

MEMORIAL DAY ADDRESS: 2021

I AM FRANK GIROUX...IT IS MY HONOR TO BE WITH YOU AND REPRESENT THE DYE IN THE AMERICAN FABRIC. I AM HERE FOR HAROLD WARREN CUMMINGS Jr....A FATHER OF THREE, MY TEAM-MATE, WHO DID HIS DUTY AND IN DOING SO LAID DOWN HIS LIFE SO THAT I MIGHT DO MY DUTY. AND SO IT GOES.....

BEGINNING 245 YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF 56 RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS SAT DOWN AND PUT PEN TO PAPER, LODGING THEIR CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS DIRECTED TOWARD WHAT WAS PERCEIVED TO BE THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN THE WORLD.

THESE GENTLEMEN CONCLUDED THEIR TREATISE WITH AN OATH:

“WE MUTUALLY PLEDGE TO EACH OTHER OUR LIVES, OUR FORTUNES AND OUR SACRED HONOR”.

THUS SPOKE THE FOUNDERS OF OUR NATION IN CONCLUDING THEIR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. AND, SINCE THEIR STATEMENT OF FIDELITY, MORE THAN SIX MILLION CITIZENS HAVE BLED THE GROUND AND OVER ONE AND A HALF MILLION HAVE BLED OUT ON THE FIELD; LAYING DOWN THEIR LIVES IN DEFENSE OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY AND JUSTICE.

THE MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART ARE HONORED TO REPRESENT THIS SACRIFICE AND STAND FIRM IN FIDELITY TO THE FOUNDERS OATH AND THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US.

TODAY WE HONOR AMERICANS KILLED IN ACTION, THOSE TAKEN FROM US IN WAR. WE, THE COMBAT WOUNDED AND MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRIOTISM.

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE WITH US TODAY.

WE WILL INFORM AS TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECORATION. OUR INTENTION IS OUR FELLOW CITIZENS UNDERSTAND THE PROPER ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THIS SACRIFICE.

ALL DECORATED WITH THE PURPLE HEART GAVE SOME, BUT SOME GAVE THEIR ALL!! THEY BLED OUT AND LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE. HENCE THE COLOR PURPLE, A ROYAL COLOR.

MEASURED OVER 245 YEARS OF NATIONHOOD, ONE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND SOULS HAVE PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE FOR US GATHERED HERE TODAY.

AND AT THIS VERY MOMENT, SOMEWHERE IN THE WORLD, WE HAVE ASKED A YOUNG AMERICAN MAN OR WOMAN TO PLACE THEMSELVES IN HARMS WAY; THEY HAVE DONE SO, AND MAY BE BLEEDING.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND, ON THE FIELD WHERE THE METAL MEETS THE FLESH, DUTY AND HONOR WILL ALWAYS OVERCOME RANK AND STATUS.

LET US CALL TO MIND THOSE WE HAVE KNOWN. I REMEMBER 3 PATRIOTS I GREW UP WITH; FRANK BELDUCIA, RICHARD CONTREAS AND ALBERT MENDOZA, ALL LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES IN VIETNAM...AND YOUNG CARSON RAMSEY WHO HONORED US IN IRAQ....

COME WITH ME NOW AND LISTEN TO WHAT THEY MIGHT
SAY TO US, THE LIVING.....

IN FLANDERS FIELDS THE POPPIES BLOW
BETWEEN THE CROSSES ROW ON ROW,
THAT MARK OUR PLACE; AND IN THE SKY
THE LARKS, STILL BRAVELY SINGING FLY,
SCARCE HEARD AMID THE GUNS BELOW.

WE ARE THE DEAD. SHORT DAYS AGO
WE LIVED, FELT DAWN, SAW SUNSET GLOW,
LOVED AND WERE LOVED, AND NOW
WE LIE IN FLANDERS FIELDS.

TAKE UP OUR QUARREL WITH THE FOE:
TO YOU FROM FAILING HANDS WE THROW
THE TORCH; BE YOURS TO HOLD IT HIGH.

IF YE BREAK FAITH WITH US WHO DIE
WE SHALL NOT SLEEP,
THOUGH POPPIES GROW
IN FLANDERS FIELDS.

IN THE EARLY 1900'S DURING WORLD WAR I, A YOUNG
CANADIAN WARRIOR BY THE NAME OF JOHN McCRAE
WROTE A DECEASED SOLDIERS REQUEST KNOWN TO US AS
"IN FLANDERS FIELDS"

HOW PROPHETIC!! AS JOHN WENT ON TO LAY DOWN HIS
LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY! HIS POETIC ADMONISHMENT TO
KEEP FAITH IS FOREVER SYNONYMOUS WITH MEMORIAL
DAY.

SO TOO IS THE PURPLE HEART.....

THE PURPLE HEART IS THE OLDEST AMERICAN DECORATION.

ANOTHER VERY SIGNIFICANT FACT, THE PURPLE HEART IS THE ONLY DECORATION THAT IS RECEIVED.

YOU DO NOT WIN IT AND, IN REALITY YOU ARE NOT AWARDED IT. TO PARAPHRASE GENERAL GEORGE PATTON: "THE OTHER FELLOW PRESENTS IT TO YOU." OR, AS GENERAL HAL MOORE MIGHT SAY: "IT IS RECEIVED ON THE FIELD, WHERE THE METAL MEETS THE FLESH."

THE PURPLE HEART CAME TO BE AS A RESULT OF GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FRUSTRATION IN NEITHER BEING ABLE TO PAY OR PROMOTE HIS MEN.

WHEN OUR COMBAT FORCES WERE FORMED TO SECURE OUR INDEPENDENCE IN 1775; WE HAD NO DECORATIONS! THE GENERAL WISHED TO FOREGO THE BRIC-BRAC AND POMPY-POLITIC THAT PLAGUED THE ENGLISH AND OTHER ARMIES; WHERE OFFICERS WERE FROM FAMILY STATUS AND THE COMMON MAN BLED.

THE AMERICAN CAUSE WAS AND CONTINUES TO BE SPECIAL AND UNIQUE...IT IS FEARED AND DESPISED BY EVERY TYRANT AND THOSE WHO WOULD BE SO.

6 YEARS INTO THE FIGHT, ON AUGUST 7, 1782, GENERAL WASHINGTON COMMISSIONED OUR VERY FIRST DECORATION. WASHINGTON'S OPENING AND CLOSING STATEMENTS OF HIS GENERAL ORDERS ON THAT DATE MAKE CLEAR HIS LOVE AND RESPECT FOR HIS COUNTRYMEN----- AND READ AS FOLLOWS:

“THE GENERAL EVER DESIROUS TO CHERISH VIRTUOUS AMBITION IN HIS SOLDIERS AS WELL AS FOSTER AND ENCOURAGE EVERY SPECIES OF MILITARY MERIT” -----AND IN CLOSING HE WROTE: “THE ROAD TO GLORY IN A PATRIOT ARMY AND A FREE COUNTRY IS THUS OPEN TO ALL.”

THE ORIGINAL DECORATION IS A PURPLE CLOTH FABRIC HEART EDGED IN GOLD BINDING WITH THE WORD “MERIT” WRITTEN ACROSS.

THE DECORATION AS WE KNOW IT TODAY WAS BROUGHT FORWARD BY GENERAL DOUGLAS MacARTHUR TO HONOR WASHINGTON AND THOSE WHO SHED BLOOD FOR THE COUNTRY.

BOTH WASHINGTON AND MacARTHUR WERE MEN OF EXACTING PURPOSE AND CHOSE THEIR CONDUCT CAREFULLY.

BOTH HAD MANY TIMES FACED DEATH ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

THEY EACH HELD GREAT RESPECT AND ABIDING LOVE FOR THEIR FELLOW SOLDIERS.

THEY AND THOSE WE HONOR HERE ARE OF CLASS!

AMERICAN CLASS!!-----THEIR ACTION TEACHES US; CLASS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WHERE WE LIVE, NOR WHAT WE DRIVE, THE CLOTHES WE WEAR NOR THE MONEY WE HAVE IN THE BANK....NOT RACE OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND NOR CAREER PATH NOR VOCATION.

CLASS IS NEITHER HIGH, MIDDLE NOR LOW.

ONE EITHER HAS CLASS OR NOT!

CLASS IS WHAT IS HELD IN YOUR HEART AND MIND.

CLASS IS STRENGTH AND HONOR.

CLASS IS DUTY, HONOR AND COUNTRY.

CLASS IS KNOWING YOU REPORT TO A HIGHER AUTHORITY;
ALMIGHTY GOD...THAT YOU FOLLOW NEITHER AN ILLEGAL
NOR AN IMMORAL ORDER AND YOU ALWAYS REMEMBER
YOU ANSWER TO HIM FOR WHATEVER YOU DO.

CLASS IS KEEPING FAITH AND MAKING CERTAIN THE TORCH
IS PASSED AND HELD HIGH!

AND, BECAUSE OF IT

VALIANT SOULS WILL SLEEP

AND POPPIES WILL GROW IN FLANDERS FIELDS.

FOR IN REALITY, FROM A TRUE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE,
THE MOST POWERFUL ARE NOT THOSE WHO SIT IN THE
OFFICE THAT IS OVAL NOR CORPORATE TOWERS OF IVORY...
NO!

THE MOST POWERFUL IS THE INDIVIDUAL WHO STANDS IN
THE BREECH BETWEEN PEACE AND TERROR THUS
AFFORDING OTHERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE A SEAT.

THEREFORE, LET US REMEMBER WHO WE ARE AND FROM
WHERE WE COME! WE ARE OF MANY SHADES AND TRIBES
BUT ONE NATION ON AN EPIC QUEST FOR INDIVIDUAL
LIBERTY AND JUSTICE.

LET US SPEND OUR BLOOD AND TREASURE WISELY. LET US BE GOOD NEIGHBORS AND LEAD BY EXAMPLE. LET US ALWAYS PROMOTE THOSE THAT UNDERSTAND AND HONOR THE SACRIFICE THAT SUSTAINS THE AMERICAN NATION, THE PURPOSE OF WHICH IS TO BE A LIGHT OF HOPE TO THE OPPRESSED OF THE WORLD.

REMEMBER THE OATH TAKEN BY 56 STALWART SOULS 245 YEARS AGO; "WE MUTUALLY PLEDGE TO EACH OTHER OUR LIVES, OUR FORTUNES AND OUR SACRED HONOR"!

REMEMBER THEIR COMMITMENT TO INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY AND JUSTICE!

THE FOUNDERS KEPT THEIR VOW AND MILLIONS HAVE SHED BLOOD FOR IT!

DO NOT TAKE YOUR CITIZENSHIP LIGHTLY!

DO NOT SELL OUR COUNTRY CHEAPLY!

KEEP FAITH AND PRESS ON!!

FRANK W. GIROUX
FT LOWELL CHAPTER 442
21 MAY 2021