Operation Iraqi Freedom/New Dawn

They [Soldiers] will cross the border out of Iraq with their heads held high. One of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of the American military will come to an end. Iraq's future will be in the hands of its people. America's war in Iraq will be over.

President Obama, 14 December 2011

The magnitude of what this Nation and our Soldiers have accomplished in Iraq is unprecedented. We have never been more proud of our Army – our Soldiers, Civilians, and our Families. You freed over twenty-five million people from tyranny and given hope when hope was forsaken. Our Army provided new opportunity for the people of Iraq. No other Army in the world could have accomplished what you have done – Only American Soldiers.

Throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn, our Soldiers embodied physical and mental toughness and courage under fire. Over the past eight years, the quality of our Soldiers has stood in stark contrast to the desert sands. Just as the WWII generation defeated tyranny across the globe, a new generation – galvanized by the attacks of September 11th – bravely defeated tyranny once again. Even during the darkest days in Iraq, our Soldiers never wavered in the face of growing doubt. They continued to risk life and limb for a cause larger than themselves. For their heroic action, they received nearly 9,000 awards for valor including two Medals of Honor, 16 Distinguished Services Crosses, and 408 Silver Stars.

We remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, our Wounded Warriors, our Gold Star Families, and all of our loved ones who have been touched by the horror of war. Their sacrifices have given meaning to our values and ideals. For that, we thank them. A grateful Nation will always remember, respect, and appreciate these heroes as the Next Greatest Generation.

We are extremely proud of all of our Soldiers, Civilians, and Families. Our Army has once again proved that it is America's Force of Decisive Action. Thank you for a job well done. Army Strong!

Raymond F. Chandler III	Raymond T. Odierno	John M. McHugh
Sergeant Major of the Army	General, United States Army Chief of Staff	Secretary of the Army