



MD Department Patriotic Instructor May 2010

"Memorial Day" General Logan's Instructions and a Message

With Memorial Day near at hand, we find ourselves in a new battle to preserve the true spirit in which it was established. In many ways the purpose for celebrating Memorial Day has passed out of the conscience of America. Today small groups of men and women, hold to tradition, attend ceremonies in cemetery's, town squares, and memorial parks in hope of honoring the heroes of Americas past. However, the great mass of Americans pass the day with little thought to the men who have given all for the freedom they enjoy. We have lost part of ourselves; apathy and ignorance have permeated the fabric of America, caused people to question their sense of Patriotism, or worse still label it unpopular and anachronistic.

In the opening paragraphs of General Order #11 General John Logan gives two important instructions to the future generations of America. First we have a duty and a sacred trust to preserve the resting places of the fallen heroes. General Logan underscores the point of preserving the memory of the fallen by saying *"What can aid more to assure this result than by cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead . . . We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance."* As camps and members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the descendent group of the GAR, General Logan's Order #11 reminds us that our generation too; has a duty to find, mark, and preserve the resting places of the "Boys in Blue. In large measure this is how we can ensure that physical evidence of the sacrifice made between 1861 and 1865 survives within the corporate American memory. The second instruction that General Logan passed on to us is that, we as members must ensure that the story of that sacrifice is taught to the next generation of Americans less the lesson of that sacrifice be lost to them. The following quote from order #11 defines our task; *"o vandalism of avarice or neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or coming generations that we have forgotten, as a people, the cost of a free and undivided republic."* We must share the responsibility to secure a future in which apathy and ignorance for sacred days such as Memorial Day have no place. We must stand up, testifying to the values of Patriotism and the values of the men we seek to honor. Camps should become involved with their local schools. The National SUVCW has a program for "Adopt-a-School.

Identify and contact the people who teach history in all grades. K - College. Camps can put together a speakers bureau that local history teachers can call upon to present programs in the classroom. Have your camp start up a local history teacher of the year award, this is great way to gain local community media exposure. In order to educate the public we must become involved at the grassroots in our communities by seeking out and working with the other patriotic groups such as the SAR or DAR to increase awareness. If you have not already established an Eagle Scout or JROTC program do so. The requirements for these programs can be found on the national web site and their cost is small in relation to the benefits and rewards they reap.

If we are to preserve in our goals to bring Memorial Day back to the original purpose we must educate the public to that original purpose. We are the front line in this endeavor and it is up to us to take an action and take it soon.

The Battle Cry of Freedom (excerpts)

Yes, we'll rally round the flag, boys, we'll rally once again
shouting the battle-cry of freedom

We will rally from the hill-side, we'll gather from the plain
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom

The Union forever, hurrah boys, hurrah!

Down with the traitor, up with the star

While we rally round the flag boys, rally once again

Shouting the battle-cry of freedom

We are springing to the call of our brothers gone before,
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom

George Frederick Root