

Message on the Anniversary of the Confederate Surrender at Appomattox
April 9, 2026

Following 4 brutal years of suffering, sacrifice, and unthinkable tragedy during the Civil War, the fate of the Union was secured in triumph when General Robert E. Lee formally issued his surrender to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, ending the war, healing the wounds of division, and restoring the full glory of the American promise.

In the final days leading to that epic moment, the Army of Northern Virginia, led by General Lee, was worn down by hunger, exhaustion, and the relentless advance of General Grant's Army of the Potomac. The excruciating toll of the Civil War weighed heavily all across the country: Hundreds of thousands of American lives were lost, families were torn apart, brother met brother on the field of battle, and our Nation's most sacred values and commitments stood in grave peril. By the spring of 1865, Confederate forces were cut off from reserves and surrounded on all fronts, and the culmination of our Nation's most horrific war fell at the hands of these two great men of history in a humble home in the Virginia countryside.

While the shadow of the war loomed across the small parlor, on April 9, 1865, violence and bloodshed gave way to a burgeoning peace. General Grant understood that rebuilding a united America depended on the terms of surrender. Rather than demanding harsh punishment for General Lee's men, he offered a unifying message: "The war is over. The Rebels are our countrymen again." At last, the war-torn Union began the course for reconstruction and the path to fulfilling the founding principles that first breathed life into our Republic 250 years ago.

To this day, the surrender at Appomattox stands as an enduring testament to the resilience of a divided nation, the strength and resolve of the American people, and the sacred ideals at the heart of our national identity. Today we recommit to the eternal truth that the United States of America is blessed from on high, bound together by justice, and was, is, and will forever be one Nation under God.

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