

Secretary of the Navy Veteran's Day Message to the Fleet, November 2008

America was founded on the principles of freedom, liberty, equality before the law, and justice for all. Since the birth of our great nation, those who serve in our armed forces have risked much, and often paid dearly, in defending these principles. Each year on November 11th our nation pauses in remembrance to commemorate the legacy of patriotism and service of those who serve in uniform.

There are currently more than 25 million living American veterans, and their many stories remind us of the cost of which our freedom comes. Our veterans served in the steaming heat of Iwo Jima, the frigid fields of Korea and the deadly jungles of Vietnam, on the sands of the Persian Gulf, the mountains of Afghanistan, and the streets of Baghdad. Wherever there have been challenges to our freedoms, our warfighters have defended America from those who wish to do us harm.

America holds her veterans - those who have served and those who serve today - in the highest esteem. Our Navy - Marine Corps team is on the front lines defending against terrorist enemies and deterring aggression in faraway lands. The Sailors and Marines who serve today honor the legacy of the heroes who have gone before us, and in doing so uphold the proudest traditions of military service.

I am deeply honored to have served as your Secretary these past three years. I thank you and your families for your service and sacrifice. May God bless all our veterans, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

The Honorable Donald C. Winter, Secretary of the Navy.