

2009 Veterans Day Message from
Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus

One day each year is set aside to specially recognize the service and sacrifice of the more than 23 million living American Veterans who have defended the United States at home and abroad.

Although one day is wholly inadequate to honor those who have given so much of themselves, Veterans Day is a symbol of the enormous debt we owe to our veterans. First celebrated in 1919 as a commemoration of Armistice Day and the end of the First World War, Veterans Day has become an enduring memorial to our forebears and their service. On this day, we honor those who established the legacy of the United States military as the finest military force in the world. We remember the rich tradition of the uniform, full of honor, heroism, and sacrifice. And we reflect on the Navy and Marine Corps battles stretching back across the years, battles fought in Belleau Wood and from Scapa Flow, through Midway and Tarawa, Chosin and Inchon, Hue City, Khafji, and Fallujah, to Baghdad and Helmand today.

Our veterans represent the best of America. Men and women from every race and creed, they have constantly preserved the blessings of liberty that we now enjoy. We honor their service, and we honor you who carry on the tradition and continue to defend our nation. Thank you for your service, Godspeed.