

Welcome Home!

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For more than 100 years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has sent troops off to war and welcomed them home. We are here today to perform the more pleasant of those two duties - to welcome home the men and women of (name of unit returning).

Standing here today, I am honored to represent the more than 2.6 million men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliaries. Together we enthusiastically express our gratitude and pride in these returning (soldiers, sailors, airmen or Marines.)

As veterans, we have stood in your shoes. We understand the pain of separation, the fear of combat and the sense of loss you may feel over those who did not return with you.

Throughout our history, the VFW has worked to ensure that our men and women in uniform are well trained, well-equipped, adequately compensated and honored for their service to this great nation. Through the VFW Military Assistance Program, Adopt-a-Unit Program and Operation Uplink (our phone card program), the VFW and it's Ladies Auxiliary do all we can to support the troops and their families at home because we have been there.

Our admiration for your courage and commitment in the face of these difficult experiences is immense. Your willingness to serve, particularly in these perilous times, is a tribute to you and to the millions who have gone before you.

When others have turned a deaf ear to the cry of the helpless, you have come to their aid.

When others have cowered in the face of a nameless enemy, you have faced that enemy and fulfilled your mission. When others have ignored the responsibilities that come with liberty and freedom, you have embraced those responsibilities and secured freedom and liberty for the oppressed.

Beginning with the earliest American's soldiers who stood at Concord Bridge, yours is a proud and honorable legacy. Those of you who wear the uniform of today's military are much different than those who went before you.

Today, in addition to engaging an enemy, you are asked to be the policemen, the peacekeeper, the humanitarian - a caregiver and caretaker of the world's oppressed. You handle advanced technologies - controlling weapons and systems dreamed of by science fiction writers only a few short years ago.

Yet, in many ways, you are the same as your predecessors.

You still leave loved ones behind and embrace an uncertain future with courage and dignity. You still understand that together you can accomplish more than as individuals. And, you still place duty and honor above your own personal concerns.

For these things we salute and honor you today. Today, the conflict is a memory. Today the fight is behind you. Today is a day of homecoming - a day of rejoicing.

And we rejoice with you. We say, "Welcome home." God bless you for what you have done and God bless the America that you serve so valiantly.