

# Monthly Message from the Chief

**November 2011**

On the eve of Veteran's Day, I feel very strongly about recognizing the commitment of the men and women who serve our country in the armed services. Like many of us in CAL FIRE today, I grew up in an era between major world conflicts. During this time, we saw the end of the Cold War and an increased focus on domestic issues. September 11, 2001 changed all of that. It seems that each of us can now identify a family member, friend or neighbor who has answered the call and volunteered to serve our country and protect our freedom. All too often, we also know someone who has been severely wounded or killed. These sacrifices are real and are happening every day.



CAL FIRE has a long history and relationship with the military and the members who have served. Our department grew dramatically as an organization in the years following World War II. The para-military structure that is the foundation for CAL FIRE as a respected and leading fire service organization was due in large part to the veterans returning home from the Great War. Many of our predecessors were veterans who fostered innovation and the "can do" work ethic CAL FIRE is known for. Following the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, our department again prospered from the training and skills these veterans brought home to us. The pilots, mechanics and managers who built our aviation program are a shining example.

Last month, along with members of the CAL FIRE Honor Guard, I proudly placed a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. It was an honor to stand in such a sacred place and pay respects to our military on behalf of CAL FIRE. As you celebrate Veterans Day, please take time to recognize and thank our veterans for their selfless sacrifice for our country and for their contributions to making CAL FIRE what it is today.

Ken Pimlott, Chief  
Acting Director