CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
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Memorial Day 2006

"That from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion." These iconic words delivered by President Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg embody the true meaning of Memorial Day: to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom.

Each member of the Armed Forces swears an oath to support and defend the Constitution. The unspoken part of that oath is the willingness to lay down one's life to protect our liberties. Our freedom is not free, and the sacrifices of Service men and women throughout history stand as constant, powerful reminders of the price. President Lincoln said, "to truly honor these heroes, we must steadfastly resolve to continue their noble fight against all who would threaten our way of life."

On behalf of the Joint Chiefs and the men and women of the Armed Forces, I join all Americans in paying tribute to those who gave their lives in service to our country. We are eternally grateful for their selfless sacrifice, and honored to carry on their precious legacy.

PETER PACE
General, United States Marine Corps
Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff