

GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
December 23, 2005

Hello, this is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

This holiday season, while we gather with family and loved ones to exchange gifts, I hope you'll join me in reflecting on the most precious gift that anyone will give this year: the gift of service of our men and women in uniform.

Only a few weeks ago, over the Thanksgiving holiday, I had the extraordinary honor to bring the thanks and the blessings of Michigan citizens to our soldiers who are serving in the Middle East.

In Kuwait, I had the opportunity to serve a Thanksgiving meal to Michigan troops from Detroit and the Upper Peninsula.

In Baghdad, I saw a snapshot of the unbelievably difficult mission that our soldiers are facing. We talked about the war, about their experiences, about their hopes and fears. We talked about Michigan and their families and loved ones.

It is a hardship beyond imagination to spend so long from home in the midst of such danger. But I didn't see that hardship in the faces of those I met. Instead I saw utter selflessness.

The same is true of some incredibly brave Michigan families. More than two thousand citizen soldiers from Michigan are overseas today. That means two thousand families will be missing the company and the laughter and the smile of a loved one this holiday season.

So, this holiday season, we in Michigan indeed have a tremendous amount to celebrate. Let us celebrate not only the gifts of family and togetherness, but the gifts of our servicemen and women and their families for their extraordinary sacrifice.

From the Persian Gulf to our Great Lakes, from those enjoying the company of family in Michigan to those serving their country abroad, I wish all our citizens, wherever they are, a safe and happy and blessed holiday season.

Thank you for listening.