

AMERICANISM/PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR – 2020-2021 BULLETIN 3

In several items I have read recently, it has been stated that it was 56 years ago that Americans headed for the polls for the first time after the assassination of a president. These statements have brought back many memories for me. I was stationed in Washington D.C. (Andrews AFB – the home of the Marine One fleet and Air Force One fleet) at the time of President Jack Kennedy's death. I was extremely fortunate to be chosen to be one of 20 female soldiers (WACs) which were part of one unit of 80 females in uniform (the other being 20 women Marines, 20 WAVES, and 20 WAF) to "march" in his funeral parade. We were the only women in military uniform in that parade. At that time, our nation was fighting a "hot" war in Southeast Asia and a "cold" war against a nuclear adversary. Americans voted (at least those Americans who were able to vote – I was too young – you had to be 21 to vote!) knowing that our future depended upon it! Voting is a duty of citizenship. With the disagreements now happening within our country by extremists, we Americans need to bow to no one in our concern and zeal for the future security and greatness of America. It isn't necessary that we all think alike. We need to keep our values in clear focus. Our resort must be to reason – not emotion, to persuasion – not violence, to perseverance – not panic. Our country is currently facing big and perplexing problems. The answers do not come easily. However, please keep in mind and educate as many as you can, that these answers will not come at all if substantial numbers of Americans permit themselves to be led into extravagances of hate and fear.

In cleaning up and clearing out some of my papers, I found an item I wish to share with you. This was a speech that I gave many times to Junior Girls (a program with the Auxiliary that no longer exists), and can be given today to a class/group learning the Pledge of Allegiance. These thoughts are viable still today!

AMERICANISM SPEECH TO JUNIOR GIRLS

Girls, I'm here today not only to help you earn your rank, but I want to impress you with the fact that you are a young American. I am proud of the fact that I am an American, and I hope that you are, too.

There are many days during the year when you should fly the flag. One in particular is Veterans Day. It used to be called Armistice Day. That is the day that the Armistice was signed to end World War I. The United States had sent over two million men overseas to fight to help bring peace to the European countries. Thousands of these men never came back as they were killed fighting for our country. Since then, there have been other wars: World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam. But every year on November 11th, we honor those who died that we might live in peace. One way to honor them is to fly the flag – the symbol of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – the symbol of our country and our freedom that we enjoy. So, girls, remember to show respect for our flag always. When you go to a parade, stand up when the flag goes by and salute it. If you have a flag at home, ask Mother or Dad to fly it on all holidays and, above all, do not play with it or allow it to touch the ground. This is showing respect for the flag and our country.

The flag is far more than the red, white, and blue cloth of which it is made. It is the symbol of our America. It stands for the past, the present, and the future of our country. It stands for our people, our land, and our way of life. George Washington said, "We will take the stars and the blue union from heaven, red from our mother country separating it by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing liberty."

Perhaps now you would like to know a little of the history of the development of our flag. That means how it came to be the way it looks today. The flag of the United States of America of today has 13 stripes, 7 red and 6 white – with 50 white stars on a blue field. The stripes remind us of the 13 original colonies that gained us our liberty and the stars represent the states that are bound together into one country. The red stands for loyalty, white for freedom, and blue for unity.

I now wish to present you with your flag. May you display it proudly. Guard and respect it at all times, for it is the symbol of every high ideal in the American way of life. This flag is displayed in our courts, schools, churches, meetings, on our ships, and from many buildings. With your friends sitting about you this afternoon, I want you to pledge your allegiance to our flag and our country. As you look at the flag, think of the pledge you are making and you will feel, again, the thrill of being an American.