



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

58 Forest Street
Wakefield, MA 01880
cinc@suvvw.org



Special Message #17
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Decoration Day and the Sacred Duty of Remembrance

Brothers of the Order,

As Memorial Day approaches, our Nation once again turns its attention to the memory of those brave men and women of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in defense of liberty and Union. Their sacrifice preserved this Republic through its darkest hours and secured the freedoms that generations of Americans continue to enjoy today. We owe them not only our gratitude, but our enduring remembrance.

For the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, this sacred observance holds a meaning unlike any other. Memorial Day was born from the hearts of Union veterans who, having witnessed the terrible cost of preserving the Nation, resolved that their fallen comrades would never be forgotten. On May 5, 1868, General John A. Logan, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, issued General Order No. 11 establishing Decoration Day—a day upon which the graves of the honored dead would be adorned with flowers and kept in grateful memory by a reunited Nation.

From those humble acts of devotion in cemetery plots across America grew the Memorial Day we observe today.

As the legal heir to the Grand Army of the Republic, our Order bears a solemn responsibility. We are entrusted with preserving the memory, principles, and patriotism of the men who saved the Union. Their legacy is not confined to monuments of stone or bronze, but lives on through our continued acts of remembrance, service, and public witness.

I therefore call upon every Brother, every Camp, and every Department to participate fully and visibly in Memorial Day commemorations within your communities. Join in the decoration of veterans' graves, just as the comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic first did more than a century and a half ago. March proudly in parades. Attend and conduct memorial ceremonies. Stand beside our fellow veterans' organizations in honoring the fallen. Let the presence of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War serve as a living reminder that the sacrifices made for this Nation are remembered still.

When we place flowers upon a grave, bow our heads during a prayer, or carry the colors through the streets of our hometowns, we continue a sacred tradition handed down to us by the veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic themselves. In those moments, we become more than spectators to history—we become its guardians.

At cemeteries large and small across this Nation rest Americans who answered the call of duty in every generation. Some died beneath the smoke of Civil War battlefields; others on distant shores and foreign fields far from home. All gave something of themselves so that this Republic might endure. Their silence now speaks to us across the years, asking only that they not be forgotten.

Let us answer that call with renewed dedication.

May we honor their memory not merely in words, but through visible acts of patriotism, remembrance, and service. And may we always prove worthy of the great legacy entrusted to our Order.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin P. Tucker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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