2 February 2015

To All Who Have Served in Uniform Since 9/11,

You and your families stepped forward as volunteers when our Nation needed you, and you excelled. For over a decade of war, you demonstrated the courage, resilience, and adaptability that are the hallmarks of the American military. Thank you for wearing our Nation's uniform.

Your dedication to those serving on your right and left has been unwavering, and your commitment to a cause greater than yourself has been inspiring. Be proud of what you have done for your country and for those people in other countries who share in the dream of a better future.

Over the last 13 years, you have written a new chapter in American military history while honoring the legacy of the generations of veterans who served before you. Their sacrifices paved the way for our welcome home—we build our legacy on their shoulders. It is appropriate to recognize and thank them as we join their ranks.

It is also appropriate to follow the example they set when they took off the uniform. Those previous generations of veterans understood that they had an opportunity—and a responsibility—to continue serving. Your generation will also help guide our country's destiny.

While the transition to civilian life brings new challenges, the American public stands ready to welcome you home. As a veteran, your country still needs your experience, intellect, and character. Even out of uniform, you still have a role in providing for the security and sustained health of our democracy. No matter what you choose to do in your next chapter, you will continue to make a difference. The opportunity for leadership is yours.

We trust that you will accept this challenge and join ranks with the business leaders, volunteers, and public servants in your communities. You have made your mark in uniform and represent the strength of our Nation. We know you will do the same as veterans, setting the example for the next generation of veterans to follow.

We thank you and your families for your service and for your continued dedication to the United States of America. It has been our greatest privilege to serve with you, and we look forward with pride to what your future holds. We know it will be extraordinary.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. WINNEFELD, JR.
Admiral, U.S. Navy
Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

MARTIN E. DEMPSEY
General, U.S. Army
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR.
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

RAYMOND T. ODIERNO
General, U.S. Army
Chief of Staff of the Army

MARK A. WELSH III
General, U.S. Air Force
Chief of Staff of the Air Force

JONATHAN W. GREENERT
Admiral, U.S. Navy
Chief of Naval Operations

PAUL F. ZUKUNFT
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant of the Coast Guard

FRANK J. GRASS
General, U.S. Army
Chief of the National Guard Bureau