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**Special Message #3**  
**Series 2020-2021**  
**31 March 2021**

### **160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Start of the Civil War**

Brothers,

The 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 marks the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the bombardment of Fort Sumter, the commencement of the greatest, most terrible war in America's history. A war to which we remain connected by the unbreakable bond of our heritage to our veteran forefathers. It is undoubtedly true to say that the American Civil War continues to shape America to this very day as no other war since then in our country's history has done. Only the War for Independence is as significant. The American Civil war set our country on the long course to fully realizing the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

On 11 April 1861, upon receiving the demand to surrender Fort Sumter, Major Robert Anderson replied, "I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication, demanding the evacuation of this fort, and to say, in reply thereto, that it is a demand with which I regret that my sense of honor and my obligations to my Government prevent my compliance."

At 0427 on the 12<sup>th</sup>, the first shot of the Civil War was fired from a 10-inch mortar located in Fort Johnson. After a day and a half of continuous bombardment, Major Anderson finally agreed to a truce and commenced a gun salute to the United States flag, during which an explosion killed two privates and seriously wounded the other four members of the gun crew. These were the first military casualties of the war.

Within three days, President Lincoln issued a proclamation calling forth 75,000 volunteers to defend the government, the laws of the United States, and appealing to all loyal citizens for their support of the efforts to maintain the "honor, the integrity, and the existence of our National Union". These 75,000 were the first of 2.2 million men from every state who served the United States over the course of the war.

I do not think that anyone at the time fully realized that those first shots and those first casualties would grow into a war of unprecedented scale to preserve the Union, transforming into a noble

crusade to free those in bondage and a hallowed trial for the soul of America. The outcome, bought at the dear price of four long, hard years of war and 650,000 deaths on both sides, has been well worth it. The Civil War gave us heroes whom we can admire today. It gave us one of the greatest presidents in our country's history and resulted in the passage of three great amendments to the Constitution which set the mold for providing civil rights to all Americans.

I am, like you my Brothers, immensely proud of my ancestors who fought for the Union. Let us never forget them or the sacrifices they made.

Let Major Anderson's sense of honor and duty to our country be our example. Let us not squander our inheritance. Let us renew our commitment to the values of the United States expressed in the Declaration of Independence and in President Lincoln's second inaugural address, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

On the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2021, all Brothers are encouraged to prominently display the flag of the United States, preferably a replica of a US flag flown from 1861-1865. Brothers are encouraged to wear the badge of the Order in public. Brothers are asked to humbly pray to our Lord that we remain fitting heirs to our veteran ancestors' legacy of loyalty, of honor and of justice.

Thank you for all you do to keep green the memory of the Boys in Blue!

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,



Brian C. Pierson  
Commander-in-Chief  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Attest:

*Jonathan C. Davis*

Jonathan C. Davis  
National Secretary  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War