



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' ~ for the week of November 1, 2021 ~ 'Never tire in honoring America's heroes'

THOMAS F. O'MARA November 8, 2021

| ISSUE: **VETERANS DAY**



We proudly continue to honor our obligation and responsibility to salute the contributions and the sacrifices of our military men and women, living and deceased, past and present and future. We can never tire in honoring these heroes.

Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature, as well as on legislative actions, local initiatives, state programs and policies, and more. Stop back every Monday for Senator O'Mara's latest column...

This week, **"Never tire in honoring America's heroes"**

This week's Veterans Day observance could not arrive at a more important time for our nation -- as a reminder and as a reflection.

If there is a single national day of honor on the calendar that can and should serve to unite us, it's this one.

Veterans Day offers a chance to pause to remember the fundamental greatness of the United States of America and those who have made it so, and then to keep pushing forward – pushing forward to find solid ground again during a time that has upended so many lives in so many ways, and to look ahead to a stronger and safer future.

In that spirit, then, I will take this opportunity to thank all of the voters across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions who took the time and made the effort to vote in the 2021 elections -- remembering always that our nation's veterans, above all, exemplify service and sacrifice in the name of protecting and carrying on America's fundamental freedoms and cherished rights, including the right to vote.

In other words, this recollection is important at this moment.

According to history.com, "Veterans Day originated as 'Armistice Day' on Nov. 11, 1919, the first anniversary of the end of World War I. Congress passed a resolution in 1926 for an annual observance, and Nov. 11 became a national holiday beginning in 1938...Veterans Day pays tribute to all American veterans—living or dead—but especially gives thanks to living veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime."

On that long-ago November 11, 1919, in the aftermath of the First World War, then-President Woodrow Wilson said that it should be a day "filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory."

Across the generations ever since, eloquent words have been delivered on the importance of saluting America's veterans.

Americans have heard President Dwight D. Eisenhower say, "In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire

citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose.”

On November 11, 1961, at Arlington National Cemetery, President John F. Kennedy said that “these quiet grounds, this Cemetery and others like it all around the world, remind us with pride of our obligation and our opportunity.”

President Ronald Reagan, offering words to commemorate the 40th anniversary of D-Day on June 6, 1984, said, “We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we may always be free.”

Veterans Day offers the chance every November to reaffirm these sentiments of common purpose, pride, patriotism, responsibility, opportunity, and freedom.

In 2005, the New York State Senate established an online Veterans’ Hall of Fame which, including this year, pays tribute to upwards of 500 veterans from every corner of the state. The Hall of Fame recognizes New York veterans for their service in the United States Armed Forces and their civilian accomplishments at home.

Later this week, on Veterans Day, Thursday, November 11, I will proudly have the opportunity to induct Richard T. “Dick” Gillespie of Penn Yan, a veteran of World War II, into the Hall. A link to Thursday’s virtual Hall of Fame ceremony, which will begin at Noon, will be available on my Senate website, www.omara.nysenate.gov, where you will also be able to find out more about Dick Gillespie and his remarkable service, as well as links to past Hall of Fame veterans, including the seven that I have had the privilege to induct.

Senators representing every region of New York welcome this opportunity to salute these lives of service and love of country – it is an important addition to the state’s reflection on Veterans Day.

In fact, it is striking to reflect on the landmarks around us every day, standing as reminders of the guiding principles and underlying strengths of our nation: city, town and village halls, county courthouses, churches, schools, police and fire stations, local public libraries, and so many more.

These American places still speak to America’s endurance as the world’s leading democracy.

We carry it on by honoring the sacrifices and the victories of our soldiers – past, present, and future. We reaffirm our pride in this nation’s servicemen and servicewomen and, of course, we turn our thoughts and prayers to all of the soldiers whom we have lost from here at home, and their families and loved ones.

The freedoms we cherish have been hard-won by the soldiers of previous generations and by those of this generation who have continued to serve and make the ultimate sacrifice.

They are true American heroes.

We are grateful to them and we honor their service.

Sacrifice is the fundamental truth of Veterans Day. It inspires our deepest faith, gratitude, and respect.

On Veterans Day, we continue to remember in common purpose.

We proudly continue to honor our obligation and responsibility to salute the contributions and the sacrifices of our military men and women, living and deceased, past and present and future.

We can never tire in honoring these heroes.

On Veterans Day, we carry on this essential observance of the United States of America.

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