

Veterans' Day

We are blessed, as Americans, to live in a nation envied the world over for our form of government and our way of life ... neither of which was achieved without the dearest sacrifices. For those blessings, on this day, we thank our veterans.

Our gratitude and our unflagging commitment to America's 25 million living veterans, and to the memories of 23 million veterans who have passed on since the dawn of our Republic, are inadequate if we consider the world we would inherit without their selfless service. We are forever indebted to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coastguardsmen for their gifts of freedom and justice.

We are the beneficiaries of their service and sacrifice..

We rise every morning empowered by a land of opportunities made rich and plentiful by a vigorous and open economic, agricultural, and industrial marketplace. We enjoy a bounty of goods and services unmatched in all the world. For all those opportunities—we thank our veterans, this day, for their service and fidelity.

We expand our knowledge of ourselves and the world around us in myriad schools and institutions of higher learning unparalleled in their accessibility to virtually every citizen who seeks the keys to education. For this priceless opportunity, we can—and should—thank our veterans.

We refill and express our creative spirits in countless libraries, theaters, auditoriums, museums, and galleries where our literary, performing, and visual arts are displayed in all their variety, uncensored, and open to all. For the right of free and open expression ... we thank our veterans.

We clash on the gridirons of ten thousand stadiums. We shoot hoops on countless inner-city courts and in mighty arenas. We swing for the fences of small town diamonds and the walls of major league ball parks. We run, we swim, we play, we exert ourselves individually and competitively in a nation where we are free to celebrate the independent spirit of athletics. For all that, let us give thanks to our veterans today, of all days.

And we bow our heads, kneel on prayer rugs, and lift our voices in holy songs in mighty cathedrals, elegant churches, simple chapels, and in synagogues and mosques all across our nation. We remain secure in the knowledge that our beliefs are sacred and our right to worship in our own way—or not to worship at all—is revered and protected.

Whether we acknowledge the guiding hand of a higher power, or simply reflect on the beauty of the right to exercise our beliefs, we can, and should, give thanks to our veterans for protecting those most sacred rights.

At day's end, we sit down to dinner, in communities large and small, and share with our neighbors the immutable constancy of our freedom to raise our families under liberty's open skies, and to fall asleep beneath the comforting blankets of our democracy.

Today, Veterans Day, let us seize this opportunity and offer our heartfelt 'thank you' to America's former men and women in uniform. For more than 230 years, they protected the rich and seamless fabric of Freedom—woven on the loom of conflict, washed in the blood of patriots, and preserved in times of peace through their fidelity to the cause of Liberty.

On this Veterans Day, we thank them all.

Thank you.