



*This document is intended to provide some ideas that may be helpful in telling the Air & Space Forces story. Use any or all of it, and feel free to improve it. Please contact the POC with updates and suggestions.*

Topic/Title: **Memorial Day Speech – Update 2026**

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Memorial Day is a time for us to remember and honor the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation. Their courage, sacrifice, and selflessness are embedded into the fabric of our history, reminding us of the true cost of freedom. We also recognize the families they left behind. Their grief and loss are profound, but their loved ones' bravery will forever be a source of inspiration to us all.

Throughout our history, our country has faced many challenges, and in each of those moments, there have been heroes who stepped forward to defend our way of life. From the battlefields of the American Revolution to the deserts of the Middle East, and across the Pacific, American soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and now space guardians have answered the call of duty with courage, commitment, and unwavering resolve.

Few of these men and women set out to be heroes. Most were ordinary Americans who volunteered to serve when they were needed and responded in extraordinary ways when they were called. They came from different places and joined for different reasons, but whatever their roles they knew one true thing: that they made a difference. As the poet said, in a country where we have no kings and queens, these men and women are the true nobility of our nation.

Since the end of the war in Vietnam we have relied on an all-volunteer force and it has served our nation superbly. However, today fewer and fewer of our citizens and the youth of our nation know anything about the military or have ever met anyone who served, and many have no idea of what we do or why it's important. We, all of us, can help.

My call to action for you today is simple:

- **If you're a veteran**, Tell your Story. Look for opportunities to tell the story of what influenced you and what you learned from service, and why service is important, and why we as citizens should serve our country.
- **If you know a veteran**, talk to them and find out why they served and what they learned, and consider how you can help inspire service
- **Be a mentor**. I often hear from young people that their entire life's trajectory was changed by one conversation or one encounter with a mentor who pointed them toward a path of purpose and service. As one of our senior officials said a while ago "military service is something many of our young people want and would thrive in; they just don't know it". We don't have to be recruiters; we can just be citizen advocates who inspire service.



## AIMS TOOLBOX

Let us remember the fallen, honor their memory, and renew our commitment to the principles they died defending. And let us always strive to be worthy of the sacrifices they made on our behalf, answer the call, and join the ranks of those who keep us free.

Never forget their courage. Never forget their sacrifice. And never forget that while freedom is a gift to us, it was never free for them.

Thank you, and may God bless America.