

## February 2022 National Patriotic Instruction

Brothers,

It is human nature, as the darkest days of winter have come and gone, that we look forward to the longer and warmer days ahead of us. However, we cannot look to far in the future just yet as we still have some items to get to before we can turn the page. As many of you have noticed I cover a broad aspect of topics in my instructions but all of them focus on how we can promote Patriotism and Patriotism can take many forms. One of the many forms that Patriotism can take is with helping members of our community. There is no coincidence that I bring this up as some regions of our country have been hit with large amounts of snow and weather in the past couple of weeks. My question to all of you is how many helped or checked on a fellow Brother during this time? Or even helped or checked on your next door or across the street neighbor? One step further, have you helped ensure that your walkways and fire hydrants are dug out and accessible?

One may think that this is not a big deal and doesn't seem like something that is one's Patriotic duty, but it is. Helping to take care of your neighbors and ensuring that your community is safe is one of the building blocks of Patriotism. By being active in your community and checking in on one another, people will start taking pride in that community and through pride Patriotism grows. By doing something as simple as shoveling the walkway in front of your home you not only show pride in your neighborhood, but you make it safe for those who walk your streets. It might not seem like a big thing, but for those of us who live through snowy winters, we all know that feeling of having to select walking in the snow or on the side of a busy road because someone didn't shovel their walkway.

Another way you can take community pride during the winter months is by clearing out fire hydrants that are in your neighborhood. Many may think that this should be the responsibility of the local Fire Departments however in most areas there are local ordinances that explicitly state it is the landowner that the hydrant is on or adjacent to, in those cases where it is on a sidewalk, that is responsible for clearing these. Again, why does it matter? I must sound like a broken record at this point, but it is the fact of taking care of your community. Anyone who has been a firefighter will tell you that in life-or-death emergencies, seconds save lives. If a fire hydrant isn't cleared out and the snow around it, which in many cases is the discharge from a snowplow which makes it heavier and more susceptible to freezing over again after it has been cleared, has frozen over, those firefighters are now delayed in getting additional water into their hoses which could cost lives. I don't know about you, but I know that if my neighbors were killed because of this, I would hold myself responsible. It is something that takes all of 5 to 10 additional minutes to do but by doing so you are looking out for your neighbors.

The last thing, as this one is probably the easiest thing a Brother can do, and anyone of us can do this even if you live in sunny California and have never seen snow in your life, and that is pick up the phone and call a Brother or friend that lives in an affected area and check in on them, see if they need anything. We have all been through some type of natural disaster whether it is hurricane, earthquake, or blizzard, and we all know that sometimes a friendly voice on the other end of the phone is a massive morale booster and can mean the world of difference for some. Looking out for one another, and having each other's back, may seem like a simple concept that has nothing to do with Patriotism, but it again instills that community pride which is the foundation of being a Patriot. I challenge you all to keep this in mind the next time your area or another region is affected by some type of issue, natural or not.

In Fraternity Charity and Loyalty,  
Br. Ben Frail, PDC  
National Patriotic Instructor

