

## **Veteran's Day Remarks**

**Dr. Núñez**

**November 11, 2016**

Thank you all for coming today to support the more than 600 veterans and active service personnel who study, teach, and work on this campus. Your attendance at this event means a lot to them. Today we also honor all the veterans who have ever served and protected our great nation.

I want to thank my colleagues on the dais today—Vice President Ken Bedini; Father Larry LaPointe; Rebecca Avery, our Veteran's Center Coordinator and a retired member of the Connecticut Army Reserve National Guard; and Colonel Frederick Miclon Jr., Director of Staff, Joint Force Headquarters, of the Connecticut Air National Guard. I want to thank Becky in particular for arranging today's event as the coordinator of our Veterans Center.

Seven and a half years ago, we opened the Veterans Center to support veterans and active service members who have turned to Eastern for the education and tools they need to reenter our economy and society. I am so proud of the work of the center and of our entire campus in welcoming veterans. As a result of this hard work, U.S. News and World Report ranks Eastern among the top 15 public universities in the North in serving veterans. This is a badge of honor we should wear proudly on this special day.

While we should never glorify battle, we must always remember what our soldiers are defending. The 18th century philosopher John Stuart Mill once said, "War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse." We have much to cherish in this country, much to defend, and nothing more valued than our democracy and the freedoms it bestows upon each of us.

I recently came across words from 100 years ago that not only remind me of how precious freedom is, but how our service men and women constitute the most vivid example of our democracy. These are words from World War I, written by someone in Kobarid, Slovenia, a town almost destroyed during a two-year battle fought by the Italian and Austrian armies from 1915-17.

