



Celebrating the Strength of the Nation: the Army's 237th Birthday

"Blessed to live in the land of the free, you could have opted for an easier path. But you know that freedom is not free. And so you volunteered and you stepped forward, and you raised your hand and you took an oath – to protect and defend; to serve a cause greater than yourself, knowing, in a time of war, you could be sent into harm's way."

-- President Obama, Washington, February 29, 2012

On this day, 237 years ago, our Nation's leaders established the Continental Army to protect oppressed colonists yearning for freedom – beginning our Army's rich heritage of defending our country and her citizens. Today, we celebrate the generations of Soldiers who embraced this calling and have served this great Nation with honor, loyalty and bravery in peace and war for more than two centuries.

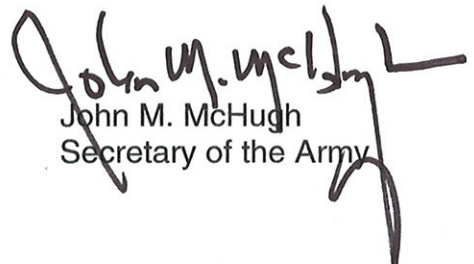
Change has always been an enduring theme of our Army's experience. After our long war for independence, we adapted to meet the needs of an expanding Nation – securing frontiers, building roads and canals, and mapping new territories. In the twentieth century, we fought two World Wars to defeat tyranny and spread the cause of freedom – emerging as *the* stabilizing global force. From Korea to Vietnam to the Persian Gulf, we answered our Nation's every call to preserve peace and stability. And, following the attacks of September 11, 2001, our Army made the decisive contribution to the global struggle against violent extremism. Today, more than a decade later, as we reflect on our accomplishments in Iraq, continue to serve our Nation's interests in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and protect the American people at home, we remain vigilant as we prepare for the challenges of an uncertain future.

Despite all this, some things have never changed. Our Army has always remained true to our enduring professional values: we value the dignity and respect of all our Soldiers, Families, and civilians; we honor the sacred trust our Nation places with us; and, we remain our Nation's loyal servants – defending the principles upon which our Declaration of Independence and Constitution were established. For 237-years, America's Army has always answered the Nation's call, and we always will.

On the Army's Birthday, we thank every Soldier, civilian and Family member who has ever served in our ranks for your dedication to duty and the selfless service that have made us all Army Strong. Happy Birthday!


Raymond F. Chandler III
Sergeant Major of the Army


Raymond T. Odierno
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Chief of Staff


John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army