Veterans' Day Speech

On the 11th hour…of the 11th day…of the 11th month…the fighting of World War I ended in 1918.

Due to the conclusion of "the War to end all Wars," November 11th became a universally recognized day of celebration.

The day was originally declared "Armistice Day" 8 years after the end of World War I and honored *only* veterans of that war. Then in 1954, after World War II and the Korean War, it was renamed "Veterans' Day" to honor all veterans who served America in war and defended democracy.

So, today we honor all of our veterans … who unselfishly placed *their* lives on the line for *our* freedom.

Those men and women were ordinary people… until they heard the call of duty and answered it. They left their families … their homes … and their lives … not for recognition or fame or even the honor we bestow upon them today. They fought to protect our country … to maintain our way of life.

As we honor our veterans and remember their great deeds, let us also salute those who are currently fighting for our freedom.

The War on Terrorism has helped us all realize how truly unique the American way of life is. The freedom we enjoy is extremely special, and that is why we must defend it.

So, now is the time to not only honor those have fought or are fighting for our freedom…it is also the time for each of us to take part in protecting it.

The defense of freedom is not just for those in the military; each of us shares that duty and that responsibility.

We don't have to join the army or the navy or any other organization of defense to actively defend our way of life. We can protect our freedom simply by maintaining it here in America.

If we want to preserve our freedoms, we must put them into action – for example, by voting in elections or speaking out against injustices. We must also ensure that everyone feels the benefits of freedom. And we can do that by volunteering in our communities or teaching our children what it really means to be an American.

Veterans' Day isn't just a day for veterans - it's a day for all Americans. It's a day to remember why they were fighting and a day for all of us to begin our journey of protecting our freedom and the freedom of many future generations.

Thank you for honoring our veterans today. Let us walk toward tomorrow still honoring them…by living in the freedom they protected.