

We are here today to honor our service members and veterans and remember the sacrifices they have made and the courage it takes to defend honor, duty, and country.

We gather here to remember their achievements, their dedication, and to say thank you for their sacrifices. Thinking of the heroes who are here today and those who are here only in spirit, a person can't help but feel awed by the enormity of what we see. We stand in the midst of patriots and the family and friends of those who have nobly served in the Armed Forces.

For many veterans, our nation was important enough to endure long separations from their families, miss the births of their children, freeze in sub-zero temperatures, bake in wild jungles, lose limbs, and, far too often, lose their lives.

Military spouses have had to endure career interruptions, frequent changes of address, and a disproportionate share of parental responsibilities.

The children often had to deal with changes in schools, separation from friends and, hardest of all, the uncertainty of whether or not Mom or Dad will live through their next combat tour.

It doesn't matter whether they served during a time of war or a time of peace. The veterans do not get to choose. For those who served during peace time, let us remember that peace can turn to war in a matter of minutes, as it did on December 7 1941 at Pearl Harbor, and again on September 11 2001.

The commitment to duty, honor, and country exemplify what a veteran believes. When a person raises their hand and takes the Oath of Enlistment, they become members of the Armed Forces. They are willing to suffer the sacrifices it takes being in the Armed Forces so that our country can stay safe and strong.

In closing, I would like to read a poem I found:

The Best on Earth: A Veteran's Day Tribute

If someone has done military service,

They earn the title "veteran," and more;
They earn our deep respect and admiration;
That they are special no one can ignore.

They sacrificed the comforts we enjoy;
The list is long of all the things they gave.
Our veterans are extraordinary people;
They're loyal, dedicated, true and brave.

When terror and invasion were real threats,
They showed us they could handle any storm.
We owe our freedoms and our very lives
To our veterans, who served in uniform.

Our veterans should be celebrities;
They're exceptional; no other group compares.
We're grateful for the many things they've done;
They're always in our hearts and in our prayers.

We owe our veterans support and friendship;
Let no one ever question what they're worth.
These men and women served us and our country,
Our veterans--the very best on earth.

Thank you, and God Bless our Veterans and the United States of America.