

Hello Brothers,

With the new year upon us, many tend to look towards the future and the new challenges we will face. Whether it be new school programs, library displays, planning Memorial Day ceremonies, fundraising or any of the other countless things we do throughout the year, these challenges, or opportunities, are all ways we can succeed in our mission as well as spread Patriotism not just to fellow Brothers but to the public. One of the things I have been focusing on in this terms Patriotic Instructions is setting up our Camps and Departments for success. To be successful in our mission, we must get out of our shells so to speak, and inform our communities of the sacrifices that were made by these men. The acts of bravery that occurred on a daily basis, and how what these Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Revenue Cuttermen experienced bettered our day to day lives today. By bringing these stories to the public eye, we are further cementing their legacy and paying tribute to their patriotism.

One thing that helps promote patriotism is setting up programs in our local schools. Getting to these young minds and instilling in them the importance of what these men did, and why they went through the horrors of war to preserve the Union will naturally promote patriotism. If done properly, will do much more than that, you will get the youth of today to want to give back to their communities which betters our country as a whole. Many think that this means setting up a lecture or a "death by power point", now don't get me wrong, in some settings this is a great way to disseminate information, however, in some cases all it does is put your audience asleep. We need to cater our programs to the needs of our audience, if you have the same program set up for 4th graders, 10th graders and a historical society, well odds are we are not reaching our full potential. We need 3 separate programs for the 3 groups as not only do they learn differently, but their interest levels are not the same. A Historical society is there because they want to be there, whereas the students are required to be there, to break it down even further, 4th graders tend to be more excited about learning than 10th graders are so you need to have different deliveries for them. These programs are amazing to spread information and to teach them about the facts of the war and of the Union soldier.

There is one other type of program that we can set up in our local schools that is more hands on. Most school districts are requiring students to do a certain amount of volunteer hours to graduate or to move on to the next grade level. By making ourselves available to the school districts and letting them know about the work we do in the community, we open a new avenue for these young minds to see WHY what we do is so important. The path of least resistance would be to go through the schools JROTC Programs. These programs are patriotic to being with and can open the door to other departments and groups within the district. Getting young people involved in a cemetery clean-up, flagging detail, or Memorial Day Ceremony will not only instill in them a sense of community, but it will put a realization to them that these were not random people that fought and died, but they were Brothers, Husbands and Fathers. That these brave men signed a blank check to a cause, to preserve the Union, to prevent the flag from being lowered in defeat. My camp recently invited my high school alma mater's NJROTC unit to a clean-up where we had 18 cadets and their instructor come. These 14-17 year olds not only were chomping at the bit to help, but we could see the pride on their faces as they unearthed stones that were lost to time. By the end of the clean-up, to a person, they were all excited to learn of when our next clean up would be, and more than willing to help in any way. We cannot forget what the GAR realized when creating the SUV, the children are our future, if we want to spread Patriotism, it would behoove us to ignore them.

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