

Honoring Heroism and Sacrifice: President John F. Kennedy's Veterans Day Address at Arlington National Cemetery, 1961



On November 11, 1961, President John F. Kennedy delivered a poignant Veterans Day address at Arlington National Cemetery, reflecting on the sacrifices of American servicemen through history and the solemn responsibilities borne by the nation to remember and honor them. His remarks remind us not only of loss but of the courage and enduring spirit that have shaped the United States. Remarks at the Veterans Day Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery
November 11, 1961

By President John F. Kennedy
General Gavan, Mr. Gleason, members of the military forces, veterans, fellow Americans:

Today we are here to celebrate and to honor and to commemorate the dead and the living, the young men who in every war since this country began have given testimony to their loyalty to their country and their own great courage.

I do not believe that any nation in the history of the world has buried its soldiers farther from its native soil than we Americans—or buried them closer to the towns in which they grew up.

We celebrate this Veterans Day for a very few minutes, a few seconds of silence and then this country's life goes on. But I think it most appropriate that we recall on this occasion, and on every other moment when we are faced with great responsi-

bilities, the contribution and the sacrifice which so many men and their families have made in order to permit this country to now occupy its present position of responsibility and freedom, and in order to permit us to gather here together.

Bruce Catton, after totaling the casualties which took place in the battle of Antietam, not so very far from this cemetery, when he looked at statistics which showed that in the short space of a few minutes whole regiments lost 50 to 75 percent of their numbers, then wrote that life perhaps isn't the most precious gift of all, that men died for the possession of a few feet of a corn field or a rocky hill, or for almost nothing at all. But in a very larger sense, they died that this country might be permitted to go on, and that it might permit to be fulfilled the great hopes of its founders.

And to the dead here in this cemetery we say:

They are the race —
They are the race immortal,
Whose beams make broad
The common light of day!
Though Time may dim,
Though Death has barred their portal,
These we salute,
Which nameless passed away.

THANK YOU, VETERANS!

★ **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11** ★
11AM – 8PM

In honor of your service, we invite all Veterans and active-duty military to enjoy a free meal on Veterans Day.

Join us at Owensboro Racing & Gaming or Ellis Park Racing & Gaming as we say thank you for your courage, dedication, and sacrifice.

**HOMETOWN
HEROES** ★ ★ ★

