



November 11, 2014



Veteran's Day Mass at the National Cemetery

THE SOLDIER

"But when I think of his patience under adversity, of his courage under fire, and his modesty in victory, I am filled with an emotion of admiration I cannot put into words. He belongs to history as furnishing one of the greatest examples of successful patriotism. He belongs to posterity as the instructor of future generations in the principles of liberty and freedom. He belongs to the present, to us, by his virtues and his achievements."

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur in his farewell address to the Corps of Cadets at West Point, May 12, 1962

THE FLAGS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES



ARMY



NAVY



AIR FORCE



MARINES



COAST GUARD



VETERAN'S DAY 2014

A day to remember, reflect and honor all of the men and women who answered the call and served their country!

The Fallen Soldier Memorial



Rifle, helmet, boots and hanging dog-tags

The Mass takes a considerable amount of planning and preparation. Months before the scheduled date, meetings begin to take place with the Diocese and the National Cemetery officials. Applications for use of the grounds are needed and a “plan of action” including the equipment that will be needed for the Mass are noted. As in past years, the crowd size requires that portable facilities are available and water is available when needed. The sound system and the organ are rented and the Mass logistics needs are itemized. Tents must be provided both for the Priests as well as the K of C Color Corps. Parking must be planned: reserved spaces for the Bishop, priests and dignitaries as well as public parking on the cemetery grounds. This is the first time in four years that parking was available at the cemetery proper.



S. K. Gene Dolecki

Gene is a member of St. Patrick’s Council and for the last 5 years, has been Program Director for the November 11th Veteran’s Day Mass.

However, during this year, he has begun the process of “training” others for next year. Both Ron Kosey of St. Patrick’s and Charlie Culkin, DD #50 will Co-Chair the function next year. All three of the above are members of Our Lady of Charity Assembly #3089 in Sarasota.

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A commemorative wreath was placed in front of the altar on the Plaza. Note the designer background for the stage: battle ribbons for all of the engagements in this century!



The Color Corps line up prior to the Mass preceded by the Color Guard bearing flags.

The Fourth Degree was well represented at the Mass with >70 members in regalia. They were led by the Master of the Florida District and PSD Robert Read; PSD James Schonefeld, the former Master who has attended all of the five years of this Mass; and the Marshall, SK Bob Urretia. Charles McLaughlin, DD #52, served as the Mass Color Corps Commander.



Prior to the Mass, the Color Guard post the colors led by CCC McLaughlin in purple.



Leading the processional, the Fourth Degree led by the Marshall (green) followed by the Master (near) and the former Master (far) and then the Sir Knights in regalia.



Once the Fourth Degree enters, the clergy all follow. They are led by Deacon Kim Cohen, the acolytes, and Deacon Epimaco Roca who is followed by Deacon J. Robert Gaitens who served as the Deacon for the Mass.



The remaining clergy follow, led by the other 11 Deacons, the 17 Diocesan Priests who concelebrated and then Bishop Frank Dewane. Father Robert Dziedziak, St. Patrick's Pastor and Father Russell Wright, Parochial Vicar of St. Patrick's concelebrated and Deacon Ray Lyons of St. Patrick's participated as well.



In his homily, Bishop Dewane talked about the need to thank Veterans for their service; to help them adjust once they return home and to assist them when needed. Saying that while only 7% of U.S. citizens enter the military, >28% are suicide statistics! That is a painful number that must be lowered!

St. Patrick's nearby provided assistance for the music for the Mass. Greg Murray, Parish Choir Director and a member of St. Patrick's Council was the organist and Sara Peeples-McNatt, performed as the soloist/cantor.



Sara Peeples-McNatt and Greg Murray.



The Florida State Council was very well represented. (L) Paul Koppie, State Deputy, Donald Kahrer, State Treasurer, Warden Rafe Lopez, Vin Cipriano, State General Programs Director and Dick Maier the State Council Activities Director.

Fourth Degree officials were noted above.



A view of some of those attending the Mass held at the newly dedicated Patriot Plaza.

It was estimated that a crowd of over 1300 faithful attended the Mass, by far, the greatest gathering of congregants in all of the five years

The logistics for planning and conducting this annual event are significant. A total of 9 meetings are held with over 600 man hours of planning prior to the Mass; on November 11th, an additional 300 man hours are expended to account for parking, water, escort service, etc. All must be coordinated with the Diocese. The volunteers obtain required rental equipment and the cost is underwritten at the ~50-50% level by various Councils/Assemblies and the Diocese.

In addition to the “hand-in-hand” work with the Diocese, all must also be coordinated with the Veterans Administration and the Director of Sarasota National Cemetery, John Rosentrater. Proper permits/permissions must be obtained.



The Bishop is seen following the priests in the recessional and is, in turn, followed by the Sir Knights in regalia, all being observed by the State Officers seen on the right. All of the faithful remained in position as asked until the recessional exited the Patriot Plaza proper at the conclusion of the Mass.



The recessional of the Bishops, priests and Deacons are followed by the Color Corps, being viewed by State Deputy Paul Koppie.



The Bishop and others at the gravesites



Immediately following the Mass, after all depart the Plaza, they exit to the rear of the pavillion for silent prayers for the fallen. It is then where TAPS is played, here by SK Ron Kosey of St. Patrick's Council and Our Lady of Charity Assembly #3089.

The Bishop, as he has done in years past, then goes to the gravesites so he can pay his silent respects at the graves "of the fallen" while the Color Corps, in silent respect, render a salute to our Veterans with all swords drawn!

The gathered faithful also pay their silent respects to our fallen Veterans during this period that immediately followed the Mass.

It is only after this tribute by the Bishop and others is traffic permitted to move once again.



As the haunting tune of TAPS is played and the Bishop prays by the graves of the fallen, 70 members of the Fourth Degree form in single row and render a sword salute!



Just prior to dismissal, the entire contingent of the 4th Degree stand at attention facing the gravesites with the Plaza as a backdrop.

