

**Veterans Day Speech**  
**Mayor Jason F. Cilento**  
**November 11, 2025**

Good morning, everyone. It is my privilege to welcome you to Washington Memorial Park for the Borough of Dunellen's 2025 Veterans Day Ceremony. It is truly special to gather here once again on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month to honor the brave men and women who have served our country and recognize all they have done to defend the freedoms that we, as Americans, hold dear.

Thank you to Dunellen American Legion Post 119 and the Dunellen Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5479 for their role in organizing this event each year, and for their service to our veterans each and every day of the year. Their valuable work ensures that our veterans have a strong network of support long after their service has ended, maintain access to the benefits they so rightly deserve, and honor our fallen heroes. The dedication of these organizations is a reminder that our recognition of our nation's heroes is not, and should not, be limited to just Veterans Day. The Borough of Dunellen is proud to honor our veterans throughout the year with over 120 Hometown Heroes banners that can be seen along North Avenue and North Washington Avenue. These banners serve as daily reminders of the courage and commitment of so many of our own family members, friends, and neighbors who have answered the call to serve.

I extend my appreciation to the members of the Dunellen Borough Council, the Dunellen Borough Police Department, the Dunellen Fire Department,

our Office of Emergency Management, CERT team, and Rescue Squad for their continued dedication and support. I'd also like to thank Alex Miller, Kelly Seader, the entire Recreation Department, the Department of Public Works, and our IT and Communications Team for their hard work and commitment in making today's ceremony possible.

Next, I would like to take a moment to honor the memory of Councilman Harold "Hal" VanDermark, who passed away on October 2nd of this year. Councilman VanDermark was a proud United States Navy veteran who devoted his life to service, both to our nation and to our Miracle Mile. His leadership, dedication, and the impact he made will never be forgotten. Please join me in a moment of silence in honor of Councilman VanDermark.

We gather here each year to show our appreciation and reverence for all veterans who have at one point in their lives donned the uniform of one of the United States Armed Forces branches to serve our nation. Most of us will never share the same experiences as our veterans. We'll never know the long nights away from family and friends, the uncertainty of deployment, the intensity of training, the dark depths of battle, or the immense weight they carry when they return home. We must never forget that it is thanks to their courage, selflessness, and sense of duty that we are able to live with our freedoms and rights that they have so valiantly fought to protect.

Today, we take the time to reflect on the generations of veterans who have come before us and their countless sacrifices that define what this day truly

means to our country, and the families who watched their loved ones set off to serve our country, not knowing if they'd ever be coming home. The historical significance of this day dates back to November 11, 1918, which would originally be known as "Armistice Day," when an armistice was signed to officially bring an end to World War I. Following World War II and the Korean War, the holiday was expanded to honor all American veterans and was renamed "Veterans Day" in 1954. For over 100 years, November 11 has stood as a reminder that freedom is not free, and that we owe our service members a great debt of gratitude.

Our veterans and service members who uphold the principles that define our great nation, such as liberty and justice for all, have earned the United States of America its reputation as "the shining city on a hill." Through their courage, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication, the freedoms that we may often take for granted remain protected for generations to come.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all the veterans in attendance today, those who could not be with us, and to all the men and women who have served our nation with honor and courage. We can never truly repay you for the sacrifices you've made for each and every one of us. May we always remember your bravery and continue to carry your legacy of service, not just today, but every day. Thank you again for your service. May God bless our veterans. May God bless our active duty service members. May God bless Dunellen and you all. And may God continue to bless the United States of America. Happy Veterans Day.