

MEMORIAL DAY

The following address is from the "Special Services at Cemetery" as given by the Post Commander from the 1917 "Services for the use of the Grand Army of the Republic." It would make a fitting address during that portion of the Sons of Union Veterans Memorial Day ceremony that designates an address:

NATIONAL DAY OF MEMORIAL

This is the national day of memorial - the time when in mind and thought our glorious past is made to live again, and the noble men who moulded and shaped its destiny, though dead, are to memory once more instinct with life and being. It is the hour when a nation awakes to the remembrance of deeds of heroism performed in its defense; the day when a loyal people grateful for service rendered their country, unite to honor their patriot dead, to enrich and ennoble their own lives by recalling a public valor and a private worth that are immortal, and to encourage, by their solemn services, a more zealous and abiding patriotism in the heart and life of every American citizen. The differences of party, creed and sect are today forgotten, while north and south, east and west, all over our broad land, our people, with reverent hearts, circle the sacred mounds where sleep our country's dead. The cares of business, the pursuits of pleasure, the usual and common concerns of secular life are put aside, while we bring flowers and wreaths of evergreen with which to decorate the graves of the men who have sacrificed on the altar of patriotic devotion everything that men hold dear, in order to preserve the integrity and unity, and to perpetuate the power and glory of our American republic. But on this Memorial Day let us not forget that many eyes are clouded with tears, that many hearts are heavy with regret, that many lives are desolate because of the father or brother, the husband or lover, who did not come back, and that many graves are the shrines of a sorrow whose influence is still potent though time has mercifully robbed it of its first keen anguish. Therefore, with our regard for the dead, let us mingle a tender sympathy for the living who mourn for the loved ones they have lost. And now, Brothers, as in this silent camping ground of our Nation's dead, with soldierly reverence and love we garland these passionless mounds, let us recall to memory the men who, in the time of danger, made their breasts a barricade between our country and its foes. Let us recall their toils on the long and weary marches, their intense sufferings in the hospitals, their fearful sacrifices in the prison pens, their sublime heroism in the

days of battle, and their supreme fidelity to home and country and native land at all times and under all circumstances, that we who remain may see that the flag under which they fought, and from the shadow of whose fold they were promoted "to fame's eternal camping grounds" may never be dishonored; that the country for whose union and supremacy they surrendered that most precious of all earthly things - life - may have the fervent and enthusiastic devotion of every citizen, and that as today we stand at every grave as before an altar, we may pledge our manhood that so help us God, the memory of our country's dead shall strengthen and encourage in us all a deeper and more abiding patriotism.

The following could also be used as part of the wreath laying or flower laying ceremony as spoken by a designated Brother and the Chaplain:

Designated Brother: *In the name of the Grand Army of the Republic, I scatter (or deposit) these memorial flowers upon this grave (or monument) which represents the graves of all who died in the sacred cause of our country. Our floral tribute shall wither. Let the tender fraternal love for which it stands endure until the touch of death shall chill the warm pulse-beat of our hearts.*

Chaplain: *Brothers, by this service, without distinction of race or creed, we renew our pledge to exercise a spirit of fraternity among ourselves, of charity to the destitute wards of the Grand Army, and of loyalty to the authority and union of the United States of America, and to our glorious flag under whose folds every Union soldier or sailor's grave is the altar of patriotism.*

All: *Amen!*