

# Holiday Message from Maj. Gen. Robert Williams

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Dec. 23, 2009 -- Military people have an intriguing relationship with holidays – when we are home with family and friends, it is truly a joyous occasion and yet our thoughts inevitably go to those who are serving our nation a long way from home.

We are grateful for the honor and virtue that compels Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines to volunteer to serve our nation regardless of personal hardship. We value their sacrifices. We salute their commitment. And we feel the strength of commitment and sacrifice more keenly when they are absent at holiday celebrations.

Whether we celebrate a holy season, a holiday season, or the measure of a year as we turn the calendar, this is a time for taking stock of what we treasure, to include our country, our families, our faith, our profession, our integrity, and our contributions to national security. Quiet, selfless contributions to our neighbors' holiday cheer remind us all that small gestures, tasks and words can have enormous power this time of year

A Carlisle area resident said it best when he wrote to us on behalf of his mother who enjoyed a memorable afternoon at one of the Seniors Holiday Parties last week. He wrote, "It is both heartwarming and commendable that, at this busy time of year, many people helped make this event the success it was [and] took the time to help others have a better holiday season. It is an honorable undertaking and a high point of the holiday season."

As you treasure shared moments with friends and family, respect yourself; drive safely in adverse weather conditions; do your part as a leader to prevent private motor vehicle accidents; drink responsibly at holiday celebrations, and stay vigilant to those who would do you and our nation harm.

As Secretary Robert Gates urges, "This holiday season, we must remember our obligation to look out for one another. We owe our attentiveness and care to those with whom we share a bond of trust, and we cannot falter our shared responsibility for their health and well-being."

As we begin this holiday season Deb and I extend our thanks for your attentiveness and care as well as your commitment to defend our country. Enjoy this well deserved time with your families and thank you for your service. Happy Holidays.