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## America has been blessed by its veterans

As mass murders, terrorist attacks and devastating natural disasters dominate recent news, it is easy to despair. But as Veterans Day approaches, we have the opportunity to focus on something positive. For it is usually veterans who protect us and come to our aid during the most desperate times.

Although the forces of Mother Nature cannot be stopped, there is a good chance that those handling the majority of rescues following a hurricane or other natural disaster are military veterans. Whether it's a Coast Guard search and rescue team or a police officer with prior military service, they risk their own lives to save others.

Like many Americans, I was struck by a viral photograph that circulated the web following the horrific attack in Las Vegas last month. The New York Post published the picture with the not-surprising headline, "Hero who shielded woman from Vegas carnage is a U.S. soldier."

The heartbreaking image of a brave man using his entire body to comfort and shield a wounded woman from further harm was not just a true depiction. It was a metaphor.

Our military – soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen – protect, shield and comfort all of us every day. Since the founding of our American Legion, veterans have shielded us from

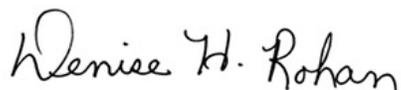
the likes of Hitler, Imperial Japan, Marxist tyrants and terrorists.

The soldier in the Las Vegas photograph, Matthew Cobos, was off-duty. He was not wearing his uniform, yet he still offered his body to buffer bullets in a moment of peril. After pulling the woman to safety, he ran back to the danger zone to rescue others. That is what soldiers do. That is what veterans do.

A century ago, Americans were fighting a war to liberate Europe. Compared to other countries, U.S. involvement was relatively short in time. But the sacrifice was enormous. A total of 116,516 Americans paid the ultimate price. Another 200,000 were wounded. It finally ended as an armistice went into effect at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918. The moment lives on as the designated date to reflect on the contributions that U.S. military veterans have made since the founding of our great Republic.

In 2016, President Barack Obama signed the Veterans Day Moment of Silence Act, legislation which had the full support of The American Legion. The proclamation calls for the American people everywhere to observe a two-minute national moment of silence on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, at 2:11 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

I will be in New York during the moment of silence but even in the bustle of America's busiest city my quiet thoughts will reflect on the sacrifice and service of the millions of men and women who have worn the greatest uniform the world has ever known.



Denise H. Rohan  
National Commander

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