The Speech of Freedom

Veteran's Day Sunday

08 November 2015

Grace Doctrine Church

St. Charles, Missouri

Joe Griffin

Pastor

Introduction:

There is a walkway across an island in front of our church which we call the Walk of Honor. Members of this church that have served in the United States armed forces each have their names inserted as pavers according to the branch in which they served.

Those in the U. S. Air Force:

Mark Allen, Daniel C. Clayton, Richard C. Clayton, Skip Collins, Deborah J. Danyluk, Lee J. Hatfield, Jay A. Humphrey, Harold E. Keistler, Thomas P. Moore, Charles H. Natsch, Sr., Ericka Oxford, Lloyd Oxford, Everett Probasco, Michael T. Probasco, Ella Ray, Robert B. Thieme, Jr., Melvin L. Turner, Daniel R. Van Hoose, Vernon E. Waymire, Jr.

In the United States Army are:

Bernell F. Bircher, Mark J. Davey, Daniel E. Hunt,
James C. Hunt, Matthew T. Hunt, Otis L. Johnson, Jr., Ryan L. Johnson, Matthew C. Lawson, Eric R. Olsen, Alan S. Rawlins, A. Weldon Schott, Paul F. Seals, Brett M. Turner, Mark Vesser, Rickey L. Voyles, Matthew Wojciechowski, Thomas Wojciechowski, Gary E. Yess.

In the United States Marine Corps:

John G. Brunner, Christopher E. Hunt, Doris T. Hunt, Gary Lowery, Peter B. Todsen II.

In the United States Navy and Coast Guard:

Robert K. Brodin, John W. Brunner, Robert W. Hall, Jr., Richard S. Hays, Michael V. Modeer, Victor A. Modeer, Jr., Spencer Risty, Tyler M. Risty, Harry F. Tague, Gary D. Watson, Michael P. Weber.

It is due to the unflagging efforts of these people plus thousands more that are doing their part in suppressing an evil that intends to destroy Western culture and replace it with the seventh-century version of Islam. This is a threat that has not been taken seriously by our nation's political leaders and unfortunately far too many of the nation's citizens. The bloody result is inevitable as our porous southern border allows foreign nationals to infiltrate and disburse among the several states. As they assume the nature of fish in the stream of American life they become a Fifth Column that waits patiently to seize an opportunity to unleash violence upon innocent people and hurl this country into the throes of historical reality: that we are at war with Islam.

We are in danger of discovering tragically the price a nation must pay for not taking seriously the presence of a known enemy, or worse, not recognizing the overt proclamations of terrorist leaders that represent a real and imminent threat. Worse yet, the refusal to recognize there even is a threat.

There have been numerous occasions throughout history when nations have faced an enemy that is apparently stronger than them, but because of courage, fortitude, grit, and faith, have ridden the tide of divine Providence to victory. In the course of the action some have fallen, some have died, and some have emerged unscathed. Such events and their survivors have written a tale that describes the drama of victory or reports have been expressed by others in cinema, song, and story.

So now I present what I trust will be a stirring recitation of martial oratory; an anthology of pre-war rhetoric whose fire and spice inspired men to battle along with several post-war eulogies whose eloquence and humility paid tribute to those who engaged the battles and brought comfort to the grateful beneficiaries of victorious armies.

Henry V at Agincourt:

Our survey of *The Speech of Freedom* begins October 25, 1415 during the middle of the **Hundred Years' War**, an intermittent series of battles between England and France over disputed lands in Normandy. On this date, the English under **King Henry V** were victorious in one of the major battles of western history. Outnumbered five to one, the British engaged the army of France led by its supreme military commander, Constable **Charles d'Albret \äl'-bre**, at the **Battle of Agincourt \ä-zhan-kür'**.

As the moment of truth arrived on the morning of the twenty-fifth, King Henry challenged his troops to win a victory on **St. Crispin's Day**, which commemorated the martyrdom imposed by Roman emperor Maximian \mak-sim'-ē-an\ upon twin third-century missionaries to Northern France: Crispin \kris'-pin\ and Crispinian \kris-pin'-ē-an\. King Henry's oration is paraphrased by William Shakespeare's *The Life of King Henry the Fifth*.

> **Act 4, scene 3.** ***The English camp.***
>
> ***Enter*** **GLOUCHESTER, BEDFORD, EXETER, ERPINGHAM,** ***with all his host*****: SALISBURY and WESTMORELAND.**
>
> **GLOUCHESTER.** Where is the King?
>
> **BEDFORD.** The King himself is rode to view their battle.
>
> **WESTMORELAND.** Of fighting men they have full three score thousand.
>
> **EXETER.** There's five to one; besides, they all are fresh.

SALISBURY. God's arm strike with us! 'tis a fearful odds.
God be with you, princes all; I'll to my charge:
If we no more meet till we meet in heaven,
Then, joyfully, my noble Lord of Bedford,
My dear Lord Gloucester, and My good Lord
Exeter,
And my kind kinsman, warriors all, adieu!

BEDFORD. Farewell, good Salisbury; and good luck
go with thee!

EXETER. Farewell, kind lord; fight valiantly to-day:
And yet I do thee wrong to mind thee of it,
For thou art framed of the firm truth of valour.
Exit SALISBURY.

BEDFORD. He is as full of valour as of kindness;
Princely in both.

Enter the KING

WESTMORELAND. O that we now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do no work to-day!

KING HENRY. What's he that wishes so?
My cousin Westmorland. No, my fair cousin:
If we are marked to die, we are enough
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
God's will, I pray thee, wish not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:
God's peace, I would not lose so great an honour
As one man more, methinks, would share from
me
For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one
more!
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my
host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart. His passport shall be made
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is called the Feast of Crispian:

He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a-tiptoe when the day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall see this day and live t'old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say "To-morrow is Saint Crispian":
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars
And say "These wounds I had on Crispin's day."

Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words
Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remember'd;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now abed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.
(4.3:1–67) (pp. 555-56)

The outnumbered English forces won a stunning victory over the better-equipped French who suffered the loss of the Constable Charles d'Albret, twelve members of highest nobility, some 1,500 knights and about 4,500 men-at-arms. English losses were negligible. When told of their small number King Henry said:

KING HENRY. **O God, thy arm was here;**
And not to us, but to thy arm alone,
Ascribe we all! When, without stratagem,
But in plain shock and even play of battle,
Was ever known so great and little loss
On one part and on the other? Take it, God,
For it is none but thine! (4.8:111–17) (p. 561)[1]

[1] William Shakespeare, *The Life of King Henry the Fifth*, in *Great Books of the Western World: Shakespeare*, ed. Robert Maynard Hitchens (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 1: 26:555-56, 561:

This victory made Henry the diplomatic mediator of Europe. Historians observe that Henry found his nation weak and drifting and after nine years left it dominant in Europe. The victory at Agincourt began England's emergence as a military power. The commonwealth thus began to prepare itself to become a client nation to God. A hundred years later, following the Protestant Reformation, it would welcome the teaching of orthodox doctrine.

Patrick Henry: "Liberty or Death":

By the end of the century, Christopher Columbus [Italian: Christoforo Colombo \kris-tō-fō′-rō kō-lōm′-bō\; *Spanish*: Cristóbal Colon \kris-tō′-val cō-lown′\] had discovered the New World. Shortly thereafter, European explorers began to establish colonies there.

In 1517, God's perfect timing ushered in the Protestant Reformation—a sudden rediscovery of the immutable truths found in the Scripture. Those who followed the teachings of Martin Luther soon found themselves at odds, not only with the established church, but with the laws of their respective countries. Through divine guidance, the pivot reorganized and moved over the Atlantic to North America and began settling in the colonies.

The first permanent English settlement in America was at Jamestown, Virginia, founded in May 1607.

By 1775, the pivot was well-established in North America. Very shortly, Jesus Christ would again control history on behalf of that pivot. For ten years, **King George III** and Parliament had been imposing on the colonies a series of oppressive tax laws. The Americans protested the crown's refusal to allow them representation in Parliament but to no avail. Each of their petitions always expressed a desire that these unjust laws be repealed and the colonies' relationship with England returned to its former tranquility.

Continued obstinacy from England allowed some colonials to consider thoughts of independence. This soon became part of a rising tide in favor of armed resistance when it was learned the British had sent troops to Boston. The king's forces had closed the port and garrisoned the city. King George appointed as military governor for Massachusetts Bay colony **Gen. Thomas Gage**, formally commander-in-chief of England's forces in North America, headquartered in New York City. In all King George had ordered fourteen regiments into Boston and his ships cruised its harbor.

Down in Virginia, the House of Burgesses assembled at Richmond's St. John's Church on March 23, 1775. The debate concentrated on the volatile state of affairs with the Mother Country. One of the delegates, Patrick Henry, who represented Hanover County, decided to recommend that the colony place itself in an immediate state of defense.

The opposition argued that a further petition should be extended before they became so bold as to muster troops. Henry's response provided the spark which set the colonial mind firmly on the course of independence. His words continue to inspire every generation of Americans and his warnings are as valid now as they were then. When Patrick Henry arose to speak he addressed the president of the assembly, Peyton Randolph from Williamsburg:

> **PATRICK HENRY.** Mr. President.
>
> **PRESIDENT PEYTON RANDOLPH.** The gentleman from Hanover.
>
> **MR. HENRY.** I beg to offer the following resolutions:
>
> "Resolved, That a well-regulated militia is the natural strength and only security of a free government;
>
> "That the establishment of such a militia is, at this time, peculiarly necessary for the protection and defense of the country, and that the known remissness of the government in calling us together in legislative capacity renders it too insecure in this time of danger and distress to rely that any provision will be made to secure our inestimable rights and liberties from those further violations with which they are threatened.
>
> "Resolved, therefore, That this Colony be immediately put into a state of defense and that a committee be named by the Convention to prepare a plan for embodying, arming, and disciplining such a number of men as may be sufficient for that purpose." (p. 8)
>
> **RICHARD HENRY LEE.** Mr. President.
>
> **THE PRESIDENT:** The gentleman from Westmoreland County.
>
> **MR. LEE.** I rise to second the resolutions of the gentleman from Hanover. I think they are timely and highly important. No member can question the fact that our state of affairs is very alarming. Sir, I yield to no man in proper loyalty to the King, but I will not agree to the sacrifice of a single particle of our inalienable privileges to any person on earth.

We use but a natural right in making provision for our protection, we mean no aggression, no violence, no treason, but if the powers in England choose to regard this action as such, on them will fall the responsibility of the course taken by them. I hate to contemplate the possibility of collision with the mother country, and I know our weaknesses. But nature has come to our aid by spreading 3,000 miles of water between us and her, and if we have our disadvantages, so has England. It will put her at a vast disadvantage to have to transport over such a distance, in the contingency of war, her armies and supplies. But, sir, admitting the probable calculations to be against us, I will say with our immortal bard:

> "Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just;
> And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,
> Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted."[2]

BENJAMIN HARRISON. Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT. The gentleman from Charles City.

MR. HARRISON. I desire to raise my voice in opposition to the adoption of the resolutions at this time. I consider them as rash and inexpedient. The report from England, as we all know, is that our petition to the King passed at the late Convention has been graciously received. No sufficient time has passed for a reply to come to us.

I am as warm a friend of liberty as any man in this Convention, and as little disposed to submit, but national civility and filial respect demand that we should do nothing hastily, offer no provocation.

THOMAS JEFFERSON. Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT. The gentleman from Albemarle.

MR. JEFFERSON. I am sorry to disagree with my friend from Charles City. I love him for his great heart and know his sturdy character for independence. But, sir, the colony should be prepared. I recognize no allegiance to parliament—only to the King of England. England is tied to the Empire by the tie of the Crown only and is a self-governing dominion; and I regard these acts of Parliament—attempting to tax our people and shutting up the port of Boston, as the acts of a foreign power which should, by all means in our power, be resisted. I call earnestly upon the Convention to support the resolution. (p. 9)

[2] William Shakespeare, *The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth*: Act III, Scene II, line 232.

MR. PENDLETON. Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT. The gentleman from Caroline.

MR. PENDLETON. I hope this Convention will proceed slowly before rushing the country to war. Is this a moment to disgust our friends in England who are laboring for the repeal of the unjust taxes which afflict us, to extinguish all the conspiring sympathies which are working in our favor, to turn their friendship into hatred, their pity into revenge? Are we ready for war? Where are our stores—where are our arms—where our soldiers—where our money, the sinews of war? They are nowhere to be found in sufficient force or abundance to give us reasonable hope of successful resistance. In truth, we are poor and defenseless, and should strike when it becomes absolutely necessary—not before. And yet the gentlemen in favor of this resolution talk of assuming the front of war, of assuming it, too, against a nation one of the most formidable in the world. A nation ready and armed at all points; her navy riding in triumph in every sea; her armies never marching but to certain victory. For God's sake, Mr. President, let us be patient—let us allow all reasonable delay, and then if worse comes to the worst, we will have no feelings of blame. Give a little time, take no hostile action. Our ills will pass away and the sunshine of the halcyon days of old will come back again.

MR. ROBERT CARTER NICHOLAS. Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT. The gentleman from James City.

MR. NICHOLAS. I agree heartily with the gentleman from Caroline. I consider the resolutions of the gentleman from Hanover as hasty, rash and unreasonable. But, more than that, I deem the militia upon which the gentleman depends as wholly insufficient. It will prove the bane of the war into which the gentleman from Hanover wishes to hurry us. Sir, I hope this resolution will be voted down. (p. 10)

THOMAS NELSON. Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT. The gentleman from York county.

MR. NELSON. I am a merchant of Yorktown, but I am a Virginian first. Let my trade perish. I call God to witness that if any British troops are landed in the County of York, of which I am lieutenant, I will wait for no orders, but will summon the militia and drive the invaders into the sea.

MR. HENRY. Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: The gentleman from Hanover.

MR. HENRY. Mr. President. No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the house. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen if, entertaining as I do opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question before the house is one of awful moment to this country. For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery; and in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at the truth, and fulfill the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country and of an act of disloyalty toward the Majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the numbers of those who, having eyes, see not, and, having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth, to know the worst, and to provide for it. (p. 11)

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the house. Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss.

Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love?

Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort.

I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us: they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging.

And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain.

Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves. Sir, we have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne! In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation.

There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending--if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained--we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of hosts is all that is left us! (p. 12)

> **They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?**
>
> **Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us.**
>
> **The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable--and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come.** (pp. 12-13)
>
> **It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!**[3] (p. 13)

Having heard Henry's stirring address and its unarguable logic, President Randolph recognized the gentleman from Fairfax:

[3] Robert Lecky, Jr., *The Proceedings of the Virginia Convention of 1775* (Richmond: St. John's Church, 1927), 8-13.

> GEORGE WASHINGTON. Mr. President, I am a soldier and believe in being prepared. For that and other reasons, I will give my vote for the resolutions of the gentleman from Hanover. Rather than submit to the present condition of things, I will raise one thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march at their head to the relief of Boston.

It is the thought possessed by men like George Washington, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Andrew Lewis, and others that enabled the burgesses to pass Patrick Henry's resolutions. This thought on that day led to the most crucial decision in our nation's history.

It allowed George Washington to organize an army for the Colony of Virginia which later put him in position to become the commanding general of the Continental Army that ultimately won the final victory at Yorktown over Gen. Charles Cornwallis and secured our Independence that has endured for over 239 years.

The Blue and the Gray:

Eighty-five years after Henry's stirring address, another war for independence was waged between the grandsons of the very men who fought the British from Lexington Green all the way to Yorktown. The **War between the States** consumed the flower of American youth as 360,222 Union soldiers died in combat or from disease and approximately 258,000 Confederate troops were killed in combat or died from disease during the four-year struggle, a total of 618,222.

Many military cemeteries contain the remains of both Northern and Southern soldiers. A tradition was developed following the war by mourners who, when visiting these burial sites, would place remembrances on the grave markers of both armies' dead.

Honorable men often see the same subject in different lights. Gentlemen, however, never cast aspersions on an opponent who gave his life for what he believed to be right. Thus, proper respect is graciously paid to their memories. This spirit of accommodation, which developed immediately after the war's end, is soberly expressed the poignant poem by Francis Miles Finch:

"The Blue and the Gray"

(Francis Miles Finch, 1827-1907)

By the flow of the inland river,
Whence the fleets of iron have fled,
Where the blades of the grave-grass quiver,
Asleep are the ranks of the dead:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the one, the Blue
Under the other, the Gray.

These in the robings of glory,
Those in the gloom of defeat,
All with the battle-blood gory,
In the dusk of eternity meet:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the laurel, the Blue
Under the willow, the Gray.

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 the judgment-day;
Under the roses, the Blue
Under the lilies, the Gray.

So with an equal splendor,
The morning sun-rays fall.
With a touch impartially tender,
On the blossoms blooming for all:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Broidered with gold, the Blue,
Mellowed with gold, the Gray.

So, when the summer calleth,
On forest and field of grain,
With an equal murmur falleth
The cooling drip of the rain:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Wet with the rain, the Blue,
Wet with the rain, the Gray.

Sadly, but not with upbraiding,
The generous deed was done,
In the storm of the years that are fading
No braver battle was won:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the blossoms, the Blue,
Under the garlands, the Gray.

No more shall the war cry sever,
Or the winding rivers be red;
They banish our anger forever
When they laurel the graves of our dead!
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Love and tears for the Blue,
Tears and love for the Gray.[4]

Douglas A. MacArthur: "Duty, Honor, Country":

No American military leader could possibly have had a keener understanding of the sound and smell of war than did Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur. He saw combat in four of our nation's wars: the Mexican Campaign, World Wars I and II, and the Korean Campaign. He was allied commander of the Pacific theatre in World War II during which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions in the battles of the Bataan Peninsula in 1942. He was also commander of UN forces during much of the Korean War.

No better spokesman than he could more precisely summarize the art of war, express a more sensitive understanding of the sacrifices required of its participants as well as their loved ones, offer a more perceptive view of its action or more clearly comprehend the responsibilities of its combatants.

MacArthur's last major address before his death was before the graduating class at West Point on 12 May 1962. His comments offer perceptive insight into the strength of character which must be indelibly ingrained into every soldier's soul if he is to honorably defend the colors of this client nation.

The occasion also marked the general's acceptance of the Sylvanus Thayer Award. Since 1958, the Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy has presented the Sylvanus Thayer Award to an outstanding citizen of the United States whose service and accomplishments in the national interest exemplify personal devotion to the ideals expressed in the West Point motto, "Duty, Honor, Country."

[4] Lois Hill, ed.), *Poems and Songs of the Civil War*. (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1996), 156-57.

"Duty, Honor, Country"

No human being could fail to be deeply moved by such a tribute as this [Thayer Award]. Coming from a profession I have served so long and a people I have loved so well, it fills me with an emotion I cannot express. But this award is not intended primarily to honor a personality, but to symbolize a great moral code—a code of conduct and chivalry of those who guard this beloved land of culture and ancient descent. For all hours and for all time, it is an expression of the ethics of the American soldier. That I should be integrated in this way with so noble an ideal arouses a sense of pride, and yet of humility, which will be with me always.

Duty, honor, country: Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be. They are your rallying point to build courage when courage seems to fail, to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith, to create hope when hope becomes forlorn.

Unhappily, I possess neither that eloquence of diction, that poetry of imagination, nor that brilliance of metaphor to tell you all that they mean.

The unbelievers will say they are but words, but a slogan, but a flamboyant phrase. Every pedant, every demagogue, every cynic, every hypocrite, every troublemaker, and, I am sorry to say, some others of an entirely different character, will try to downgrade them even to the extent of mockery and ridicule.

But these are some of the things they do. They build your basic character. They mold you for your future roles as the custodians of the Nation's defense. They make you strong enough to know when you are weak, and brave enough to face yourself when you are afraid.

They teach you to be proud and unbending in honest failure, but humble and gentle in success; not to substitute words for actions, not to seek the path of comfort, but to face the stress and spur of difficulty and challenge; to learn to stand up in the storm, but to have compassion on those who fall; to master yourself before you seek to master others; to have a heart that is clean, a goal that is high; to learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep; to reach into the future, yet never neglect the past; to be serious, yet never to take yourself too seriously; to be modest so that you will remember the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength.

They give you a temperate will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions, a freshness of the deep springs of life, a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of an appetite for adventure over love of ease.

They create in your heart the sense of wonder, the unfailing hope of what next, and joy and inspiration of life. They teach you in this way to be an officer and a gentleman.

And what sort of soldiers are those you are to lead? Are they reliable? Are they brave? Are they capable of victory?

Their story is known to all of you. It is the story of the American man-at-arms. My estimate of him was formed on the battlefield many, many years ago, and has never changed. I regarded him then, as I regard him now, as one of the world's noblest figures; not only as one of the finest military characters, but also as one of the most stainless.

His name and fame are the birthright of every American citizen. In his youth and strength, his love and loyalty, he gave all that mortality can give. He needs no eulogy from me; or from any other man. He has written his own history and written it in red on his enemy's breast.

But when I think of his patience in adversity, of his courage under fire, and of his modesty in victory, I am filled with an emotion of admiration I cannot put into words. He belongs to history as furnishing one of the greatest examples of successful patriotism. He belongs to posterity as the instructor of future generations in the principles of liberty and freedom. He belongs to the present, to us, by his virtues and by his achievements.

In 20 campaigns, on a hundred battlefields, around a thousand campfires, I have witnessed that enduring fortitude, that patriotic self-abnegation, and that invincible determination which have carved his statue in the hearts of his people.

From one end of the world to the other, he has drained deep the chalice of courage. As I listened to those songs [of the glee club], in memory's eye I could see those staggering columns of the first World War, bending under soggy packs on many a weary march, from dripping dusk to drizzling dawn, slogging ankle deep through the mire of shell-pocked roads to form grimly for the attack, blue-lipped, covered with sludge and mud, chilled by the wind and rain, driving home to their objective, and for many to the judgment seat of God.

I do not know the dignity of their birth, but I do know the glory of their death. They died, unquestioning, uncomplaining, with faith in their hearts, and on their lips the hope that we would go on to victory.

Always for them: duty, honor, country. Always their blood, and sweat, and tears, as we sought the way and the light and the truth. And 20 years after, on the other side of the globe, again the filth of murky foxholes, the stench of ghostly trenches, the slime of dripping dugouts, those boiling suns of relentless heat, those torrential rains of devastating storms, the loneliness and utter desolation of jungle trails, the bitterness of long separation from those they loved and cherished, the deadly pestilence of tropical disease, the horror of stricken areas of war.

Their resolute and determined defense, their swift and sure attack, their indomitable purpose, their complete and decisive victory - always through the bloody haze of their last reverberating shot, the vision of gaunt, ghastly men, reverently following your password of duty, honor, country.

The code which those words perpetuate embraces the highest moral law and will stand the test of any ethics or philosophies ever promulgated for the things that are right and its restraints are from the things that are wrong. The soldier, above all other men, is required to practice the greatest act of religious training—sacrifice. In battle, and in the face of danger and death, he discloses those divine attributes which his Maker gave when He created man in His own image.

No physical courage and no greater strength can take the place of the divine help which alone can sustain him. However hard the incidents of war may be, the soldier who is called upon to offer and to give his life for his country is the noblest development of mankind.

You now face a new world, a world of change. And through all this welter of change and development your mission remains fixed, determined, inviolable. It is to win our wars. Everything else in your professional career is but corollary to this vital dedication. All other public purposes, all other public projects, all other public needs, great or small, will find others for their accomplishment; but you are the ones who are trained to fight.

Yours is the profession of arms, the will to win, the sure knowledge that in war there is no substitute for victory, that if you lose, the nation will be destroyed, that the very obsession of your public service must be duty, honor, country.

Others will debate the controversial issues, national and international, which divide men's minds. But serene, calm, aloof, you stand as the nation's war guardian, as its lifeguard from the raging tides of international conflict, as its gladiator in the arena of battle. For a century and a half you have defended, guarded, and protected its hallowed traditions of liberty and freedom, of right and justice.

Let civilian voices argue the merits or demerits of our processes of government: Whether our strength is being sapped by deficit financing indulged in too long, by Federal paternalism grown too mighty, by power groups grown too arrogant, by politics grown too corrupt, by crime grown too rampant, by morals grown too low, by taxes grown too high, by extremists grown too violent; whether our personal liberties are as thorough and complete as they should be.

These great national problems are not for your professional participation or military solution. Your guidepost stands out like a ten-fold beacon in the night: duty, honor, country.

You are the leaven which binds together the entire fabric of our national system of defense. From your ranks come the great captains who hold the nation's destiny in their hands the moment the war tocsin sounds.

The long, gray line has never failed us. Were you to do so, a million ghosts in olive drab, in brown khaki, in blue and gray, would rise from their white crosses, thundering those magic words: duty, honor, country.

This does not mean that you are warmongers. On the contrary, the soldier above all other people prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war. But always in our ears ring the ominous words of Plato, that wisest of all philosophers: "Only the dead have seen the end of war."

The shadows are lengthening for me. The twilight is here. My days of old have vanished--tone and tint. They have gone glimmering through the dreams of things that were. Their memory is one of wondrous beauty, watered by tears and coaxed and caressed by the smiles of yesterday. I listen vainly, but with thirsty ear, for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing reveille, of far drums beating the long roll.

In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns, the rattle of musketry, the strange, mournful mutter of the battlefield. But in the evening of my memory always I come back to West Point. Always there echoes and re-echoes: duty, honor, country.

Today marks my final roll call with you. But I want you to know that when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of the corps, and the corps, and the corps.

I bid you farewell.[5]

[5] http://www.keytlaw.com/f-4/general-macarthurs-duty-honor-country-speech/ accessed November 5, 2015.

