

To our American Veterans:

Veterans Day celebrates and honors the service, sacrifice, and enduring achievements of the nearly 22 million living Americans who served our nation in uniform--at home and abroad--during times of both war and peace. We at Veterans Affairs not only honor our service members past and present, but the family members who supported you when you were called to defend our nation's freedoms and after you came home -- often dealing or struggling with issues as a direct result of your service to our great country.

When the world is threatened ... it calls on America and we call on our service members who serve without question and without delay. You served as our protectors and defenders, warfighters, peacemakers, and peacekeepers. You were the guardians of the greatest social and political experiment the world has ever known--representative democracy.

Consider this: Veterans Day is but one day a year. Year round, approximately 5,000 VA staff, volunteers and medical residents at VA facilities across the Pacific Northwest -- about one third of which are Veterans themselves - with the National Cemetery Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and the Veterans Health Administration, are privileged, proud and humbled to support a common goal and mission... To fulfill President Lincoln's promise, to care for those "who shall have borne the battle," and for their families and their survivors, by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans. The VA is currently implementing [MyVA](#), the largest transformational project in the department's history. We are updating systems and procedures to better serve you and our goal is to become the top customer-service agency in the entire federal government.

We are privileged to live in the United States where the cost of freedom, as you especially know, is not free; it has been paid for by the sacrifices of the men and women like yourselves who have served and fought for the flag of our nation and all it represents. On this special day, we at the VA want to give a special thanks to you and to your families for your service and sacrifice in defending the freedom and liberty that we all enjoy. We are privileged to serve you, the American Veteran. There is no higher honor. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Fisher
Director, VA Portland Health Care System

William F. Streitberger
Director, Portland and Anchorage Regional Office

George Allen
Director, Willamette National Cemetery