MARK & FRIENDS

A Veterans Day Tribute: Remembering Courage, Sacrifice, and Freedom

Wednesday, November 11, 2026 | Ministry Package V5.1
Host: Mark Burns

Program Summary

On this special Veterans Day edition of Mark & Friends, Mark Burns honors the men and women who have served in the United States armed forces and the families who have shared in their sacrifices. The program opens with John 15:13 and patriotic selections performed by the Singing Men of GNN. Its centerpiece is President Ronald Reagan's November 11, 1985 Veterans Day address at Arlington National Cemetery, delivered after a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Reagan reflects on the lives and futures surrendered by those who died in service, the duty of the living to remember, and the importance of seeking peace through strength, truth, wise agreements, and prayer. Mark closes with an invitation to thank veterans and remember them throughout the year, followed by Janet Paschal's "Another Soldier's Coming Home."

Key Takeaways

- Veterans Day honors all who have served, living and deceased, while also remembering families and those who gave their lives.
- John 15:13 points to the profound meaning of sacrificial love.
- Remembrance is an active responsibility: we tell the stories and preserve the meaning of sacrifice.
- President Reagan emphasizes the lives and futures that fallen service members gave up.
- Lasting peace requires thoughtful leadership, moral clarity, responsible agreements, and a willingness to pursue diplomacy.
- The address urges prayer for peace, freedom, justice, and a more stable world.
- Gratitude should be expressed to veterans and military families throughout the year, not only on November 11.
- The program's music gives space for reflection, patriotism, and Christian hope.

Scripture References

- John 15:13 - Opening Scripture: the love of laying down one's life for friends; fulfilled supremely in Jesus.
- Joshua 1:5 - God's promise quoted in Reagan's address: 'I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.'
- Psalm 34:14 — Seek peace and pursue it (additional reflection)

- 1 Timothy 2:1–2 — Pray for those in authority (additional reflection)
- Romans 12:18 — Live at peace with others as far as possible (additional reflection)
- Psalm 46:1 — God as refuge and strength (additional reflection)

Quote of the Day

“All we can ever do for our heroes is remember them and remember what they did.” — President Ronald Reagan, Veterans Day, 1985

Broadcast Notes

Broadcast date: Veterans Day, November 11, 2026. Host: Mark Burns. The program opens with John 15:13, followed by two patriotic selections by the Singing Men of GNN, President Ronald Reagan's November 11, 1985 address at Arlington National Cemetery, Mark's closing tribute, and Janet Paschal's closing musical selection. The complete spoken content is preserved from the supplied broadcast transcript, with punctuation and clear spelling corrections. Musical passages are identified in sequence without lyrics. Additional Scripture references below provide devotional reflection beyond the verses spoken in the broadcast.

Practical Applications

- Thank a veteran personally and, if welcomed, ask about their experience.
- Reach out to a military spouse, parent, or family member with encouragement.
- Pray for those currently serving and for veterans facing challenges.
- Remember a fallen service member by learning and respectfully sharing their story.
- Read John 15:13 and reflect on what sacrificial love means in everyday life.
- Pray for leaders making decisions about war, peace, and national security.
- Consider a practical act of service through a reputable veterans’ support organization.
- Make gratitude a year-round habit rather than a once-a-year observance.

Today's Challenge

This week, honor service with action: thank one veteran, encourage one military family, and spend a few moments praying for those who serve and for leaders entrusted with decisions affecting peace. Reflect on John 15:13 and ask how sacrificial love can shape your own relationships.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the men and women who have served my country, for their courage, and for the sacrifices borne by their families. Comfort those who grieve, strengthen veterans carrying visible or unseen wounds, and protect those who serve today. Give wisdom to leaders who make decisions about conflict and peace. Keep me from taking freedom for granted, and teach me to show gratitude through words and deeds. Above all, help me follow Jesus, who showed the greatest love by laying down His life. Make me an instrument of peace, compassion, and faithful service. In Jesus' name, Amen.

About Today's Speaker

About Today's Featured Voices

Veterans Day tribute • Archival presidential address and music

President Ronald Reagan (1911–2004) served as the 40th President of the United States from 1981 to 1989. The program features his Veterans Day remarks delivered at Arlington National Cemetery on November 11, 1985. The Singing Men of GNN provide the opening patriotic selections, and gospel singer Janet Paschal performs the closing song, "Another Soldier's Coming Home."

Featured on Mark & Friends - Listen anytime under the Mark & Friends tab at GreatNewsRadio.org or WLUJ.org.

About Today's Host

Mark Burns

Host of Mark & Friends

Mark Burns is General Manager of the WLUJ Family of Stations and Great News Radio Network and host of Mark & Friends. With decades of experience in Christian radio and ministry, he presents Scripture-centered programs intended to educate, edify, and evangelize.

Additional Ministry Resources

- Great News Radio
- WLUJ
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Ronald Reagan Presidential Library - November 11, 1985 address and historical context

Broadcast Transcript (Spoken Content and Musical Cues)

[Opening theme: "We're Glad You're Here." Lyrics omitted.]

Opening Scripture and introduction - Mark Burns

Reading from John 15, verse 13.

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. John 15, verse 13. O magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together.

It's Wednesday, November 11, 2026, and welcome to this special Veterans Day edition of Mark & Friends. Today we pause to honor the brave men and women who have served in our nation's armed forces, along with their families, whose sacrifices have helped preserve the freedoms we enjoy. Veterans Day was originally known as Armistice Day, commemorating the end of World War I on November 11, 1918.

And today, with grateful hearts, we remember those who served, those who continue to serve, and especially those who gave their lives in service to our country. I've prepared a special tribute featuring two patriotic selections by the singing men of GNN, followed by a moving Veterans Day address delivered by President Ronald Reagan at Arlington National Cemetery in 1985. We'll conclude with a beautiful selection by Janet Paschal, Another Soldier's Coming Home.

May today's program encourage you to thank a veteran, pray for our military families, and remember that freedom comes with great sacrifice. Let's begin with the singing men of GNN.

[Musical selection 1: “The Star-Spangled Banner” - The Singing Men of GNN. A patriotic tribute to the flag and the nation. Lyrics omitted.]

[Musical selection 2: “Battle Hymn of the Republic” - The Singing Men of GNN. A choral reflection on faith and sacrifice. Lyrics omitted.]

Introduction to the archival address - Mark Burns

I found this great speech on the Internet. It was delivered by President Ronald Reagan on November 11, 1985. You'll hear President Reagan's remarks at a Veterans Day wreath-laying ceremony at the Arlington National Cemetery.

Veterans Day address - President Ronald Reagan | November 11, 1985

Thank you all very much. Secretary Weinberger, Harry Walters, Robert Medairos, Reverend Clergy, ladies and gentlemen, a few moments ago I placed a wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier. And as I stepped back and stood during the moment of silence that followed, I said a small prayer.

And it occurred to me that each of my predecessors has had a similar moment, and I wondered if our prayers weren't very much the same, if not identical. We celebrate Veterans Day on the anniversary of the armistice that ended World War I, the armistice that began on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. And I wonder, in fact, if all Americans' prayers aren't the same as those I mentioned a moment ago.

The timing of this holiday is quite deliberate in terms of historical fact, but somehow it always seems quite fitting to me that this day comes deep in autumn when the colors are muted and the days seem to invite contemplation. We are gathered at the National Cemetery, which provides a final resting place for the heroes who have defended our country since the Civil War. This amphitheater, this place for speeches, is more central to the cemetery than at first might seem apparent, for all we can ever do for our heroes is remember them and remember what they did, and memories are transmitted through words.

Some time back I received in the name of our country the bodies of four Marines who had died while on active duty. I said then that there is a special sadness that accompanies the death of a serviceman, for we're never quite good enough to them. Not really, we can't be, because what they gave us is beyond our powers to repay.

And so when a serviceman dies, it's a tear in the fabric, a break in the whole, and all we can do is remember. It is, in a way, an odd thing to honor those who died in defense of our country in defense of us in wars far away. The imagination plays a trick.

We see these soldiers in our mind as old and wise. We see them as something like the founding fathers, grave and gray-haired. But most of them were boys when they died, and they gave up two lives, the one they were living and the one they would have lived.

When they died, they gave up their chance to be husbands and fathers and grandfathers. They gave up their chance to be revered old men. They gave up everything for our country, for us, and all we can do is remember.

There's always someone who is remembering for us, no matter what time of year it is or what time of day. There are always people who come to this cemetery, leave a flag or a flower or a little rock on a headstone, and they stop and bow their heads and communicate what they wished to communicate. They say, Hello, Johnny, or Hello, Bob.

We still think of you. You're still with us. We never got over you, and we pray for you still, and we'll see you again.

We'll all meet again. In a way, they represent us, these relatives and friends, and they speak for us as they walk among the headstones and remember. It's not so hard to summon memory, but it's hard to recapture meaning.

The living have a responsibility to remember the conditions that led to the wars in which our heroes died. Perhaps we can start by remembering this, that all of those who died for us and our country were, in one way or another, victims of a peace process that failed, victims of a decision to forget certain things, to forget, for instance, that the surest way to keep a peace going is to stay strong. Weakness, after all, is a temptation.

It tempts the pugnacious to assert themselves. But strength is a declaration that cannot be misunderstood. Strength is a condition that declares actions have consequences.

Strength is a prudent warning to the belligerent that aggression need not go unanswered. Peace fails when we forget what we stand for. It fails when we forget that our republic is based on firm principles, principles that have real meaning, that with them we are the last best hope of man on earth.

Without them we are little more than the crust of a continent. Peace also fails when we forget to bring to the bargaining table God's first intellectual gift to man—common sense. Common sense gives us a realistic knowledge of human beings and how they think, how they live in the world, what motivates them.

Common sense tells us that man has magic in him, but also clay. Common sense can tell the difference between right and wrong. Common sense forgives error, but it always recognizes it to be error first.

We endanger the peace and confuse all issues when we obscure the truth, when we refuse to name an act for what it is, when we refuse to see the obvious and seek safety in Almighty. Peace is only maintained and won by those who have clear eyes and brave minds. Peace is imperiled when we forget to try for agreements and settlements and treaties, when we forget to hold out our hands and strive, when we forget that God gave us talents to use in securing the ends He desires.

Peace fails when we forget that agreements, once made, cannot be broken without a price. Each new day carries within it the potential for breakthroughs, for progress. Each new day bursts with possibilities.

And so hope is realistic and despair a pointless little sin. And peace fails when we forget to pray to the source of all peace and life and happiness. I think sometimes of General Matthew Ridgway who, the night before D-Day, tossed sleepless on his cot and talked to the Lord and listened for the promise that God made to Joshua, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.

We are surrounded today by the dead of our wars. We owe them a debt we can never repay. All we can do is remember them and what they did and why they had to be brave for us.

All we can do is try to see that other young men never have to join them. Today as never before, we must pledge to remember the things that will continue the peace. Today as never before, we must pray for God's help in broadening and deepening the peace we enjoy.

Let us pray for freedom and justice and a more stable world. And let us make a compact today with the dead, a promise in the words for which General Ridgway listened, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. In memory of those who gave the last full measure of devotion, may our efforts to achieve lasting peace gain strength.

And through whatever coincidence or accident of timing, I tell you that a week from now, when I am some thousands of miles away, believe me, the memory and the importance of this day will be in the forefront of my mind and in my heart. Thank you, God bless you all, and God bless America.

Closing tribute - Mark Burns

Let's honor our veterans not only today but throughout the year with our gratitude, our prayers and our willingness to remember.

As we close, we'll hear Janet Paschal singing, Another Soldier's Coming Home. Thanks for listening, thanks for being a part of our radio listening family. This is Mark Burns with Great News Media.

God bless you, God bless our veterans, and God bless America.

[Musical selection 3: “Another Soldier’s Coming Home” - Janet Paschal. A gospel reflection on faithful service and the hope of heaven. Lyrics omitted.]