



CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

The Liberty Bell is an American icon, a visible reminder of our Nation's foundation, values and vision. As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Liberty Bell, we should reflect on three legacies that all Americans share: Liberty, Opportunity and the Future.

Our unique heritage is defined by the Legacy of Liberty. As young school children, we learned about the first settlers: Pilgrims on the Mayflower, the Quakers' in Pennsylvania and many others. These pioneers came to America to escape oppression and to pursue personal liberty. The Liberty Bell symbolizes that freedom.

The Liberty Bell also reflects the Legacy of Opportunity. It symbolizes the promise of prosperity. Many of our parents and grandparents came to this country with no money. Instead, they believed that they could gain a degree of economic security through the strength of their hands and the depth of their hearts. They sought nothing more than a chance to succeed or fail on their own.

Finally, the Liberty Bell represents the Legacy for the Future. As a Nation, we have internalized that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are God-given rights. But, we also acknowledge these constitutionally protected provisions are not free. Our men and women in uniform defend them every day. They put aside their personal interests for the rights and well being of future generations. In honor of those sacrifices that shaped and secured our national identity, the Liberty Bell has been tolled to commemorate key dates, such as the first reading of the Declaration of Independence, the ratification of the US Constitution and on D-Day when US forces stormed the beaches of Normandy.

These three legacies define our American heritage and society. No other nation has been forged on these principles. No other nation is as strong or resilient because of them.

Today's environment can't be hostile towards individuality and liberty, so we must jealously guard our freedoms, preserving them for following generations. In the words of Benjamin Franklin, "They that give up essential liberty to obtain a little safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Let us never forget what the Liberty Bell embodies in a time that challenges our legacies.

May God bless our Armed Forces and may God bless America.

RICHARD B. MYERS
Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

