

[New Veterans Thank Secretary Chuck Hagel For Lifetime of Service](#)

New York, NY (January 29, 2015) – Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), today released the following statement on outgoing Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel:

“IAVA members applaud Secretary Hagel for a lifetime of work on behalf of our community. As a former enlisted soldier and the first Vietnam veteran to lead the Pentagon, Secretary Hagel has a keen understanding of the challenges veterans face when transitioning out of the military,” said IAVA CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff. “Under his leadership, the veteran community has experienced unprecedented access and collaboration with the Department of Defense. From establishing a new DoD agency to focus on the always important POW/MIA Accounting Mission to providing updated guidance for increased collaboration between veteran service organizations and military installations across the globe, Secretary Hagel has never stopped fighting for veterans, military-service members and their families. With the Secretary’s departure, there are still pressing issues to be addressed, and we hope that Congress and the President will put our servicemembers, veterans and families first as they work to address DoD’s budgetary challenges in the coming weeks ahead.”