



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

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VETERANS DAY 2009

(GREETINGS)

**IT'S AN HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO BE HERE
TODAY WITH ALL OF YOU AS WE CELEBRATE AND
REMEMBER ALL WHO HAVE FOUGHT AND DIED AND
SERVED TO PRESERVE THIS LAND OF HOPES AND
DREAMS.**

**GENERATIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN HAVE
DEMONSTRATED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO PUT**

COUNTRY BEFORE SELF...GENERATIONS OF PATRIOTS WHO SERVED FOR THE GREATER GOOD, WHO NEVER SOUGHT GLORY OR RECOGNITION FOR THEIR OWN SAKE, BUT IT COMES NONETHELESS AS WE HONOR THEM TODAY.

HISTORY HAS PROVIDED US WITH EXTRAORDINARY EXAMPLES OF THEIR SELFLESS DEEDS...THE GOOD WORKS THEY PERFORMED ARE A HUMAN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF RARE WONDER. COUNTLESS MILLIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD HAVE FOREVER BEEN THE BENEFICIARIES OF THEIR SACRIFICE, KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY.

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE BENEFITTED CAN HARDLY BE CALCULATED, SUFFICE

**IT TO SAY THE NUMBER OF ERECTED MEMORIALS OR
SPEECHES DELIVERED DOESN'T BEGIN TO
REPRESENT THE TRUE SCOPE OF SERVICE OUR
NATIONS' VETERANS HAVE PROVIDED.**

**OFTENTIMES, OUR FREEDOMS ARE TAKEN FOR
GRANTED AND THE COST INVOLVED OF MAINTAINING
THE LIBERTIES WE ENJOY AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A
NATION ARE FREQUENTLY OVERLOOKED AND
SADLY, GO UNACKNOWLEDGED.**

**WHAT VETERANS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE
CAUSE OF LIBERTY AND THE PROTECTION OF
AMERICAN VALUES AND IDEALS ARE ENDURING
BECAUSE OF THE QUIET, RESILIENT STRENGTH OF
CHARACTER AND FAULTLESS LOYALTY, HONOR AND
INTEGRITY OF THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED AS OUR**

DEFENDERS DURING PEACE TIME AND IN WAR. IT'S BEEN SAID THEY "HAVE MERELY DONE THEIR DUTY."

BY SIMPLY "DOING THEIR DUTY," VETERANS WERE WILLING TO STEP FORWARD IN HARM'S WAY SO THAT OTHERS COULD ALSO SHARE THE SAME GIFTS OF LIBERTY AND PROSPERITY THAT WE ALL ENJOY.

THOSE SHARED TRAITS...THAT COMMON DENOMINATOR...THAT WILLINGNESS TO SERVE, THAT ABILITY TO REMAIN STALWART WHILE PLACING ONE'S LIFE ON THE LINE FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS, ASSUMES EVEN MORE PROMINENCE TODAY, WHILE OUR NATION IS AT WAR.

**APPLYING THE SAME DILIGENT AND
RELENTLESS INTELLIGENCE, DEDICATION AND
SENSE OF SERVICE AS THOSE OF THEIR
PREDECESSORS, A NEW GENERATION OF SOLDIER,
SAILOR, MARINE, AIRMAN AND COASTGUARDSMAN
HAVE NOW ASSUMED THE MANTLE OF DEFENDER OF
DEMOCRACY AND GUARDIAN OF FREEDOM.**

**AS CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT LAND, WE SHARE
AN EQUAL SENSE OF PRIDE IN THE YOUNG SERVICE
MEMBERS WHO RISK THEIR LIVES FOR ALL OF US
EVERY DAY. AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, THEIR
INCREDIBLE VALOR AND THEIR EXTRAORDINARY
SENSE OF PURPOSE SHOULD SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE
TO ALL OF US, INSPIRE ALL OF US AND GIVE US THE
COURAGE WE NEED TO FACE ANY CHALLENGE.**

IN CLOSING, I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND YOU ABOUT THE SERVICE OF AMERICA'S VETERANS, PAST AND PRESENT: IT'S VITAL THAT WE, AS GRATEFUL CITIZENS AND AS A PEOPLE, TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRESERVING THE HISTORIES OF OUR PATRIOTS AND OUR NATIONS' STRUGGLES TO REMAIN FREE... EACH OF US CAN HELP IN OUR OWN, UNIQUE WAY TO TEACH AND SHARE AND CELEBRATE AND NURTURE THE LEGACY OF AMERICA'S VETERANS TO PASS ON TO OUR CHILDREN, THEIR CHILDREN AND THOSE THAT COME AFTER THEM.

AS WE WORK TO FOSTER AN UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION FOR WHAT OUR VETERANS HAVE PROVIDED US, CHIEF AMONG OUR PROMINENT CONCERNS SHOULD BE THAT THOSE WHO HAVE

**BORNE THE BURDEN OF PRESERVING EVERYTHING
WE CHERISH AS A NATION SHALL BE CARED FOR.**

ENGLISH STATESMAN GEORGE CANNING

**WROTE: “WHEN OUR PERILS ARE PAST, SHALL OUR
GRATITUDE SLEEP?”**

**OUR SENSE OF GRATITUDE CANNOT ‘SLEEP.’
WE MUST BE WILLING TO PICK THEM UP WHEN THEY
ARE DOWN, HELP POINT THE WAY TO A NEW LIFE
WHEN THEY RETURN HOME AND CARRY THEM WHEN
THEY ARE WEARY. WE THE MANY, HAVE BENEFITTED
FROM THE SACRIFICE AND SERVICE OF THE
RELATIVE FEW AND IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO
ENSURE OUR VETERANS ARE CARED FOR AND
TENDED TO; IT IS A RESPONSIBILITY THAT WE ARE**

**OBLIGATED TO FULFILL...IT IS ONE THAT HONOR
DEMANDS OF US.**

**TO DO ANYTHING LESS WOULD ONLY SERVE TO
DISHONOR AND DIMINISH OUR STANDING AS THE
GREATEST NATION ON EARTH.**

**BEFORE WE LEAVE HERE TODAY, LET US OFFER
A PRAYER OF THANKS TO THOSE WHO ARE
CURRENTLY SERVING AND FOR THE GALLANT SOULS
OF OUR DEPARTED COMRADES, FRIENDS AND LOVED
ONES. LET US ALWAYS REMEMBER THE FREEDOMS
THEY HAVE EARNED FOR ALL OF US AND LET US
ALWAYS DRAW STRENGTH AND INSPIRATION FROM
WHAT THEY HAVE DONE.**

GOD BLESS AMERICA.

