



This document is intended to provide some thoughts 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: **Veterans Day Speech**

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Today we gather to recognize and express our gratitude to the brave men and women who have served our country with honor, courage, and sacrifice. Today, we pay tribute to those who have worn the cloth of our nation and who have defended the ideals and freedoms that our forefathers so eloquently recorded in our founding documents.

Because of the dedication and service of our veterans, we enjoy the freedoms and liberties that define our way of life. They fought to protect our democracy, uphold our constitution, and safeguard the rights and freedoms of all Americans. Their selflessness and devotion to duty inspire us all.

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 the time came. They came from different places and joined for different reasons, but whatever their role they know 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.



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We must honor our commitment to all our veterans by providing access to quality healthcare, education, employment opportunities, and other essential services. It is our duty as a grateful nation to stand by our veterans and their families, just as they have stood by us.

And most important, those of us who are veterans need to tell our stories so that new generations of Americans will be inspired to serve their country and in so doing, *make a difference*.

To all our veterans, both past and present, we say thank you. Thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and your unwavering commitment to our country. May we never forget your bravery, your valor, and your profound contributions to the defense of our nation.