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## **BYRD PAYS TRIBUTE TO OUR NATION'S VETERANS**

### **A VETERANS DAY MESSAGE**

WASHINGTON, DC – Senator Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., paid tribute to our nation's veterans during a speech on the Senate floor on November 8. Senator Byrd's remarks follow:

“Mr. President, this Sunday, November 11, will be Veterans Day. On this Sunday, our Nation will honor all veterans of all wars. It will be a day, this Sunday, to thank every man and every woman who wears or who has ever worn the uniform of one of the U.S. Armed Forces.

“It will be a day to remember and to honor the dedication, the professionalism, and the courage of every individual who has been prepared to defend our people, our Nation, and our Constitution by taking up arms against our enemies.

“On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, 89 years ago, in the dark year of war that was 1918, the armistice began.

“Tired troops laid down their weapons against muddy trench walls, weary gunners lowered their sights, the thundering cannons fell silent, and the fragile calm of peace was broken only by the crisis of celebration and the prayers of Thanksgiving. The United States had taken part in the largest war that history had ever witnessed, and it was finally over.

“The carnage of World War I was of a scope and scale that shattered the soul. Battles took place across the globe and on the seas. It was the first war to take to the skies, the first war to see chemical weapons used on a large scale, the first war to see tanks and other heavy armored weapons employed. Pandemics of influenza had swept the globe on the winds of war, extending the suffering to new areas and into civilian arenas, taking my mother to her grave.

“World War I caused the disintegration of four vast empires: the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the German Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Russian Empire. In just over 4 short years, more than 20 million people were killed and more than 20 million people were casualties of that war. It was truly the cataclysmic end of the existing world order. But November 11, then called Armistice Day, became forever a day to be grateful for peace, thankful for democracy, and thankful for the men and the women who had done so much to preserve both.

“People called World War I the Great War. They called it the War to End All Wars. Many people believed that no war could have been worse. But, alas, World War I was neither the greatest war in terms of size and complexity, nor was it the war to end all wars. Since World War I, the United States has taken part in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam conflict, the first Persian Gulf conflict, and now the second Persian Gulf conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. troops have also come under fire in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Somalia. Millions more American men and women in uniform have joined with their battle-hardened brethren from World War I to share in the honored

title of ``veteran." In 1947, the November 11 Armistice Day celebrations were renamed 'Veterans Day' to honor all veterans of all wars.

“This Veterans Day, with the Nation's men and women in uniform again in harm's way, the Nation will again mark with a moment of silence the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. In that silence, during that peaceful moment, we shall send our love, our prayers, and our thoughts to the men and the women who will know no peace in the dust and heat of battle. We will send wishes of strength, of courage, and of luck. We will send our love, we will send our prayers, and we will send our thoughts to their families as well, and we will wish for them the strength to endure the long separation and the strain of worrying about their soldier. In that peaceful moment, we shall give thanks to all who serve and all who have served.”

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