



Armed Forces Day

(Greetings)

For more than 70 years, Americans have been celebrating the branches of our nation's military on Armed Forces Day, but for the VFW, we've been celebrating our brave servicemen and women for much longer than that.

As veterans, we take special pride in those who understand what it means to sacrifice everything for country ... who understand the high price we pay for freedom. That is why veterans ... past, present and future ... are what the VFW is about.

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From the first celebration of this day on May 20, 1950, its meaning and importance has grown with each observance. Together, our active-duty troops, National Guardsmen and our Reservists are a formidable military force, and they are the reason we are here today.

Armed Forces Day is the one day of the year where we put our friendly rivalries and banter aside, allowing us the opportunity to recognize and honor the strength and sacrifices of all of the men and women who selflessly put on America's uniform and dutifully defend our nation.

From the beginning of our nation's founding, it was clear that our survival fell upon the shoulders of patriots who were willing to put it all on the line for a life free of tyranny. And from the beginning, those patriots, the

defenders of this nation, recognized that only at great cost, would the concept of liberty and justice become a reality ... and only with great sacrifice would freedom prevail.

Through the years those patriots have become the powerful force of men and women who wear the uniform of the United States military; it is America's proud soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and guardians who have tenaciously defended and preserved our way of life.

Each page of America's history is etched with the sacrifice of our Armed Forces. On each page is written the legacy of their accomplishments, and as veterans who have spent time defending and protecting our freedom, we know all too well the dedication and sacrifice serving our country

entails, and what a daunting responsibility it is. From defending our country in times of peril to helping on the home front, being a guardian of freedom is truly the highest honor.

Today, we work to show our appreciation and celebrate Armed Forces Day — a day to honor America’s active duty, National Guard and Reserves ... all who selflessly go wherever they are called. They are the backbone of our nation, and make the mighty, formidable force that is America’s military.

America has been celebrating Armed Forces Day since 1949, and today, I believe it’s perhaps more important than ever, that we take a moment of silence in honor of the service

men and women who have laid down their lives across the globe in defense of our nation.

(Pause)

Peace and freedom are things you achieve today but are not forever guaranteed. Several times history has harshly reminded us that we must always be vigilant.

But we are the lucky ones here who are blessed with the opportunity to express our gratitude to the selfless men and women who serve our nation ... and this duty must not be forgotten.

I urge everyone here to pause a moment and reflect upon the freedoms that we have today and think about the

service and sacrifice of those – the men and women of our armed forces – who for nearly 250 years have provided our nation with the security so we can build upon those freedoms.

It is because of their selfless devotion to duty, their sacrifices and their courage that we are able to live free of tyranny, and Armed Forces Day provides the perfect opportunity to reflect on that way of life.

We are truly privileged to have such selflessly brave citizens among us, and today, and every day, we salute them.

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