2009 Veterans Day

This Veterans Day, we salute our men and women in uniform who have selflessly defended and secured our Nation's freedom.

On 11 November 1919, Americans celebrated Armistice Day, commemorating the first anniversary of the end of World War I. Recognizing the veterans of "The Great War" became an annual event, and in 1938 Congress declared Armistice Day a national holiday. After millions of America's sons and daughters answered our Nation's call to service in subsequent wars, Congress renamed the holiday Veterans Day in 1954 to honor *all* veterans. President Dwight D. Eisenhower urged Americans to "solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom. . . ."

Ninety years ago, Chief of Staff of the Army General Peyton C. March told the Nation's World War I veterans that "the story of your participation in the war will inspire future generations." Today, we can indeed point to a proud legacy of service and sacrifice by the Soldiers of America's Army, who are truly the Strength of the Nation. While we thank all Soldiers—past and present—for their service, during this Year of the Noncommissioned Officer, we especially recognize our NCOs who have consistently proven to be the backbone of the Army. We encourage everyone to thank veterans of all wars for their service and sacrifice to our Nation and to remember them and their Families on this Veterans Day.

Kenneth O. Preston
Sergeant Major of the Army

George W. Casey, Jr.
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army