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Military Health System Senior Leadership Holds Second Annual Remembrance Ceremony for Fallen Military Medical Personnel

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, families of fallen military medical personnel gathered at Arlington National Cemetery to remember their loved ones who died during combat operations in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

“We gather together certainly to recognize their courage and sacrifice, the ultimate sacrifice, on the battlefield. Yet we also are here to acknowledge our own grief and the enduring loss felt by their families,” said Charles Rice, M.D., the senior medical official for the Department of Defense, and host of the event. “These medical service members – medics, corpsmen, nurses, doctors – gave their lives in order to save lives.”

The ceremony included a presentation of colors by the Joint Armed Forces Service Color Guard, a wreath laying, and a playing of Taps. Featured guests included Vice Admiral Adam Robinson, Surgeon General of the Navy; Rear Admiral David Jay Smith, Joint Staff Surgeon, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Major General Deborah Wheeling, Deputy Surgeon General of the Army National Guard; and Mrs. Lee Woodruff, author and co-founder of The Bob Woodruff Foundation, ReMind.org

“Military medical personnel have been on the battlefield saving lives throughout history,” said Rice. He added “To say that these heroes understood the risks of war is a simple fact. They volunteered to serve their fellow Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine as a caregiver. They also delivered life-saving care to our allies, civilians and –not infrequently – wounded enemy combatants. There are men and women alive today, here in the US and overseas, who owe their lives to the heroism of those we are honoring today.”

“We are humbled by the sacrifice of our fellow healers; we are thankful to their families for the too brief time that their loved ones served with us; and we are obligated to never forget what they have done,” concluded Rice. “This ceremony honors their service to us all.”

For more information about the event, please contact Charlene Reynolds at (703) 681-8882. Video clips from the ceremony will be posted to www.health.mil following the event.

