# VFW National Convention

## To those who have served: A letter to veterans

Aug 26, 2008

*Note: The following letter is from Gen. George Casey, who was to address convention delegates during the VFW's 109th National Convention in Orlando but was unable to attend because of Tropical Storm Fay.*

Aug 27, 2008

*To Those Who Have Served: A Letter to Veterans*

I am sorry that the storm has kept me from connecting directly with you – the courageous men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Each of you has placed this Nation's security and the freedom of others before your own lives. You are, indeed, a national treasure. Today, I had wanted to salute you and to tell you about your Army.

As we approach another anniversary of September 11th, it is useful to reflect on why our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines are deployed in harm's way. We are at war against a global extremist terrorist network that attacked us and is fixed on destroying our way of life. This foe will not fade away nor will it give up easily. We are engaged in a long war and the stakes for our country are high. At this hour, a new generation of American heroes has taken up the fight in defense of our values and ideals. They are deployed to defeat our enemies before they can attack us again at home. Your Army is a hugely resilient, professional and combat-seasoned force that has been stretched by the demands of the current conflict. We will do what it takes to win and to preserve this magnificent force.

And you, as Veterans, are doing your part. You are lending your critical voice. By coming together – from all Services and so many different backgrounds – you are part of the national dialogue on the state of the America's military and its role in 21st Century conflict. You do so with a level of credibility and wisdom that few can match.

For the last 35 years, the ranks of this Nation's Armed Forces have been filled entirely by volunteers. You know well the importance of sustaining an All-Volunteer Force – a force

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that has come to embody American resolve to defend freedom and protect liberty around the world. Your voice here will help secure this heritage and ensure that we maintain the same quality servicemen and women tomorrow that we have today.

You also know that today's troops are tomorrow's Veterans. The U.S. Army takes this responsibility to you and today's Soldiers seriously. To that end, we are working hand-in-hand with the right people, including health care specialists, Veterans Affairs, and others to provide the care, benefits and support you so deserve. Together, our mission is to get this right.

And so we move forward. We are in an era of persistent conflict where success is dependent upon our whole Nation working in concert. Your participation in this collaborative process counts immensely. And, by using your voice here and in your communities, you not only serve the living, but you honor the fallen and safeguard their proud legacy.

May God bless you.

**George W. Casey, Jr.**
**General, United States Army**