

Address delivered by Hon. John E. Fogarty, MC at the Dedication Exercises of Memorial Squares, by the Carlo-LaPrade Post No. 5388, VFW at the Johnston Firemen's Grounds, Johnston, R.I. Sunday May 18, 1947.

I am deeply conscious of my own limitations - as I join with you in this splendid endeavor to commemorate the brave deeds of these young men of Johnston - whose sacrifice was necessary in order that you and I could meet here - free men in a free land - and dedicate these Squares to their everlasting memory.

I wish I could bring to you some ringing tribute - some classic oration - that would fit this noble occasion. But, I feel in my heart, no matter how hard we try - it will be impossible for us to do anything nearly as great, as fine, as noble - as that which these brave men have already done for you and I.

There is but one thing I can think of that would be fitting here. If I could tell you - and be honest in doing so - that the peace these men fought to win has been achieved - has become a fact - then I believe we could proclaim that we had honorably discharged our duty - just as these young men discharged theirs.

Until that day shall dawn - when a just and lasting peace is a fact among all Nations - then there will always be something lacking as we acknowledge our debt to the heroes who died that their country might live.

It is discouraging today - to listen to many who talk of the certainty of another war.

It is horrifying to realize there are thousands who profess to doubt that certainty - but whose waking moments are occupied with thoughts of war.

Such thinking is a danger in itself.

Just a few years ago all of our thinking was centered on war. We shuddered at its horrors and prayed a merciful God would spare those we loved from the slaughter.

But none of us then were in doubt about the outcome. Our minds were not occupied with plans for avoiding the awesome effects of defeat. We were confident of victory and our thoughts were concerned with doing everything necessary to speed the day of triumph.

We need a return to that kind of thinking today.

The Statesmen of the world struggle to find a formula for peace. Their failures are dramatized - and the picture we get is often a discouraging one.

But Nations do not drift into peace.

Peace is a goal which pessimists assert is impossible of attainment.

But it is a goal worthy of our very best efforts. It requires energy, sacrifice and determination. It requires that our thinking be on the goal, in order that all our efforts shall be properly directed.

Our actions here today afford tangible proof of our love and devotion to these brave men who made the eternal sacrifice for their God and Country.

They have earned the undying gratitude of their nation. Beyond this there is little we can do, in a tangible way, to pay tribute to their memories.

Noble resolutions lose their strength with changing conditions. Great monuments may decay and crumble. Later generations may stand and wonder who were these men for whom these spots were named.

But there is something we can do. A deed worthy of their names as men - and fitting to their characters as heroes.

We can highly resolve - as long as God shall reign in His Heaven - we shall keep alive and burning the promise that these dead shall not have died in vain.

They took up arms against an enemy which threatened their homes and their beloved country. They died as heroes - rather than live as slaves.

Their souls - on fame's eternal camping ground - demand of each of us the solemn promise that we shall cling fast to the principles for which they gave their lives.

They were promised there would be no more wars; that man could find a plan for getting along with his neighbor; that all humanity could live and prosper - united in the purpose of preserving peace.

They believed that promise - and we must - under our solemn bond with their memories - make that promise come true.

Great effort will be called for; many sacrifices must be made.

But - when we are called upon to put forth whatever the effort - to make whatever the sacrifice - in physical strength, in financial resources, or in political ideas - I pray God - we shall have the intestinal fortitude to compare what is asked of us - with what these brave dead have done for us.