

**Remarks at a Veterans Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia**  
*November 11, 2025*

*The President.* Thank you, J.D. Thank you very much to our great Vice President. That was a good decision I made.

This morning, on these hallowed grounds where generations of American heroes rest in eternal glory, we gather to fulfill the sacred duty of every free man and woman.

On Veterans Day, we honor those who have worn the uniform, who have worn the battle, who have stood to watch, and whose ranks have formed the mighty wall of flesh and blood, bravery and devotion that has defended our freedom for 250 years.

Today, to every veteran—we love our veterans—we say the words too often left unsaid: Thank you for your service. Thank you very much.

We want to also say thank you for carrying America's fate on your strong very broad and proud shoulders. Each of you has earned the respect and the gratitude of our entire nation. We love you, we salute you, and we will never forget what you have done to keep America safe, sovereign, and free. Thank you very much.

And we're also honored to be joined by a great man—he will go down as a great man someday—Speaker Mike Johnson. Speaker. Wherever you may be, Speaker. We love you, Speaker—there he is. Right there. Good. Got a good location. *[Laughter]* He always gets a good location.

And congratulations to you and to John and to everybody on a very big victory. We're opening up our country. It should have never been closed. Should have never been closed.

I want to thank Secretary Doug Collins, who's outstanding. Just done a fantastic job for the veterans. We have a 92-percent approval rating. We took that up from 38 percent from a certain previous administration that we won't mention.

Also, Secretary of War—we like the sound of that better than the other—Secretary Pete Hegseth. Pete, thank you very much. Thank you, Pete. Great job.

Our great Attorney General, Pam Bondi. Pam, thank you very much. Thank you.

Secretary Doug Burgum. Doug, thank you. Thank you very much for being here, Doug.

The number-one energy person anywhere in the world. Acknowledged—I was amazed that he took the job and he did it without hesitation. What he gave up, what Doug gave up, what all of them gave up, nobody would ever know. But Secretary Chris Wright, number one anywhere in the world, acknowledge. And drill, baby, drill, Chris. Right? Drill, baby, drill. The energy prices are way down, and they're going further.

Secretary Linda McMahon, Education—moving education back to the States, Linda, right? Getting it back to the States, where it belongs. Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer. Thank you, Lori, very much.

Director Russ Vought. Director, thank you. What a good job he's doing. Cutting, cutting, cutting, but fairly cutting. Director Tulsi Gabbard. Thank you, Director.

Ambassador Jamieson Greer. What a job he's done. We've taken in trillions of dollars in tariffs, and we want to keep it that way. *[Laughter]* It's been good for our country, I can tell you, including national security.

General Dan Caine. General, thank you. He's a real general. And congratulations on wiping out the nuclear capability of Iran in about a matter of seconds, once they got there. They traveled a total of 37 hours, but once they got there, they were very quick.

And also to many other very distinguished guests. We have an amazing group of people. I'd like to name every one of you, but I think a lot of people would be upset. It's a little cold. *[Laughter]*

The pages of American history are filled with the tales of titans, icons, innovators, and trailblazers who built this country into the greatest, most ambitious, and most prosperous nation the world has ever seen.

And we brought it to new levels. I'll tell you, we were going in the wrong direction for a period of time, but we've never been hotter than we are right now. This is the hottest country anywhere in the world.

Yet every captain of industry, every pioneer of science, and every star whose brilliance has lit up the lights of Broadway all share one thing in common: They only had the chance to soar because the veterans had the courage to serve. They took care of those people. They took care of all the stars. The stars that you read about wouldn't be here without our veterans.

Everything we have, everything our country has achieved, has been purchased by the muscle, spine, and steel of the United States military.

We owe it all to the fierce and noble men and women of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, and the United States Marines.

*Audience members.* Oorah! *[Laughter]*

*The President.* Here's a guy. *[Laughter]*

*[At this point, the President pointed to Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance.]*

Our servicemembers are—own words are the greatest possible tribute to their immortal valor.

Shortly before the Battle at Bull Run, Major Sullivan Ballou of Rhode Island became a big name, didn't he? Wrote to his dear wife Sarah. He said, "I know . . . how great a debt we owe to those who went before us." He said, "And I'm willing—perfectly willing, darling, to lay down all my joys of this life to help maintain this Government and to pay that debt."

One—just 1 week later, Major Ballou did just that. He gave his life to save our country.

On the night before he jumped into the dark skies over Normandy on D-day, Colonel "Bull" Wolverton knelt with his men in prayer. "Dear God," he said, "we ask only this, that we—if we die, we must die—and we as men would die, without complaining, without pleading, and safe in the feeling that we have done our best for what we believed was right." We must do what is right.

Colonel Wolverton too died for us so bravely in battle.

Today we remember with overwhelming gratitude the more than 1 million American service members who have made the supreme sacrifice and laid down their lives for the good old U.S.A.

Generation after generation, America's warriors have left behind the comforts of home and family to face violence, evil, and death so that our families could know joy, goodness, and peace. We honor them so strongly.

Our heroes have lived through unthinkable nightmares so we could live the American dream. And the American dream is coming back again stronger than ever before, and you'll see that as the next few years evolve.

They have volunteered to give their last breaths to all of us so that we could breathe free. And today we know without any doubt in our hearts that after two and a half centuries, America stands tall because America's veterans stood so strong. And soon, our country will be stronger than ever before.

The American veteran has forged a legacy of gallantry and daring without parallel in human history.

In September 2009, Army Captain William Swenson was driving through the Afghan mountains when his convoy was ambushed by over 60 Taliban insurgents. He and his comrades were pinned down for hours without artillery or air support. A fellow soldier was shot in the chest, and Captain Swenson crossed an open field to aid his brother-in-arms.

People said, "Don't do it, Captain. Don't do it." He did it.

When the terrorists closed in around them and demanded their surrender, Captain Swenson threw a grenade at the enemy and rallied his men to break their advance. He then carried the wounded soldiers hundreds of yards to a rescue helicopter before charging back three times—back and forth, back and forth—into the fire to save the wounded and bring them home. Even after 7 hours of fighting, he refused to leave any man behind.

Retired Lieutenant Colonel William Swenson is here with us in Arlington. And for his actions that day, he proudly wears the congressional Medal of Honor. Colonel Swenson, thank you very much. Thank you very much. Please. Thank you. Thank you very much. The ultimate honor. Thank you.

Another person who shows the mettle of the American veteran is Dale Stovall. As an Air Force helicopter pilot in Vietnam, Captain Stovall was assigned to rescue a downed American airman deep in hostile territory.

Despite the extreme peril, Captain Stovall took off in his HH-53C helicopter and soon came under intense fire, forcing him to turn back. But the captain refused to abandon his mission. The next day, he willingly plunged back into the danger while taking fire from all directions. He didn't have a chance, he felt. But he said, "I've got to do it."

He rescued the downed American pilot who had been stranded on the ground for 23 days and brought him back home alive, completing the deepest rescue behind enemy lines in the entire Vietnam War.

For this and 11 other harrowing rescues—he was brave guy—Dale received the famous Air Force Cross and the Distinguished Flying Cross and two Silver Stars, making him the fourth most combat-decorated Air Force Academy grad of all time.

He retired as a brigadier general after 31 years of service. General Stovall, you are a legend. Please. Thank you. General Stovall. Thank you very much. Thank you.

You look good, General. *[Laughter]* You look—I wish I looked that good. *[Laughter]* You look good. Thank you very much, General.

America's warriors never quit, never surrender. They fight, fight, fight, and they win, win, win. That's what we do. We win battles.

As you know, today is not only Veterans Day, but it's my proclamation that we are now going to be saying and calling Victory Day for World War I—Victory Day—you know, I—I was

recently at an event, and I saw France was celebrating Victory Day, but we didn't. And I saw France was celebrating another Victory Day for World War II, and other countries were celebrating—they were all celebrating. We're the one that won the wars. [Laughter]

And I said, "From now on, we're going to say Victory Day for World War I and World War II," and we could do for plenty of other wars. But we'll start with those two. Maybe someday somebody else will add a couple of more, because we won a lot of good ones.

But when I see other countries celebrating Victory Day—I watched it. I watched U.K. I watched Russia. They were celebrating Victory Day, World War II. And I said, "We've got to have a Victory Day." Nobody even talked about it in our country.

But from now on, we are going to be celebrating Victory Day for World War I, for World War II, and, frankly, for everything else.

Under the Trump administration, we are restoring the pride and the winning spirit of the United States military. That's why we have officially renamed the Department of Defense back to the original name, Department of War.

And remember, we won World War I. We won World War II. We won everything in between. We won everything that came before. And then we brilliantly decided to change the name of this great thing that we all created together, and we became politically correct.

We don't like being politically correct, so we're not going to be politically correct anymore. From now on, when we fight a war, we only fight for one reason: to win. We fight to win.

And under my leadership, we're also fighting for the great veterans who have always, always been there for us and especially when we needed them and needed them most.

In 9 months, the Trump administration has cut the backlog of VA benefit claims in half. That's a big achievement. And Doug is going to get it down to zero.

During the Biden administration, the backlog exploded like we had never seen before. And I'm going to eliminate 100 percent of that backlog. We're moving at that pace. And already, we've processed more than 3 million backlog claims, the most of any year in the history of the VA.

We've added more than 1 million extra service hours across the VA centers. And we've opened 20 new facilities in 13 States, something that people said just not possible to do.

We also have brought back VA choice and VA accountability—taken away by the Biden administration—so that when you have to wait on line, you go out and you get yourself a doctor, we pay for the doctor if you have to wait. And the other thing is we fired thousands of people who didn't take care of our great veterans.

They were sadists. They were sick people. They were thieves. They were everything you want to name. And we got rid of over 9,000 of them. And then, when Biden came in, he hired them back, many of them. But we got rid of them, and I think we got rid of them permanently. We replaced them with people who love our veterans, not people who are sick people.

We're also confronting the challenge of veterans' homelessness. And earlier this year, I signed an order establishing the National Center for Warrior Independence to house up to 6,000 veterans in need. And we will not stop until we have ended the tragedy of homeless veterans once and for all.

I'd see in New York where people that came into our country illegally—they came in illegally—would be put up in hotels and veterans would be sitting on the sidewalk outside of that hotel where these other people are put in. And many of the people that came in were put in from prisons. They were murderers. They were drug dealers. They were people that we didn't want in

our country. They were staying in hotels—luxury hotels—and our veterans were sitting on the sidewalks watching them go in. I said, "That's never going to happen under this administration."

I also signed the VA Home Loan Program Reform Act because no veteran should be kicked out of their home for what they call a "late payment." It's not happening.

And I'm pleased report that since January the veterans unemployment rate has fallen by more than 26 percent. That's amazing. Worked hard on that.

And I also want to give a very special thanks to all of the veterans service organizations that work so hard. They're all represented here today. But they work so hard on behalf of our great veterans. And one of the heroes who reminds us of why we fight for those who served in uniform is Army Major and West Point grad, Jonathan Turnbull.

In 2019, Jonathan was conducting an operation in Syria when a suicide bomber approached and detonated his vest, leaving Jonathan gravely wounded. So, so badly wounded, they thought he had no chance. The injuries were so severe, the doctors gave him—everybody, they just looked—they all cried. They knew him, they loved him, and they were just crying. They said, "No chance."

He was resuscitated three separate times and underwent—he underwent 22 surgeries. But he refused to give up. He wanted to live. He loved this country. He loved his family. He wanted to live. He was going through hell.

I visited Jonathan at Walter Reed in 2020. I remember it so well. And today I'm delighted to say that Jonathan is not only alive, he is here with us, back on his feet and living a great life alongside his beautiful wife Samantha and their three incredible children. Jonathan, Samantha, please. God bless you. God bless you. Thank you.

Where are you? There he is. There he is. Beautiful. Thank you very much. Thank you. You're a tough guy. You're a tough one. Nobody could have gone through what you went through. He is doing good, isn't he? Huh, Samantha? Thank you very much, both.

And in conclusion, from the very beginning of our country, our great American flag has always been shielded and protected by a special cast of citizen who has stepped forward to safeguard liberty's cause.

When danger came, when duty called, when Almighty God asked who had the will and the strength to defend the land of the free, each and every American veteran stood up and said: "Here I am. Send me. Here I am."

They've come from every corner of this nation, from the cornfields of Iowa to the hills and valleys of California, from the steel towns of Pennsylvania to the vast plains of Texas, from the banks of the mighty Mississippi to the five boroughs of New York City with selfless commitment and unyielding conviction.

They made themselves America's ramparts and became the shield between our homeland and those who would do us harm with everything they had.

They did one thing above all else: They put America first.

On the decks of destroyers, beneath the thunder of cannon fire, and the cockpits of our beautiful B-2 bombers—aren't they beautiful?—now we respect them so much, what a job they did—that, in an instant, completely obliterated Iran's nuclear capability of which we have just ordered, I have say, many more of the updated versions of that incredible piece of art.

They defended the American republic, dispensed American justice, crushed the enemies of freedom, and vanquished the forces of wickedness and evil. That's what we've been doing.

Because of what every veteran has done today, the flame of liberty shines bright, the people of our nation sleep safe, the American dream surges forward, and our magnificent destiny stands more splendid and glorious than ever before.

So I want to say thank you once again to every American veteran. You are very, very special people and always in our heart. And thank you very much. And God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

Thank you very much. Thank you, everybody. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:59 a.m. in the Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Senate Majority Leader John R. Thune; and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. J. Daniel Caine, USAF. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on November 14.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Veterans Day ceremony in Arlington, VA.

*Locations:* Arlington, VA.

*Names:* Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bondi, Pamela J.; Burgum, Douglas J.; Caine, J. Daniel; Chavez-DeRemer, Lori M.; Collins, Douglas A.; Gabbard, Tulsi; Greer, Jamieson L.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Johnson, J. Michael; McMahon, Linda E.; Stovall, Dale E.; Swenson, William D.; Thune, John R.; Turnbull, Jonathan; Turnbull, Samantha; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Vought, Russell T.; Wright, Christopher A.

*Subjects:* Attorney General; Department of Defense, renaming as "Department of War"; Federal Government, appropriations legislation; Illegal immigration; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Joint Chiefs of Staff; Medal of Honor; Office of Management and Budget; Office of the Director of National Intelligence; Oil and natural gas, domestic production; Secretary of Education; Secretary of Energy; Secretary of Labor; Secretary of the Interior; Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Secretary of War; Senate majority leader; Speaker of the House of Representatives; Tariffs; U.S. servicemembers, service and dedication; U.S. Trade Representative; Veterans benefits; Veterans Day; Veterans, health and medical care; Veterans, service and dedication; Vice President; Victory Day for World War I; Victory Day for World War II; Virginia, President's visit.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD202501112.