

**VETERAN'S DAY SPEECH
MAYOR JASON F. CILENTO
NOVEMBER 11, 2022**

Hello, welcome, and thank you for attending today's Veterans Day ceremony. I am privileged to be here with you on the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month to honor our nation's service members and to reflect on the great sacrifices they made to protect our freedoms.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the Dunellen American Legion Post 119 and the Dunellen Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5479. These organizations are essential to our Miracle Mile and we are grateful for their leadership in serving veterans in our community, the State of New Jersey and across the nation. Their efforts ensure those who served our country receive the benefits and recognition they so rightfully deserve and we applaud them for it.

Historically today was known as Armistice Day. It was initially created to recognize the conclusion of the Great War in 1918, the war it was thought at that time, to end all wars. Over time, the holiday would become known as we all know it today – Veterans Day – and it would rightfully become a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Some of us here have never worn the uniform or experienced the horrors of battle. Simply put, we cannot fathom what veterans – and their families – have gone through to ensure that we live with the joys of freedom. For hundreds of years, since our nation's founding, service members have been going into battle to safeguard our country's independence and sovereignty, fighting for causes greater than one nation such as the two World Wars, or fighting against global terrorism. I say this as a reminder to

those of us who did not serve - if we ever begin to take for granted our rights, such as voting or the freedoms of speech and religion, the ability to assemble, or simply to love whom we choose to love - we need to recall that these privileges have come with great sacrifice by others who selflessly chose to defend our freedoms. Not all have the inalienable rights of Americans, and that is precisely why the United States of America is beacon of hope for millions across the globe. May we never forget that freedom is not free.

As we stand together to honor and acknowledge all who have served this country in the military, let us make a promise that we will always remember the bravery and sacrifices they have made. That we are the greatest nation on God's green earth because of those sacrifices. That the United States of America remains free and stands for liberty and the pursuit of happiness because of those sacrifices - sacrifices that have been made since 1776. God bless you, God bless our Veterans, God bless our Miracle Mile, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Don't forget to thank a Veteran. Happy Veteran's Day.