

# TENNESSEE SUPPLEMENT

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**Clarence Loyd Crump**  
Grand Commander

## A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND COMMANDER

Why we honor our dead heroes.

The last seven days (4/20/2021-04/25/2021) I have been helping arrange the funeral of a deputy with the Madison County Sheriff's Office, in Madison County, Tennessee. Deputy Terry Dyer died while awaiting his turn to testify in court on Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. What does this have to do with Memorial Day, you may ask. Deputy Dyer was a veteran of the United States Army but did not die while serving in the U.S. Military. Deputy Dyer was a 62-year-old veteran of the Lexington, Tennessee, Police Department, the Jackson Police Department, and the Madison County Sheriff's Office. This still does not have any direct bearing on what Memorial Day is about. But with some indulgence from my military veteran friends, I would like to describe some corollaries that bring Memorial Day to mind, well before May 18, 2021.

Police Memorial Day is scheduled for May 15, 2021. There will be no holiday or cookouts or closure of businesses to honor these men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, similarly to those who will be honored on May 18<sup>th</sup>. In one sense this is fitting because no matter what day of the year, there will be men and women wearing a law enforcement officers' uniform. There will be no parades for these heroes. Only the feeling of loss in the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

During the last week I helped make the hundreds of arrangements to send our hero to the Valhalla that he deserved. I held his daughter as she cried, and I stood watch over his casket. I would do far more if I were able. While all this planning was taking place, our country was busily debating defunding and eliminating police forces. I wonder to myself if these same individuals would seek to eliminate our national military as well. I cannot speak to who or what deserves to be funded or defunded, only that I have been side by side with men who

willingly laid their lives aside for their friends. These men were different races but never considered race when it came to their duty.

Our military dead are too numerous to mention by name. I spent time in both Iraq and Afghanistan during our recent wars. I have lost friends of different races to insurgent attacks. We all wore the same flag and were willing to die for one another. The last military funeral I attended was a young African American sergeant named Daniel Merriweather, of Memphis, Tennessee. I met Daniel in Baghdad in 2006 and remember when he was killed in Afghanistan in 2009. I remember a 20-year-old boy named Anthony Sieg, killed by insurgent rocket attacks in September of 2006. I remember a retired ex-cop and Vietnam veteran named Brian M. Brian, killed in October 2006 by an IED attack in Baghdad.

One commonality between military and law enforcement funerals is the United States Flag, the 21-gun salute, the playing of Taps, the military commands, and the aircraft flyovers. Of these the United States Flag is the most important. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, I helped place a United States Flag over the body of our fallen hero. That flag and our personnel stayed with him until he was placed in the earth on April 25<sup>th</sup>. The United States Flag represents all my friends who laid dead under it, whether it be military or law enforcement. The Flag to me is freedom itself, and the cost of that freedom is measured by the number of friends I know who have lain under it.

In His Service,  
Billy B. Young  
Grand Commander



## UPCOMING FESTIVALS

Middle Tennessee Association – Friday-Saturday, June 4-5, Mt. Moriah Lodge, Murfreesboro  
West Tennessee Association – Friday-Saturday, September 10 and 11 (tentative dates) at Jackson Commandery  
Upper East Association – Saturday, November 6 and 13 at Dashiell Lodge in Elizabethton