

Armed Forces Day 2018: A time to reflect on freedom, and those who defend it

‘America is blessed to have true heroes among us’

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Our nation’s birth and survival has fallen upon the shoulders of patriotic men and women who have put everything on the line to keep our country free. Our servicemen and women recognize that only at great cost can the concept of liberty and justice become a reality, and only with great sacrifice can freedom prevail.

Armed Forces Day was created in 1949 to honor those who wear the uniform of our nation. It is an opportunity to express our gratitude to selfless patriots who raise their right hands when most don’t. It’s a day to recognize our proud soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, and thank them for protecting the freedoms we cherish. It is also a chance to remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our great nation.

In his 1950 proclamation, President Harry S. Truman called on all Americans to mark Armed Forces Day by recognizing “the skill, gallantry, and uncompromising devotion to duty characteristic of the armed forces in the carrying out of their missions.”

Those of us who have worn the uniform understand all too well the struggles and sacrifices that military service requires, and what a great responsibility it is. From defending our country in times of peril to helping on the home front in times of peace, being a steadfast protector of our great nation is truly the highest honor.

As veterans, we’ve seen firsthand the costly price of freedom. Our members know the commitment and determination it takes to protect this great nation, and to help bring peace and prosperity across the globe. Deployed to all corners of the Earth, our armed forces continue to selflessly leave their families and loved ones behind to go wherever and whenever needed – without hesitation.

Armed Forces Day is a time for all Americans to reflect on the freedoms we have today, and

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to think about the brave service members who for centuries have provided our country with the very security which makes those freedoms possible.

Through the years, it has been the powerful force of our military men and women tenaciously defending and preserving our way of life who have defined what it means to be courageous – and today we thank our military for everything they have and continue to do. America is blessed to have true heroes among us.

This op-ed was written by VFW National Commander Keith Harman, and was originally featured on [Military Times](#).