

STONE, BLOOD AND STEEL

A Tribute to the Veterans of Our Wars

by
John P. G. McKenzie



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

**Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106**

**www.wetmoredeclamation.com
Email: speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com**

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This day, each year, has been set aside by the Congress of the United States to honor the veterans of our wars. It is right that we do so. So let us, then, take a brief moment from our busy day to think a little about our veterans and the meaning of Veteran's Day.

We celebrate Veteran's Day, we honor our veterans upon Veteran's Day. Do we really know why? Who are these men that we honor? They are the remains, the sometimes pitiful remains, of the massive walls of living stone, blood, and steel which we, a democracy, threw up against the onslaught of a vicious and powerful enemy; an enemy determined to destroy our way of life upon the earth. These veterans are the door that we slammed shut in the face of that enemy to protect our homes, to protect our children, to protect our friends. These veterans are the stones of flesh and blood that made the walls against which the mailed fist of the enemy crashed and pounded in vain. Bruised, battered, torn and mangled, that wall of veterans held the enemy at bay until, shattered by the very fierceness of his assault against it, he was vanquished and forced to leave the field.

Those men who forged the protective shield behind which democracy survived are the veterans. Those men who built that shield with their own flesh and blood on far off shores to keep the ravages of war from their own homes--they are the veterans.

The walls of our defense were dismantled when their need was over. The men whose bone and muscle comprised those walls were brought home. They are the veterans. They live and work among us today; some of them--bankers, clerks, craftsmen, even teachers in this very school.

Some of those men you never see; for their lives are bounded by the blank walls of hospitals and care centers; their shattered bodies are unequal to the task of caring for their own needs. They, too, are the veterans.

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