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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT THE VETERANS  
DAY PRE-PARADE CEREMONY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Thank you, Fran. Everybody, I want you to know, Fran is running this ceremony so wonderfully but he deserves a lot of credit. Now, I want to be fair. He did not sing –

[Laughter]

Okay, he didn't sing but he has done extraordinary work with the United War Veterans and he served with great distinction, a highly decorated member of the Green Berets. Let's thank Fran for all he has done.

[Applause]

And Doug, that was not an encouragement of more singing, okay.

[Laughter]

I want to be really clear about that. I want to thank everyone who is gathered. This is so important that we get together and we remember and then we resolve to support our veterans. The memory, the commemoration is powerful but we get a chance to put it into action now and that's what we have to make our common cause. I want to thank the members of my administration who are here, one of whom everyone here knows. And everyone admires her for her energy, her spirit, her love for veterans, all she does about it – General and Commissioner of the Department of Veteran Services, Loree Sutton, thank you for all you do.

[Applause]

I want to thank all the first responders who are with us and special thanks to NYPD Chief of Department Terry Monahan. Thank you Terry, and thanks to all the first responders who are here.

[Applause]

Thank you to all the elected officials, especially someone who does so much for veterans on the federal level where so much help is still needed. Let's thank our Senior Senator, Chuck Schumer, for all he does.

[Applause]

And I have to say if you were not stirred by the words of Captain Flo Groberg, you better check your pulse because this man just told us something we needed to hear. Thank you.

[Applause]

Our Grand Marshal, thank you so much for all you have done and all you are doing.

This city hosts the largest Veterans Day Parade in the entire country. We are very, very proud of that fact – 25,000 vets will march, hundreds of thousands will watch this parade. We want people to feel the meaning of this. And we know that each year one branch of the services is honored in particular and this year it is the United States Army. I can't think of a better choice than that.

[Applause]

I am entirely biased in making that statement. My wife's dad, Robert, served in the U.S. Army in World War II in France and Italy. My dad, Warren, served in the U.S. Army in the Pacific in the landings at [inaudible] Okinawa [inaudible]. And I'm sorry to say, my dad lost half of his leg on Okinawa to a Japanese grenade.

And if you come up in a family that is so proud of that tradition of service and particularly proud of what the Army has meant to this country since the founding of our nation, you recognize that no one comes back from their service as if they've just completed the last chapter of a book and it's all behind them. They come back deeply connected to those who have served with them. They come back with a debt of gratitude we owe them but they also come back feeling what they experienced. Everyone in different ways.

And some of what they carry with them is physical and some is mental, emotional. And sometimes it's both. And sometimes it's spoken. And sometimes there is silence. But we have an obligation to reach each and every veteran to figure out, to learn what they need, and we can be there for them just like they were there for us. And we've got more work to do. I want to start with the most obvious thing that every single person can do. If you own a business, big or small, here's something you can do that will make the world a better place. Hire a veteran.

[Applause]

And if you know a veteran is in need – God forbid there is a veteran who doesn't have a job, doesn't have a place to live. God forbid there is a veteran who is not getting the health care that he or she needs. God forbid there is a veteran that's struggling with mental illness, with PTSD, or any other challenge and doesn't feel they can talk about it. It's up to us to find them, to meet

them, to support them, to embrace them. That's what we should dedicate ourselves to this Veterans Day.

On behalf of 8.6 million New Yorkers, I say to all those who have served us and all those who are serving us now, God bless you all. Thank you.

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