



CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20318-9999

2009 Armed Forces Day

On Saturday, May 16th, we pause to commemorate Armed Forces Day and pay tribute to all active duty Service members, National Guardsmen and Reservists, who, through the thickest of wars and greatest of crises, have raised their hands high to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

The theme of this year's Armed Forces Day, "United in Strength" – seems especially fitting to me, personally – for in my nearly 45 years of wearing the uniform, I have rarely seen our Nation and our military as united in common purpose, spirit, and understanding as I do, right now.

For that commitment and that unity, I am grateful to our civilian leadership, as well as our hometowns and local communities. The virtue of serving a cause greater than self is a public virtue, one which is still just as revolutionary as it was during our Nation's founding.

In now our eighth year of war, our Armed Forces stand as one of the most combat-hardened forces in our history. Yet their uplifting enthusiasm and resilience never cease to inspire. I know – we all know – that this spirit has everything to do with your support. It is a sea of goodwill which lifts the spirits of every military Service member and family, in times difficult and good. It is that same support and encouragement we cannot do without.

To the more than two million Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and their families, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I extend our heartfelt thanks for your service. And to the Nation we serve – we humbly thank you for your unstinting devotion – and for the opportunity to represent the spirit you share so generously, all across the globe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M.G. Mullen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

M.G. MULLEN
Admiral, U.S. Navy