



THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

A kid's introduction to "The War Between the States"

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Onward Christian Soldier and Christian Cavalier



THE CIVIL WAR, also called “The War Between The States,” was fought when the North, called the Union, and the South, called the Confederacy, became divided over many issues including slavery. It started in 1861, and ended in 1865, when the South was forced to surrender. After the war, the slaves were set free, but the recovery from the destruction took many years to fix. In the end, America learned a valuable lesson and promised never to divide itself again.



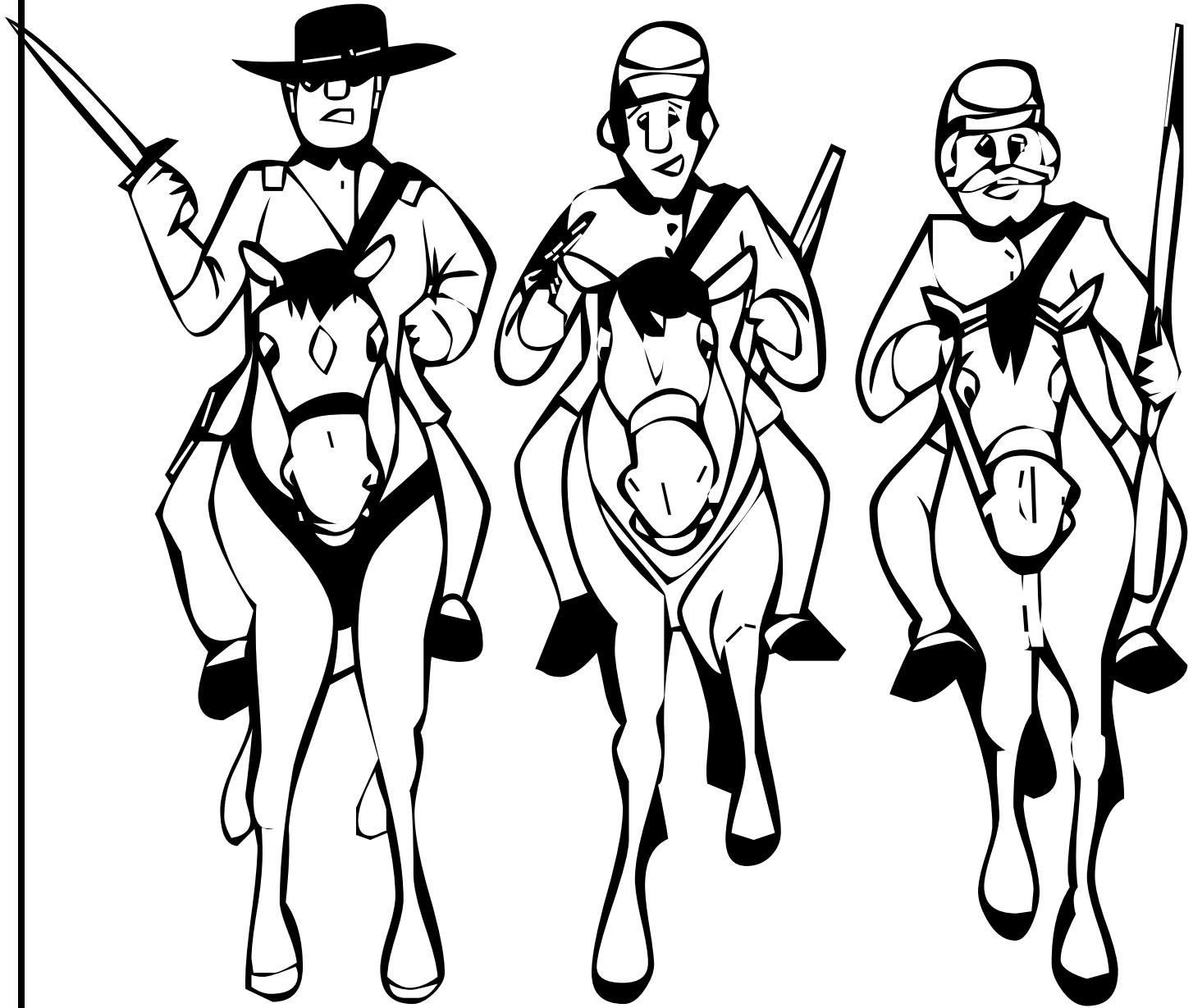
THE CONFEDERATES, also called “Rebels,” were soldiers from the South and fought under the flag of the Confederate States of America. They usually wore gray uniforms and were formed after the Southern states had seceded from the Union. The Confederate army was made up of men from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The president of the C.S.A. was Jefferson Davis.



THE FEDERALS, also called “Yankees,” were soldiers from the North and fought under the flag of the United States of America. They usually wore blue uniforms and were formed to preserve the Union. The Federal army was much larger than the Confederate army and had more supplies. Most Federal troops would have to march great distances as most of the Civil War’s battles were fought in the South. The president of the U.S.A. was Abraham Lincoln.



THE INFANTRY were soldiers that fought on foot. Usually they would line up in long rows on the battlefield and march toward the enemy. Most carried black-powder muskets and sometimes they would charge forward with a sharp bayonet on the end. Both sides in the Civil War had brave infantry soldiers including the North's "Irish Brigade" and the South's "Stonewall Brigade."



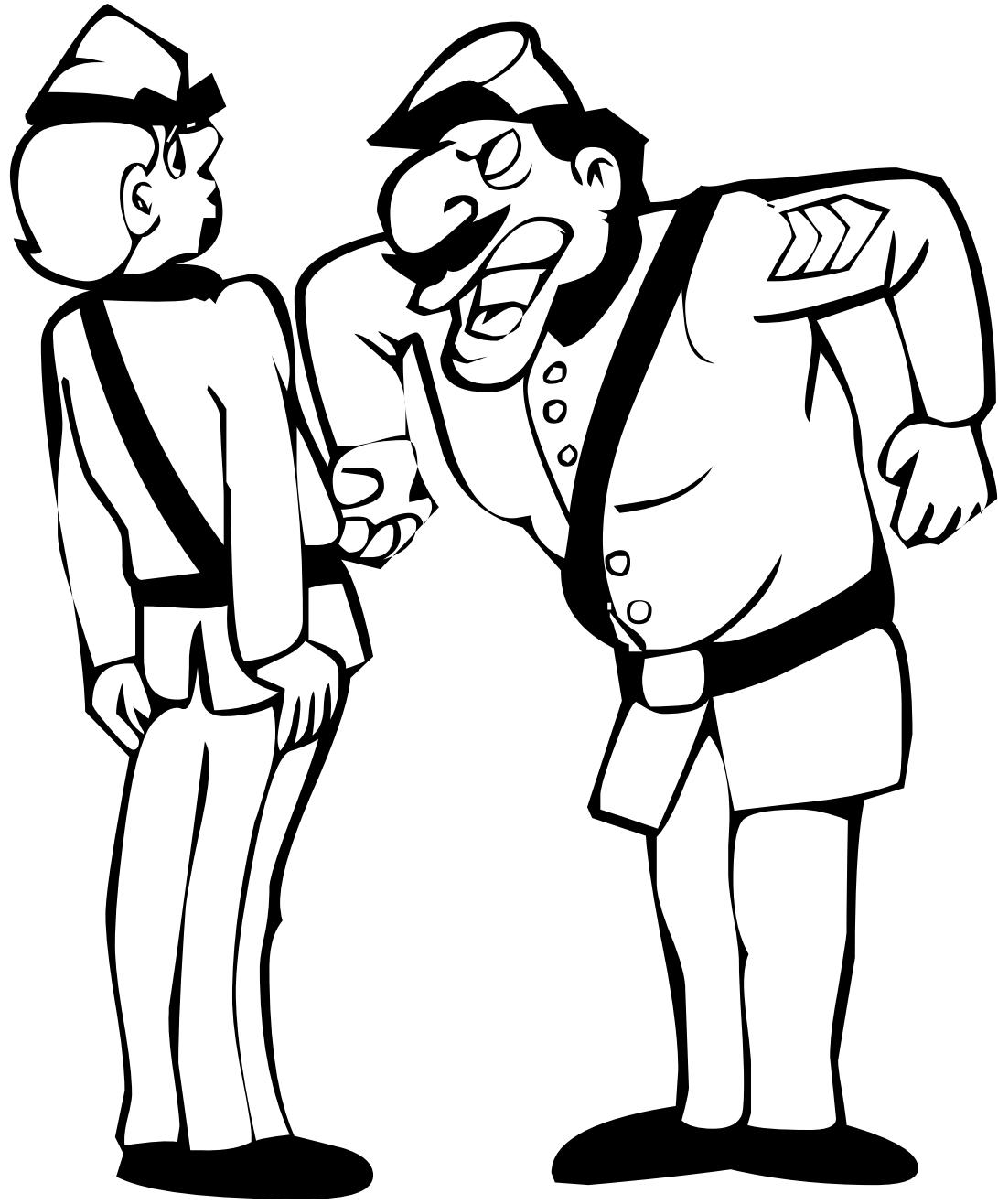
THE CAVALRY were soldiers that fought on horseback. They were very skilled riders and often carried pistols, rifles, and a sword. Sometimes they would act as scouts and ride out ahead of the army looking for any danger. Other times they would find supplies or safe places to cross the river. Both sides in the Civil War had brave cavalry commanders including the North's General George Armstrong Custer and the South's General J.E.B. Stuart.



DRUMMER BOYS were brave and loyal lads who had joined the army, but were too young to fight. Because they were not of age, these boys were taught how to drum and kept time with a beat while the army was on the march. This helped the soldiers to stay in step. Sometimes they were used to signal orders to the troops in the field.



PICKETS were soldiers who stood guard duty. Most of the time, they would keep a watchful eye over their camp while everyone else slept. Sometimes pickets from the North and South would talk to each other from afar, or meet under a truce to trade tobacco and coffee. Even though they were on different sides of the war, many of the pickets were able to get along, if only for a little while.



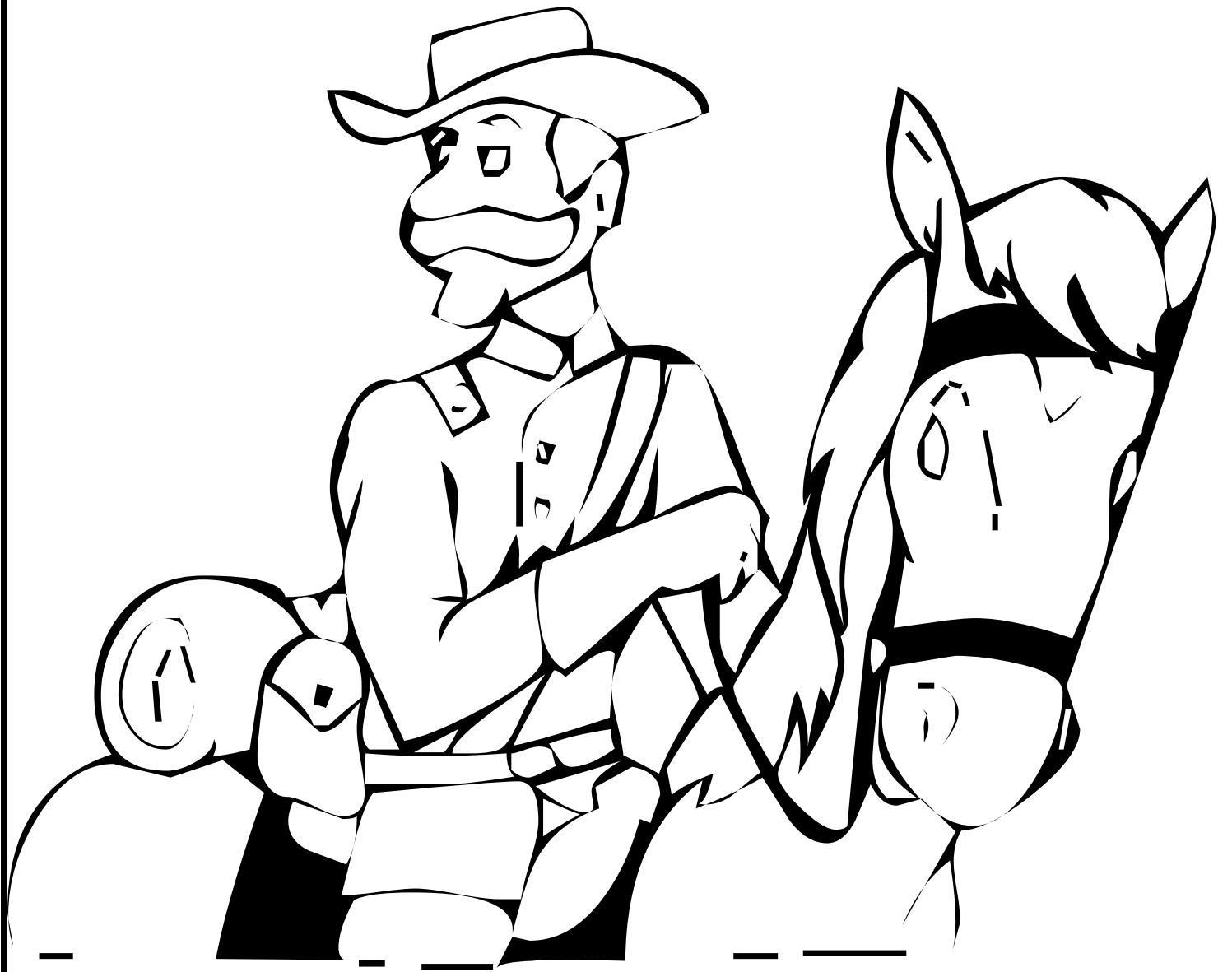
NEW RECRUITS had to train before going off to war. Most of the armies in the Civil War were made up of volunteers and each soldier had to learn how to march and how to shoot. Officers from the regular army were in charge of turning these farm boys into fighting men. After a few weeks of drilling, most were ready for battle.



ARMY CAMPS during the Civil War were sometimes crowded and uncomfortable. Often, soldiers from both sides would have to sleep out under the stars or in ragged tents. Some did not have warm clothing or shoes and many soldiers became ill and died from disease. This was very hard on the troops during the winter months.



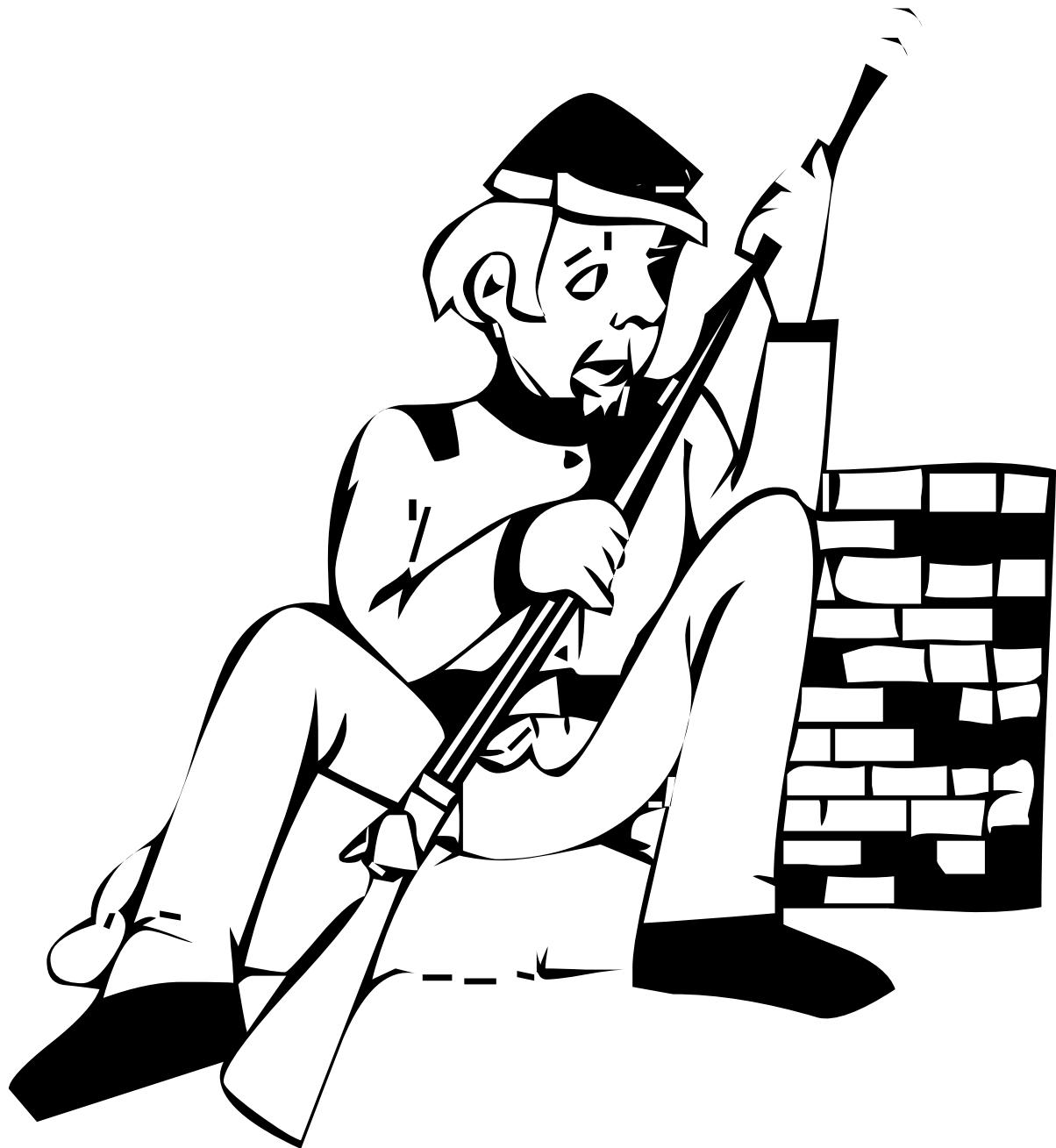
MEDICAL CARE was very limited during the Civil War. Soldiers hurt on the battlefield were taken on stretchers to houses and barns that were turned into hospitals. Often, the army's surgeons could do nothing for the wounded but make them comfortable before they died. Sometimes they would have to amputate a soldier's arm or leg and many others died of infection. Nurses, like Clara Barton, helped the doctors to save as many lives as they could.



GREAT LEADERS fought on both sides in the Civil War. In the North, commanders such as Ulysses S. Grant, William Tecumseh Sherman, Joshua L. Chamberlain, and Phil Sheridan fought bravely against the South's legendary Robert E. Lee, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, J.E.B. Stuart, and James Longstreet. Before the war, many of these men were classmates who attended the same military school at West Point. They later met again on the battlefield.



THE END of the Civil War began when Confederate General Robert E. Lee agreed to meet with Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. After four years, both sides were very tired and the South believed that it was time to surrender. This began the healing of America as the North and South began to work together again. When it was over, more than 620,000 men had died.



TODAY many of the Civil War battlefields are National Parks. Each year, people visit these sites to learn about “The War Between the States,” and to pay their respects to those who fought and died there. These places are called “Hallowed Grounds” and help us to remember the sacrifice of our brave men in the blue and gray.