



Kevin P. Tucker
Commander-in-Chief
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General Order No. 17
Series 2025-2026
8 June 2026

Passing of Brother William Poole, Last Living Real Son of a Union Veteran

It is my solemn duty to announce the passing of Brother William Poole, recognized as the last living Real Son of a Union Veteran of the Civil War, who departed this life on Sunday, June 7, 2026 at the age of 101.

Brother William "Bill" Poole was born on January 13, 1925, to Charles and Clara Bell Poole. His father, Charles Poole, Sr., was born on March 27, 1844, in Ritchie County, West Virginia, and served the Union cause as a member of the 6th West Virginia Volunteer Infantry.

During his service, Charles was wounded in the left leg, resulting in an amputation above the knee, and later received an invalid pension from the federal government. In 1915, at the age of 71, Charles married Clara Bell Straw, who was 27 years old. Together they raised five children, including William, known throughout his life as "Bill."

Brother Poole's family represented a remarkable living connection to the Civil War generation. His mother, Clara Bell Poole, lived to the age of 101 and was the last Civil War widow in Missouri to receive a pension based on her husband's Union service.

Following in a tradition of service to the nation, Bill entered the United States Army in 1944 during the Second World War. Serving in the European Theater, he distinguished himself through extraordinary courage when he voluntarily joined another soldier in rescuing a severely wounded officer from the battlefield after others believed the attempt too dangerous. For this act of heroism, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

After returning home from the war, Brother Poole married Shirley Courtney, and together they raised nine children. He worked as a mechanic and later in the construction industry, earning a reputation as a devoted husband, father, and provider. His family remembered him as a man of unwavering faith, dedication, and work ethic who never missed a day of work and ensured his family was in church every Sunday.

Brother Poole represented a direct and living connection to the men who preserved the Union during our nation's greatest trial. With his passing, an historic chapter in the legacy of the Grand

Army of the Republic and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War comes to a close. His life served as a tangible link between the Civil War generation and the present day, reminding us of our sacred obligation to preserve the memory, history, and principles for which the Union soldiers fought.

The Commander-in-Chief, on behalf of the National Organization, extends heartfelt condolences to Brother Poole's family, friends, and all who mourn his loss.

The family has reported that funeral services are being planned at Pitts Chapel in Bolivar, Missouri, with interment to follow at Enon Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery in Morrisville, Missouri. Additional details will be shared as they become available.

Therefore, pursuant to the authority vested in the Commander-in-Chief, it is hereby ordered that:

1. The Charter of the National Organization shall be draped in mourning for a period of thirty (30) days from the date of this Order.
2. All Department and Camp Charters of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War shall likewise be draped in mourning for a period of thirty (30) days from the date of this Order.
3. All Departments, Camps, and the National Organization are requested to place a mourning drape or appropriate memorial emblem on their official websites and social media platforms for a period of thirty (30) days in tribute to Brother William Poole and in recognition of his unique place in the history of our Order and the nation.
4. All Brothers are encouraged to remember Brother Poole in their thoughts and prayers and to reflect upon the enduring legacy of the Union veterans whose memory we are sworn to honor.

As we mark the passing of the last Real Son, let us renew our commitment to the purposes of our Order: to perpetuate the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic and the men who saved the Union, and to ensure that their sacrifices are never forgotten.

Ordered this 8th day of June, 2026.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,



Kevin P. Tucker
Commander-in-Chief
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Attest:



James Crane
National Secretary
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

