

Nov. 11, 2024

A VETERANS DAY MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY CHARLTON MEGINLEY

BATON ROUGE, La.—Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Charlton Meginley, Col (Ret), USAF extends this message to Louisiana’s veterans today on Veterans Day:

We all remember where we were on 9/11—I was sitting in class. And like so many Americans, as I watched what was happening, I knew instantly that, as soon as I finished law school, I was going to join the Air Force.

I’m from Alexandria, and as a kid, I spent a lot of time on England Air Force Base. I also grew up in a military family: one grandfather was an airman who served in World War II and Korea, and my other grandfather was a sailor who served during Korea. My dad was 34 years old when he joined the Army National Guard as a way to get the training and education he needed to pull his family out of poverty. We all have our heroes—these three men are mine—and their service was one of the primary reasons why I joined the military. Simply stated, it was my turn.

When I joined the Air Force JAG Corps as a lawyer, I thought it would be for a few years and then my wife and I would return home. Little did I know that I would make the military my career. But, my story is just one of many millions of stories. Each one of us who raised our hand and took that oath to support and defend the Constitution, an oath that so few Americans have taken, has a story.

Today, we come together with full hearts to honor the stories of the men and women who, through extraordinary acts, heroically wore the uniform of our Armed Forces. On this Veterans Day, we stand in reverence of their immense service, profound sacrifice and steadfast devotion to safeguarding the fundamental ideals that form the very essence of our nation.

As we pause to reflect on the sacrifices made by our veterans, let us not forget that their commitment transcends the battlegrounds where they fought. Our veterans and current service members have and continue to stand resolutely at the front lines, not only to defend our cherished land, but to protect the sacred Constitution that unites us as one people.

Our veterans understand this truth viscerally. They fought valiantly not only against tyranny on distant shores, but for the very ideals etched into our Constitution. From the Revolutionary War to the conflicts of today, veterans embody what it means to stand fiercely for freedom, even when the ultimate price must be paid. This means engaging in meaningful civil discourse, standing boldly for one another's God given rights and ensuring that the values of liberty, justice and equality resonate in our everyday lives—not just as words, but as realities for every American.

We also must continue to acknowledge the profound struggles that many veterans face when they return home—challenges that serve as poignant reminders that the fight for justice and dignity is never fully concluded. Let us arm ourselves with compassion and solidarity, pledging to support our veteran communities, ensuring they receive the care and respect they so richly deserve.

For some of us, the battle doesn't end when the uniform comes off. There are struggles that remain, both seen and unseen. But just as we stood together in the field, we must stand together now in our communities—lifting each other up, offering support and ensuring no one walks the path alone. As long as I'm Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs, I pledge to you to work hard every day to fulfill the mission of our department to serve those who served.

To all our veterans who stand before us today, and those who watch from distant horizons, we offer our heartfelt gratitude for your service. The sacrifices you and your families have made will forever echo in our hearts, and your legacy inspires us to protect and cherish our Constitution for generations yet to come.

Veterans, thank you, sincerely, for your service. You will forever be our nation's heroes. May God bless you, the great state of Louisiana and our United States of America.

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