WARRIOR CARE MONTH – OPEN LETTER TO OUR ARMY COMMUNITIES

In the month of November, Americans traditionally reflect on the service of our Nation's veterans – past and present – and give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy because of their courage and sacrifice. Fittingly, the Department of Defense has designated November as *"Warrior Care Month,"* taking stock of the advances we have made in treating our servicemen and women and, equally importantly, reaffirming to our troops our country's commitment to care for our wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and their Families.

Over the past seven years, the United States Army has transformed the way we care for our men and women in uniform. From Soldiers highly trained in self-aid, buddy-aid and combat life-saving techniques, to our combat medics on the battlefield, to our forward-based surgical teams and combat support hospitals, to our medical evacuation personnel and on to our superb regional medical centers overseas and in the United States, the Army's medical care system provides world-class care for our Warriors. Today, nearly 90 percent of Soldiers injured in battle survive, compared to the 70 percent who survived during World War II. There is no better evidence of our Army's commitment to taking care of our own. It's clear, our Army care effort doesn't start when a Soldier arrives at one of our outstanding hospitals--it begins well before they get to the hospital.

The Army supports its Wounded Warriors and their Families through the entire recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration process to ensure all their needs are fully met. Our thirty-six installation-based and nine community-based Warrior Transition Units provide individualized care for Soldiers and their Families. These efforts ensure Soldiers can heal and successfully transition—back into the Army or into civilian life—according to the best interests of the individual and their Family. For our most seriously injured Warriors and their Families, the Army Wounded Warrior Program offers dedicated and ongoing support, providing them a place to turn for help as their needs change over time. In addition, we are working daily to improve coordination between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs so our Soldiers and Families receive the full range of benefits they so clearly deserve.

This progress has come with the help of volunteers across America. So many have opened up their hearts and offered their time and volunteer efforts on behalf of our wounded, ill and injured Soldiers and their Families. They deserve our gratitude for their extraordinary work.

Warrior Care Month is a time for us to tell this story, the full story of Army care, throughout our Army Family. It is a story that touches every Soldier, every Family, and every community. Aside from the war and the defense of our Nation, providing the highest quality care and support to our Soldiers and their Families remains the Army's number one priority. No Soldier or Family should ever feel alone in their recovery.

We know there is more to be done. Meeting our obligation to Wounded Warriors and their Families will take the sustained efforts of not only the Army, but the Nation as a whole. Working together, the Army and our partners will ensure our Warrior Care programs are worthy of the sacrifices made by our Soldiers and Families in service to our great Nation.

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