

## **The Attribute of a Patriot**

### **Speech at President Harrison Wreath Laying Ceremony at Crown Hill**

**18 August 2012**

We in the National Society Sons of the American Revolution identify our ancestors who were involved in the struggle for independence as Patriots. Webster Dictionary defines a Patriot as one who loves their country and zealously supports its authority and interests. However, I believe this definition misses the kernel of what a Patriot is doing.

The other day I was in a grocery store after casting my ballot in the Michigan primary election. The clerk commented about the sticker on my chest which said that I had voted. "What is that she asked?" I told her about it being primary day for all the competed, elective local, state and national offices. She said "must be important, guess I should vote" as if it weren't important she wouldn't bother. I sacrificed my time to learn the issues and candidates and to vote; will she? And while I'm on that subject; during the 19<sup>th</sup> century over 75% of eligible voters cast a ballot! In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it declined to about 58% casting a ballot! In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it has declined to 54%. Where is the sacrifice of time and self interest?

What was it that concerned our forefathers leading up to the Revolutionary War? They commented and commiserated on taxes being leveled upon them by the King and Parliament and having no say in the matter; they had little say in the way they wanted to conduct their inter-colony business and trade; they complained of having no say in the matter of the selection of judicial and legislative and executive officials; they perceived risk in keeping a common storage for the powder for their Militia arms; they even had to lodge the King's troops in their houses without their

permission; they couldn't go into uninhabited lands for new opportunity at a livelihood even if they were willing to risk it; it appeared to our forefathers that they were being treated worse than even the lowliest of British citizens! Finally they were provoked to fight, so they declared their Independence from the King and his government so that they could construct a government that would provide for their safety and happiness and allow them to have their right of freedom. Over 50% of the 16 to 50 year old male population at that time was willing to sacrifice their lives and property for this. In the wars that have transpired since then, there has been an ever decreasing percentage of the population that was willing to sacrifice their lives, property and time. In the Civil War about 33% of the 16 to 40 year old male population was willing to sacrifice their lives, property and time to preserve the Union. In WWII it was about 30% (when the women are counted who went to the factories) and then the entire nation went on rationing. In the current "Global War on Terror," a response to an attack on our soil that was as catastrophic as Pearl Harbor, less than 1% of the population has been willing to sacrifice their lives, property and time. The rest of us are not being asked to sacrifice anything! Why not?

The man whose birthday we celebrate today said: "Unlike many other people less happy, we give our devotion to a government, to its Constitution, to its flag, and not to men."

Should one sacrifice his time, property and self interest in this devotion? I think yes. At all times a Patriot is one willing to sacrifice for a greater good!