

Note: This was the speech given by Chelsey during the Memorial Day Services held on May 29, 2017. Please join us in reading these inspiring words:

By Chelsey A. D'Albini - Memorial Day, May 29, 2017, Garnett Municipal Cemetery

I want to take this moment to welcome you here today. I want to welcome you to some of the most hallowed ground in Anderson County. Here, in this quiet interrupted meadow, you are surrounded by heroes. That chill you feel up your spine lets you know that you are in the presence of greatness. You stand here respectfully in the quiet shadows of tombstones a hundred years old, honoring heroes that made their impact a century ago. We are gathered here to honor the greatness of those individuals, to remember their contributions and to commit to memory their names.

A hundred years ago, the world was different. Anderson County was different. Garnett was different. In 1917, the world was at war. In what would be called the War to end all Wars. The Great War. The World War. By this time, the US had responded, and men from Garnett had answered the call. Beside me is a monument to men who fought during the Civil War, and not a stone's throw from us are other monuments just as important for men from that Great War. Just a few rows to the north of us is a hero, Prairie Fred Brown and his family, to the east of us lies Christopher Morris and Lloyd Morris, who were not related, but served the same cause, to the southeast lies Harry Hubbard and in the cemetery to the north of us lied Michael Lynch, both of whom enlisted despite physical handicaps to serve in the Veterinary Corps. All of whom were from Garnett, Kansas, all of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice and all of whom died as heroes.

The white limestone marker just to the southwest of us, across the central drive beneath that great tree stands to honor a man not buried here. In fact, he's not even buried in the United States, he is buried in the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery in France. The monument here was purchased for him by his little sister, Flora, whom is buried next to it, and her parents on the other side. The vertical monument bears the name of her brother. A man who did not *want* to go to war, but felt it was his duty. A simple man who grew up in Garnett as the son of the local photographer and farmer whom answered a draft notice from his farmstead in Montana where he was farming with his brother. Harry Fuller felt obligated because he was the only one of his brothers not married with children. Harry Fuller felt he owed it to his country and his family to report for the draft. Harry answered the call, knowing that it could cost him everything. He embraced the possibility, looked death in the eyes, and Harry Fuller died a hero in July of 1918.

What is important to know though is that not only today is a day to remember and memorialize our heroes; it's a day to keep alive the things that meant the most to their families. Flora Fuller never married. She was the youngest of the Fuller children and she cared for her parents up until their death. Flora Fuller talked to many of the men who came home from the Great War. She consistently took part in ceremonies just like this one. She was the guest of many parades, many veterans from World War I, and she pushed for us to remember not only her brother, but men just like him. She helped champion the formation of an American Legion Post in Garnett, and was on hand when the men of that organization asked if they could name it after her brother. In 1919, the men of Garnett formed the

Harry A Fuller Memorial American Legion Post Number 48. They chose to honor Harry because he was the first of them to be killed in the Great War. They honored him because they shared his experience. They honored his sense of duty. They honored him for his gentle kindness. They honored his service and his sacrifice until 1947 when they chose to honor him in conjunction with another hero.

Flora Fuller kept her brother's memory alive. She came out here and planted flowers around his monument when the cemetery was not as big as it is today. She visited him here, knowing that he would never return home. She felt close to him here, and every spring when the flowers she planted so long ago bloom in the purest of white blossoms, you can see how much he meant to her. One can only imagine and infer that Harry Fuller was her hero. Harry Fuller was a lot of men's hero.

Surrounding us here, in the firing squad, bearing the colors, standing at attention, and quietly sleeping here under the grass, is the greatness of heroes. The men and women buried here in this meadow represent some of the greatest times in our history. They represent a time when we answered a cry for help and triumphed over a common enemy. More importantly they represent a time when we came together as a society. We come together here today to recognize that. We come together today to honor them. We come together today to remember their names, and we come together today to memorialize them and others like Harry Fuller as the heroes they are.

Today as you leave from here, I encourage to you to find a hero buried here. They're marked with the bronze markers, the flags, and other insignia. Take a moment there in front of that headstone to appreciate that person's sacrifice, appreciate that the family that helped them bear that burden because no one ever serves in the military alone. And most importantly when you see a hero walking among you that you reach out to them do not wait until they lay quietly sleeping to show them that their sacrifice is recognized. We are a society immersed in Heroes, and it's time we remember them.