

Today, I want to talk specifically about service. ^{Remembering} The word
“service” was once synonymous with the military. “I was in the
service,” veterans of World War II and Korea still say with pride

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Speech
Bellamy
1999

There was a time when many Americans knew personally the
today.

meaning of service. It meant that one way or another – through the
draft or enlistment or a commission – you had offered years of your
life to your country, often by going into harm’s way.

I was
further
my husband

Today, very few Americans have this experience or even
understand what it means to serve one’s country. It’s getting harder
to fill the ranks. Fewer young people today view military service as

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a beneficial and desirable part of their education. They need help understanding the value and ideal of service.

These are some of the reasons why Veterans Day is important. Having this national holiday means that at least one day out of the year, all Americans encounter the word "veteran."

Yet sadly, the only way most Americans experience Veterans Day is by opening an empty mailbox. "Oh, it's Veterans Day," they say. "I forgot," and they're right. They have forgotten.

Veterans are the

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keepers of the flame, the bearers of our national memory. Veterans know better than any other Americans that the ideals of democracy and freedom will always be linked to the selfless service of our Armed Forces.

In a recent newspaper article, Justice Antonin Scalia wrote that "democratic self-government" is the "greatest development of the millennium." Veterans understand this. Veterans know the high cost of establishing and maintaining democracy. Throughout our nation's history, the price of democracy has been their selfless service.

remembering

The “great lesson of the twentieth century,” says Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera, is that “the United States must stay engaged in world affairs.”

It was a lesson that began with World War I, a war fought to “make the world safe for democracy,” Americans fervently hoped, “the war to end all wars,” that was not to be the case, as we learned many times throughout this tragic century.

The origin of this day goes back to the years following World

War I. On November 11, 1918, at eleven o'clock in the morning –
Woodrow Wilson
the eleventh day of the eleventh month – the great war was over.

The bloodiest conflict in human history up to that time concluded with pen strokes on a document, an armistice signed in a railway coach near the battle zone in France. Then, bugles sounded the call to “cease firing,” and battle-weary soldiers climbed out of their bleak and muddy trenches to go home. Of the American expeditionary forces who stepped off troop ships in Europe in 1917, one hundred thousand died.

(HISTORY OF VETERANS DAY)

After the armistice, people on both sides of the Atlantic struggled to grasp the meaning of their staggering losses. The United States, England and France each honored those who served, and especially those who died, by burying an unknown soldier at a revered national site. In 1921, America's Unknown was entombed at Arlington National Cemetery. England's unknown was placed in Westminster Abbey, and France's, near the Arc de Triomphe.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery soon became a site of pilgrimage for veterans and the families of the fallen, a place where they could show reverence for those who died, where they could console each other in mutual grief.

In response to the strong desire to honor World War I veterans, Congress declared November 11 as Armistice Day in 1926. Twelve years later, Congress designated that day as a national

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holiday. It was 1938, and war clouds loomed once again over Europe. Three years later, America entered the Second World War.

In the aftermath of World War Two and the Korean War, virtually every American family had at least one veteran of its own or knew veterans. Over 300,000 died in World War Two, and thousands more perished in Korea. In 1954, Congress amended its Act of 1938 by replacing the word "Armistice" with the word "Veterans," making November 11 a national holiday, Veterans Day, a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Today - right now about 144,000 soldiers
are serving in 70 countries throughout the world.

But let us not forget that those serving in
the military are a small group in American Society.
The overwhelming majority of Am. citizens have never
had any association at all with military service.

∴ a veteran? mark would ask who that - someone
who once played in the NFL or NBA. So it is vital
that we hear from veterans & honor veterans because
of their selfless service - and that the US remains a
beacon throughout the world for those who long for freedom
and human dignity. So we give special salute today to
those who risked their lives for our freedom.

World War I - (close to 100) ~~But~~

Korean War

Beirut - Grenada - Panama - Somalia - The Sinai - Persian Gulf

Vietnam.

Haiti - Bosnia -

The sacrifice of our veterans must be told to each generation
so that they may understand & value their freedom.

Recently - moving wall at WCU - Vietnam -

Hall of Heroes - John 15-13 -

Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend -

Honor them in life or death - Those few who gave so much for the survival of so many - asked so little - these heroes were examples of heroism, valor - honor - The WCU Club - inspired by Tony Polito - spearheaded & researched this project - Salute to Gold Star Mothers.

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The 20th century taught us that the world will never be completely safe for democracy. Freedom will always require vigilance and exact a high price from those who would possess it.

That price is the selfless service of the armed forces of democratic societies.

Because America's veterans understand what it is to serve, it is veterans who must help reconnect Americans to the ideal of service.

If our nation is to remain strong, the core values of the United States

Armed Forces must become the core values of the American people.

They must understand that Veterans Day means so much more than

an extra day off.

Veterans we honor you & we
Thank you -