



## VETERANS DAY SPEECH 2024 *(young audience)*

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Good morning/afternoon, [name of school/group].

[Thank event hosts and any special VIPs]

**<PAUSE>**

I am honored to be here in celebration of Veterans Day. To begin, I'd like anyone here who has a family member who was or is in the military to raise their hand.

If your mom or dad, grandparent, aunts or uncles, brothers or sisters, or anyone else in your family served, get those hands up.

**<PAUSE>**

If your hand is raised, ***thank you.*** I and so many of our fellow Americans appreciate your family member's service, and we recognize that having a loved one in the military can be difficult. So thank you.

**<PAUSE>**

[Briefly mention your own military service (branch, era, military occupation) and/or that of a family member]

**Millions** of men and women have volunteered to serve in the military. All of them had different reasons for joining. They held different jobs and served in different places across the world. Some of them went to war. Many were injured or otherwise changed in service. Whatever their story is, they took a great risk and protected our country and our freedoms.

That's why we celebrate Veterans Day—to recognize and honor their courage, sacrifice and contributions.

I'd like to highlight just one veteran who deserves our gratitude.

**<PAUSE>**

As a little girl, Kim Hubers used to take road trips to the Black Hills of South Dakota. Rising thousands of feet above the land, the forested hills and mountains were impressive to see.

But that's not what Kim remembers most. Staring out the backseat window, she remembers seeing a convoy of military Humvees—those large, square-shaped trucks built to drive across everything from deserts to jungles.

When Kim saw that convoy, she knew she wanted to grow up and be part of it. So when she was just 19 years old, Kim enlisted in the South Dakota Army National Guard as a heavy vehicle operator and got to **drive** those big trucks.

Kim made her dream come true at a time when our country needed her most. She enlisted in 2001, the same year of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America. A couple of years later, Kim was sent to war in Iraq in the Middle East.

While she was there, Kim witnessed destruction and devastation. She saw people get hurt. She feared for her life. But she continued on, knowing that she had a duty to serve her country.

Kim served in the military for **fourteen** years. She's proud of her service and would've served longer if she had been able. But serving in war took a toll on her mind and body. Today, Kim continues to deal with physical pain and a long list of health issues.

And yet, Kim still finds a way to serve others, even though she's no longer in the military. She spends much of her time helping other veterans who, like her, were forever changed by service. She is a leader in South Dakota and has shared her story to help other veterans across the country.

**<PAUSE>**

What Kim did when she joined the military took courage. When someone signs up to serve, they do so not knowing everything they'll have to do. They don't know where they'll have to travel to. They don't know if they'll have to go to war. And they don't know what sacrifices they'll have to make.

That's why it requires so much bravery, and it's why we have a national holiday just for veterans.

This Veterans Day, I'd like to ask you to think about veterans like Kim and to ask yourself how you can show them your gratitude.

Saying thank you to veterans you encounter is a good place to start and a worthy practice to adopt. It's a simple gesture but one that reminds veterans they are seen and appreciated. You never know how much it could mean to someone.

If you want to take it a step further, consider volunteering for veterans. DAV, which stands for Disabled American Veterans, offers numerous ways for people of all ages to do just that.

You can volunteer your time helping a veteran in your own community. This can include helping them with yardwork, running errands for them or volunteering at an event for veterans. There are also opportunities to volunteer at your local medical center for veterans, which is run by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

If you're 21 years old or younger and log a certain number of hours, you could qualify for one of DAV's college scholarships that recognize young people who volunteer their time for veterans in DAV's name.

**<PAUSE>**

Or you could show your appreciation and raise money to support programs for veterans by participating in DAV's Field of Flags. Based on how much money you raise, you'll be sent a box of flags to display in your yard or anywhere you'd like. Schools and businesses can also participate.

If you like getting outside, consider participating in the annual DAV 5K race where veterans, families and supporters run, walk, ride or roll over three miles in support of veterans. The event is an opportunity to raise money and awareness for veterans. You can participate in person in Cincinnati or join the virtual race.

**<PAUSE>**

Lastly, if you raised your hand earlier, you can help support veterans like your family members by becoming a junior member of DAV Auxiliary. The Auxiliary is made up primarily of veterans' family members and supports DAV's larger mission to ensure those who served are cared for.

**<PAUSE>**



I want to thank [event host/school/group] again for having me here today. Have a wonderful Veterans Day, and don't forget to reflect on what today is all about.

Thank you.

**<END>**