

## February Patriotic Instruction

Brothers,

Most of my instructions for the past year have been on ways in which we can use technology to spread our mission and patriotism to the public. However, the month of February is too important to our order to not pay it special attention. We have all grown up with Presidents Day celebrating the lives of all Presidents of the United States and the leadership that they have provided our great country. However, there is one President that many of us believe stands above the rest, the man that led this country through the Civil War, that's right, the one, the only, Abraham Lincoln. We believe in him so much that his birthday, 12 February, is a special day for us, known as Union Defenders Day. With all of these holidays that we pay tribute to, one might ask themselves why this day is so important. Simply put, it is to ensure that not only do we pay homage to those that served to defend the country during the war, but to also give thanks and praise to Lincoln himself.

This day was first celebrated 1866 by President Johnson and his cabinet, as it was his first birthday after his death. In 1889 then Commander in Chief George B. Abbott of the Sons of Union Veterans issued General Order 17 requesting Camps and Department celebrate and honor Lincoln on what he proposed be called "Sons of Veterans' Day". This went to the Committee on Officers Reports that year and returned with recommending that we add this day to our calendar but call it Union Defenders Day. We continue this tradition today as many Camps and Department have a Lincoln Luncheon or a different form of Defenders Day Celebration.

This day is a great day for us, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, to celebrate Lincoln. We need to also take this opportunity to extend our celebrations out to other organizations and remind them of the deeds that occurred in this time period. Most look towards his actions in freeing the slaves, as they should. However, we cannot let them forget about what he did to preserve the Union. The actions he took during the Civil War that do not get as much press or publicity. How he made the tough decisions necessary to lead the country through this trying time.

I challenge you all to have these discussions with your not only your Brothers this 12 February, but with those outside the order as well. Doing this will help perpetuate the memory of President Lincoln, both inside the American Civil War community and outside of it. The only way we can do this is by having these conversations with people and ensuring that his actions are not forgotten.

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