

MEMORIAL DAY 2008
BLOOD THAT CRIES FROM THE GROUND
Genesis 4:10

INTRO: Memorial Day is a time of remembrance, a time when we honor our military dead. It is a time to remember their sacrifice wherever that sacrifice took place.

Every military cemetery is a reminder of blood shed for freedom. Whether that sacred place be in France, Belgium, Italy, Australia, Singapore, Mexico City (Mexican War), Indonesia, Poland, Greece, Denmark, Germany, the Philippines, or any of the other 13 foreign cemeteries where 124,917 our service personnel rest, let us not forget their sacrifice, a sacrifice of blood. Nor shall we forget the 95,000 who lie in graves known only to God. Truly their blood cries out, "Remember us!"

I. WHERE IT ALL STARTED

- A. The first Memorial Day was known as Decoration Day, and it all began in Columbus, Mississippi, a hospital town during the War for Southern Independence. It was after the Battle of Shiloh, April 6-7, 1862, that hundreds of wounded soldiers, North and South, were carried by train to Columbus. The death rate of the wounded was high, and hundreds were buried in this Mississippi town.
- B. It was after the war that a group of Southern women made their way to Friendship Cemetery in Columbus to place flowers on the graves of their Confederate dead. As these ladies did this noble deed, they noticed that the Union Soldiers did not have flowers on their graves. These dear ladies took flowers and placed them upon the graves of the Northern soldiers. These dear ladies would from then on be known as the Decoration Day Ladies.
- C. New York Attorney Francis Miles Finch read a newspaper article in the New York Tribune concerning the Decoration Day Ladies of Columbus, Mississippi, the year was 1867. The article said, "The women of Columbus, Mississippi, animated by nobler sentiments than are many of their sisters, have shown themselves impartial in their offerings made to the memory of the dead. They strewed flowers alike on the graves of the Confederate and of the Federal soldiers."
 - 1. Finch told a reporter, "When I read those lines in the Tribune it struck me that the South was holding out a

friendly hand, and that it was our duty, not only as conquerors, but as men and fellow citizens to grasp it.”

2. Francis Miles Finch, ex-Union soldier, was inspired to write the poem “The Blue and the Gray.” This poem would become required memorization for all grammar school children. I share but one stanza:

“From the silence of sorrowful hours
the desolate mourners go.
Lovingly laden with flowers
Alike for the friend and the foe;
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting for the judgment day;
Under the roses, the blue;
Under the lilies the Gray.”

3. So we see that the first Memorial Day was on April 25, 1866 at Columbus, Mississippi. A picture of the Decoration Day Ladies can be seen in the Billups-Garth Archives in the Columbus-Lowndes County Library.
4. In an article written by Captain Bob Banks titled, “A Peep into the Past” he gives an eyewitness account of the first Memorial Day. “Arriving at the cemetery, the ladies assembled around the graves of the soldiers in a form of a square... The ladies then performed the beautiful and touching duty of decorating the graves with flowers. It is fact-and historic fact, absolutely authentic and incontrovertible-that the first Decoration Day for the graves of the Confederate dead was April 25, 1866, at Columbus, Mississippi. This beautiful custom of decorating soldier’s graves, which has now become national, had its birth in the sweet-hearted activities of the three ladies of that town, Mrs. J.T. Fontaine, Mrs. Green T. Hill and Miss Matt Morton. On that occasion too, Mrs. Augustus Sykes led the way to the graves of the Federal dead and tenderly placed garlands upon the sod that covered the Union soldiers.”

II. THE HERO OF THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

- A. The Spanish American War cost 3,289 American lives. The war cry of the war was, “Remember the Maine.” The Maine was sunk in Havana harbor costing 260 US sailors their lives.

B. The most remembered warrior of this war is Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt, commander of the Rough Riders. We need heroes like him today.

III. Jn 15:13, THE BLOOD OF THE DOUGH BOYS OF WORLD WAR I

A. Let us not forget the sufferings of our men in WW I. 116,708 men gave their lives for freedom.

B. One of the most famous poems to come out of WW I was written by Moina Michael in 1918. This poem still inspires people to wear the Poppy on Memorial Day. The poem is titled, "We shall Keep The Faith."

At Flanders fields,
the Poppy grows with profusion.
Sleep sweet-to rise anew!
We caught the torch you threw
And holding high, we keep the faith
With all who died

We cherish, too, the poppy red
That grows on fields where valor led;
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies,
But lends a luster to the red
Of the flower that blooms above the dead
In Flanders Fields

And now the Torch and Poppy Red
We wear in honor of our dead
Fear not that ye have died for naught;
We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought
In Flanders Fields.

IV. THE HEROES OF WORLD WAR II

A. Tom Brokaw calls the generation of WW II, "The Greatest Generation." Eisenhower, Patton, McCain, MacArthur, Nimitz, Bradley, Marshall and the list goes on of the great leaders of WW II.

B. The United States gave the blood of 416,800 men and women to defeat the terrorists of that day Mussolini and Hitler.

C. World War II veterans are dying at a rate of nearly one

thousand per day. Have they died in vain? Are we to give up on freedoms fight? Shall we allow the evil leaders of the world to do as they please without recourse? No! For the blood of our heroes cries from the ground, "Fight on."

V. THE KOREAN CONFLICT

- A. Our first Jet Aces came out of this war. The cold and the mud and the North Koreans and the Chinese tried to break our back, but we fought on. MacArthur wanted to push the Communists out of the entire country of Korea, but he was relieved of duty.
- B. In Korea, we gave the blood of 36,576 of our own for the cause of freedom. Their blood cries out fight on for freedom. Don't bow to the liberals and the yellow journalists.

VI. VIETNAM

- A. The Viet Nam wall is the most touching monument to me in Washington D.C. I am moved by the Iwo Jima monument and others, but the Viet Nam memorial has the names of my generation on it. The names of my peers in Viet Nam. The names of Clifford Lint of Ocean Springs and of Billy Denley of Elliott are on that wall!
- B. I have never been ashamed of my service in Viet Nam. I do not and will not apologize for my service. Serving during Linebacker II proved to me that the soldier, the sailor, the marine and the airman wanted to win.
- C. Will the blood of 58,217 men and women go unheralded? I say no, never.

VII. IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

- A. Right now, we have men and women serving in the War on Terror. Should they be criticized and mistreated for keeping us free? I say no!
- B. We have given 4,061 of our best in Iraq and 483 in Afghanistan. Have they died in vain? No!

VIII. THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST CRIES OUT

- A. The blood of Jesus will set you free indeed! Christ died for our sins and arose for our justification.
- B. The blood that He sweat in the Garden cries out to us. The blood from His face where the beard was plucked out cries out.

The blood from the stripes on His back cries out. The blood of His thorn crowned brow cries out. The blood from His nail pierce hands and feet cries out. The blood from His spear riven side cries out. HIS BLOOD CRIES OUT!

- C. What you will do with the blood of Christ? Will you receive Him as Saviour or trod under foot His sacrifice? (Hebrews 10:29)
- D. Yes, Christ shed His blood; He was buried; but now, is risen as the Captain of the Christians (Hebrews 2:10).

Conclusion: We are in danger of becoming a Paper Tiger! To be strong, we must have God on our side, without Him we will continue to be weak as water. May God help us to be strong! At one time, we were a Nation to be reckoned. May it be said of us what is said in Ezekiel 3:8, "Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy foreheads strong against their foreheads."

"This Memorial Day take time to thank those that have proudly worn the uniform of the United States military. May we never forget that so many poured out that last full measure of devotion so that you and I might live free." (Janet Parshall)