



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

November 21, 2012

A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Americans have always had much for which to give thanks. We live in a good and great country, where our blessings are manifold. For those who settled Virginia's Berkeley Plantation, it was a safe arrival from England in 1619. For the Pilgrims at Plymouth, it was a bountiful harvest in 1621. For the Continental Congress in 1777, and for President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, it was the Almighty's presence during times of great peril.

This year, despite a difficult economy, we can give thanks that we continue to enjoy the blessings of liberty, prosperity, and security. These are the gifts of successive generations of our fellow citizens, who answered the calls of duty and safeguarded our freedoms during times of peace and war.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is dedicated to serving these men and women, who have served us all so magnificently. As we join with friends and loved ones this Thanksgiving Day, let us all take a moment to remember and give thanks for our 22 million Veterans, who have kept this country and much of the world safe, free, and prosperous. Let us also give thanks for our 319,000 dedicated VA colleagues, who help us keep Lincoln's promise to "care for [those] who have borne the battle and for [their families]." Say a special prayer of thanks for the nearly three million Americans in uniform today, many of them in harm's way and more than 800 of whom are our VA colleagues. They stand watch around the world so that we can enjoy the blessings of being American.

Warmest Thanksgiving greetings to all our Veterans and their families, to our survivors, and to the professionals at the Department of Veterans Affairs, who serve them. May God continue to bless and protect those who serve and have served our Nation in uniform. May God continue to bless this wonderful country of ours.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric K. Shinseki". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Eric K. Shinseki