UNITED STATES ARMY
THE CHIEF OF STAFF

December 20, 2011

Army Gold Star Families,

As we pause to observe the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom/New Dawn, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to those who have borne the enormous burden of sacrifice on behalf of our Nation.

The Secretary of the Army, Sergeant Major of the Army and I have sent the attached letter to the force. I feel compelled, however, to address our Gold Star community personally.

No one knows the acute cost of war better than our Gold Star Families and as we close this chapter of our history, our Gold Star Families will always be honored and remembered by a grateful Nation.

I know that words will never fully express the sense of loss that you feel, but I assure you that our Army and our Nation will never forget those that bravely gave their last full measure in defense of our freedom.

I humbly thank all of you on behalf of the Soldiers, Civilians and Families of the United States Army.

Sincerely,

Raymond T. Odierno
General, United States Army