

Mack Trucks Veterans Day Speech 11-10-11

“Send in the Mack Bulldogs” – the words of British soldiers in World War One

While the Mack Bulldog is one of the most recognizable icons in the world and a symbol of the strength and tenacity of the products made here, not everyone knows that the name was earned on the battlefield.

Courage, tenacity and a never-quit attitude. That’s what our military is all about, and what Mack is all about.

In fact, Mack right here in the Lehigh Valley has faced some tough times. Last time I had the chance to speak here Mack was transitioning their headquarters to a new location and were shutting down many operations.

Now I’m happy to say that Mack is back in the Valley. Virtually every worker who was laid off in those dark days is back on the job, and the new facility is building the machines that are moving America.

But today is about so much more than economic news.

On Veterans Day we honor the men and women who put on their nation's uniform and made the sacrifices that allow us all to stand here today. To stand here free to live and work and worship as we choose, not as some dictator would command us.

The world looks to America as a beacon of freedom, of reason, of justice – but the very foundation our nation is built upon and the steel that backs it up is the military: the men and women who serve.

What backs up the men and women who serve? Mack Trucks.

In World War One more than six thousand Mack Trucks were used by British and American soldiers.

In World War Two more than thirty-five thousand Mack Trucks were used to save the world -- and that was just the start of the company's contribution. Mack supplied thousands of tank engines, B-29 Liberator bomber parts and, right here in Allentown, PBV Catalina Flying Boats that saved countless lives by helping to defeat the German U-Boat fleet preying on troop transports and civilian traffic alike.

But, as good as Mack Trucks are – it's about the men and women in uniform who use them. It's daunting to think about the sacrifices our

soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines made – and continue to make. To be uprooted from home and family, to know that America depends on them, to have to stand ground in the face of an enemy who wants to destroy them.

The great military pilot Eddie Rickenbacker said “Courage is doing what you’re afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you’re scared.” Or, as John Wayne put it “Courage is being scared to death – but saddling up anyway.”

That’s where our military heroes are different than the average person. In situations that would paralyze most with fear, they persevere. They get the job done.

They love their country enough that they go overseas to protect it. They fight for our right to be free individuals in a military that requires them to obey orders as part of a team.

They value their lives and the lives of their fellow warriors, but they will lay those lives down for their country.

I want to challenge everyone here to treat Veterans Day with the reverence it has earned. Take the time to honor the memory of the fallen

and the sacrifices made by all veterans. We owe them more than we could ever repay.

I close with the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt – the man who led us through one of the darkest times in our history and who never got to see America become the greatest nation in the world. “In the truest sense freedom cannot be bestowed...it must be achieved.” Today we honor the men and women who achieved our freedom, and I urge you all to honor them every day.