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THE CENTENARY OF ARMISTICE DAY
NOVEMBER 11, 1918 TO NOVEMBER 11, 2018

Greetings and Salutations (yes, some of you have received that letter before) – thank you for coming out today under clear cool skies, many are probably still under blankets at home.

I'm going to steal these lines from Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, "**It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness** "

Dickens' novel exemplified a key human condition as to how individuals stand up, to sacrifice their own lives, in order to save the lives of others. Arguably, nowhere else does this condition manifest itself more, than in the lives of those who have served Our Veterans know what camaraderie is all about, Esprit de Corps, and laying down their life to save a buddy.

Heck – the Air Force Para Rescue motto simply states “So That Others May Live”.

Of course that Dickens novel played out on the French Revolution background - let us fast forward to the present.

For in France today, on the occasion of the 100th year Anniversary of signing an Armistice ending the WAR TO END ALL WARS – ***silence rang - as loud as bells from the chapels.***

100 years ago – ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO – The American Legion was created to assist the Vets coming back home - gas was \$0.25 a gallon, 50 percent of all vehicles were Model Ts, a loaf of bread was a dime, and the average family made \$1,500.

Charlie Chaplin played at the box office, Babe Ruth helped the Red Sox win the 1918 World Series, women couldn't vote yet, and God bless America was written in 1918.

The average life expectancy for men was 37 years - 42 for women (influenza took its toll that year).

I know they said there would be no math: yet for all you math majors – what is average ???
Average = Top of the bottom, bottom of the top.....

Of all living veterans today, 4% fought in World War II, 8% in Korea, 33% Vietnam, 34% in the Gulf Wars, and 23% attributed to times of peace.

75% of our vets have had combat experience. As our population ages, conversely the percentage of Veterans to population shrinks as well.

In 1980 - 18% of our population had military experience. In 2016 it shrunk to 7%. Today in our all-volunteer Armed Forces less than 1% of our population stands up and listens to the call of our country.

Regardless of what conflict, war, which branch, enlisted or officer, or serving with a strong defense in peace --- we all took an oath with no expiration date. There is nothing AVERAGE about our Veterans.

In closing, Google, Bing, and the World Wide Web have brought us more information at our fingertips than any Grolier Encyclopedia could.....

Here's our extra credit for today's quiz. What would pop up if we were to Google "The One Percent" on our Smart Phones ??? We would be guided towards countless economic and financial references, we would be guided to the wealthiest millionaires and billionaires, there would be slants of all political persuasion.

Yet, I submit to you - that all that posturing would be wrong.

I submit to you that ALL WHO HAVE SERVED..... All who served 100 years ago in the Argon, to those who served selflessly on the beaches of Normandy, those who served at the frozen Chosin Reservoir, those who gave their all in the Mekong Delta rice paddies, those who endured the sweltering deserts of Iraq, the unthinkable house to house close combat in Kandahar, and all other unknown places around the world.

Yes, I submit to you that **these Veterans** are the REAL RED, WHITE & BLUE – the TRUE ONE PERCENT – for it is today's all volunteer Armed Forces who answer our country's call for PEACE – LIBERTY – AND FREEDOM. God Bless our Veterans and God Bless the USA.