



President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs Judiciary Committee paper H.R. 7786, June 1, 1954. This ceremony changed Armistice Day to Veterans Day. (U.S. Army photo by DMA Social Media)

NCOs Talk About the Meaning of Veterans Day

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Although World War I officially ended June 28, 1919, the fighting had stopped several months earlier, when an armistice between the Allied Powers and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

President Woodrow Wilson originally declared Nov. 11 as Armistice Day, but in 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed legislation changing the name to Veterans Day – a day to honor American Veterans of all wars.

Many of our nation's Veterans have become seasoned warriors over time, some with multiple deployments under their belts. Many have made the military their way of life. Among them is retired Sgt. Maj. Joseph Vargo, who, after more than 28 years in the Army and serving in Desert Storm, the Balkans and with embedded forces in Iraq, now works in staff and faculty development at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

“Joining the Army was the best thing that could have

happened to me,” said Vargo, who grew up in a military home, playing “Soldier” with the neighborhood kids. “I went combat arms, and I never looked back. It helped me to grow up, become a man, take responsibility. I appreciated the discipline and the guidance it provided, because it molded me into the person I am today.”

Vargo’s father was drafted during the Korean War, all of his uncles also served, and his older brother lost his life in the line of duty. His family has made serving in the Army their legacy, and it is one that makes him proud, he said. He is proud to be the first in his family to be promoted to sergeant major, and the first to retire from the Army, but what he is most proud of, he said, is that his daughter now serves in the Army as well, as an ICU nurse.

“The last great thing I got to do was pass the torch to my daughter before I retired,” he said. “I gave her her first salute as she commissioned.

“Veterans day really brings it home. At the end of the day, it’s what makes our nation great – that we have people who are willing to serve their country with honor



Members of the Fort Knox Sergeant Audie Murphy Club participate in a Veteran’s Day parade in downtown Louisville, Ky., Nov. 9, 2018. (U.S. Army photo by Renee Rhodes)

and distinction.”

Some, like Vargo, have a legacy of service in their family. Still others bravely blaze a new trail and join the military seeking an opportunity to test themselves and improve their lives. Sgt. Charles Roseboro, a combat engineer with the 10th Brigade Engineer Battalion, from Charlotte, N.C., is the first in his family to ever serve in the military. As one of six, Roseboro wanted to set a good example for his younger siblings.

“One of the biggest reasons I joined the military is because I just felt like I was stuck in time. Sometimes you need to be taken out of your element to actually work on yourself,” Roseboro said. “By serving in the Army, my family can see me doing something a little different than the norm. It’s good for my brothers and sisters to see. There are six of us; we range in age from 14 to 25.”

The significance of Veterans Day was clear to this young Soldier.

“Veteran’s Day is a day that we can sit back and think of the people who have gone overseas, and fought wars for many decades for our country, and in some cases died — much thanks to those before me,” Roseboro said.

Becoming a better man for his family and country is important.

“I’ve learned a lot about different cultures, and how people live, and how people value certain things in life,” said Roseboro. “When I was in Afghanistan, I would always see this



10th Mountain Division, Command Sgt. Maj. Samuel Roark (left), speaks with a member of the community following a memorial ceremony hosted by volunteers from the Association of the United States Army and American Legion Post 1757 in front of The Moving Wall display, a traveling half size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Sackets Harbor, N.Y., Aug. 24, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Paige Behringer)



Spc. Judy Rosa and Sgt. Charles Roseboro perform preventive maintenance checks and services during Exercise Combined Resolve V at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, Nov. 7, 2015. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of 301st Public Affairs Detachment)

guy at 7:30 in the morning, herding his sheep from one field to another to keep them healthy and give them exercise. I felt like that was something so good, but also so disciplined, because he did it at the same time every morning. I noticed the dedication he had for his family. I am a different person since I joined the Army; 360 turnaround. I have started a college degree, and I have become more professional.”

Along with military benefits and the potential for personal and professional growth come sacrifices most Americans will never experience. President Barack Obama spoke of the sacrifices of our Veterans and their families in his 2015 Veterans Day proclamation, “On Veterans Day, we reflect on the immeasurable burdens borne

by so few in the name of so many, and we rededicate ourselves to supporting those who have worn America’s uniform and the families who stand alongside them.”

Most Soldiers find their own means of coping with the necessary sacrifices. Roseboro stays focused on his mission and big picture outcomes.

“The greatest sacrifices I make being in the military are being away from my 9-month-old son and being away from my family,” Roseboro said. “What kind of evens me out is knowing that right now I am in a state of bettering myself. At a certain point, when it is time for me to hang up my uniform, I have done the best I can to provide for my family and show them a better route in life.”

Roseboro touted the benefits of military service and encouraged others to follow his lead.

“I would tell any young woman or man considering joining the Army; Do it!” Roseboro said. “Go get a college education. There are so many benefits that come with the military; go travel the world. You don’t have to do 20 years, you can just do one contract. There are so many benefits as far as the G.I. Bill. You will always be a Soldier. So, once you get out and you’re looking for a job as a civilian, you’ll network with those battle buddies and they can help you out.”

Obama’s proclamation highlighted the importance of caring for our Veterans as they return home.

“Our true strength as a Nation is measured by how we take care of our Veterans when they return home,” Obama said. His proclamation also focused on understanding and supporting our nation’s Veterans.

“Our Veterans left everything they knew and loved and served with exemplary dedication and courage so we could all know a safer America and a more just world. They have been tested in ways the rest of us may never fully understand, and it is our duty to fulfill our sacred obligation to our veterans and their families. On Veterans Day, and every day, let us show them the extraordinary gratitude they so rightly deserve, and let us recommit to pledging our full support for them in all they do.” ■

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