

## November 2010 Patriotic Instructor Message

As the month of November brings forth the shortening day, the cold clear skies, and the leaf clothed in red, there is an appropriate slowing of the world about us. The ambitions of summer have melted into cold moonlight nights and the knowledge of winter's near arrival makes a man introspective. One Hundred and forty-seven years ago the somber days of November were backdrop to the stage upon which Abraham Lincoln stood to offer what has become the most important speech in, the short history, of the American nation, his Gettysburg Address. On the afternoon of Thursday, November 19, 1863, at the dedication of the Soldiers National Cemetery, four and a half months after the Battle of Gettysburg had come to a close, Abraham Lincoln rose to address the gathered people. In the next two minutes he spoke on the meaning of the war but more importantly he spoke on the need to remember the men who fought in the war, saying that "In a larger sense, we can not dedicate — we can not consecrate — we can not hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced."

Lincoln was instructing the people of his time, as well as the generations which were to come after, that it would be their job to carry on the work and to see that the long term benefits won by the sacrifice of so many young men would be provided to the people of America forever. Therefore, it must be, for those of us who honor our ancestors and continue to perpetuate the memory of our ancestors sacrifice, that these words of Lincoln are a call to action. The words of Lincoln, like the November winds which have lain bare the trees, allow us to view the plain truth for the first time. One Hundred and Forty-seven years ago in the depth of the fall, Lincoln told us that there would be a spring and he reminded us that the span of the world and the meaning of events, roll on beyond the far horizon. As we approach another Remembrance Day, in Gettysburg, it is important that we reflect on how we have answered the call, made on that sad but memorable November day so long ago, by Lincoln.

We are the recipients of the historical disassociation created by the passage of time. Today many people no longer see the lessons of the Civil War as useful. Time has become a haze which obliterates the past, obscures the future and in some cases acts like a killing frost by destroying societies connection to the past utterly. To counter the erosion of patriotism and to promote remembrance, of the past, we must rejoice in the inspiration that our ancestors provided us and we must teach others that the high ideals and moral courage displayed by our ancestors is worthy of preservation and emulation. We must not seek to make our ancestors famous but rather to earn them honor that will pass the test of time. It is to this end that we must be dedicated

In closing this patriotic instructors message, I ask you to ponder these words of Alfred Lord Tennyson "*Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore, And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.* For me this means, that we must not be the ones who give into the world by forgetting the past. We must linger on the shore and pass on wisdom for which so many paid the ultimate price.

