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Monthly Patriotic Instruction
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“We will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.”
-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Happy New Year! We look forward now to the close of the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, just as many Americans did the end of the American Civil War. January marks the quickening of the chase to the end of the war. In January, 1865, Union forces captured Fort Fisher, one of many strongholds the Confederate government had sworn would never fall to the enemy, Richmond was hemmed in and Confederate armies in the west were no longer a potent threat to the Union.

More importantly, the 13th Amendment narrowly passed ratification in the House of Representatives. The subject of several books and at least one recent movie, this amendment outlawed the practice of slavery in the United States. Although the fight for civil rights was far from over, and remains a challenge still today, the first step real step was taken with the Amendment. As we celebrate the beginning of a new year and the renewal of so many things, let us remember that this month marks the sesquicentennial of one of the greatest steps taken toward realizing freedom for all Americans.

One hundred fifty years ago armies of veteran Union soldiers swept across the south with a renewed dedication to closing the war and ending the rebellion. Columbia, South Carolina, the very birthplace of the rebellion, was put to the torch at the end of the month, and Tennessee, likewise a hotbed of secession, drafted a new constitution outlawing slavery. In New York, a city which was torn apart by rioting only one year before, the now world-famous New York Stock Exchange opened at 10 Broad Street, where it remains open today, signaling the beginning of almost 150 years of commercial prosperity in the United States and the nascence of worldwide American financial presence.

As we move swiftly to the close of the sesquicentennial, an anniversary the likes of which most of us will not see again, let us remember our commitment to Loyalty, a cardinal virtue of our Order, a virtue our ancestors held unquestionably close to their hearts. Let us also remember the man who is quoted at the beginning of this instruction. On the 3rd Monday of this month many Americans celebrate the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. with a day of service, volunteering time to serve others as he did. Remember on that day the Gettysburg Address, where President Lincoln reminded all of the unfinished work America still has to do, and then get out and work for someone else in need.