

VETERANS DAY 1997

AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE MILITARY:

A GRATEFUL NATION REMEMBERS

TODAY WE CONTINUE A TRADITION THAT BEGAN NOVEMBER 11, 1919, ONE YEAR AFTER THE END OF WORLD WAR ONE. PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON PROCLAIMED THAT EACH NOVEMBER 11 WAS TO BE COMMEMORATED AS "ARMISTICE DAY," A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE TO HONOR THE 116,000 AMERICANS WHO DIED IN THE WORLD WAR. IN 1954, ARMSTICE DAY WAS REDESIGNATED "VETERANS DAY." WITH THE NEW NAME, THE OBSERVANCE WAS GIVEN A BROADER SCOPE: TO HONOR ALL AMEREICAN VETERANS, LIVING AND DEAD, IN WHATEVER WAR PERIOD OF PEACE THEY SERVED.

TODAY WE ARE HERE TO DO JUST THAT – TO HONOR ALL VETERANS, LIVING AND DEAD, FOR THEIR SERVICE IN THE MILITARY – WHETHER IN WAR OR PEACE, AT HOME OR ABROAD. LET ME ASK ALL VETERANS HERE WITH US TODAY TO PLEASE STAND FOR A MOMENT, OR RAISE YOUR HANDS

IF YOU CANNOT STAND. WE HONOR YOU AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE. (PLEASE BE SEATED.)

THIS YEAR, IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE THAT WE FOCUS SPECIAL ATTENTION ON OUR WOMEN VETERANS. ON OCTOBER 18TH OF THIS YEAR, WE DEDICATED THE WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE FOR AMERICA MEMORIAL AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY.

AS PRESIDENT CLINTON SAID BACK IN 1995 DURING THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY, THE MEMORIAL (QUOTE) "MAKES A LONG OVERDUE DOWN PAYMENT ON A DEBT THAT WE WILL NEVER FULLY REPAY, A DEBT WE OWE TO GENERATIONS OF AMERICAN WOMEN IN UNIFORM WHO GAVE AND CONTINUE TO GIVE SO MUCH TO OUR COUNTRY. AND A DEBT WE OWE YET TO FUTURE GENERATIONS OF WOMEN WHO WILL DEDICATE THEIR OWN LIVES TO THE DEFENSE OF OUR FREEDOM." (UNQUOTE)

MANY WOMEN VETERANS ECHO HIS COMMENTS, SAYING QUIETLY, "IT'S ABOUT TIME." SOME PEOPLE, ON THE OTHER HAND, ASK WHY WE NEED A SEPARATE MEMORIAL FOR WOMEN. THE MEMORIAL IS MEANT TO HONOR WOMEN

FOR THEIR MANY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEFENSE OF OUR NATION, TO THE PROTECTION OF OUR FREEDOMS – DESPITE THE MANY BARRIERS THEY HAD TO OVERCOME TO DO SO. THE MEMORIAL IS MEANT TO HONOR THE MANY WOMEN VETERANS WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN ALL BUT INVISIBLE IN THE PAST. AND THE MEMORIAL IS MEANT TO HELP EDUCATE FUTURE GENERATIONS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF WOMEN’S SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY.

LET’S LOOK AT THE BARRIERS THEY HAD TO OVERCOME – STARTING AS FAR BACK AS THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. WOMEN WERE NOT ALLOWED TO JOIN THE CONTINENTAL ARMY, SO THEY WORKED AS NURSES, LAUNDRESSES, COOKS AND SPIES. SOME OF THEM DISGUISED THEMSELVES AS MEN IN ORDER TO FIGHT. JUST IMAGINE WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR DEBORAH SAMPSON WHO, DISGUISED AS A MAN, ENLISTED AND SERVED FOR THREE YEARS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY. INJURED TWICE, SHE TREATED HER OWN WOUNDS TO ESCAPE DETECTION. WHEN SHE FELL SICK WITH FEVER AND WAS TREATED BY A DOCTOR, SHE WAS FINALLY FOUND OUT. IMAGINE WHAT

SHE WENT THROUGH TO SERVE HER COUNTRY. OTHER WOMEN, LIKE MOLLY PITCHER AND MARGARET CORBIN, SERVED AS WATER BEARERS FOR THE ARTILLERY. JUST IMAGINE WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR THESE WOMEN, WHO, WHEN THEIR HUSBANDS FELL INTO BATTLE, BOTH STEPPED IN TO TAKE OVER THEIR WEAPONS AND KEEP FIGHTING.

DURING EVERY WAR AFTER THAT, WOMEN STEPPED IN AGAIN TO TAKE PART IN SOME WAY, DESPITE CONTINUING LEGAL AND SOCIAL BARRIERS TO DOING SO.

DURING WORLD WAR ONE, WOMEN WERE ALLOWED TO ENLIST, FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN THE U.S. MILITARY. OVER 12,000 OF THEM SERVED STATESIDE, "FREEING A MAN TO FIGHT." OVER 230 BILINGUAL WOMEN SERVED OVERSEAS AS TELEPHONE OPERATORS WITH THE U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS. JUST IMAGINE WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR THESE WOMEN, GOING AGAINST SOCIAL CUSTOM TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY. VETERAN LILLIAN BUDD RECALLS BEING TOLD TO STRIP NAKED FOR HER INDUCTION PHYSICAL – (QUOTE) "THIS AT A TIME WHEN A GIRL THOUGHT MANY TIMES BEFORE SHE'D GET IN A BATHTUB WITH A NIGHTGOWN ON,

EVEN IF SHE WERE THE ONLY PERSON IN THE HOUSE!”
(UNQUOTE) AS WORLD WAR ONE VETERAN ANNE
PEDERSON FREEMAN SAID DURING GROUND BREAKING FOR
THE WOMEN’S MEMORIAL, (QUOTE) “WHEN I SERVED,
WOMEN DIDN’T HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE.” (UNQUOTE)
THESE WOMEN CERTAINLY OVERCAME MAJOR BARRIERS
TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY.

DURING WORLD WAR TWO, APPROXIMATELY 400,000
AMERICAN MILITARY WOMEN SERVED STATESIDE AND
OVERSEAS. THEY SERVED IN EVERY THEATER OF THE WAR
AN IN MANY NONTRADITIONAL ROLES. JUST IMAGINE WHAT
IT WAS LIKE FOR THESE WOMEN. MANY JOINED AGAINST
THE WISHES OF THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES – AS
WELL AS THE WISHES OF MANY OF THEIR MALE
COUNTERPARTS. AS WORLD WAR TWO VETERAN CARMEN
GAMBILL RECALLS, (QUOTE) “DURING TRAINING WE WERE
TOLD, “YOU ARE HERE TO TAKE MEN’S JOB’S AND THEY
WON’T GIVE THEM UP WITHOUT A FIGHT.’” (UNQUOTE) THE
MILITARY ASKED FOR THEIR SEVICE BUT THEY WEREN’T
PREPARED FOR THEM. AS D.L. “JINX” JENKINS RECALLS,

(QUOTE) "THE ARMY SUPPLIED ME WITH A SKIRT, A NECKTIE AND A MAN'S SHIRT" (UNQUOTE) FOR A UNIFORM. EVEN THOUGH THE MILITARY ASKED FOR THEIR SERVICE, WOMEN DID NOT FIND IT EASY TO SIGN UP. BLACK WOMEN FACED THE BIGGEST BARRIERS. BECAUSE OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, THEY WEREN'T EVEN ALLOWED INTO THE POST OFFICES TO PICK UP APPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE. BUT IN SPITE OF THE OBSTABLES, THEY MANAGED TO JOIN AND SERVE WITH HONOR.

DURING WORLD WAR TWO, 87 FEMALE MILITARY MEMBERS WERE HELD PRISONERS OF WAR. SIX ARMY NURSES LOST THEIR LIVES DURING THE INVASION AT ANZIO BEACHHEAD. ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-ONE WACS DIED DURING WORLD WAR TWO, MANY AS A RESULT OF BEING IN COMBAT AREAS. BUT STILL, MANY PEOPLE ARE NOT AWARE OF THEIR SERVICE – OFTEN NOT EVEN THEIR FELLOW VETERANS. AS LIEUTENANT COLONEL CHARITY ADAMS EARLY, FORMER WORLD WAR TWO WAC AND BATTALION COMMANDER OF THE FIRST ALL-BLACK WOMEN'S BATTALION IN FRANCE, RECOUNTS: (QUOTE)

“WHEN I MENTIONED ONCE THAT I WAS IN FRANCE DURING THOSE YEARS, ONE VETERAN ASKED ME WHAT I WAS DOING VISITING PARIS DURING THE WAR. I TOLD HIM, ‘I WASN’T VISITING – I WAS HELPING YOU WIN THE WAR!’”
(UNQUOTE)

THROUGH ALL HISTORY, THE SACRIFICE AND SERVICE OF WOMEN WERE NOT ALWAYS ACCEPTED, WERE NOT ALWAYS RECOGNIZED, AND WERE NOT ALWAYS REWARDED.

AS PRESIDENT CLINTON STATED IN A SPEECH AT THE WOMAN’S MEMORIAL, “DESPITE THIS HISTORY OF BRAVERY AND ACCOMPLISHMENT, FOR VERY MUCH TOO LONG, WOMEN WERE TREATED AS SECOND-CLASS SOLDIERS. THEY COULD GIVE THEIR LIVES FOR LIBERTY, BUT THEY COULDN’T GIVE ORDERS TO MEN. THEY COULD HEAL THE WOUNDED AND HOLD THE DYING, BUT THEY COULD NOT DREAM OF HOLDING THE HIGHEST RANKS. THEY COULD TAKE ON THE TOUGHEST ASSIGNMENTS, BUT THEY COULD NOT TAKE UP ARMS. STILL THEY VOLUNTEERED, FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM ALL AROUND THE WORLD, BUT ALSO

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO SERVE TO THE FULLEST OF THEIR POTENTIAL.” (UNQUOTE)

THE WOMEN’S ARMED SERVICES INTEGRATION ACT OF 1948 GAVE WOMEN PERMANENT STATUS IN THE ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE AND MARINE CORPS, BUT IT ALSO LIMITED THEIR NUMBERS TO TWO PERCENT OF THE TOTAL FORCE, AND IT PROHIBITED THEM FROM RISING ABOVE THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL OR COMMANDER.

WOMEN SERVED DURING THE WARS IN KOREA AND VIETNAM, BUT IT WAS THE END OF THE MILITARY DRAFT IN 1970 THAT REALLY OPENED DOORS FOR WOMEN’S SERVICE. IN THE ERA OF THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE, MANY BARRIERS LIFTED. THE RESERVE OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS WENT COEDUCATIONAL IN 1969, AND THE MILITARY SERVICE ACADEMIES BEGAN ADMITTING WOMEN IN 1976. THE FIRST WOMEN GENERAL OFFICERS WERE PROMOTED IN 1970. IN 1978 THE WOMEN’S ARMY CORPS DEACTIVATED, AND ITS MEMBERS WERE INTEGRATED INTO THEIR BASIC BRANCHES.

BUT STILL WOMEN FACED BARRIERS. STILL, THEY WERE OFTEN THE FIRST OF THEIR GENDER TO JOIN A UNIT FORMERLY COMPRISED ENTIRELY OF MEN, OR THE FIRST TO COMMAND A UNIT. BUT AS THE NUMBERS INCREASED AND THE FIRSTS BECAME SECONDS AND THIRDS, WOMEN WERE BETTER ACCEPTED IN THE MILITARY.

BY 1980, WOMEN MADE UP 8.5 PERCENT OF THE MILITARY. IN 1989, 770 WOMEN DEPLOYED TO PANAMA IN OPERATION JUST CAUSE. IN OPERATION DESERT STORM, WE SAW THE LARGEST SINGLE DEPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN U.S. MILITARY HISTORY UP TO THAT TIME, AND THERE WAS WIDESPREAD PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR IT. WOMEN, 41,000 OF THEM, MADE UP SEVEN PERCENT OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES SERVING IN THE GULF.

SINCE DESERT STORM, MILITARY WOMEN HAVE SERVED AROUND THE GLOBE AND IN EVERY DEPLOYMENT THE U.S. MILITARY HAS UNDERTAKEN. THEY HAVE BROKEN BARRIERS AND CONTINUE TO BREAK BARRIERS. COMBAT AVIATION OPENED TO WOMEN, AND THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT RESCINDED THE "RISK RULE" THAT BARRED

WOMEN FROM COMBAT UNITS AND CERTAIN HIGH-RISK SUPPORT UNITS. IN 1995, AIR FORCE LIEUTENANT COLONEL EILEEN COLLINS DEPLOYED AS THE FIRST FEMALE PILOT OF A SPACE SHUTTLE, THE DISCOVERY. IN 1996, SERGEANT HEATHER LYNN JOHNSON BROKE NEW GROUND BY BECOMING THE FIRST WOMAN TO EARN THE GUARD'S BADGE AT THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER. LATER THAT SAME YEAR, PATRICIA TRACEY, U.S. NAVY, AND CAROL MUTTER, U.S. MARINE CORPS, BECAME THE FIRST WOMEN PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF THREE-STAR GENERAL. IN 1997, ARMY GENERAL CLAUDIA KENNEDY JOINED THEM.

TODAY, 193,000 WOMEN SERVE IN THE ARMED FORCES, COMPRISING 13.4 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL FORCE. ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF THE JOBS AND MORE THAN 90 PERCENT OF THE CAREER FIELDS ARE OPEN TO WOMEN. THEY STILL FACE BARRIERS, BUT CONDITIONS CONTINUE TO IMPROVE. AS STATED IN 1996 BY GENERAL JOHN A. SHALIKASHVILI, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, (QUOTE) "I DON'T WANT TO PROPHECY... BUT MY SENSE IS WE ARE ON

A COUNTDOWN TO THE DAYS WHEN THERE WON'T BE A POSITION IN THE MILITARY THAT WOMEN CAN'T AND WON'T OCCUPY." (UNQUOTE)

THE WOMEN'S MEMORIAL CELEBRATES THE SACRIFICES AND EFFORTS OF WOMEN IN OUR PAST WHO MADE THIS ALL POSSIBLE. AS BRIGADIER GENERAL EVELYN P. FOOTE, WHO RETIRED FROM THE ARMY IN 1989, HAS OBSERVED, THE WOMEN VETERANS OF THE PAST (QUOTE) "DID ALL THE NECESSARY FOUNDATION BUILDING FOR WOMEN WHO FOLLOWED. WITHOUT THEIR TREMENDOUS PERFORMANCE, THE FULLY INTEGRATED ARMY WE KNOW TODAY WOULD NOT EXIST." (UNQUOTE) BUT MANY OF THOSE WOMEN REMAIN INVISIBLE.

ASK ANYONE THE QUESTION, "DO YOU KNOW A VETERAN?" AND THE ANSWER IS USUALLY, "OH YES, I DO." BUT ASK, "DO YOU KNOW A WOMAN VETERAN?" AND THE ANSWER IS VERY OFTEN, "NO...I CAN'T SAY THAT I DO." ASK A WOMAN VETERAN IF HER NEIGHBORS AND CO-WORKERS KNOW ABOUT HER VETERAN STATUS. THE ANSWER IS VERY OFTEN, "NO, I DON'T THINK THEY DO." IF YOU ASK HER

WHY THAT IS, THE ANSWER IS USUALLY, "WELL, IT JUST NEVER CAME UP." THERE ARE OVER 1.8 MILLION WOMEN ELIGIBLE TO BE REGISTERED WITH THE WOMEN'S MEMORIAL AS VETERANS. AS OF THE DEDICATION CEREMONY THIS OCTOBER, ONLY 200,000 WOMEN WERE REGISTERED, JUST 11 PERCENT OF THOSE ELIGIBLE.

REGISTRATIONS COME IN WITH COMMENTS LIKE THE FOLLOWING, SHOWING HOW "INVISIBLE" THESE WOMEN VETERANS AND THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS SOMETIMES ARE:

--FORMER AIR FORCE COLONEL HELEN NORRIS SENT IN EIGHT REGISTRATIONS WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENT (QUOTE): "I WANT TO HONOR EIGHT WOMEN WHO SERVED THEIR COUNTRY IN VARIOUS SERVICES AND COMBAT SITUATIONS, TO ASSURE THEY ARE NOT FORGOTTEN BY THOSE OF US WHO HAVE ALSO SERVED. I DON'T KNOW IF THEY ARE ALREADY REGISTERED OR IF THEY WERE EVEN AWARE THAT THE WOMEN'S MEMORIAL EXISTED. I DISCOVERED THEIR SERVICE ASSOCIATION WHILE READING THE OBITUARIES IN THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER. I WAS

AMAZED TO DISCOVER HOW MANY FROM MY LOCAL AREA HAD HELPED TO MAKE THE HISTORY OF THE WOMEN IN THE SERVICE SO OUTSTANDING AND YET REMAINED UNRECOGNIZED EXCEPT BY THEIR FAMILY AND CLOSEST FRIENDS.” (UNQUOTE)

--MARY ELLEN JOHNSON REGISTERED HER MOTHER, WORLD WAR TWO ARMY LIEUTENANT DORTHY L. JOHNSON, WITH THESE COMMENTS (QUOTE): “I READ ABOUT THE MEMORIAL IN ANN LANDERS’ COLUMN. MY MOTHER SERVED AS AN ARMY NURSE IN WORLD WAR TWO, SO I DECIDED TO SUBMIT HER NAME. I HADN’T INTENDED TO TELL HER, BUT I DIDN’T KNOW SOME OF THE INFORMATION, SO I HAD TO TELL HER. AM I GLAD I DID! WHEN I WENT TO VISIT HER A FEW DAYS LATER, SHE HAD DUG OUT ALL OF HER MEMORABILIA THAT SHE HAD PACKED AWAY. THERE WAS SO MUCH TO LOOK AT, AND MOST OF IT I HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE. MY SISTER AND I SPENT HOURS LOOKING AT EVERYTHING AND LISTENING TO HER TELL ABOUT EACH ITEM. I ASKED WHY SHE HADN’T BROUGHT THE MATERIAL OUT BEFORE AND SHE SAID SHE DIDN’T WANT ANYONE TO

THINK SHE WAS BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT SHE HAD DONE.”

(UNQUOTE)

IF VETERANS HAVEN'T EVEN SHARED THEIR STORIES WITH THEIR CHILDREN BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T WANT TO BRAG, IS IT ANY WONDER THAT THEY HAVEN'T SHARED THEIR STORIES WITH OTHERS? IS IT ANY WONDER THAT SO MANY WOMEN VETERANS – ESPECIALLY THOSE FROM EARLIER GENERATIONS – REMAIN “INVISIBLE?”

THE WOMEN'S MEMORIAL IS DESIGNED TO HONOR WOMEN VETERANS AND TO SHARE THEIR HISTORIES WITH FUTURE GENERATIONS. RETIRED AIR FORCE GENERAL WILMA VAUGHT, PRESIDENT OF THE WOMEN IN THE MILITARY SERVICE FOR AMERICA FOUNDATION, HAS OFTEN BEEN ASKED WHY THE MEMORIAL WASN'T BUILT AS A WALL WITH NAMES CARVED ON IT, LIKE THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL. “THAT WOULDN'T WORK VERY WELL,” RESPONDS GENERAL VAUGHT. “FOR ONE THING,” SHE SAID, “WOMEN HAVE THIS HABIT OF CHANGING THEIR NAMES.”

IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE NAME CHANGES AS WELL AS OTHER CHANGES THAT OCCUR, THE HEART OF THE WOMEN'S MEMORIAL IS THE REGISTRY. THIS IS A COMPUTERIZED REGISTER CONTAINING THE PHOTOS, MILITARY HISTORY AND MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES OF ANYONE WHO REGISTERS. WHEN VISITORS TO THE WOMEN'S MEMORIAL TYPE IN THE NAME OF A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE, THEIR PHOTO AND STORIES WILL FLASH UP ON THE SCREEN. WHETHER THEY KNOW THE MAIDEN OR MARRIED NAME, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE INFORMATION. AND REGISTRANTS CAN SEND IN CHANGES AS THEY OCCUR.

THE WOMEN'S MEMORIAL WAS BUILT AROUND THE EXISTING GATEWAY TO ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY. THIS GATEWAY WAS BUILT BUT NEVER COMPLETED IN THE 1930s. BY COMPLETING THE GATEWAY, THE MEMORIAL IN ESSENCE HONORS ALL VETERANS, WOMEN AND MEN. INSIDE ARE 14 EXHIBIT ALCOVES WITH ARTIFACTS PORTRAYING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN IN ALL CONFLICTS IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAD BEEN

INVOLVED. THE MEMORIAL IS DESIGNED TO EDUCATE CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF WOMEN VETERANS. THIS SEPARATE MEMORIAL FOR WOMEN VETERANS ENSURES THAT THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.

A NURSE OF WORLD WAR TWO WROTE THESE WORDS (QUOTE): "LET THE GENERATIONS KNOW THAT WOMEN IN UNIFORM ALSO GUARDED THEIR FREEDOM. THAT OUR RESOLVE WAS JUST AS GREAT AS THAT OF THE BRAVE MEN WHO STOOD AMONG US. THAT WITH VICTORY, OUR HEARTS WERE JUST AS FULL AND BEAT JUST AS FAST. THAT THE TEARS FELL JUST AS HARD FOR THOSE WE LEFT BEHIND." (UNQUOTE)

YEARS FROM NOW PEOPLE PROBABLY WILL WONDER WHY WE EVER NEEDED A SEPARATE MEMORIAL FOR WOMEN. AS ONE WOMAN VETERAN SAYS (QUOTE), "MORE THAN ANYTHING I WANT TO BE REGARDED NOT AS A WOMAN SOLDIER, BUT AS A SOLDIER." (UNQUOTE) THAT MOST LIKELY WILL BE SO IN THE FUTURE. BUT IT WILL BE SOON ONLY BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE FOR

THE SACRIFICES OF WOMEN VETERANS TODAY AND IN THE PAST. LET'S NOT FORGET HOW THEY DEFENDED OUR FREEDOM – AND HELPED CHANGE OUR WORLD.

DURING GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONIES FOR THE WOMEN'S MEMORIAL IN 1995, HELEN K. COXHEAD, 95 YEARS OLD AND A VETERAN OF WORLD WAR ONE, PROUDLY DISPLAYED THE MILITARY DOG TAGS SHE HAD CARRIED WITH HER, EVERY PLACE SHE WENT, FOR ALMOST 80 YEARS. "I AM VERY PROUD OF MY SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY," SHE SAID, " AND I JUST DON'T WANT TO EVER BE FORGOTTEN."

HELEN DID NOT MAKE IT TO THE DEDICATION CEREMONY IN OCTOBER; SHE DIED MARCH 14, 1997. BUT WE WILL REMEMBER. THE WOMEN'S MEMORIAL ITSELF, EVENTS LIKE OUR OBSERVANCE HERE TODAY, AND OUR CONTINUED HONORING OF ALL VETERANS ON VETERANS DAY ENSURE THAT HELEN – AND ALL OF HER FELLOW VETERANS, MEN AND WOMEN – WILL BE REMEMBERED BY A GRATEFUL NATION.



ELINOR Z. TAYLOR
MAJORITY CAUCUS SECRETARY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Why do we honor vets -

- putting lives in danger for our country
- helping keep Amer. Free
- to show appreciation for magnitude of the sacrifice
- for making a difference
- for keeping our nation - free -

challenge you to ask friends & neighbors - }?

Vets - we honor you - we thank you for your
service

VETERANS DAY

NOVEMBER 11, 1997

A TIME FOR RECOGNITION

ON THIS DAY WE RECOGNIZE
AMERICANS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE
WHO HAVE SERVED THEIR COUNTRY.
PEOPLE WHO HAVE GIVEN US – THROUGH
THEIR SACRIFICE, COURAGE AND
DEDICATION – A PRECIOUS GIFT: THE

FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE IN A
LAND UNIQUE AMONG LANDS.

ON THIS DAY WE HONOR THE MEN AND
WOMEN WHO DIED DEFENDING OUR
FREEDOM AND THOSE WHO SERVED WITH
VALOR AND LIVED.

IN 1918, ON THE 11TH HOUR OF THE 11TH
DAY OF THE 11TH MONTH, THE WORLD

CELEBRATED. AFTER FOUR YEARS, THE
“WAR TO END ALL WARS” WAS OVER.

AMERICANS SET ASIDE NOVEMBER 11
AS ARMISTICE DAY TO HONOR THE
SACRIFICES MEN AND WOMEN MADE IN
THE WAR. THOSE WHO SERVED THE BITTER
WAR MARCHED IN HOMETOWN PARADES,
AND PEOPLE GATHERED TO HEAR
SPEECHES.

TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE WAR, IN
1938, CONGRESS DESIGNATED NOVEMBER
11 AS A NATIONAL HOLIDAY. AFTER
WORLD WAR II BEGAN IN EUROPE,
AMERICANS JOINED OTHER NATIONS –
GREAT AND SMALL – IN ANOTHER BITTER
STRUGGLE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM.
AFTER THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD

WAR, WE CONTINUED TO OBSERVE
ARMISTICE DAY ON NOVEMBER 11.

IN 1953, THE CITIZENS OF EMPORIA,
KANSAS, FIRST CALLED THE HOLIDAY
“VETERANS DAY” – IN GRATITUDE TO THE
VETERANS IN THEIR TOWN. THE
MOMENTUM SWELLED, AND A KANSAS
CONGRESSMAN INTRODUCED LEGISLATION

RENAMING THE NATIONAL HOLIDAY
VETERANS DAY.

TODAY, THERE MAY NOT BE MANY
SURVIVORS OF THAT FIRST WORLD WAR,
BUT WE CONTINUE TO GIVE THANKS FOR
PEACE ON THE DAY ITS ARMISTICE WAS
SIGNED.

ON THIS DAY, WE RECOGNIZE NOT ONLY
THOSE WHO SERVED IN TIMES OF BATTLE,
BUT ALSO THOSE WHO SERVE IN TIMES OF
PEACE. THEY PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE
LIBERTIES WE GUARD WITH FEROCIOUS
INTENSITY. AMERICA HAS THE BEST-
EQUIPPED, BEST-PREPARED MILITARY
FORCE IN THE WORLD, YET THERE ARE
STILL OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME.

MEN AND WOMEN LOSE THEIR LIVES IN TRAINING ACCIDENTS EVERY YEAR. IN 1997, CAPTAIN AMY SVOBODA (ZVO-BOW-DA), WHO FLEW A-10S AND CAPTAIN GLEN COMEAUX (KO-MO), A T-3 INSTRUCTOR PILOT, WERE JUST TWO.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO LOSE THEIR LIVES IN OTHER TYPES OF ACCIDENTS, SUCH AS AIRMAN FIRST CLASS

CHRISTOPHER REZAC, A FIREFIGHTER, WHO
DIED WHILE HELPING CONTAIN A FUEL
TANK EXPLOSION NEAR SHEPPARD AIR
FORCE BASE, TEXAS.

WHETHER AT HOME STATION OR ON
DEPLOYMENT THERE IS AN INHERENT
DANGER IN THE JOB THEY HAVE, EVEN
THOUGH THE MILITARY WORKS HARD TO
INSTILL “SAFETY FIRST” IN ALL THEY DO.

ON THIS DAY WE PAY SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO
THOSE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVE IN
AMERICA'S ARMED FORCES AROUND THE
WORLD. THEY PERFORM THEIR MILITARY
MISSION WHETHER THEY ARE STANDING
WATCH ON FOREIGN SOIL; INVOLVED IN
HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS TO BRING FOOD,
SHELTER AND MEDICAL RELIEF TO PEOPLE
IN DISTRESS; OR PARTICIPATING IN
PEACEKEEPING ACTIONS IN STRIFE-FILLED

AREAS OF THE WORLD. THEY ARE
VIGILANT AND PREPARED. PREPARED TO
PROTECT THE IDEALS AND FREEDOMS
THAT WE, AS A NATION, HAVE ENVISIONED
SINCE THE CREATION OF THIS GREAT
COUNTRY BY OUR FOUNDING
FOREFATHERS . THE COST OF THAT VISION
HAS BEEN TREMENDOUS, FOR THE PERIODS
OF PEACE OUR COUNTRY HAS ENJOYED
ARE FEW. THE LONGEST TIME OF

COMPLETE TRANQUILLITY FOR OUR
ARMED FORCES WAS THE 23 YEARS
BETWEEN WORLD WARS ONE AND TWO.
SINCE THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR, MORE
THAN 42 MILLION MEN AND WOMEN HAVE
SERVED IN AMERICA'S MILITARY. MORE
THAN 600,000 OF THOSE DAUNTLESS,
SELFLESS WARRIORS DIED IN COMBAT.

BUT WHY ARE WE SO SEEMINGLY
WILLING TO FIGHT AND, IF NEED BE, TO
DIE? THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION IS
AS SIMPLE – AND YET AS COMPLEX – AS
THE SOUL OF AMERICA ITSELF. WE FIGHT
BECAUSE WE BELIEVE. NOT THAT WAR IS
GOOD, BUT THAT SOMETIMES IT IS
NECESSARY. OUR SOLDIERS FIGHT AND DIE
NOT FOR THE GLORY OF WAR, BUT FOR THE
PRIZE OF FREEDOM. THE WORDS OF THE

PHILOSOPHER JOHN STUART MILL SAY IT
BEST: “WAR IS AN UGLY THING, BUT NOT
THE UGLIEST OF THINGS. THE DECAYED
AND DEGRADED STATE OF MORAL AND
PATRIOTIC FEELING WHICH THINKS
NOTHING IS WORTH WAR... IS MUCH
WORSE. A MAN WHO HAS NOTHING FOR
WHICH HE IS WILLING TO FIGHT, NOTHING
HE CARES MORE ABOUT THAN HIS OWN
PERSONAL SAFETY, IS A MISERABLE

CREATURE WHO HAS NO CHANCE OF BEING
FREE...”

AND, THE HEART OF AMERICA IS
FREEDOM, FOR OURSELVES AND ALL
NATIONS WILLING TO FIGHT FOR IT. YES,
THE PRICE IS HIGH, BUT FREEDOM IS A
WEALTH NO DEBT CAN ENCUMBER.

AS WE REMEMBER THESE BRAVE
WARRIORS AND THEIR COMRADES IN ARMS
ON THIS VETERANS DAY, WE MUST LOOK
TO THE FUTURE AS WELL AS THE PAST. IN
TODAY'S WORLD, FREEDOM COMES
CLOAKED IN UNCERTAINTY. AMERICA
STILL RELIES ON HER SONS AND
DAUGHTERS TO DEFEND HER LIBERTY. THE
COST OF FREEDOM REMAINS HIGH, BUT WE
ARE WILLING TO PAY IT. WE DO NOT PAY IT

GLADLY, BUT WE PAY IT WITH DEEP
REVERENCE AND THANKS TO THOSE WHO
HAVE SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES FOR
AMERICA. WE KNOW THAT IN THE YEARS
TO COME, MORE BRAVE SOULS WILL
SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES FOR AMERICA. WE
INCLUDE THEM IN OUR THOUGHTS AND
PRAYERS TODAY.

(PAUSE) ON A FINAL NOTE, I WOULD
LIKE TO SAY THANK YOU.... I AM TRULY
HONORED TO BE A PART OF THIS VETERANS
DAY CELEBRATION. I, AS WELL AS
EVERYONE HERE TODAY, ARE TRULY A
BENEFACTOR OF THE GREAT SACRIFICES
THAT ALL VETERANS HAVE MADE.....
FOR THIS..... I SAY THANK YOU.