

## A Salute to the Flag

We are able to meet in this place today because of what has transpired over the last 241 years...and by that I mean the valiant efforts of those in service to our country; the sacrifices they have made, and continue to make at this very moment, here at home and on foreign soil to protect our freedoms.

This is our fine ensign of freedom, a bold emblem of strength and hope. A long list of heroes, with the help of God, have kept Old Glory flying high in the face of the many threats and challenges to our way of life.

The blood spilled on the fields of battle at Valley Forge, Gettysburg and Chancellorsville, up San Juan Hill, in faraway Korea, Viet Nam, Iraq, and every other battle that we have fought on land, sea, and in the air has forever stained this fabric a bright crimson.

The white stripes are as brilliant rays of sunshine that deeply penetrate even the blackest of nights. Still our nation's darkest hours are filled with a radiant glow from this symbol.

The blue field brings to mind the clouded canopy or starry-decked heavens where we find an infinite number of stars that inspire mankind to continue ascending the spiral stairway of history to a world of glowing promise. This is the emblem of man's finest dreams. It is our greatest hope on earth. It is our American flag.

Our nation reveres this flag not from a sense of unquestioning worship, but from a deep sense of national heritage. Strengthened by our noble deeds, splendid accomplishments, and untold sacrifices, this flag reflects America's pledge to uphold democracy and work for peace throughout the world. It is America's strength in honor, as dignified in the stars and stripes of the flag. It helps establish the moral character of our nation.

To maintain the American way of life, and pass it on to those generations that follow us, is the responsibility of every True American. Let us together vow to do this. I'm sure we all know someone who is helping to secure your freedoms right now. So, I ask that you stand quietly in honor of those who serve, and please focus your eyes upon the Stars and Stripes, and assume a proper salute as we join our voices in the pledge of allegiance to this flag.

(Pledge)

We are gathered today to offer a proper respect to the ensigns of this Nation that have become tattered, weathered, or torn....to give them a proper and respectful retirement. We are pleased to have with us members of the Richmond-Ft. Lee Chapter of the National Sojourners, who will conduct our flag retirement ceremony.



..... #92 in a series of 'Nuggets from the Quarry of Freemasonry'.<sup>SM</sup>

*Douglas M. Messimer, PM, LEO Tuckahoe Lodge 347 7/6/17*