



Army's Top Leaders Mark Service's 238th Birthday

By Alex Dixon:

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At the ceremony celebrating the 238th birthday of the Army, Secretary of the Army John McHugh said birthdays can be bittersweet.

"When I blow out candles, I start thinking it's another year closer to that inevitable conclusion," McHugh said. "But I want to make a suggestion for this occasion: that we consider instead of turning a year older, the Army is turning a year newer, a year better, a year stronger."

Throughout the ceremony, which took place in the Pentagon auditorium, McHugh, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Ray Odierno, and Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel spoke on the idea of looking forward, while also reflecting on the past and the sacrifices made in the last 238 years.

"We stand on the shoulders of those who come before us," Odierno said. "Today, we're the best Army in the world. Two years from now, we'll be the best Army in the world. And 10 years from now, we'll be the best Army in the world, because that's who we are."

Wounded warriors and their families were present at the ceremony, along with many Soldiers in uniform.

"If you want to know how we became this great nation, you look into the eyes of wounded warriors,"

McHugh said. "You see the strength that they bring and it's really a reflection of the celebration that we have here today."

McHugh said today's Soldiers for life are more ready and resilient than they have ever been, as they continue to serve the nation that they have served now for more than 200 years now.

Odierno and Hagel said that while the families of Soldiers don't wear a uniform, they sacrifice just as much.

"The strength of our nation is our Army," Odierno said. "The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. And the strength of our Soldiers is our families, and that's what makes us Army strong."

Hagel said the Army's birthday celebrates an institution that is unmatched in the confidence and trust placed in it by citizens.

"I don't know of another country in the world that can say that," Hagel said. "[This celebration] represents an institution that has essentially been around longer than the republic."

After senior defense leaders spoke, four Soldiers with the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), recited the Soldiers' creed. After the audience sang the Army

song, senior leaders cut the service's birthday cake. ■



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