However the statement also gave birth to the Order of the Cudies", which today is an organization primarily of mothers under the American Legion.

The Veterans of GAR Posts tended to elect Post Officers who were the Commissioned Officers they followed in the field during the war, or were they were highly respected non Commissioned Officers, Medal of Honor Recipients, or Distinguished Meritorious Servicemen. In most GAR Posts quite often elected the members who served as Commissioned Officers during the war. Most were also members of MOLLUS, which pre-dated the GAR. The favored topics of discussion and comradery at most GAR meetings involved repeated stories and experiences about the Campaigns and great events of the war in which the men mutually participated, as well as the political issues of the day that affected their ability to care for the wives, widows and children of fallen and deceased fellow Veterans. Unit Pride, Patriotism and their Unit Battle Honors were extremely important to all the Veterans of the GAR. The GAR had such a strong impact on America, most fathers insisted their daughters must wed a veteran or a son of a veteran. To do otherwise was not considered patriotic or proper.

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