

The original documents are located in Box D28, folder “Veterans Day Ceremonies Sponsored by the 40 and 8, Grand Rapids, MI, November 11, 1969” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. The Council donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

VETERANS DAY CEREMONIES, NOV. 11, 1969, GRAND RAPIDS,
SPONSORED BY THE 40 & 8.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

WE ARE GATHERED HERE IN OBSERVANCE OF VETERANS
DAY -- ARMISTICE DAY FOR MOST OF THE 51 YEARS SINCE NOVEMBER 11,
1918.

ALTHOUGH MANY AMERICANS DO NOT MARK THIS DAY WITH
ANY GREAT FANFARE, VETERANS DAY IS ONE OF OUR GREAT NATIONAL
HOLIDAYS. IT IS THE DAY WHEN WE QUIETLY AND SOLEMNLY REMEMBER

VETERANS DAY/2

AND SALUTE THIS NATION'S VETERANS AND OUR WAR DEAD, WHATEVER WAR THEY MAY HAVE FOUGHT IN.

VETERANS DAY IS A GREAT NATIONAL HOLIDAY, TOO, BECAUSE IN SALUTING OUR VETERANS AND OUR WAR DEAD WE ALSO TAKE NOTE OF OUR GREAT HERITAGE OF FREEDOM.

IT IS NEARLY 200 YEARS SINCE OUR COUNTRY PROCLAIMED ITSELF A FREE NATION. IN THAT TIME SPAN AMERICANS HAVE FOUGHT MANY WARS. AND ALWAYS WE FOUGHT FOR WHAT WE THOUGHT TO BE RIGHT. ALWAYS WE HAVE SOUGHT TO END WARS --

VETERANS DAY/3

IF FIGHT THEM WE MUST -- BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT BEEN THE AGGRESSOR. AND SO IT IS THAT TODAY, IN PURSUING PEACE IN THE TRAGIC LAND CALLED VIETNAM, WE SEEK TO END WAR ON TERMS THAT ARE REASONABLE AND JUST AND WILL NOT DESECRATE THE MEMORIES OF THOSE WHO HAVE DIED IN THAT FARAWAY COUNTRY.

THIS IS ONE OF THE THOUGHTS I WANT TO LEAVE WITH YOU AS WE JOIN IN SALUTING THE NATION'S VETERANS ON THIS DAY SET ASIDE IN THEIR HONOR.

WE ARE SALUTING TODAY MEN WHO FOUGHT FOR FREEDOM --

VETERANS DAY/4

AND MEN WHO DIED FOR FREEDOM'S CAUSE.

I DARE TO SAY THIS EVEN THOUGH WE NOW ARE LIVING IN A WORLD WHEN SOME AMERICANS SNEER AT PATRIOTISM AND RIDICULE THOSE WHO SPEAK OF DEFENDING FREEDOM. I DO NOT CONDEMN THOSE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES TOO ENLIGHTENED TO FEEL A DEEP DEVOTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF AMERICANISM OR THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF OUR CAUSE. I FEEL SORRY FOR THEM.

I FEEL SORRY FOR THEM BECAUSE TO ME AMERICA MEANS THE SAME THINGS IT MEANT TO PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT --

VETERANS DAY/5

COURAGE, HONOR, JUSTICE, TRUTH, SINCERITY AND HARDIHOOD. THESE ARE THE VIRTUES THAT MADE AMERICA. AND AS TEDDY ROOSEVELT SAID, AMONG THE THINGS THAT WILL DESTROY AMERICA IS PEACE AT ANY PRICE.

CITIZENS OF THIS COUNTRY HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO DISSENT FROM A COURSE THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN. BUT I WOULD HOPE THEY WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE IN THEIR DISSENT. IT IS NOT CONSTRUCTIVE TO URGE PEACE THROUGH CAPITULATION.

IS PATRIOTISM AN UNFASHIONABLE WORD TODAY? I USE

VETERANS DAY/6

IT WITHOUT APOLOGY. I AM PROUD THAT I FEEL A STIRRING DEEP WITHIN ME WHENEVER I SEE MY COUNTRY'S FLAG. AND I FEEL SURE THAT THE VETERANS WE HONOR HERE TODAY EXPERIENCE THAT SAME TUG OF EMOTION WHENEVER THEY LOOK AT THE STARS AND STRIPES.

IF WE TRULY LOVE AMERICA, WE MUST SHOW THAT WE CARE ABOUT FREEDOM.

WE WHO WERE BORN AMERICANS SOMETIMES FORGET THE TRUE MEANING OF FREEDOM AND WHAT A GREAT PRIVILEGE IT IS TO BE AN AMERICAN.

VETERANS DAY/7

I RECENTLY TALKED WITH A MAN WHO EMIGRATED TO THIS COUNTRY IN 1947 WITH JUST \$120 IN HIS POCKET. BY DINT OF GREAT PERSONAL ABILITY AND HARD WORK, THIS MAN HAS MADE A FORTUNE. TODAY HE GOES ABOUT OUR COUNTRY SELLING AMERICA -- BECAUSE HE KNOWS WHAT PRECIOUS GIFTS FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY ARE, THE GIFTS THAT AMERICA BESTOWS ON EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US. HE KNOWS THAT IF WE WHO WERE BORN IN AMERICA HAD EVER EXPERIENCED LIFE IN A LAND WHERE TOTALITARIANISM HAD EXTINGUISHED THE LAMP OF FREEDOM WE WOULD DROP DOWN ON OUR

VETERANS DAY/8

KNEES AND KISS THE GROUND WE NOW STAND UPON.

ALL OF US, ALONG WITH OUR VETERANS, SHOULD PROUDLY ANNOUNCE OUR AMERICANISM TO ALL THE WORLD -- FOR WHEN WE DO SO WE SPEAK OF THE GREATEST SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT EVER CREATED, THE FREEST, THE ONE MOST COMPLETELY BASED ON THE SOVEREIGN WILL OF THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES.

I BELIEVE IN AMERICANISM AND I BELIEVE IN PATRIOTISM.

I BELIEVE IN THE KIND OF PATRIOTISM THAT SUSTAINS

VETERANS DAY/9

OUR FIGHTING MEN IN VIETNAM -- THE KIND OF PATRIOTISM WHICH
RECOGNIZES BOTH OUR STRENGTHS AND OUR WEAKNESSES, WHAT WE
ARE AS A NATION AND A PEOPLE, AND WHAT WE ARE CAPABLE OF
BECOMING.

THIS IS THE KIND OF PATRIOTISM WE CELEBRATE WHEN
WE PAY TRIBUTE TO OUR VETERANS AND OUR WAR DEAD ON THIS
SOLEMN NATIONAL HOLIDAY.

LET US BE PROUD OF THESE MEN -- THE LIVING AND
THE DEAD -- AND OF WHAT THE AMERICAN SPIRIT HAS ACCOMPLISHED.

VETERANS DAY/10

**AND LET US BE WORTHY OF THE GLORIES OF OUR
HERITAGE -- AND THE PROMISE OF OUR FUTURE.**

#

CARDS

Congress of the United States

Office of the Minority Leader

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

GRAND RAPIDS,

NOV. 11, 1969

Herold R. Ford
M.C.

TUESDAY

VETERANS DAY CEREMONIES

SPONSORED BY 40 E' 8.



Remarks by Rep. Gerald R. Ford at Veterans Day ceremonies, Nov. 11, 1969, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, sponsored by the 40 & 8.

Ladies and gentlemen:

We are gathered here in observance of Veterans Day -- Armistice Day for most of the 51 years since November 11, 1918.

Although many Americans do not mark this day with any great fanfare, Veterans Day is one of our great national holidays. It is the day when we quietly and solemnly remember and salute this Nation's veterans and our war dead, whatever war they may have fought in.

Veterans Day is a great national holiday, too, because in saluting our veterans and our war dead we also take note of our great heritage of freedom.

It is nearly 200 years since our country proclaimed itself a Free Nation. In that time span Americans have fought many wars. And always we fought for what we thought to be right. Always we have sought to end wars -- if fight them we must -- because the United States has not been the aggressor. And so it is that today, in pursuing peace in the tragic land called Vietnam, we seek to end war on terms that are reasonable and just and will not desecrate the memories of those who have died in that faraway country.

This is one of the thoughts I want to leave with you as we join in saluting the Nation's veterans on this day set aside in their honor.

We are saluting today men who fought for freedom--and men who died in freedom's cause.

I dare to say this even though we now are living in a world when some Americans sneer at patriotism and ridicule those who speak of defending freedom. I do not condemn those who consider themselves too enlightened to feel a deep devotion to the principles of Americanism or the righteousness of our cause. I feel sorry for them.

I feel sorry for them because to me America means the same things it meant to President Theodore Roosevelt -- Courage, Honor, Justice, Truth, Sincerity and Hardihood. These are the virtues that made America. And as Teddy Roosevelt said, among the things that will destroy America is peace at any price.

Citizens of this country have every right to dissent from a course that their Government has taken. But I would hope they would be constructive in their dissent. It is not constructive to urge peace through capitulation.

(more)

Is patriotism an unfashionable word today? I use it without apology. I am proud that I feel a stirring deep within me whenever I see my country's Flag. And I feel sure that the veterans we honor here today experience that same tug of emotion whenever they look at the Stars and Stripes.

If we truly love America, we must show that we care about freedom.

We who were born Americans sometimes forget the true meaning of freedom and what a great privilege it is to be an American.

I recently talked with a man who emigrated to this country in 1947 with just \$120 in his pocket. By dint of great personal ability and hard work, this man has made a fortune. Today he goes about our country selling America -- because he knows what precious gifts freedom and opportunity are, the gifts that America bestows on each and every one of us. He knows that if we who were born in America had ever experienced life in a land where totalitarianism had extinguished the lamp of freedom we would drop down on our knees and kiss the ground we now stand upon.

All of us, along with our veterans, should proudly announce our Americanism to all the world -- for when we do so we speak of the greatest system of government ever created, the freest, the ~~most~~ most completely based on the sovereign will of the people themselves.

I believe in Americanism and I believe in patriotism.

I believe in the kind of patriotism that sustains our fighting men in Vietnam -- the kind of patriotism which recognizes both our strengths and our weaknesses, what we are as a Nation and a people, and what we are capable of becoming.

This is the kind of patriotism we celebrate when we pay tribute to our veterans and our war dead on this solemn national holiday.

Let us be proud of these men -- the living and the dead -- and of what the American spirit has accomplished.

And let us be worthy of the glories of our heritage -- and the promise of our future.

###