



*Remarks by Brigadier General Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.,  
Commander, Mississippi Valley Division,  
at the Veterans Day Celebration,  
Vicksburg Rose Garden, 11 Nov 00, 11:a.m.*

Greetings and amenities . . .

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Each year, the nation sets aside November 11 as a day to honor the heroism and sacrifice of America's soldiers, past and present. Veterans Day is the time we recall the courageous legacy of soldiers who fought in our nation's wars, from the War of Independence to the Persian Gulf. It is also a moment for us to pause and express our appreciation for the fierce dedication of the many soldiers who serve in our ranks today.

Since our country's birth, American soldiers have answered the call of duty with honor and dauntless courage. From the snows of Valley Forge to the slopes of Little Round Top, from the forests of Meuse-Argonne, to the beaches of Normandy, from the frozen hills of the Chosun Reservoir to the burning sands of Kuwait, the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces have demonstrated their invincible spirit and their love of freedom and human dignity.

Today, these men and women are trusted warriors who save lives, uphold the values that made America great, and defend the principles of democracy.

At this very hour, thousands of soldiers are preserving the fragile peace in Korea and helping quell ethnic violence and rebuild civil society in the Balkans. They support anti-drug efforts in Latin America, provide humanitarian demining assistance to the nations of Africa, and engage in confidence-building exercises with former Warsaw Pact states of Eastern Europe.

They are carrying on a legacy of valor and service that soldiers before them established through the long years of our nation's history. Because of the tradition of excellence established by their predecessors before them, soldiers today are able to face each challenge, accept every danger, and overcome all obstacles with confidence and unparalleled dedication.

They are a shining example of all that is best in America: They are the vessel that embodies our nation's virtues; they are the strong right arm that shields our freedoms; and they are the mortar that helps bind our nation together in common purpose.

We cherish and honor our veterans and serving soldiers. We remember that they are the American heroes who answered the nation's call, doing the hard work of preserving the peace and freedom all Americans enjoy, and bringing hope and justice to people throughout the world. Whatever achievements our nation has attained, whatever bounty we have been granted, we owe to the men and women who have stood guard at the front lines of our Republic.

And so on this day of reflection, a grateful nation thanks our veterans -- young and old, those yet living and those who fell on foreign battlefields or are buried in the hallowed ground of cemeteries across our land -- for all they have done and continue to do for the citizens of our great country.