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By Sgt. 1st Class Balinda O'Neal Dresel

Alaskans, Canadians pause to recognize 100 years since end of World War I

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska – On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, veterans, service members and community members gathered at the Alaska National Guard armory here to honor all who served in the U.S. and Canadian military during the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Veterans and Remembrance Day ceremony.

The solemn ceremony encompassed music, speeches, presentation of awards and wreaths, and readings of Veterans Day proclamations from President Donald Trump and Alaska Gov. Bill Walker.

The proclamations gave homage to the end of hostilities in World War I as the United States and its allies signed an armistice with Germany on November 11, 1918. One year later, to honor and memorialize lives lost during the Great War, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed Nov. 11 as Armistice Day, the precursor to Veterans Day.

“This year, as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the armistice, we again salute the generations upon generations of American heroes who have sacrificed so much to secure the blessings of freedom for their fellow Americans,” Trump wrote in his proclamation.

Walker echoed this same sentiment in his proclamation to the state of Alaska.

“We celebrate the courageous service of all Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and women, National Guard members, and Reservists who have served, and are serving, in the United States Armed Forces,” Walker wrote. “We are eternally indebted to our veterans for their remarkable and valiant service to the United States of America, and we will never forget their selfless allegiance and readiness to put their lives on the line to defend the freedoms of our democracy.”

The keynote address for the day's event was made by Maj. Gen. Laurie Hummel, Alaska National Guard adjutant general and commissioner of the DMVA, who spoke about the special characteristics of veterans by highlighting their unique stories.

“Our military and veterans constitute a family, through a shared bond of experience and sacrifice,” said Hummel. “There's an easiness of understanding some existential truths about one another; that they came when called, and did their best, to secure the common defense in the hopes that our constitution remains intact.”

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During the ceremony, Verdie Bowen, state of Alaska Veterans Affairs director, announced the recipient of the 2018 Governor's Veterans Advocacy Award that was bestowed on Solomon "Sol" Atkinson from the Southeast community of Metlakatla on Annette Island. During his 22 years in the U.S. Navy, Atkinson completed three tours in Vietnam and was the recipient of numerous awards including the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

The Sailor was one of the very first Frogmen after President Kennedy commissioned the Navy SEAL team in 1962, said Bowen. Atkinson trained 48 astronauts including Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Jim Lovell.

"He is an outstanding individual," said Bowen, complementing Atkinson's desire to help other veterans in his community. "He has had a lifetime of service starting from before I was born until this day."

"Today we honor the few: those who have been willing to make any and every sacrifice for [their] nation to endure," said Hummel.

In harmony with Veterans Day, Remembrance Day celebrates service members who died in the first and second world wars, Korean War, Afghanistan and peacekeeping duties. More than 66,000 Canadians and 100,000 American service members perished on battlefields in World War I.

"In Flanders Fields the poppies blow between the crosses, row on row, that mark our place," said Canadian Brig. Gen. Scott Clancy, the deputy commander of the Alaskan NORAD Region, as he read from the war memorial poem.

A Fallen Warrior and wreath laying ceremonies concluded the event affording participants the opportunity to remember selfless allegiance and sacrifice and applaud remarkable and valiant service.

"Today, and every day, we pay tribute to those who have worn the uniform, and we pray for the safety of all currently serving in harm's way," wrote Trump.

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PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.)
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/176wg/sets/72157673385366787>
3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/299836/alaskans-canadians-pause-recognize-100-years-since-end-world-war>
4. **DVIDS Video links.** B-Roll: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/639630/veterans-day-ceremony-b-roll>; Video Package: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/639642/veterans-day-ceremony>



U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Linzi Hargraves placed red and black roses during the Fallen Warrior ceremony on Veterans Day in honor of all who served in the U.S. and Canadian military at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Nov. 11, 2018. (U.S. National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla /Released)



Maj. Gen. Laurel Hummel, the adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard and commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, gives a speech at a Veterans Day ceremony hosted by the DMVA at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Nov. 11, 2018. (U.S. National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. N. Alicia Halla /Released)



From the left, Maj. Gen. Laurel Hummel, the adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard and commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Bob Doehl, DMVA deputy commissioner, and Chief Master Sgt. Winfield Hinkley, AKNG senior enlisted leader, render a salute after positioning a wreath during the DMVA's Veterans Day ceremony at the National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Nov. 11, 2018. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Balinda O'Neal Dresel)