

RITUALS OF SPECIAL SERVICES

Adopted July 14, 1925
by the GRAND LODGE in session
at Portland, Oregon

Revised July, 1958

Revised January, 1964

Revised July, 1982

Revised July, 1992

Revised March, 1996

Revised June, 1999

Revised July, 2004

Revised August, 2005

Revised February, 2018

Revised May, 2022

Revised July, 2023

BENEVOLENT AND PROTECTIVE
ORDER OF ELKS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Elks Care — Elks Share

— INTRODUCTION —

The Special Rituals of the Order were revised under the direction of Ted Callicott, Chairman of the Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee, with the assistance of Dale W. Blanton, Past Chairman of the Committee. The language has been modernized and unnecessary portions eliminated and a new Flag Retirement Service has been added (written by Ted Callicott of Paris, Tennessee Lodge No. 816).

- (Revision of July, 1982)

The Special Rituals of the Order were revised under the direction of Clair Culver, Chairman of the Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee, with the assistance of his fellow Committeemen to add a new paragraph in the Flag Day Service, to acknowledge that our Flag was carried in defense of Grenada, Panama and Operation Desert Storm.

- (Revision of July, 1992)

Ted Callicott, PGER, Chairman
Advisory Subcommittee on Ritual

The Special Rituals of the Order were revised under the direction of Carl J. Lino, Chairman of the Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee, with the assistance of his fellow Committeemen to accommodate the gender situation now existing in the Order.

- (Revision of June, 1999)

The Special Rituals of the Order were revised under the direction of David Barker, Chairman of the Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee, with the assistance of Carl J. Lino, Chairman of the Grand Lodge Americanism Committee, to add three new paragraphs in the Flag Day Service, to acknowledge September 11th, 2001 and Iraq, Afghanistan and the Philippines.

- (Revision of July, 2004)

Dwayne E. Rumney, PGER, Chairman
Advisory Subcommittee on Ritual

The Special Rituals of the Order were revised under the direction of Allen H. Lenort, Chairman of the Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee, with the assistance of his fellow Committeemen. In addition, PDDGER Thomas Root of Westminster, CO Lodge No. 2227; PER Christy Williams of Moreno Valley, CA Lodge No. 2697, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission [ENVSC], and PER Leonard Mills of Vancouver, WA Lodge No. 823, all contributed to add four new sections that honor and acknowledge the Memorial Tablet Service for Elks, Father's Day, Veterans Day, and POW/MIA Remembrance Day.

- (Revision of February, 2018)

Michael F. Zellen, PGER, Chairman
Advisory Subcommittee on Ritual

The Special Rituals of the Order were revised under the direction of Michael W. Iddings, Chairman of the Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee, with the assistance of his fellow Committee Persons. The language has been modernized for the Flag Day Service, and a new September 11th Ceremony has been added (written by Robert C. Ricker of Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey Lodge No. 782).

- (Revision of July 2023)

Michael F. Zellen, PGER, Chairman
Advisory Subcommittee on Ritual

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and caused the seal of the Grand Lodge to be affixed.

Attest:



Bruce A. Kidley
GRAND EXALTED RULER

Bryan R. Klatt
GRAND SECRETARY



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RITUAL

for

Laying the Cornerstone of an Elks Lodge Home



[The service shall be a public ceremony. The Officers shall be addressed as Grand Lodge Officers who shall assemble at the place of dedication, in any appropriate arrangement, wearing the jewels of their respective stations. The Grand Secretary shall carry the documents, etc. for deposit in the box. The Grand Esquire shall carry the box to be deposited in the cornerstone. The Grand Chaplain shall carry the Bible which may be open. The Grand Esteemed Leading Knight shall carry a silver vessel containing water. The Grand Exalted Ruler shall carry a gavel.]

[Appropriate Music.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Members and Guests, here will be erected a Lodge Home consecrated to the noble principles by which the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is inspired and guided. We come to lay the cornerstone of the structure; a structure which will be an eloquent expression of those principles and the pride we take in them.

If the hope and effort put into this work be realized, this Lodge Home shall be a radiating center of good will and hearty aspiration for constant betterment. Its good deeds shall beam forth the spirit of brotherly warmth and kindness. Its doors shall swing wide with welcome to every comer who, either in the spirit of fraternity or need, shall seek our portals.

Please stand. [Brief pause.] The Grand Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

GRAND CHAPLAIN: Almighty God, we ask Thy blessings upon this service. Grant that the Lodge Home which is to be erected upon this cornerstone, and dedicated to the purpose of Elkdom, may be well worthy of the great fraternal Order which it typifies and represents in this community, and may it always be a center of true fraternal spirit, which shall ever uphold and further the best interest of this city, and aid in the advancement of all civic, intellectual and moral interests of its citizens. And may our Order as it grows both in numbers and influence realize the attainment and purpose for which it has been founded, and may it always stand as a leading influence in the fraternal life of this country. And to Thy Name we attribute all glory and honor. Amen.

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Please be seated.

[The Grand Secretary will read the record to be deposited in the stone, with a list of documents, coins, etc., and hand the list, with the articles to be deposited, to the Grand Esquire, who will place them in the box. The Grand Exalted Ruler, accompanied by the Grand Chaplain and the Officers, will descend to the stone. The Grand Esquire will present the box to the Grand Exalted Ruler, who will place it in the recess prepared for it, and adjust the cover. The stone will then be fitted in its place. The Grand Exalted Ruler receives the vessel containing water from the Grand Esteemed Leading Knight.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: [Sprinkling the stone.] In the name of the Charity we should feel and should practice; in the name of the Justice which should control our opinions and our dealings; in the name of the Brotherly Love which should be all-embracing; and in the name of the Fidelity which unfalteringly extends the principles of this Order to all mankind, I lay this cornerstone.

[The architect delivers to the Grand Exalted Ruler a trowel filled with mortar which is spread upon the cornerstone, and another stone placed thereon.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: As we build this stone into the wall of our Lodge Home, so may we build into our lives the strength and the beauty of the eternal principles taught at the Altar of our faith.

[The Officers return to their former positions.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: I declare this cornerstone laid as a constituent part of the Lodge Home that here shall rise and embody in architectural grace and material permanence the principles and purposes of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

ORATION

[Music — Vocal or Instrumental.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Members and Guests, a further stage in the great work we are striving to accomplish has been achieved. It is well begun; it is for us to carry it through worthily — to make this structure a precious and a splendid Lodge Home that shall fittingly symbolize and enduringly make manifest the eternal principles upon which our Order is founded.

By and under the authority of the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, I declare this cornerstone in position and proclaim this service closed.



RITUAL

for the

Dedication of the Lodge Home or Room



[The service shall be a public ceremony. The Officers shall be addressed as Grand Lodge Officers who shall occupy their respective stations, wearing the jewels of such stations. The stones provided for building the Altar should be graduated in size, and the upper one made large enough for a proper display of the Bible and Antlers.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: We are present in the name of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity, for the purpose of dedicating this Lodge Home (*or Room*) to the use of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

[Organ music: "Pilgrims' Chorus" from Tannhauser (Wagner), or suitable music.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Members and Guests, in accordance with the rules governing our Order, no important undertaking shall be commenced without asking the blessing of God.

Please stand. [Brief pause.] The Grand Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

GRAND CHAPLAIN: Almighty God, may Thy blessing rest through all the years to come upon this Lodge Home (*or Room*) which will be dedicated today to the uses and purposes of the Order of Elks. Grant that it shall be a source of inspiration of high ideals, and of fine impulses in the life not only of this Lodge, but of this city in which it is located. May we realize that in its dedication an ideal has been established that must, day-by-day, be made a living and vital reality, as the Members of this Lodge, actuated by the principles of the Order, carry out the real and inspiring spirit of their Obligation. May our patriotism be loyal, active and unselfish; may our faith, inspired by the Bible which rests upon our Altar, be true, and may the Antlers constantly remind us of love of our fellow Members. Give us strength and wisdom, we beseech Thee, to carry out the high purposes we have undertaken, to Thy Glory and to the benefit of our great Order, we ask in Thy Name. Amen.

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Please be seated.

[Instrumental music: "March From Aida" (Verdi), or appropriate music.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Members and Guests, we are assembled to dedicate this Lodge Home (*or Room*) to the uses of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. That which marks its distinctive purpose is the Altar, at which all Elks receive the Obligation that binds together this fraternity. With us it typifies neither sect nor creed, but is erected to signify our belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood

of man. Therefore, the first duty before us is the erection of an Altar consecrated to the great principles of our Order.

Grand Esteemed Leading Knight, you will place the first stone, emblematic of your station, Charity.

[Throughout the placing of the stone, the Organist plays very softly “Ave Verum” by Mozart, but strikes a strong, triumphant strain as the stone is placed, and maintains it until the Grand Knights and the Grand Esquire have resumed their stations and are seated.]

GRAND ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: [Bringing the representation of a white stone, lettered “Charity” and placing it on the Altar.] In the name of Charity which means not only the relief of the sick and needy, but in the broadest sense a love of all humankind, I place this stone, and may the inscription upon it be a constant reminder of our duty to our fellow man.

[The Grand Esteemed Leading Knight returns to his/her station and is seated.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight, what is the contribution from your station?

GRAND ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: [Bringing the representation of a pink stone, lettered “Justice” and placing it on the Altar.] I place this stone in the name of fraternal Justice, a justice which enables us to perceive the merits of others and our own shortcomings — a justice tempered and glorified which blesses those who give and those who take.

[Triumphant strain from the Organist until the Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight returns to his/her station and is seated.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight, what is your offering to the construction of our Altar?

GRAND ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: [Bringing the representation of a blue stone, lettered “Brotherly Love” and placing it on the Altar.] Into this structure I place this stone of Brotherly Love, typifying the Golden Rule of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us. It is the color of the Forget-Me-Not and reminds us that neither absence nor death can break the fraternal chain which unites the hearts of all.

[Triumphant strain from the Organist until the Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight returns to his/her station and is seated.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Let a scarlet stone, representing Fidelity, surmount and adorn this Altar. It typifies eternal faith and devotion which unites and glorifies Charity, Justice and Brotherly Love, making them enduring parts of our Fraternity.

[The Grand Esquire shall bring the representation of a scarlet stone, lettered “Fidelity” and place it on the Altar. Triumphant strain from the Organist until the Grand Esquire returns to his/her station and is seated.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: But an Elks Altar is not complete until it has received its honor guard in accordance with our practice. Grand Esteemed Leading Knight, with what shall we guard this Altar?

GRAND ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: With the Flag of our country, the emblem of freedom and the symbol of unity, out of which springs the cardinal principle of our Order, Charity.

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Grand Esquire, you will place the Flag of our country at the right of the Altar.

[The Grand Esquire will proceed to the Grand Esteemed Leading Knight's station to receive the Flag and place it beside the Altar.]

[The Flag shall not be furled, folded or grabbed in any way except by the staff. The Eagle on top of the staff shall face directly forward when posted at the station of the Grand Esteemed Leading Knight and while being carried to the Altar. When posted at the Altar, it shall face directly forward in the direction of the Grand Esteemed Leading Knight's station.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Please stand and salute our Flag.

[Music: "The Star-Spangled Banner," while the Flag is being arranged.]

GRAND ESQUIRE: The American Flag! Wherever it waves it is the symbol of free life and democratic government. Its colors belong to the earth, where the flowers bloom, and to the skies where the stars shine. It catches in its folds the light of morn, the radiance of noon, the glow of the sunset hour, and reflects them back with cheer and hope into the great depths of humanity.

A beacon to guide us, a shield to defend us, may the virtues born of the Flag be blended into this structure and enshrined in our hearts. May the sentiment of the Flag be preserved in our fraternal and American way of life, and perpetuated in all of our institutions to the end that Charity may abound, that Justice shall prevail, and that Brotherly Love and Fidelity shall abide in the land.

[The Grand Esquire remains standing before the Altar.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Please unite in singing "God Bless America."

[Assembly sings.]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Please be seated. [Brief pause.] Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight, what should be placed upon the Altar?

GRAND ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: The Bible, the Book of Law, upon which is founded Justice.

[The Grand Esquire proceeds to take the Bible from the Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight and places it upon the Altar and the Organist plays softly "Nearer, My God to Thee."]

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight, what should be the final decoration of the Altar?

GRAND ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: The Antlers, the emblem of our Order, significant of the protection afforded through Brotherly Love.

[The Grand Esquire proceeds to take the Antlers from the Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight and places it upon the Altar and the Organist plays softly "Auld Lang Syne."]

[The Grand Esquire returns to his/her station and is seated.]

CHAIR OF BUILDING COMMITTEE: Grand Exalted Ruler, I present to you as the representative of the Grand Lodge, the keys of this completed Lodge Home (*or Room*), that you may declare the same dedicated to the uses of our Fraternity.

GRAND EXALTED RULER: Brother/Sister (Name) and Members of the Building Committee, on behalf of the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, I congratulate you upon the completion of your labors and the success you have attained. The Members are indebted to you for your efforts in their behalf, and you must yourself feel the satisfaction from a good job successfully performed.

[Grand Exalted Ruler takes the keys and hands them to the Grand Esquire, then continues:]

Grand Esquire, you will proclaim the dedication of this Lodge Home (*or Room*) to the purposes of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and deliver these keys to the Board of Trustees of this Lodge, that they may be applied to such purposes.

GRAND ESQUIRE: [Delivers keys and returns to his/her station.] By and in accordance with the order of the Grand Exalted Ruler, I declare this Lodge Home (*or Room*) dedicated, in the name of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity.

[Instrumental music: "Song To The Evening Star," from Tannhauser (Wagner), or appropriate music.]

[Introduction of the Orator by the Grand Exalted Ruler.]

ORATION

GRAND EXALTED RULER: By the authority of the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, I declare this to be an Elks Lodge Home (*or Room*) in which shall be taught in perpetuity the grand objectives of our Order.

I now declare the Lodge of Dedication closed.



RITUAL

for

Mortgage Burning Ceremony



[The service shall be a public ceremony. The Officers shall occupy their respective stations, wearing the jewels of such stations. The Altar shall be decorated with the proper emblems. An urn and a ceremonial torch, placed in a desirable location near the Altar prior to the opening ceremony by the Esquire, may be used to burn the mortgage.]

EXALTED RULER: Members and Guests, we are about to perform the ceremony of burning the mortgage on our building.

Please stand. [Brief pause.] The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: [From his/her station without advancing to the Altar.] Almighty Father, we come to give thanks to Thee for the manifold blessings Thou hast bestowed upon this Lodge in the _____ years of its existence. May we not forget, in our zeal and enthusiasm to acclaim its material progress in this ceremony, that our greatest aim should ever be its spiritual success. May we find in this beautiful home, now free from debt, the inspiration to carry on to ever-greater heights the labor of love to which our Order is dedicated. We ask in Thy name. Amen.

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated. [Brief pause.] Lodge Esquire, you will take your position for the burning ceremony.

[The Esquire proceeds to a position by the urn.]

[Lights dimmed.]

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: [Advancing to the urn.] As I touch this torch to the last evidence of the indebtedness against this Home, may it be emblematical of the fire of Brotherly Love that should ever burn in our hearts.

[Esteemed Lecturing Knight returns to his/her station and is seated.]

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: [Advancing to the urn.] This station offers its flame to this last evidence of debt against our Home with a hope that the torch of Justice will ever guide the opinions and decisions of every Elk in this Lodge.

[Esteemed Loyal Knight returns to his/her station and is seated.]

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: [Advancing to the urn.] As we have unburdened ourselves of the indebtedness against our Home and I add my torch to the last evidence of that debt, may the flame that rises be symbolic of the Charity that burns eternally in every Elks Lodge.

[Esteemed Leading Knight returns to his/her station and is seated.]

EXALTED RULER: [Advancing to the urn.] I apply this torch to the last vestige of the documentary evidence of the debt against our Home; and to those who passed on to their celestial home, our message of thanks and gratitude for their part in the organization and progress of this Lodge. And may we find renewed inspiration in this ceremony to carry on the unfinished task of building Homes of Brotherly Love, Justice, Charity and Fidelity.

Lodge Esquire, you will place the ashes of the mortgage in an envelope, seal it, and turn it over to the Secretary of this Lodge, that it may remain in the archives among the records of the Lodge.

[The Esquire complies, returns to his/her station and is seated.]

ORATION

[Oration optional.]

EXALTED RULER: Let us go forth rejoicing! Our Home is free from the lien of debt. I now declare this service closed.



RITUAL

for a Funeral Service



[This funeral service is prepared for use in the Lodge Room or in a Chapel. Appropriate modifications of the service may be made to conform in conjunction with the other funeral services and local practices and customs.]

[It is the duty of the Esquire to make whatever preparations may be necessary for all parts of the service.]

[The Exalted Ruler should communicate with the family, mortuary, and/or clergy to determine the most appropriate arrangements for the service.]

[The Esquire leads the procession of Officers and Members into the Lodge Room or Chapel in an orderly fashion. The Esquire takes the position between the head of the casket or left of the urn and the Exalted Ruler with the dais being placed 1 to 2 paces out in front of the Officers. The Exalted Ruler's position shall be at the dais; the Leading and Loyal Knights and Chaplain at the head; and the Lecturing Knight and the Inner Guard at the foot of the casket or urn. The remaining Members will remain in a single line behind the Officers on either side of the casket (all will face towards the audience) being sure not to block the view of the casket from the view of the family and guests. When an Officer gives their part, be sure to take a step forward to deliver their part and step back when finished.]

[Officers of the Lodge may wear the jewels of their respective stations.]

[Each Member shall be provided with a spray of Ivy for use as herein indicated.]

[The musical selections named in the Ritual may be changed to suit local conditions.]

[The strains of "Auld Lang Syne" should be played softly while the Exalted Ruler and the Lodge Officers take their positions. At the close of the ceremony, the Organist again softly takes up the strains of "Auld Lang Syne," which is played until the Officers have retired.]

[The Secretary shall make a proper entry in his/her minute book of every funeral service. If the deceased Member belonged to a Lodge other than the one conducting the service, the Secretary will send to the Member's Lodge a certified copy of his/her minute entry regarding the funeral.]

[Organ prelude: "Auld Lang Syne," or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: To the family, relatives and friends, we, as Members of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, are here to pay a tribute of affection and honor to our Brother/Sister (*Name*) who has passed through the shadows into everlasting peace.

At this time we should pause in thoughtful review of the principles we uphold. The faith we follow teaches us to live in bonds of Charity with all mankind. To do Justice to one another raises the standard of human excellence everywhere. Brotherly Love is a torch that sheds light over the whole pathway of life. Fidelity inspires us to be true to one another, and to treasure the memory of the departed.

In fraternal recognition of the part borne by our Brother/Sister in all our work, and bowing to the decree of an all-wise God, I ask you to listen in reverence to the chime of the hour of eleven — with us the Hour of Remembrance.

[Eleventh hour chimes.]

ESQUIRE: It is the Hour of Recollection.

EXALTED RULER: The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: Almighty Father, we come to Thee, and humbly ask Thy blessing upon this service.

May the passing of our Brother/Sister inspire new devotion to the fraternal duties entrusted to our keeping. May those who mourn be comforted with Thy tender love and mercy.

From the darkness of this hour lead us into the sunshine of Thy presence. As Thou art with us through life, so bring us at last where we are united in bonds of eternal peace. Amen.

EXALTED RULER: The Inner Guard will call the name of our departed Brother/Sister.

INNER GUARD: [Calls the name once.]

EXALTED RULER: In vain we call. He/she has passed into the light which is beyond the valley of the shadow of death; the places that have known him/her shall know him/her no more; and again we realize that in the midst of life we are in death; that He who watches over all our destinies will again, on the last great day, unite the chain of Fraternal Love so recently broken.

[Organ music: "Prelude" (Chopin), or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Leading Knight, in summing up the life work of our departed Brother/Sister, what record shall be made in the name of Charity?

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: I testify to his/her faithful adherence to the cause of Charity.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Loyal Knight, how shall his/her devotion to Justice be measured?

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: As the just deserve justice, I declare that he/she was faithful to Justice.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Lecturing Knight, representing the principles of Brotherly Love, what is the testimony from your station?

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: By the fraternal ties that bound him/her to us, I pronounce him/her faithful to Brotherly Love.

EXALTED RULER: Lodge Esquire, what is your tribute to our Brother's/Sister's patriotism?

[Standard Candidate Flag or appropriate substitute to be used.]

ESQUIRE: [The Esquire grasps the two top corners of the Flag and lifts the Flag reverently and holds it before him/her and says:] He/she who loved his/her country's Flag has not lived in vain. This Flag is first in our hearts as loyal Americans and guards our Altar as loyal Elks. May its clustering stars and streaming light guide the immortal soul of our departed Brother/Sister on its journey through eternity.

[Gently places Flag on casket.]

EXALTED RULER: As a tribute to his/her Fidelity, I bring the unfading Amaranth encircled by the clinging Ivy. These tokens we deposit with him/her in enduring friendship, the Amaranth typifying our belief in the immortality of the soul, and the Ivy symbolizing Brotherly Love. [Places flowers upon casket.] Sleep, my Brother/Sister, and peace be with you.

[Quartette or solo: "Softly Now The Light of Day," or appropriate music.]

[The Exalted Ruler may designate another Officer, or Member, to deliver the eulogy. A special eulogy may be given, if desired, in place of the following, or in addition hereto.]

EXALTED RULER: My friends, the incident of death is not more mysterious than the incident of birth. We were born to die, and we die that we may live. This philosophy of human existence remains unchanged throughout the passing centuries.

The birth of an individual does not greatly impress us; but when death invades our ranks, we are appalled. It is not life that causes us to pause but loss of it. Likewise a clinging faith in immortality has been our solace and our inspiration since first the flight of time began.

Although a natural and inevitable event, the final summons always comes to those we love with a blow that seems to crush our hearts. We think gentle thoughts, we speak tender words, we halt, we wonder, we reason, and with faith, we become reconciled as we realize that loss of life is not the end but a beginning.

In this simple and reverent ceremony it is not my purpose to deliver a personal eulogy of our Brother/Sister, who no longer answers when his/her name is called. *(Full name)* was an American citizen, responsive to every duty of citizenship and brotherhood. He/she took his/her vow before the Antlers, he/she attested his/her Obligation upon the Great Book of Law, he/she pledged allegiance to the American Flag.

True, our Brother/Sister has journeyed away from us. His/her dream ship, frail or staunch, has sailed to another shore. The clock of his/her days has stopped. Upon its dial, the motionless shadows mark eleven, with us the golden hour of recollection. Whatever may have been his/her accomplishments, we are his/her treasurers. We will cherish his/her good deeds, forget his/her faults and inscribe his/her name upon the tablets of love and memory. As he/she was true to us, let us be true to him/her.

Speaking for the surviving Members of his/her Lodge, I say “Good-bye — good-bye until the hour of eleven shall regularly return. Thou art I and I am thou, thy name shall never be forgotten.”

[Song: “Our Absent Brother,” (air: The Vacant Chair), or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: May we ever act with Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. Members, I now ask that you pay tribute to our departed Brother/Sister by leaving with him/her the clinging Ivy symbolizing Brotherly Love after which the service will be concluded.

[Organist plays softly, “Auld Lang Syne,” or appropriate music, the Officers and Members file past the casket, each depositing a spray of Ivy and in turn repeating these words, in a whisper, “Peace be with you.” The depositing of the Ivy shall be optional with each Lodge depending upon the circumstances. The Officers and Members will proceed in an orderly fashion, after depositing of the Ivy, away from the casket or urn.]



RITUAL

for a Funeral Service at the Grave



[This funeral service is prepared for use at the grave. It may be used whenever conditions shall make such use appropriate. Appropriate modifications of the service may be made to conform in conjunction with the other funeral services and local practices and customs.]

[The formation at the grave shall be the same as that observed for the service in the Lodge Room or Chapel.]

EXALTED RULER: We have come with our beloved Brother/Sister to his/her last earthly resting place. The lesson of this service is to be found in the love and reverence we bear for those who are gone, and the sympathy we feel for those who remain. In applying and consecrating this lesson let us invoke the blessing and guidance of a merciful God. [Brief pause.] The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: Almighty Father, in all Your wisdom, You have chosen our Brother/Sister to be with You forever in Heaven, and we are happy that he/she shall live in the sunshine of eternal life. Comfort those who mourn with Thy unfailing goodness and mercy.

Help us in the practice of the Benevolent work of our Order, and keep us faithful to the principles upon which our fraternity was founded — Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. Amen.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Leading Knight, where should we write the faults of our Brother/Sister?

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: Upon the sand.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Loyal Knight, where shall we record his/her virtues?

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: On the tablets of love and memory.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Lecturing Knight, what should be the covering for his/her grave?

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: The broad mantle of Brotherly Love.

RITUAL

for the

Elks Memorial Tablet Service



Tablet Service (Originally from the 1992 Special Services Book, updated in 2010 by Tom Root – PDDGER, Westminster, CO Lodge No. 2227)

[It shall be the duty of every Elks Lodge with reasonable diligence to erect and maintain a Memorial Tablet or necrology, upon which or within which, shall be inscribed the names of all departed members whose names were upon the rolls of the Lodge as members thereof at the time of their decease, and such other inscription as the Lodge may deem proper. B.P.O.E. Statutes, Section 2.040.]

[When a deceased member's name is to be inscribed upon the Memorial Tablet, the following ceremony may be used as a Special Service, under the order of "Sickness and Distress."]

EXALTED RULER: Members, a great Elks Member (Name) has passed away. His/her trials ended, his/her faults forgotten, his/her virtues cherished, he/she rests in peace. As the Exalted Ruler of this Lodge, I direct that his/her name be inscribed upon our Memorial Tablet, as an enduring record of his/her Fidelity, and that his/her example and services may be remembered and preserved in the annals of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

[Hymn: "The Empty Chair," or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Leading Knight, what is the significance of the Elks Memorial Tablet?

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: The preservation in every Elks Lodge of the names of our departed members and the perpetuation of their memories.

EXALTED RULER: Has _____ Lodge No. ____ such a tablet?

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: It has.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Loyal Knight, is our Memorial Tablet so carefully guarded that it is safe from the hand of vandalism, as well as from the ravages of time?

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: As the sanctity of our Home is safe from desecration, and our meeting secure in the integrity of our members, so is our Memorial Tablet safe within our walls.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Lecturing Knight, what is the dominant lesson of this service?

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: The love and reverence we bear for those who are gone and the sympathy and interest we feel for those who remain.

EXALTED RULER: Lodge Secretary, what is the number of our honored members, and does the number tally with the names upon our Memorial Tablet?

SECRETARY: Exalted Ruler, the number of our departed members is _____ and it corresponds with the number of names on our Memorial Tablet, the last being that of Brother/Sister (Name).

EXALTED RULER: Lodge Esquire, let the name of member (Name) be inscribed upon our Memorial Tablet, in fraternal regard, in affectionate remembrance, and in full recognition of the exalted principles of our Order, by which we live and die.

ESQUIRE: Exalted Ruler, the name is so inscribed.

EXALTED RULER: We write the faults of our members upon the sand, their virtues upon the tablets of love and memory. Members, let us consecrate the work done here by bowing in humble submission to God.

Please stand. [Brief pause.] The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: God of our Fathers, may Thy blessing rest upon the services which we have performed as we have dedicated this Tablet to the memory of our departed member. For all that he/she meant to this Lodge during his/her life we thank Thee, and may his/her virtues be recalled by all who gaze on this memorial. Grant that we shall so live that the memory of our lives shall find a place in the hearts of those around us, as they recall the things which we did, and which were true, upright, sincere and generous, and to thy honor and glory. Amen

EXALTED RULER: I now declare this service closed.



RITUAL

for the

Elks Memorial Service



[The service shall be a public ceremony. The Officers shall occupy their respective stations, wearing the jewels of such stations. The Altar shall be decorated with the proper emblems and shall be set upon the stage if the ceremony is held in a public hall; in its regular position if the ceremony takes place in the Lodge Room.]

[Music: "Funeral March" (Chopin).]

EXALTED RULER: Members and Guests, our Order has decreed that the first Sunday in December be set apart as a day for Elks to gather and freshen with the dew of recollection the tender blossoms of hope and love entwined about the memory of their departed. Obedient to our laws, and with hearts attuned in perfect sympathy, we meet on this Memorial Day to pledge anew Fidelity to the memory of our fellow Members who have entered into the realm of eternity. [Brief pause.] Please stand. [Brief pause.] The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: [From his/her station without advancing to the Altar.] Almighty Father, Giver of Life, Master of Death, we meet to honor the memory of our fellow Members whom Thou has summoned to lay down the burdens of mortality, and to find rest with Thee. Grant that we may approach this service with eyes undimmed by tears, and with hearts flooded with the sunshine of happy retrospection. Help us to recall the gentle words, the kindly thoughts, the many attributes which made our Members true Elks and upright men and women.

Give us faith in this hour, to feel again the touch of vanished hands and to hear the voices that are stilled. Imbue our hearts with the inspiring hope of immortality that banishes sorrow and gives assurance of a happy reunion upon the shores of Thy fair land. Enable us to read the tablets of love and memory, and learn from the records of our departed Members how best to live our own lives. Imbue us with the spirit of true Charity; incline our hearts to Justice; so broaden our nature that all may find shelter beneath the mantle of our Brotherly Love; keep us faithful to the memory of our departed Members, and may our thoughts of them grow sweeter with the passing years. Amen.

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated.

[Quartette or chorus: "Send out Thy Light" (Gounod), or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: As Elks we are taught that some day the mortal shall put on immortality. Firm in our faith, we are reminded by these services that we are born, not to die, but to live. True, the light of beloved eyes has faded from our sight, but it shines more brightly upon another shore. Voices we loved to hear at the fireside, in business, or in fraternal association, are silenced; but they will live again in the music of the Choir Invisible, and blend forever in the harmony of angels. Memorial Day with us is a day of tender sentiment. Hope dries our tears, and with eyes of faith may we see those whom we have loved and lost awhile, and who are awaiting the day when the chain of fraternal love shall be reunited forever.

The Secretary will call the roll of the absent.

[The Secretary will call the roll of the departed Members. In large Lodges where the calling of the entire list of deceased Members is impractical, it is permissible to call only the names of those who have died since the last Memorial Service.]

EXALTED RULER: In vain we call! They have passed through the valley of the shadows into the sunlight of eternal morning; the places that have known them shall know them no more, but upon our tablets of love and memory, their names shall endure forever.

[Song: "The Lord Is My Shepherd" (Koschat), or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Leading Knight, what is the object of Memorial Day?

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: To remind the living that our fellow Members are never forgotten.

EXALTED RULER: By what offering do you dedicate our Altar to Memory?

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: [Advancing to the Altar.] The sweet Forget-Me-Not, typifying Charity which teaches us to remember only the good that has been done.

[Deposits flower upon the Altar and returns to his/her station and is seated.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Loyal Knight, what does Justice offer?

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: [Advancing to the Altar.] The Amaranth, emblem of immortality, the just reward of true and upright lives.

[Deposits flower upon the Altar and returns to his/her station and is seated.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Lecturing Knight, what has your station to add to the Forget-Me-Not and the Amaranth?

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: [Advancing to the Altar.] The clinging Ivy, symbol of our Brotherly Love.

[Deposits flower upon the Altar and returns to his/her station and is seated.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Leading Knight, by what virtue do we designate the station of the Exalted Ruler?

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: Fidelity.

EXALTED RULER: Fidelity embraces all. It inculcates a devotion tender as the Forget-Me-Not, everlasting as the Amaranth, constant as the Ivy. May the records inscribed upon the tablets of love and memory inspire us to the faithful practice of the precepts of our Order. In renewing our fidelity to the memory of our departed Members, may we be inspired ever to a life of service to the living. And may the Grace of God enable us to derive from this ceremony renewed confidence that beyond the shadows there is life everlasting.

ORATION

[Quartette or chorus: "Unfold Ye Portals" (Gounod), or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: Please stand and unite in singing "Auld Lang Syne."

AULD LANG SYNE

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

And never brought to mind?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

And days of Auld Lang Syne?

For Auld Lang Syne, my dear, for Auld Lang Syne,
We'll take a cup o' kindness yet, for Auld Lang Syne.

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated.

[Exalted Ruler gives the Eleven O'Clock Toast.]

EXALTED RULER: Please stand. [Brief pause.] The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: Almighty Father, from the memories of this hour may we derive inspiration that will be helpful to us as individuals and as Members of this Order. Go with us into our homes, into the daily walks of life; give us good gifts, and make us worthy to receive Thy blessing. Amen.

EXALTED RULER: I now declare this Memorial Service closed.



RITUAL

for the

Observance of Mother's Day



[The service shall be a public ceremony. At assembly, each Elk present should be handed a carnation — a red one for a living mother and a white flower for a deceased mother which he/she will pin on his/her lapel.]

EXALTED RULER: Members and Guests, we are here to honor our Mothers whose influence is a continuous force in our lives. Mothers are more than pictures on memory's walls. They are an ever-present inspiration at our side, keeping pace with us along life's winding trail, holding us firm and pure, and making us better and nobler persons.

Responding to that deep sense of reverence of motherhood, which finds common expression each second Sunday in May throughout America, under the hallowed name of Mother's Day, we meet as Members of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks in this fitting ceremonial. Because of the leading part we have taken in the promotion of this endearing day, and because Remembrance, Benevolence, Protection and Inspiration—highest attributes of motherhood—find such cherished place in the code and life of every Elk, we enter into the observance of this occasion with a sense of appropriateness very happily our own.

Let us, in this hour, indulge Remembrance with thoughts of Mother's benevolence and protection, and seek that inspiration which this ceremony in her honor will naturally proclaim. Let us go, for a little while, back through those golden gates which memory has left ajar. Let us express anew our love, and renew our loyalty and devotion for the years to come.

“Not for the star-crowned heroes
The men that conquer and slay,
But a song for those that bore them,
The mothers braver than they.”

[Appropriate music.]

[At this point the Exalted Ruler, or one of the Members whom the Exalted Ruler shall have appointed to this duty, shall deliver the following tribute to Mother. This tribute was written by James E. McCormick, the blind Past Exalted Ruler of Modesto, California, Lodge No. 1282.]

A TRIBUTE TO MOTHER

Members and Guests, we have arranged this simple ceremony in honor of Mother. No human being, no assemblage of human beings could do justice to such a subject. We might fill this room with the rarest of flowers, a celestial choir might sing the sweetest songs, silver-tongued orators could hold you spellbound, and still our effort would be a pitiful tribute to such an occasion.

Our songs, this simple ritual coupled with feeble words, may do no more than to remind us of a duty that we owe. Yes, a duty that we can never fully repay.

You have heard Mother referred to as the one "who went down into the Valley of the Great Shadow that we might have our being." How true that is! And how many shadows has this ever-faithful guardian angel passed through that you and I might live and be equipped with the forces to live! Where is there another who will make the sacrifices, suffer the pain and continue to face the storms of life that the child may be protected? Who can measure the value of that priceless jewel, a Mother's love? If the great Almighty ever searched for a treasure house in which to store the jewels of Love, Kindness, Self-Sacrifice, Devotion, Peace and Patience, His all-seeing eye must have rested on a Mother's heart.

From the cradle to the grave, this treasure house has poured out its contents to guide, to heal, to cherish and to teach all mankind. And for what reward or recompense? For the hours of patient waiting at the bedside of sickness, for the pain and disappointment when you and I fail to fulfill a Mother's ambition? Is it for the few short letters we write this silver-haired martyr? Too often do we neglect even this small tribute of devotion.

Who are the heroes of life? Are they the great leaders of nations, the generals, the statesmen, the financiers, the philosophers, poets and geniuses? Or are they the quiet, patient, white-haired queens of every home—they who have planted in the hearts of these individuals the inspiration for the acts that have brought them fame?

We need not go abroad in search of a test of a Mother's devotion. We have examples of it in our own country, in our own state, in the homes of every Member and friend. You Members who wear the red flowers in honor of the Mother who still lives, you know her sacrifices, you know the love and devotion that fills that good old heart, a heart that would give its life's blood for you.

You Members who wear the white flower in honor of the memory of the Mother who has crossed her tired hands and who rests in the shadow of eternal sleep, you have but the memory of that sweet face to cheer you on in life's battles.

Tonight, (*Today*) let us blend the white with the red, and link them both with the golden chain of respect and devotion to the sweetest word in the English language, to the truest friend we shall ever own, to our Mothers.

[At the conclusion of the tribute, the Exalted Ruler calls upon the Officers.]

EXALTED RULER: Lodge Esquire.

ESQUIRE: I speak of Remembrance of the hallowed Past. Memories of happy childhood, of a loving Mother who was our guide through the waywardness of youth, and our strength amid the labors of advancing adulthood. Those of us who still are happy in life's association with her, and those of us who have only a sweet memory in our hearts, alike pay this tribute of Remembrance of all she has been, all she is, and all she will ever be in our lives.

[Esquire resumes his/her seat.]

[Song: "That Wonderful Mother Of Mine," or similar song.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Lecturing Knight.

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: I speak of Benevolence. Nowhere in all the walks of life is Benevolence exemplified so unselfishly, not in higher and holier degree than in a Mother's never-failing love and service. Her very fingers are time-worn in loving care of us. Her one thought has been our welfare and happiness. And she has journeyed through the Valley of the Shadow, that we might have life.

[Esteemed Lecturing Knight resumes his/her seat.]

[Song: "Rock-a-Bye, Baby," or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Loyal Knight.

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: I speak of Protection, which has a symbolic fraternal meaning to all Elks. What better, truer protection will infancy or maturity ever know than the protection of a Mother's loving arms? Her strength never fails, and there is a recurring resurrection of courage to meet the demands made upon her, so that she always responds as only a Mother can.

[Esteemed Loyal Knight resumes his/her seat.]

[Song: "Mother Machree," or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Leading Knight.

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: I speak of Inspiration, that which moves us to press on when fellow travelers on life's journey would fall by the wayside. It is a living, vitalizing ever-present force, not an influence that has passed. Even so are our Mothers. They never die! They are the ever-faithful and never-deserting guardian angels, whose influence is an inspiration that uplifts and sustains us throughout our lives.

[Esteemed Leading Knight resumes his/her seat.]

[Song: "Mother O' Mine," or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: "Youth fades, love droops; the leaves of friendship fall; but a Mother's hope for us outlives them one and all."

Please stand. [Brief pause.] The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: O God, Our Father, for the sacred and hallowed memories which have inspired the observance of Mother's Day, we thank Thee, and may the sweet and gentle recollections which crowd the hearts and minds of all as we participate in this service make of us stronger, truer and better children. Bless the Mothers of our great land who are this day guiding and inspiring childhood, and may the gentle and ennobling influence of Mother be always to our youth the sweetest and most uplifting power they shall ever know. May light perpetually shine upon the mother whom we have loved long since and lost awhile. We ask in Thy Name. Amen.

EXALTED RULER: I now declare this service closed.



RITUAL

for the

Observance of Father's Day



(Created by Christy Williams, Past Exalted Ruler of Moreno Valley, CA Lodge No. 2697)

[The service shall be a public ceremony. The Officers shall occupy their respective stations, wearing the jewels of such stations and the Altar shall be arranged with the proper emblems. A U.S. Flag Pin or small U.S. Flag should be given to all in attendance. All Officers shall stand and deliver their charges from their stations.]

EXALTED RULER: My Brothers/Sisters and Friends, we gather here today to pay a tribute to Father. To the Fathers whose guidance and wisdom still resonate with us on a daily basis; to those Fathers who are still to become a mentor to their children; and to those Fathers whose guidance and wisdom are but a fond memory in our hearts and minds.

The third Sunday of June is reserved for the observance of Father's Day and what a fitting time of the year for this recognition. For a father's love and inspiration for his children is as bright and endearing as the longest days of the year. Similar to the inspiration of our Order — the mighty Elk — Fathers provide a guiding presence that inspires us as children and adults to become true and faithful to ourselves and all those around us. Their strength and convictions are the cornerstones which teach us to be steadfast and fair. Their benevolence and gentleness show us to be charitable and kind to all.

Let us in this simple ceremony pay homage to those that will be, those that still are today, and those whose memories continue to guide us down life's pathway — to Father.

[At this point the Exalted Ruler, or one of the Members whom the Exalted Ruler shall have appointed to this duty, shall deliver — A Tribute to Father.]

— A TRIBUTE TO FATHER —

EXALTED RULER or APPOINTED SPEAKER: Remembrance of Father is more than pictures on memory's wall; it is more than a poem or a few memories. Who are the heroes of life? Are they the great leaders of nations, the generals, poets or geniuses? Or are they the men who helped mold them, guide them and teach them throughout their lives? Father's teach that strong education, dedication, passion for what you believe in, hard work to conquer your goals and a firm commitment to God, family, friends, community & country will give them the strength they need to be our great leaders of the world.

Some fathers make the courageous decision to serve our country in order to protect their families. They go across our county and the world to protect, to serve, and to keep us from harm. Father is strength, a man that in spite of his obligation to his family, also teaches us that his strength comes in many ways. The strength to leave the family that he loves to do what is required of them, even if it means he may not make it home again. They are the heroes and exemplify true strength as Fathers.

There are men who themselves did not have a child but stepped up to be the Father you needed. An uncle, a step-father, a brother who helped raise and guide you through life because you need them. To those men you are a Father, for you are a HERO to the child you helped through life.

You who hold the Flag Pin (or Flag) in honor of the memory of the Father who has crossed his tired hands and who rests in the shadow of eternal sleep, you have but the memory of his face, the sound of his voice in past thoughts and his everlasting love to help you in life's battles.

Today, let us remember those who have passed and celebrate those who are here. And that we will always know that special word in the English Language: To the strongest friend we shall ever know, to our Fathers.

[The speaker shall resume their seat, or the Exalted Ruler will continue.]

EXALTED RULER: Lodge Esquire, what is your tribute to Father.

ESQUIRE: I offer this in memory of the Fathers who have passed through the valley of the shadows and into the sunlight eternal, and still continue to inspire and guide us throughout our life's journeys: *It matters not what others saw in my Father, the only thing that matters is what I still see in him today.*

[Esquire resumes his/her seat.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Lecturing Knight, what is your tribute to Father.

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: I provide a poem written by Helen Steiner Rice:

*Fathers are wonderful people, too little understood
And we do not sing their praises, As often as we should ...
For somehow, Father seems to be, The man who pays the bills,
While Mother binds up little hurts, And nurses all our ills ...
And Father struggles daily, To live up to 'HIS IMAGE'
As protector and provider, And "hero of the scrimmage" ...
And perhaps that is the reason, We sometimes get the notion
That Fathers are not subject, To the thing we call emotion*

*But if you look inside Dad's heart, Where no one else can see
You'll find he's sentimental, And as soft, as he can be...*

*But he's so busy every day, In the grueling race of life
He leaves the sentimental stuff, To his partner and his wife...*

*But Fathers are just WONDERFUL, In a million different ways
And they merit loving compliments, And accolade of praise*

*For the only reason Dad aspires, To fortune and success
Is to make the family proud of him, And to bring them happiness...*

*And like OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, He's a guardian and a guide
Someone that we can count on, To be ALWAYS ON OUR SIDE.*

[Esteemed Lecturing Knight resumes his/her seat.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Loyal Knight, what is your tribute to Father.

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: The motto of this station is Justice. With a Father's ever teaching lessons of right and wrong — their thoughts, words & deeds guide us through the ever present challenges that are placed along life's pathway. As children we should be ever guided by these examples of right and wrong, and for that we are forever grateful of a Father's guidance and love.

[Esteemed Loyal Knight resumes his/her seat.]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Leading Knight, what is your tribute to Father.

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: I provide a writing by Ragini:

*Fathers young, fathers old
Remembering good times are our gold.*

*Value earned through guidance given
Helping us go forth in living'.*

*Each father adding to our trove
A treasure chest of love untold.*

*Remembering father in our lives
Taking time to realize.*

*Fatherly love brings wealth to living
Remembering this we go forth in giving.*

*Fathers young, fathers old
We remember you all, As life unfolds.*

[Esteemed Leading Knight resumes his/her seat.]

EXALTED RULER: As the motto of this station is Fidelity, what better way to express the meaning of Fathers — for they are:

- Faithful — Always there — Trustworthy — Honoring
— Ever-loving — Righteous — Supportive •

(— Author Unknown)

EXALTED RULER: Please Stand. [Brief pause.] The Chaplain will lead us in Prayer.

CHAPLAIN: O God and Heavenly Father to us all. We thank thee for this hour of gathering where we have acknowledged the Fathers to be, the Fathers that are, and the Fathers that have joined you at your side to look over our lives. May the blessing that you bestow upon us, guide us to be the very best of children that our Fathers have always wanted us to be. May we never forget the strong and noble influences that have mentored us along life's pathway and may we continue to carry on the positive messages of Fatherhood forever and ever. We ask this in Thy Name. Amen.

EXALTED RULER: Blessed indeed is the man who hears many gentle voices call him father!

(—Lydia M. Child, Philothea; A Romance, 1836)

I now declare this service closed.



RITUAL

for

Flag Day Service



ANNUAL SERVICES — JUNE 14th

Commemorating the Birth of the American Flag

SUGGESTED PROGRAM

1. Singing: “Star-Spangled Banner” By the entire Assembly
2. Introductory Exercises Exalted Ruler & Officers
3. Prayer Chaplain
4. Music: “Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean”
5. History of the Flag
6. Singing: “God Bless America” By the entire Assembly
7. Response
8. Pledge of Allegiance By the entire Assembly
9. Patriotic Address By Member of the Order
or by an invited guest
(optional)
10. Conclusion Exalted Ruler

[The service shall be a public ceremony and may be held in the Lodge Room or a public hall, or in the open air. Sufficient seating space should be reserved to accommodate Members, and the reserved section should be appropriately decorated. Other suitable decorations are optional.]

[A large American Flag shall be placed to the right of the Exalted Ruler’s station or podium.]

[To begin the service, all Officers shall assume their seats, wearing their jewels of office.]

[If desired, a street parade, with music and banners, may be arranged to precede the ceremonies.]

[Members present should be provided with small American Flag Pins to be worn on the left lapel.]

[The program herein outlined may be changed to suit local conditions as to music, speakers, etc., but the use of the “History of the Flag” and the “Response” is mandatory.]

EXALTED RULER: Please stand and unite in singing the “Star-Spangled Banner.”

[Assembly sings.]

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated. [Brief pause.] Members and Guests, the purpose of this service is to honor our country's Flag, to celebrate the anniversary of its birth, and to recall the achievements attained beneath its folds. It is quite appropriate that such a service should be held by the Order of Elks, an organization that is distinctively American, intensely patriotic and without counterpart.

Esteemed Leading Knight, what are the fraternal aims of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks?

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: To inculcate the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity; to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind; to uphold our country and its laws; and to quicken the spirit of American patriotism.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Leading Knight, what is the significance of the American Flag?

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: It is emblematic of the crowning virtue, Charity.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Loyal Knight, what is the significance of the American Flag?

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: It is emblematic of Justice for all.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Lecturing Knight, what is the significance of the American Flag?

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: It is the symbol of Brotherly Love.

EXALTED RULER: Lodge Esquire, what is the significance of the Flag from the station of the Exalted Ruler?

ESQUIRE: It is the symbol of Fidelity.

EXALTED RULER: Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity are the cardinal principles of our Order and they are exemplified in all of our services. By them we teach love of country and of our countrymen and loyalty to our American way of life. To be an Elk is to be an American citizen who lives for their country and is ready to die for it.

Please stand. [Brief pause.] The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: [From his/her station without advancing to the Altar.] Almighty God, in this hour of patriotic observance of the birthday of the American Flag, we ask You to bless our Flag, and the people of these United States. For all that our Flag represents, both at home and abroad, we thank Thee, and that through all our history as a nation, it has been an ensign of freedom, liberty and opportunity. And through the years to come may this Flag wave as the banner of liberty, freedom and enlightenment. May this service bring to each of us a sense of loyalty to our country and enable us to be better patriots, truer citizens, and more loyal Americans, to Thy glory and to the honor of this great nation. Amen.

[Music: "Columbia, The Gem Of The Ocean."]

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated. [Brief pause.] That we may better understand the meaning of our Flag, I call upon Brother/Sister (*Name*) for the history of the Flag.

THE FLAG: ITS HISTORY

Heraldry is as old as the human race. The carrying of banners has been a custom among all peoples in all ages. These banners usually contain some concept of the life or government of those who fashion them.

The evolution of the American Flag marks the progression of the government of the American people.

From the founding of Jamestown in Virginia, in 1607, until 1775, the Flag of England was the Flag of the Peoples of America.

In 1775, the Pine Tree Flag was adopted for all colonial vessels, and this was the banner carried by the Continental forces in the Battle of Bunker Hill.

[Music: "Yankee Doodle."]

[Enter Pine Tree Flag.]

The Southern colonies from 1776 to 1777 used the Snake Flag.

[Music: "Chester, L.M."]

[Enter Snake Flag.]

In the latter part of 1775 the Continental Congress appointed a committee to consider the question of a single Flag for the thirteen colonies. That committee recommended a design of thirteen alternate stripes of red and white, with an azure field in the upper corner bearing the red cross of St. George and the white cross of St. Andrew. John Paul Jones, the senior lieutenant of the flagship "Alfred," hoisted this Flag to the masthead on December 3, 1775, and one month later it was raised over the headquarters of General Washington at Cambridge, Massachusetts, "In compliment," as he wrote, "to the United Colonies."

[Music: "A Successful Campaign."]

[Enter above-described Flag.]

This Flag, called "The Continental Colors" and "The Grand Union," was never carried in the field by the Continental land forces, but it was used by the Navy as its exclusive ensign, and was the first American Flag to receive a salute of honor, a salute of eleven guns from the Fort of Orange in the Dutch West Indies.

In response to a general demand for a banner more representative of our country, the Congress on June 14, 1777, provided: —

"That the Flag of the United States be thirteen stripes of alternating red and white; and that the union be thirteen stars, white on a blue field, representing a new constellation."

[Music: "Hail Columbia, Happy Land."]

[Enter above-described Flag.]

It is generally believed that in May or June of 1776, a committee consisting of George Washington, Robert Morris and George Ross commissioned Betsy Ross, a Philadelphia Quakeress, to make a Flag from a rough design they left with her. It is said that she suggested that the stars should have five points, rather than six.

This starry banner was first flown at Fort Stanwix, called Fort Schuyler at that time, near the city of Rome, New York, on August 3, 1777, and was under fire three days later at the battle of Oriskany, August 6, 1777, during a British and Indian attack.

The first official salute to the Stars and Stripes was given on February 14, 1778, by France, on the French coast, when the "Ranger," under command of John Paul Jones, was saluted by the French fleet.

This Flag, then carried by the "Ranger," was made by the young women of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, from stripes of their best colored-silk dresses and the white wedding gown of a recent bride.

It is said that this same "Ranger's" Flag was flown by Jones' ship, the "Bon Homme Richard" in its thrilling fight by moonlight, upon the high seas, with the British frigate "Serapis." When the "Serapis" struck her colors, the immortal fame of John Paul Jones was ensured as the intrepid defender of the youthful republic.

The original thirteen Stars and Stripes represented the original thirteen colonies. In 1795 two additional Stars and Stripes were added to represent admission to the Union of Vermont and Kentucky. Under this banner of fifteen Stars and Stripes was fought the War of 1812. It was the sight of it flying over Fort McHenry, on September 14, 1814, that inspired Francis Scott Key to write what was to become our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Miss Margaret Young, who cut the stars for that particular banner, was the mother of Henry Sanderson, the Grand Exalted Ruler of the Order of Elks in 1884.

[Music: "The Star-Spangled Banner."]

[Enter above-described Flag.]

The Congress on April 14, 1818, adopted a resolution that on and after July 4, 1818, the number of stripes should be thirteen and that the blue field should carry one star for each of the twenty states in the union and that a new star should be added for each state thereafter admitted.

[Music: "America."]

[Enter above-described Flag.]

Since 1818, there has been no change in the Flag design except that twenty-eight new stars were added before July 4, 1912, and this Flag of forty-eight stars flew over this nation for forty-seven years until just before the Vietnam War.

[Music.]

[Enter 48-star Flag.]

On July 4, 1959, a star was added for Alaska, our first non-connected state and a year later, Hawaii, our island state added a fiftieth star. Our present Flag — fifty stars and thirteen stripes. It is accompanied by the POW-MIA Flag to recognize the plight and demise of a special group of our Armed Services, those who were prisoners of war or still remain missing in action.

[Music.]

[Enter 50-star Flag.]

[Introduce color guards.]

EXALTED RULER: Please stand and salute our Flag.

[Produces the Flag, holding it in his/her hands. The Organist plays softly “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Exalted Ruler continues:]

As this emblem is first in our hearts as loyal Americans, so is it close to our Altar as loyal Elks. The gentle breezes with lingering caress kiss the folds of no Flag which can compare with it in beauty. There is no such red in budding rose, in falling leaf or sparkling wine; no such white in April blossom, in crescent moon or mountain snow; no such blue in woman’s eye, in ocean’s depth or heaven’s dome; and no such pageantry of clustering stars and streaming light in all the spectrum of the sea and sky.

Please be seated. [Brief pause.]

Our Flag is at once a history, a declaration and a prophecy. It represents the American nation as it was at its birth; it speaks for what it is today; and it holds the opportunity for the future to add other stars to the glorious constellation.

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is the first and only fraternal body to require formal observance of “Flag Day.” In July of 1908, the Grand Lodge of this Order, at Dallas, Texas, then assembled, provided for the annual nationwide observance of “Flag Day” on the 14th of June in each year, by making it mandatory upon each Local Lodge of the Order.

This unique distinction as the strongest promoter of “Flag Day” is most becoming to the Order of Elks. This Order is distinctively American. Only American citizens are eligible to join it and it has no foreign affiliations. It has linked its destiny with the destiny of our country and made this Flag its symbol of self-dedication to God, to country, and to fellow men.

Please stand and join in singing “God Bless America.”

[Music and Assembly sings.]

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated.

RESPONSE

[Suitable introduction. This is mandatory. To be delivered by an Elks Member designated by the Exalted Ruler.]

The Stars and Stripes, Flag of the United States of America! The world-wide hope of all who, under God, would be free to live and do His will.

Upon its folds is written the story of America — the epic of the mightiest and noblest in all history.

In the days when peoples of the old world groveled in abject homage to the heresy of “the divine right of Kings,” a new constellation appeared in the western skies, the Stars and Stripes, symbolizing the divine right of all to life, liberty, happiness and peace under endowment by their Creator.

To what man or woman is given words adequate to tell the story of the building of this nation? That immortal story is written in blood and sweat, in heroic deeds and unremitting toil, in clearing the primeval forests and in planting of vast prairies where once the coyote and buffalo roamed. Onward swept the nation, spanning wide rivers, leaping vast mountain ranges, leaving in its path villages and farms, factories and cities, till at last this giant nation stood astride the continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

This is the heritage of the people of the United States. It has been repurchased by each succeeding generation and must be won again, again and again until the end of time, lest it too shall pass like the ancient Empires of Greece and Rome.

“The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” What was won at Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill had to be repurchased at Ticonderoga and Yorktown.

What John Paul Jones achieved upon the high seas in the War of Independence had to be repurchased by Commodore Perry on Lake Erie in the War of 1812.

The prestige of Admiral Dewey’s victory at Manila Bay in 1898 was won by the naval battles in the seas about the far-distant islands of the Pacific, after the sneak attacks upon Pearl Harbor and Manila in 1941 had summoned our country to assume its role in World War II.

What our troops achieved under the Stars and Stripes at Chateau-Thierry and Flanders in World War I, their sons were required to repurchase in World War II in the bloody trek across northern Africa, on the beachheads of Europe and in the Battle of the Bulge.

The Flag our American men raised at Iwo Jima was the same Flag later raised in the defense of Inchon, Pusan and Pork Chop Hill in far-off Korea. Then another generation under the same Flag bled to stem the threat of communism in far-off Vietnam.

Our young people were again called to carry our Flag in the defense of a free world in the actions in Grenada and Panama. Willingly, our brave men and women carried our Flag and the honor of the American people into battle in Operation Desert Storm.

And who among us will ever forget the sight of firefighters raising our Flag over the ruins of the World Trade Center, the military personnel draping our Flag on the side of the Pentagon, or the citizens of Somerset County, Pennsylvania, placing our Flag near the site where brave Americans died fighting the hijackers of Flight No. 93? No other symbol could have offered such comfort, as we still, today, endure the horrors of that day.

Today, American Armed Forces carry our Flag in the villages of Iraq, the mountains of Afghanistan and the jungles of the Philippines and wherever terrorism may reside. Their struggle against the sponsors of terrorism is the hardest battle yet, and this threat to our Nation, and to our way of life, is certainly as great a challenge as our Flag has ever seen.

The resurgence of patriotism since September 11, 2001, has rekindled respect for our Flag. We see the Star Spangled Banner wherever we turn, on homes, businesses, automobiles and billboards. Such displays stimulate our love for our Nation and for what it stands; they remind us of the sacrifices being made by the men and women of our Armed Forces around the world; and, they are a tribute to the heroes of the Police and Fire Departments the Nation over.

The greatest significance of this Flag, however, lies in the influence it has in the hearts and minds of millions of people. It has waved over the unparalleled progress of a nation in developing democratic institutions, scientific and technological knowledge, education and culture. It has served as a beacon for millions of poor and oppressed refugees abroad and stands as a promise that the under-privileged will not be forgotten.

What is the meaning of the Flag of the United States? There can never be a definitive answer to that question. There are people in this world who see it as a symbol of imperialism; others see it as a destiny of the people. But Woodrow Wilson resolved his reference to these and similar views when he said: "This Flag, which we honor and under which we serve, is the emblem of our unity, our power, our thought and shape of this nation. It has no other character than that which we give it from generation to generation. The choices are ours."

Only love, true love of our fellow man, can create peace. The emblem and token of that love is the Stars and Stripes, the symbol of the American way of life.

"Our Fathers' God, to Thee,

Author of liberty,

To Thee we sing.

Long may our land be bright

With freedom's holy light.

Protect us by Thy might,

Great God, our King."

EXALTED RULER: Lodge Esquire, how shall we further honor our Flag?

ESQUIRE: The Flag is formally honored by the Pledge of Allegiance. This Pledge was written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy and published in “The Youth’s Companion” as part of a patriotic campaign of that magazine. The Pledge did not become part of the Flag Code until 1942, and in 1954, the phrase “Under God” was added.

EXALTED RULER: Let us all stand and pledge ourselves never to forget the principles represented by this Flag.

“I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands; one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.”

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated.

[Suitable introduction.]

ORATION

[Oration optional.]

EXALTED RULER: In conclusion of this observance of Flag Day, let us rededicate ourselves to the Flag of the United States of America and may the principles of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity ever increase in each of us.

I now declare this service closed.



RITUAL

for the

Flag Retirement Service



[The service shall be a public ceremony. The Officers shall occupy their respective stations, wearing the jewels of such stations. The Altar shall be decorated with the proper emblems.]

[It is the duty of the Esquire to make whatever preparations may be necessary for the ceremony.]

[The retired service-worn Flags shall be folded, as to proper Flag etiquette, and with equal numbers placed on the Esteemed Leading, Loyal and Lecturing Knights' stations with the field of stars upward and the folded point toward the respective station Officer.]

EXALTED RULER: Members and Guests, we are about to perform the ceremony of retiring unserviceable Flags of our country and to honor that retirement with dignity and respect.

Please stand. [Brief pause.] The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: [From his/her station without advancing to the Altar.] Almighty Father, we ask Thy blessings upon this patriotic service. As we gather to pay our respect and tribute to our Nation's Flag, may the beauty of its silken folds remind us always of the proud history of our country. May it nourish in the hearts of all reverence for what it represents and the memory of those who fought beneath it. May we foster at all times the true spirit of utmost loyalty to our Flag. Amen.

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated. [Brief pause.] The Flag of the United States of America is the emblem of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks which is distinctively American and intensely patriotic. Our American Flag flies majestically over our homes, our communities, and our public places thereby proclaiming and signifying our pride and confidence in America.

The Flag is a symbol of our great Nation. We have looked upon our American Flag as a symbol of our National unity and of self-dedication to God, to country and to our fellow man. It is the spirit of our undying devotion to our country. It has been the banner of hope and freedom for generations of Americans. Our Flag represents one's greatest, noblest and most sublime dream as well as the highest ideals of individual liberty, justice and equal opportunity for all.

Having been planted firmly on the high pinnacle of American faith, the Flag's gentle fluttering folds have been an inspiration to untold millions. May we all continue to enjoy the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness which has been granted to every American as the heritage of a free person.

Lodge Esquire, you will receive the service-worn Flags from the stations.

[Music: "America," or appropriate music.]

[The Exalted Ruler is seated. The Esquire proceeds to the Esteemed Lecturing Knight's station who rises and delivers his/her charge.]

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: The Flag is a symbol of strength and unity which is made possible by love and consideration for our fellow man in a great common cause. For the good of our Nation, may the Flag constantly remind and always encourage us of our duty to our fellow man.

These Flags have nobly served the cause of brotherhood that this Nation under God is dedicated to, the Golden Rule of loving one another and doing unto others as we would they should do unto us.

In the name of Brotherly Love, I present to you these service-worn Flags.

[Music: "Battle Hymn Of The Republic," or appropriate music.]

[The Esteemed Lecturing Knight is seated. Then the Esquire proceeds to place the Flags upon the Altar and then proceeds to the station of the Esteemed Loyal Knight who rises and delivers his/her charge.]

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: As our Flag proclaims the performance of Justice, it also represents the freedom and Justice upon which our country was founded. The symbol of our great Nation has ensured individual freedom and promoted God's own Justice for all the peoples of the earth.

May our fellow men be reminded of their grave responsibility as free persons to see that justice, under God, is a self-evident truth for which they live and give the last full measure of devotion. May our faith in Justice, inspired by the Bible, be true and saving. May our Justice enable us to perceive the merits of others and control our opinions and dealings with our fellow man.

In the name of eternal Justice and with an unswerving trust in the mercy of our Heavenly Father, I present to you these service-worn Flags.

[Music: "Star-Spangled Banner," or appropriate music.]

[The Esteemed Loyal Knight is seated. Then the Esquire proceeds to place the Flags upon the Altar and then proceeds to the station of the Esteemed Leading Knight who rises and delivers his/her charge.]

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: This station, which is represented by the Flag of our country, the emblem of freedom and the symbol of unity, signifies the cardinal attribute and crowning virtue of our Order — Charity. May our Charity be governed and guided in thought and deed by our duty to our fellow man. May it be boundless and all-embracing. May we be ever conscious of the principle it represents.

May these Flags recall the virtues of compassion and Charity for our fellow man. The faith we follow in these Flags directs us to live in bonds of Charity with all mankind.

In the name of Charity, I present to you these service-worn Flags.

[Music: "God Bless America," or appropriate music.]

[The Esteemed Leading Knight is seated. Then the Esquire proceeds to place the Flags upon the Altar and then proceeds to his/her station and is seated.]

EXALTED RULER: The station of Fidelity urges all citizens to be faithful to the principles and accomplishments represented by our Nation's Flag. In service to our country, countless citizens have devoted a lifetime and many have given their lives. The Flag reminds us of our obligation to protect the American way of life and stimulate pride in our heritage with enthusiasm to preserve it.

The responsibility of every true American is to personally understand and maintain the American way of life; to honor it by his/her own exemplary conduct; and to pass it intact to succeeding generations.

Today these colors are tattered and faded. They have served their country with honor and distinction. They have now reached the end of their patriotic journey. May the fundamental virtues for which they waved be ever embedded in our hearts and souls.

With a service of tribute, memory and love to our faded and worn American Flags, we honorably retire them with dignity and respect. It is to this end that we submit our service-worn Flags for proper and dignified disposal.

I now declare this Flag retirement service closed.

[The Lodge shall deliver the service-worn Flags in a box to a local mortuary for a dignified and private cremation.]



RITUAL

for the

Veterans Day Service



(Veterans Day Service was initiated and presented by the Elks National Veterans Service Commission at the Indianapolis, IN Convention in July 2015.)

[The service shall be a public ceremony. Arrange the room in the format of a Lodge Meeting with the Altar arranged as it would be for a Lodge Meeting, including lighting the Star of Fidelity.]

EXALTED RULER: We are gathered here to honor the men and women who have faithfully served our country as members of our armed forces. **“So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.”**

Please rise and join me in singing our National Anthem — The Star Spangled Banner. Thereafter, please remain standing and the Chaplain will invoke the divine blessing.

[During the singing of the National Anthem, the American Flag shall be paraded by the Esquire or designated person(s) from its position at the Altar around the room in a slow and solemn manner, returning to a position at the Altar or to a position of honor at the right of the Exalted Ruler’s Station.]

CHAPLAIN: Let us pray. Father, we ask that you shower your blessings upon our Veterans as we honor them today. We ask that you continue to enable the Order of Elks to demonstrate that, in time of peace and in time of war, it will continue to aid those who have made it possible for America to endure and to prosper.

Father, may we, in this brief ceremony, provide to our Veterans sure knowledge that they are not alone, nor forgotten. Please allow us to faithfully and fully carry out our pledge that “So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.” Amen.

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated. [Brief pause.] In 1917, while the world was at war, our Order established a committee to study what the Elks could do in the crisis facing returning Veterans. There was no Veterans Administration. There were no Veterans Hospitals. This committee recommended at the 1917 Grand Lodge Session that “the Elks give consideration to the sick and wounded on the battlefields of France and equip base hospitals for their care,” and that “Our Order create a fund for war relief work.” The membership enthusiastically and unanimously approved a resolution appropriating One Million Dollars for the War Relief Fund. A War Relief Commission was appointed to administer the funds. Thereafter, the Order organized and equipped the first two base hospitals to reach France, staffed by faculty and alumni from the Universities of Virginia and Oregon.

In 1918, to accommodate maimed and wounded veterans, the Elks built a 700-bed Reconstruction Hospital in Boston and gave it to the War Department. It continues in operation to this day. This was the only Veterans' Hospital that was donated by a private entity. Also in 1918, the Order built a 72-room Community House to take care of the families visiting the 40,000 soldiers stationed at Camp Sherman, Ohio.

After World War I, a war in which more than 70,000 of our Members served, and more than 1,000 of our Members perished, our Order made 40,000 rehabilitation, vocational and educational loans to disabled Veterans, without requiring any security. This was the genesis of the G.I. Bill. The vast majority of the loans were repaid.

During the Grand Lodge Session held in Los Angeles in 1921, a proposal was made to establish the National Headquarters of the Order in Chicago, Illinois. It was also then proposed that the Order erect a memorial building to honor those who served their country and gave their lives in what was then called the Great War. The Lodges of the Order promptly raised more than 2.5 million dollars for the effort and the cornerstone of the Elks Memorial and National Headquarters Building was laid June 7, 1924.

By 1940, the growing strife in Europe led to the formation of the Elks National Defense and Public Relations Commission. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the National Defense and Public Relations Commission was renamed the Elks War Commission. The War Commission worked to recruit aviation cadets and to send gift boxes to members of the armed services. As the War advanced, the War Commission became heavily involved in nurse recruitment and in caring for and entertaining traveling and hospitalized soldiers. More than 100,000 Elks served in World War II and more than 1,800 gave their lives.

In 1946, after the end of World War II, it was recommended that the War Commission be dissolved and a National Veterans Service Commission be created to carry on a Hospitalized Veterans Program.

The National Headquarters and Memorial Building was rededicated in 1946 to honor those who saw service in World War II. Again, in 1976, this honor was bestowed on those who served in Korea and Vietnam and all subsequent conflicts. In 1994, the City of Chicago accorded the Memorial Building monument status.

As the Elks National Veterans Service Commission was also charged with responsibility for all patriotic activities of the Order, it was decided in 1949 to change its name to the Elks National Service Commission. In 1995, at the Grand Lodge Session in New Orleans, the delegates voted to change the name back to the Elks National Veterans Service Commission.

With funds primarily granted by the Elks National Foundation, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission now staffs and funds representatives in more than 250 VA Medical Centers, Outpatient Clinics, State Veterans' Homes and USO's. It funds Veterans Grants to Lodges across the country. It sponsors Adopt-A-Veteran, Army of Hope, Playing Cards for Veterans, Student/Veteran Volunteer, a Veterans Leather Program and a great number of other Veterans programs. It assists the Re-Creation® singing group as it entertains Veterans in hospitals across this nation.

Elks will continue to honor and support our country's veterans. It is a pleasant task we have chosen for ourselves and we hold it as a most sacred trust.

Please rise and join in singing "God Bless America."

[Assembly sings.]

EXALTED RULER: Thank you and please be seated.

[The flag of the respective branch of service or the POW/MIA Flag may be paraded during the following presentations.]

EXALTED RULER OR DESIGNATED PRESENTER: The United States Army is primarily responsible for land-based military operations. It is the largest and oldest of branches of the U.S. Military. It has its roots in the Continental Army which was formed on June 14, 1775. The Congress of the Confederation created the United States Army on June 3, 1784, at the end of the Revolutionary War. The Army motto is "This, We'll Defend."

EXALTED RULER OR DESIGNATED PRESENTER: The United States Navy is responsible for naval warfare, and is the largest Navy in the world. It also has its origins in the Continental Navy, which was disbanded after the Revolutionary War. In 1794, after Barbary Coast pirates attacked American shipping, the Naval Act provided for the construction of six frigates. The Navy's battle fleet tonnage is now greater than that of the next 13 largest navies combined. The Navy motto is "Non Sibi Sed Patriae — Not Self But Country."

EXALTED RULER OR DESIGNATED PRESENTER: The United States Marine Corps is the branch of the United States Armed Forces charged with providing power projection from the sea. It is a component of the Department of the Navy, although also a separate branch of the military. The first two battalions of Continental Marines were formed on November 10, 1775. By the mid-20th Century, the U.S. Marines had become the dominant practitioner of amphibious warfare. The motto of the Marine Corps is "Semper Fidelis — Always Faithful."

EXALTED RULER OR DESIGNATED PRESENTER: The United States Air Force is the aerial warfare branch of the United States Armed Forces. Initially part of the United States Army, the Air Force was formed as a separate branch of service on September 18, 1947. It is the largest Air Force in the world. The stated mission of the Air Force is to "fly, fight, and win — in air, space and cyberspace."

EXALTED RULER OR DESIGNATED PRESENTER: The United States Coast Guard is a maritime, military, multi-mission service with a maritime law enforcement mission. It operates under the Department of Homeland Security, but can be transferred to the Department of the Navy during time of war. Formed on August 4, 1790, as the Revenue Cutter Service, it is the United States' oldest seagoing service. The Coast Guard motto is "Semper Paratus — Always Ready."

EXALTED RULER OR DESIGNATED PRESENTER: The POW/MIA Flag is the official flag of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. It flew over the White House on National POW/MIA Day in 1988. It is the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capital Rotunda and, other than “Old Glory,” is the only flag to fly over the White House. It is a continued reminder of the plight of America’s POW/MIA’s.

ORATION

[Oration optional.]

EXALTED RULER: Please rise and listen in reverence as TAPS is sounded in honor of all fallen soldiers.

[Play TAPS.]

EXALTED RULER: Would all Veterans remain standing to be recognized, and state your branch of service and years served.

[Veterans’ statements.]

EXALTED RULER: All rise to join these Veterans in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

[Recitation.]

EXALTED RULER: The Chaplain will now lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: Let us pray. Our Father, we thank you for this opportunity to gather in a free country to honor those Veterans who have fought to preserve that freedom. We ask your blessing upon those who have served in our Armed Services, and for a special blessing upon those who have given their lives in that pursuit.

We ask, Father, that you allow our great fraternal Order to remain able and steadfast to assist our Veterans and to see to their every need. Help us to remain true to our pledge that **“So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will not forget them.”** Amen.

EXALTED RULER: I now declare this Veterans Day Service concluded.



RITUAL

for

POW/MIA Remembrance Day



(Main contributor Leonard Mills, Past Exalted Ruler of Vancouver, WA Lodge No. 823)

[The service shall be a public ceremony. It shall be held in conjunction with the National POW/MIA Recognition Day, which is the 3rd Friday of September. Arrange the room in the format of a Lodge Meeting with the Altar arranged as it would be for a normal Lodge Meeting, including lighting the Star of Fidelity.]

[The Table should be placed in a Position of Honor, half-way between the Altar and the Station of the Exalted Ruler. The chair should be placed at the table, and facing the Altar, similar to the Vacant Chair in a Lodge of Sorrow.]

[Items required for POW/MIA Ritual service:

- Small round table with chair
- White table cloth
- Dinner Plate with one Lemon Slice
- Small cup of salt
- Wine glass
- One red rose in a vase
- One White candle with a yellow ribbon tied around it
- Lighter (for candle)
- One Bell]

[Staging the room:

- Place the folded table cloth in the center of the table.
- Place the plate w/lemon slice near the Lecturing Knight's station
- Place the cup with salt near the Loyal Knight's station
- Place the wine glass near the Leading Knight's station
- Place the rose near the Chaplain's chair
- Place the candle and lighter near the Esquire's chair
- Place the bell at the Secretary's station.
- (The Secretary is the official "Bell Ringer")]

[When all are seated and ready, the Secretary rings the bell to begin the service.]

EXALTED RULER: Members and Guests, as we begin this Service of Remembrance, please rise and join our Chaplain in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: Almighty God, on this the Third Friday in September, we humbly ask that you bless those men and women who, in their darkest hour, became Prisoners of War or Missing in Action protecting our Nation's way of life. We pray that this service may bring to each of us a sense of loyalty to those who suffered at the hands of our enemy. Please Lord, Remember them, and please help us to always remember! Amen.

EXALTED RULER: The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has forever supported our nation's armed forces. This was formalized in the early 1900's when our Order began to study what we could do for our returning veterans. At that time, the Veterans Administration did not exist, and there were no VA Hospitals.

At the 1917 Grand Lodge Session, it was recommended by our Order that "the Elks give consideration to the sick and wounded on the battlefields of France and equip base hospitals for their care." We created a War Relief Fund, and in 1918 we built the "Reconstruction Hospital" in Boston and donated it to the War Department. It continues to operate to this day.

Over the decades we continued to find ways to support and provide for our returning Veterans. Their needs have changed over the years. We are beginning to see more clearly the real price our heroes pay as we understand more about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. We continue to do what we can for those who so unselfishly pledged their service to our country and its citizens.

But there was always something missing. We would do all we could for those who could make it to our hospitals or other care centers, but what about those who didn't return — the Prisoners of War and those who are Missing in Action? They continue to this day suffering the trauma that causes PTSD. We cannot forget about the military personnel — and civilians — who have been kept away from the well-deserved reunification with their country and their families.

Since the Revolutionary War and not including our own Civil War, there are 181,103 still listed as Prisoners of War, and 44,977 still listed as Missing in Action. This is a total of 226,080 of our citizens in this category. If we were to add in the numbers from the US Civil War, the number increases to 509,711. These include soldiers and civilians, spanning the time from the Revolutionary War to the current conflicts in the Middle East. The continued threat of terrorism drives a new fear into the civilian population of the world. The same fear that our POWs face every day.

Observances of National POW/MIA Recognition Day are held across the country on military installations, ships at sea, state capitols, schools and veterans' facilities. It is traditionally observed on the third Friday in September each year. This observance is one of six days throughout the year that Congress has mandated the flying of the National League of Families' POW/MIA Flag. The other days are Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.

The flag is to be flown at major military installations, national cemeteries, all post offices, VA medical facilities, the World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, the Director of the Selective Service system and the White House. Although Congress does not mandate this requirement for our fraternal organization, we as Elks do, and we proudly stand in support of that congressional mandate. We as Elks wish for all of America to understand that this list also includes the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America. Most of our Lodges across the nation fly the POW/MIA Flag daily as a small token of our sense of patriotism and the deep respect we have for those who have sacrificed so much.

The table that sits before you is a Place of Honor. Please note that the table is round, representing the everlasting concern on the part of the families and other survivors for their missing loved ones. To many, the distress and grief never seems to go away. In setting this table, we acknowledge those missing from our celebration, and we remember them!

EXALTED RULER: Remember!

[Secretary rings bell.]

EXALTED RULER: The table is small, and set for one. This is to symbolize the vulnerability of the lone prisoner against his captors.

[Esquire and Chaplain rise and proceed to the side of the POW/MIA table, pick up the table cloth, and wait for “Remember” and bell.]

EXALTED RULER: Remember!

[Secretary rings bell.]

EXALTED RULER: The tablecloth is white. This is to symbolize the Purity of Intention in responding to our nation’s call to arms.

[Esquire and Chaplain spread the table cloth and place it over table, pause, and then return to their seats.]

[Inner Guard rises and proceeds to a position behind the chair placed at the table, and waits for “Remember” and bell.]

EXALTED RULER: Remember!

[Secretary rings bell.]

INNER GUARD: The chair is empty, but stands ready for our loved one who is not here.

[Inner guard pauses, and then returns to seat.]

[Esteemed Lecturing Knight rises, lifts a small plate w/lemon slice, proceeds to the side of the POW/MIA table, and waits for “Remember” and bell.]

EXALTED RULER: Remember!

[Secretary rings bell.]

[Esteemed Lecturing Knight places the plate on the table.]

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: Upon this plate we have placed a slice of lemon, reminding us of their continued bitter suffering.

[Esteemed Lecturing Knight pauses, and then returns to seat.]

[Esteemed Loyal Knight rises, picks up a small cup of salt, and proceeds to the side of the POW/MIA table, and waits for "Remember" and bell.]

EXALTED RULER: Remember!

[Secretary rings bell.]

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: [sprinkles pinches of salt on the plate] The grains of salt represent the countless tears of the families as they wait for any word.

[Esteemed Loyal Knight pauses, and then returns to seat.]

[Esteemed Leading Knight rises, lifts an empty wine glass in the right hand, and proceeds to the side of the POW/MIA table, and waits for "Remember" and bell.]

EXALTED RULER: Remember!

[Secretary rings bell.]

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: [places inverted wine glass on the table] The wine glass is inverted. They cannot join us in our sacred toast this night. But we shall toast to them.

[Esteemed Leading Knight pauses, and returns to seat.]

[Chaplain rises, picks up the vase with rose, and proceeds to the side of the POW/MIA table, and waits for "Remember" and bell.]

EXALTED RULER: Remember!

[Secretary rings bell.]

[Chaplain places vase with rose on the table.]

CHAPLAIN: The single red rose in the vase, signifying the blood that many have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose also reminds us of the family and friends of our missing Americans who keep the faith, while awaiting their return.

[Chaplain pauses, and then returns to seat.]

[Esquire rises, picks up the candle lighter and the White Candle with a Yellow Ribbon tied around it, proceeds to the POW/MIA table, places the candle on the table and lights it as ER says:]

EXALTED RULER: Remember!

[Secretary rings bell.]

ESQUIRE: The yellow ribbon on the candle represents the yellow ribbons worn on the lapels of the thousands of Americans who demand with unyielding determination a proper accounting of our service men and women — and civilians — who are not among us tonight. The lit candle is reminiscent of the light of hope which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to the open arms of a grateful nation.

[Esquire pauses, and then returns to seat with candle lighter.]

EXALTED RULER: Remember!

[Secretary rings bell.]

EXALTED RULER: To all who have served alongside them, those of us who have donned the same proud uniform, and having been sworn to the same faith and allegiance, and to all of the fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and children, the families and communities across this great nation, who proudly watched as their soldiers departed to defend our way of life, we will never forget their sacrifice.

Please rise and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

[Exalted Ruler Leads Pledge.]

ALL: I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; AND TO THE REPUBLIC FOR WHICH IT STANDS, ONE NATION UNDER GOD, INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL.

EXALTED RULER: At ease, and please remain standing while our Chaplain leads us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: Almighty God, we thank thee for the privilege to gather in remembrance of those who have so unselfishly given of themselves to protect and defend our way of life. We ask that you look over those who still have not returned until the day they are brought home.

Bestow thy blessing upon the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, to the end that this service may bring us renewed strength and help us to remain strong in our resolve to gain a full accounting of all Americans who have not returned, and cannot be with us today. Help us to always remember. Amen.

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated. [Brief pause.] **Remember!**

[Secretary rings bell.]

EXALTED RULER: When you see this table, remember it as a place of honor. It is normally placed close to or within sight of the entrance to a dining room, and you will see it in Elks Lodges across this country. It is only one of the symbols of our belief that **“So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.”**

We thank you for attending this service today. As you depart on your way home, please **Remember!**

[Secretary rings bell.]

EXALTED RULER: Until the day they return home, or are returned to find eternal peace, **We Must, and We Will Always Remember!**

[Secretary rings bell.]

EXALTED RULER: I now declare this POW/MIA Remembrance Day Service concluded.



RITUAL

for

September 11th Ceremony



[The service shall be a public ceremony. The Officers shall occupy their respective stations, wearing the jewels of such stations. The Altar shall be decorated with the proper emblems and shall be set upon the stage if the ceremony is held in a public hall; in its regular position if the ceremony takes place in the Lodge Room.]

EXALTED RULER: Members, Family, and Friends, we gather here today to refresh with the dew of recollection the tender blossoms of hope and love entwined with the memory of the departed. With our hearts in perfect sympathy, we meet on this 11th day of September. To pledge Fidelity anew to the memory of those who have entered into the realm of eternity. Please stand.

The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN: [from his/her station] Our Father who art in Heaven, we meet to honor the memory of those who were taken on September 11th, 2001. Grant that we may approach this service with eyes undimmed by tears and hearts flooded with retrospection. Help us to recall the gentle words, the kind thoughts, and the many attributes which made them true Americans. Give us faith in this ceremony, to feel the touch of hands again that are no longer there and to hear the voices that are silenced. Imbue our hearts with the inspiring hope of immortality that banishes sorrow and gives assurance of a happy reunion. Enable us to read the tablets of love and memory while remembering those lost. In still in us the spirit of Charity, incline our hearts to Justice, to broaden our nature that all may find shelter beneath the mantle of Brotherly Love, keep us faithful to the memory of the departed, and may our thoughts of them grow sweeter with the passing years. May we never forget the sacrifice borne by so many. Amen.

[Playing of Amazing Grace]

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated. I am sure I speak for most Patriotic Americans when I say the American flag is, and always will be, the greatest symbol of freedom in the world. From the first unofficial national flag, the Continental Colors, to the first official flag approved by the Continental Congress on June 14th, 1777, with 13 stars representing the 13 original colonies called the Stars and Stripes, to the one we see today, it has always stood for freedom. As Americans and Elks, we honor our flag on June 14th, Flag Day every year, so it is only fitting we begin by honoring it here tonight.

EXALTED RULER: As this emblem is first in our hearts as loyal Americans, so it is close to our altar as loyal Elks. The gentle breezes with lingering caress kiss the folds of no flag which compare with it in beauty. There is no such red in budding rose, in falling leaf or sparkling wine; no such white in April blossom, in crescent moon or mountain snow; no such blue in woman's eye, in ocean's depth or heaven's dome and no such pageantry of clustering stars and streaming light in all the spectrum of the sea and sky. As we gather today as Americans, let us all pledge ourselves never to forget the memory of those who have been lost, those who have defended our country in the past, and those who continue to protect us each and every day.

EXALTED RULER: Please stand and salute our flag. Please join me in the pledge of allegiance to this symbol of freedom.

ALL: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, One nation under God indivisible with Liberty and Justice for All. Please be seated.

[Playing of God Bless the USA]

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Leading Knight [Brief pause] What is the Significance of September 11th from your station?

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: Charity. The Charity that was conveyed by millions of Americans to their fellow man in time of need. The lending of a shoulder to cry upon and, a helping hand to those in need. The giving of one's self, time, and spirit. To aid and comfort their fellow Americans. This is Charity.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Loyal Knight [Brief pause] What is the Significance of September 11th from your station?

ESTEEMED LOYAL KNIGHT: Justice. The Justice that many of our fathers, grandfathers, and all others have brought upon those destined to destroy this great country. May the Justice of our Military and First Responders continue to show the world that the United States of America is truly the Land of the Free Because of the Brave. May those who continue to plot to harm our country be brought to Justice by the brave men and women of the Armed Forces of our great nation.

EXALTED RULER: Esteemed Lecturing Knight [Brief pause] What is the significance of September 11th from your station?

ESTEEMED LECTURING KNIGHT: Brotherly Love. To risk one's life for a total stranger in need is not only courageous, but divine. In the face of that kind of selflessness, we can no longer call each other strangers but brothers and sisters. Those who risk their lives for others display Brotherly Love for their fellow Americans. That is Brotherly Love.

EXALTED RULER: What is the Significance of September 11th from this station?

ALL OFFICERS: Fidelity.

EXALTED RULER: Fidelity to the principles that every man, woman and child is created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. To live their lives as free citizens of this great nation. Please stand.

Lodge Esquire, what is the Significance of September 11th from your station?

ESQUIRE: [Esquire walks to the candle which is positioned on stand by the altar] In memory of the 2,527 Civilians, 343 Firefighters, 71 Law Enforcement Officers, 55 military personnel and those that have since passed due to a variety of diseases associated with September 11th 2001, I will light a candle in this our time of remembrance. [Esquire walks back to their station]

EXALTED RULER: Let's all observe a moment of Silence.

[After a moment of silence, ring the bell 11 times]

[Then the playing of TAPS]

EXALTED RULER: Please be seated.

EXALTED RULER: In times like these, we can find comfort and inspiration in the words of some of our Past Presidents. President John F. Kennedy, who gave his life in service to our country, wrote, "A man does what he must in spite of personnel consequences, in spite of obstacles and danger and pressures, and that is the basis of all human morality." In President Kennedy's inaugural address, he declared, "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of Liberty. President Ronald Regan said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.

President Regan also said, "above all, we must realize that no arsenal, or no weapon in the arsenals of the world, is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women. It is a weapon our adversaries in today's world do not have. President George W. Bush, after September 11th, said, "now we have inscribed a new memory alongside the others. It's a memory of tragedy and shock, loss and mourning. But not just a memory of loss and mourning. It's also a memory of bravery and self-sacrifice, and of love, love to lay down one's life for a friend-even a friend whose name you never knew. Time is passing, yet for the United States of America, there will be no forgetting September 11th. We will remember every rescuer who died in honor. We will remember every family that lives in grief. We will remember the fire and ash, the last phone calls, the funerals of the children".

[Playing of Where were you when the world stopped turning]

EXALTED RULER: [introduces any guest speakers] *(This is optional)* So that we may better understand some of the courage, spirit, and sacrifice displayed on September 11th, 2001, I call upon:

[Guest Speaker talks if you have one.]

ESTEEMED LEADING KNIGHT: (or other dignitary) Poem**THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL**

We went to work like always,
In our cars, the bus or train.
That day began so normal,
But it ended quite insane.

Eight-forty six that morning,
That first plane would hit the tower.
Creating so much damage,
Cause it hit with such great power.

Just 18 minutes later,
When the second plane would crash.
There was not time to think,
Cause it all happened in a flash.

First responders acted quickly,
They all rushed to get inside.
If not for these brave heroes,
Many others could have died.

They saved so many lives,
Because they did their jobs so well.
Brought all of them to safety,
Right before those buildings fell.

It was such a total shock
To see those buildings start to fall.
There are way too many people,
Who did not get out at all.

Every one of us remembers,
Where they were that fateful day.
There's just no way of knowing,
Why these people act this way.

We hope the day will come,
When we can all feel safe again.
Many prayers are sent to God,
These type of things will finally end.

EXALTED RULER: September 11th, 2001, was the 21st century's day of infamy. It was a day that will live in the annals of courage and patriotism. Today we paid tribute to those who were lost and those who survived. The heroes at ground zero who in life and death, wear an indelible badge of honor. We celebrate not only them, but all of our fellow Americans, for the intended victims of this attack were not just the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, or the people on flight 93. The targets were not just the symbols of America, but they were the spirit of America, and the intended victims were all 330 million Americans. Our enemies made a mistake when they viewed liberty and freedom as a weakness. The attacks on September 11th, 2001, were intended to break our spirit, but instead, we emerged stronger and more unified. As Elks, we felt and still feel a renewed devotion to the cardinal principles of our order Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love, and Fidelity. As Americans, we felt a renewed feeling of Patriotism and the principles of political, economic, and religious freedom, the rule of law, and respect for human life. We are more determined than ever to live our lives in freedom. In the conflict that was brought upon us, we were as determined as our parents and our grandparents before us to prevail over evil at any cost until we ultimately triumphed.

[Song "Have You Forgotten" or appropriate music.]

EXALTED RULER: Please stand. [Brief pause] The Chaplain will lead us in Prayer.

CHAPLAIN: Almighty God, unto thy love and mercy, we commend the souls of our departed friends, may the light perpetual shine upon them until the morning breaks and the shadows flee away. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me." May we realize that we are thy children, and may we so live that when our day is done, we may face the eternal change that comes to us all in faith and confidence through thy redeeming grace and power. May the peace of God, which passed all understanding, abide with us forever. God Bless the soles of those who were lost. The men and women of our nation's Armed Forces, each of us here tonight and bless this great land we call America.

Amen.

EXALTED RULER: On behalf of the Officers and Members, we thank you for joining us today and participating in this simple ceremony to remember September 11th, 2001. May we never forget those who lost their lives that fateful day and those that worked tirelessly to save our fellow Americans.

I now declare this service closed.



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