

March 2023 National Patriotic Instruction

Brothers,

As you might have noticed by now, most of my monthly instructions are about how we can grow the order through Patriotism. Whether it is showing our Patriotic ways to the community, on social media, or with other organizations that are like minded. However, this month I have decided to dedicate the National Patriotic Instruction to the 160th Anniversary of the 1st Medal of Honor being presented. On 25 March 1863, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton on behalf of President Abraham Lincoln, awarded Pvt. Jacob Parrott of the 33rd Ohio the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Andrews' Raid, also known as the Great Locomotive Chase. The Medal of Honor is the highest decoration anyone in the United States Armed Forces can receive.

Since its inception in 1861, there have only been 3535 Medal of Honors that have been issued to members of the military. A vast majority of these were issued to those during the American Civil War, including the only female to have ever received the Medal of Honor, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker as well as the youngest to ever receive the Medal, Drummer William Johnston of the 3rd Vermont Infantry, who was 11 years and 358 days old at the time of his actions. The citations vary in detail and the level of bravery, but they all share one thing in common, they were willing to do everything in their ability to not only serve the Union, but to be there for their fellow soldiers, sailors and Marines.

In 1916 a review board was created to examine every Medal of Honor recipient, as until then there was no other medal to be issued for valor in the US Military and the standards one had to do to receive the medal had increased. The review board found that of the 2625 medals they reviewed, 911 did not meet the new standards and were rescinded. Of those 911, 1 was re-issued after a second review in 1977, that being for Dr. Mary Walker, and 5 additional ones were re-issued after a third review in 1989 Scout William H. Woodall being the only Civil War recipient, both were originally rescinded because they were civilians working for the Army, not soldiers. After these review boards, the total issued to those from the American Civil War is 1523.

My challenge to all of you this month is simple. Learn more about a local Medal of Honor Recipient and share their story. Don't let their sacrifices be forgotten, as this is part of our mission. I look forward to seeing and hearing about these brave souls in the coming months, whether it be in face to face conversations, seeing posts on social media, or by seeing their grave stone and doing a little digging...that is poor phrasing but you know what I mean.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,
Br. Ben Frail, PDC
National Patriotic Instructor