

Veterans Day 2017

Throughout our nation's history, there is a unique group of citizens who have stepped forward to protect the rest of the nation. And, it is that small group, the mere seven percent of Americans who have ever served in our United States Armed Forces, who we celebrate and thank today.

It is because of their dedication and sacrifice that we celebrate Veterans Day ... to recognize and honor all those who have placed country above self, who have determined the safety and security of others as more important than their own, and who have done their duty by taking their place in line just as generations of military men and women have done before them.

To those of us who have worn or continue to wear the uniform of our country — and to our family members who stand just as strong at home — there is no doubt that Veterans Day brings with it a meaningful significance. To every American veteran, Veterans Day means much more than just a federal holiday, or a mattress sale.

It is on this day when we honor the contributions and sacrifices of the more than 23 million veterans and service members who have proudly served our country, and all those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the name of liberty and justice.

Every generation of Americans owes a debt of gratitude to these patriots of past and present ... all who have set aside their personal pursuits and answered our nation's call.

Those of us who care to honor America's heroes gather because we are honoring our sons and daughters, our mothers and fathers, and our brothers and sisters, who are serving on behalf of everyone in our great country ... just like generations of American patriots did before them.

In the past, our nation has been confronted time and time again ... our freedoms threatened ... our way of life challenged. But America could always be assured that our values and freedom were being guarded by a determined and highly dedicated military.

From the jungles of Vietnam to the rocky slopes of Afghanistan, from Pork Chop Hill to the Persian Gulf, and from Bastogne to Baghdad. For every single man and woman who has donned a U.S. military uniform, by virtue of their service and sacrifice, today is their day to stand tall and be recognized by a grateful nation.

Today, and every day, we must take the opportunity to keep alive the memories, sacrifices and accomplishments of our nation's veterans.

To do less would diminish their service and sacrifice.

Your presence here provides meaningful proof that we will live up to our obligation to each and every individual who has ever worn the uniform of the United States of America.

As we depart from this event today and into the future, you may be confronted by the question: What is it veterans have done exactly? I encourage you to respond with a smile and state simply: Around the world, veterans have broken the shackles of tyranny, smashed the chains of bondage,

and freed entire nations from oppression. Veterans have vanquished cruelty and replaced it with an inextinguishable light that is the spirit of liberty and freedom.

Our freedom will never be free, and it is our veterans who have sacrificed and paid the highest price for all of us.

Every day is Veterans Day to the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. And now you know why. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak here today.

Remember, all veterans gave some, and some veterans gave all.