

## The Loyalty Of Citizenship : Sept 1861 Sept 2001 Set 2011

In the Spring and Summer of 1861, The United States of America was literally divided among its various states in a war for survival. The election of Abraham Lincoln as Chief Executive had begun a process of disloyalty to the established Federal Union by several Southern States. The Country faced its greatest challenge then (or Now) as to whether it would continue, or fail to remain together. The Citizens of that era who were loyal to the Constitution and The Union decided to act and respond to the Call of President Lincoln to take arms and defend our Great Land. The needs of the individual were swept aside and sacrificed to attempt to achieve a higher goal: The Continuation of The Union as established by the Founding Fathers 85 years previous on July 4, 1776. With the attack on Fort Sumter, The Battle began for Survival. It would take four long years, at the cost of more than half a million casualties to settle the issue, or at least cause the fighting to end.

I am constantly amazed at the dedication of the average citizen who responded then, and continues to respond today. The great call to loyal citizens resulted in great response. The millions who eventually responded were a true definition of the meaning of citizenship. Patriots were they all, and this in effect defined who they were and what they stood for. Recently, I came across a reminder of this loyalty. In Sept of 1861, The Officers and workmen of The United States Mint were asked to take an Oath of allegiance to the Union. As evidenced by a Medal I recently acquired, it is a lasting reminder and memorial of the effect of The American Civil War upon the average Citizen of the time. The evidence of their actions is also well known as Millions of Men (and some Women) Volunteered their Lives and "Sacred Fortunes" in service to The Republic. Their Dedication to keeping the United States as "one" is somewhat beyond belief as we know their sacrifices, From Antietam , Gettysburg, The Wilderness , and Thousands of other sites recalls Those Americans who proved their mettle.

Ten Years ago Today, The United States again showed its faith in its Citizens and its ability as a country to respond and prevail. The Horrifying attack on The World Trade Center in New York, The Pentagon in Washington D.C. and The Path of Flight 93 in Pennsylvania again showed the world that under the most difficult circumstances, Americans would do what is needed to prevail. The Policeman, Firemen, Medics and other First Responders gave great example to us all as to what Bravery and Courage really mean. These Brave souls, all Citizens put their needs, fears, and often lives aside to help save others who needed their help. We remember them today and on all days as those Loyal Citizens who put others before themselves. We should all take these actions to heart and ask ourselves "Can we live their example?" Truly these folks along with countless others are real American Heroes. Let us always remember them and what they did for our Nation and its Posterity.

Today, Ten Years after this Tragic event, we as a nation can look back and offer to our descendants the same type of dedication that our Fathers and Mothers gave us. As President John F. Kennedy said "Ask not what your Country can do for you, but what you can do for your Country". We can show them and the world that we will "pay any price, bear any Burden" to keep our Land safe and free. However, Freedom is not free, as evidenced by the countless Sacrifices by our The Nations Armed Forces, now and then. They are made up of average Citizens who are willing to put themselves in harms way to defend the rest of us. What greater Sacrifice is there?

The Sons of Union Veterans of The Civil War salute all Citizens of our Countries History who have answered the call for its defense. All are our Citizens, and we are very proud of each and every one of them. God Bless them all.