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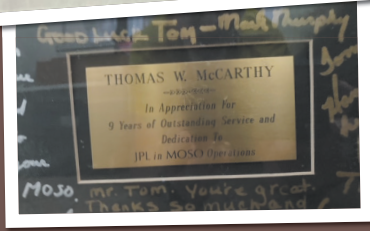
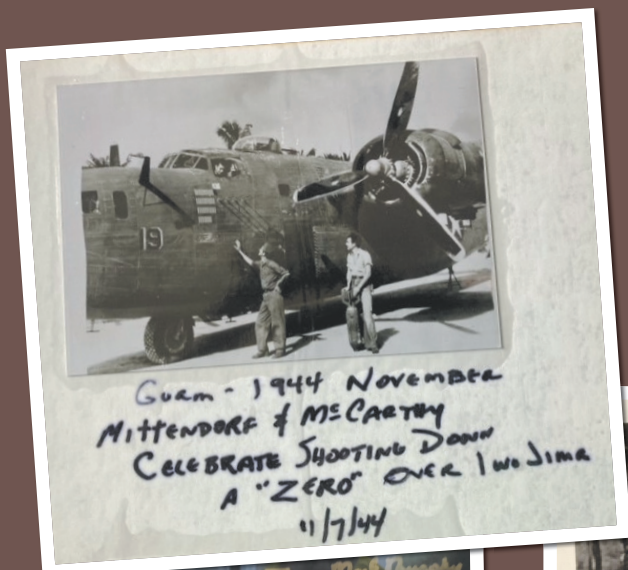
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# Secret life of veteran revealed

**Bob Cox**

Journal Review

A well-kept secretive life was laid to rest Wednesday near Cape Canaveral, Florida in the “Cemetery of Astronauts.” Tom McCarthy, who grew up in Crawfordsville, lived a life that included being instrumental in the victories in the Pacific Theater during World War II and later helped the United States land on the moon with his job with NASA.

Nephew Charles McCarthy, who also grew up and had a successful career with Crown Cork and Seal, referred to his uncle as “the uncle nobody knew.” It was not until he reunited with Tom in Florida where both men moved for retirement.

Charles visited with Tom often and had a whole new revelation of his uncle’s life and now understands why the elder McCarthy was

unknown. The work Tom did with the Navy and NASA was secretive and he had to keep a tight lip.

Tom’s father owned the McCarthy Radio Service business in Crawfordsville. The family sold the business after Tom’s junior year at Crawfordsville High School and moved to Lafayette.

In August after graduating from Lafayette Jefferson High School, Tom enlisted into the Navy with plans to work in radio communications. He was transferred to a newly formed photograph bomber squadron which specialized in photography aboard a B-24 bomber.

Tom was the First Radio Man/Turret Gunner on his plane. He flew many missions photographing Japanese encampments on the islands that were taken by the allies. Many times his plane would fly over an island gathering information weeks before the

invasion started. His plane flew over Iwo Jima three months before the battle for the island began.

His plane would come under attack and he had to man his gun located under the belly of the plane. More than once his crew had to land the B-24 riddled with bullet holes. His plane did record shooting down a Zero during

one skirmish.

The Navy marked the work of the crew as classified and the flight crew could not talk about their missions due to secrecy. In fact, Tom never opened up about his duties until his last couple of years of life.

After the war, Tom went to work for Western Electric





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and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory where he served his country again. His proudest achievements were his contributions to NASA's Multimission Operations Systems Office and Deep Space Exploration.

Tom's work led to the success of NASA landing a man on the moon, meaning once again Tom could not talk about his work. His silence was part of his job while working on top secret NASA projects.

"We had no idea Tom was working for NASA or what impact he had on the space programs," Charles said. "I am so fortunate that I was able to sit down and talk with my uncle about his life. No one in our family knew."

"Tom was able to pull together the contractors that led to the success of Apollo and other NASA programs,"

Charles said. "He was awarded many commendations and awards while working for NASA, and the family never knew."

Charles said his uncle's personality helped him keep his secrets through life.

"I found Tom as being very humble," Charles said. "He did not brag about all his success. He did his job and did not expect any fame or praise. Our family, which includes his one living brother in Lafayette, never knew all Tom did. We never knew."



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# How military spouses can find connection, support

## StatePoint

Military spouses sacrifice stable careers and time with loved ones due to constant moves to new duty stations, and hold down the fort at home during their spouses' deployments. That's why the USO prioritizes providing community and support to military spouses. Here are some of the ways their programs are making an impact:

- **Friendship:** USO Coffee Connections are monthly gatherings where military spouses can relax, craft, do yoga, swap advice and go on outings. The goal is building friendships among military spouses. When Jenna King's husband Tech Sgt. Howard King was forward deployed to Poland with less than 24 hours' notice, she says she found a home away from home at USO Lakenheath in the U.K., which has been hosting Coffee Connections since the war in Ukraine began. Because of the warm welcome and sense of community she found there, she and her children visit the center often. "There's something for each of us here," she said. "Being overseas, friends who are like family are the biggest blessing. And you can't turn down free coffee and snacks!"

- **Support for new parents:** Military parents are often away from family and friends during their pregnancies and first months as new parents. USO Special Delivery presented by Johnson's are baby showers that provide a touch of home. They allow expectant parents and mili-



tary spouses to connect and bond, and 72% of participants this year have stated in feedback surveys that this is the only baby shower they will receive. More than 20,000 parents have been served through this program since its 2013 launch, including 1st Lt. Erika Pearson, an active-duty service member in the Air Force. She knew her spouse, 1st Lt. Drew Pearson, could potentially be deployed around her due date. "The USO helped me make friends that I could rely on if my husband were to miss the birth, and offered me resources I could reach out to, if needed," says 1st Lt. Pearson.

- **Professional development:** Because of frequent relocations, military spouses often have trouble finding their professional footing. That's where the USO can step in. Connecting service members and military spouses

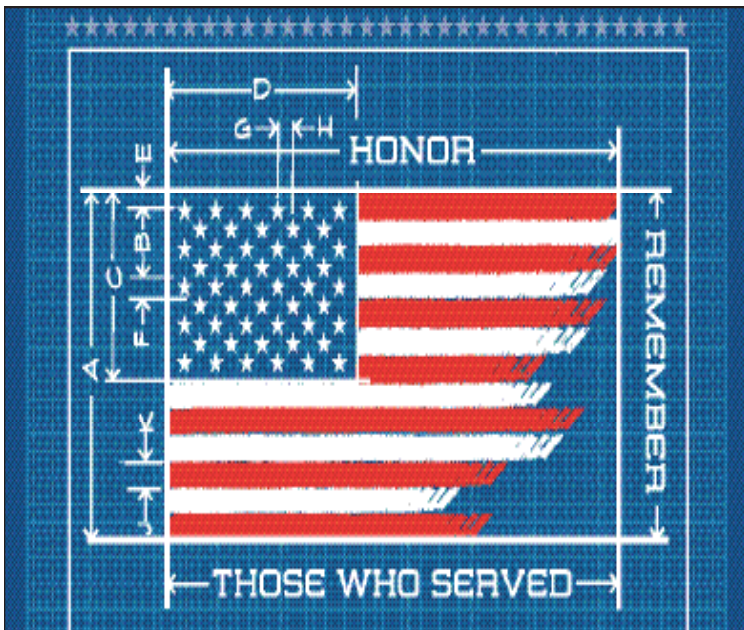
to resources that focus on employment, education, financial readiness, mentorship and veterans benefits, the USO Transition Program helps military families build a roadmap to achieve their goals and positions them for success throughout the duration of their service, as well as in their post-military life.

- **Support while solo-parenting:** The burden of solo-parenting can become especially apparent during deployments, when military family members must struggle to find a new normal. For Tessa Michaelson Schmidt, connection with her husband Brett, a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve, became complicated when he was deployed to Kuwait where there is an eight-hour time difference, unreliable Wi-Fi on base, and the added pressure of being deployed

near the frontlines. Because they and their two children have an incredible passion for reading, the USO Reading Program has been a blessing. Deployed service members can record themselves reading a book to their child. Then, the recording and a copy of the book are sent to that service member's family.

"They have a real response when they hear his voice, and then we get the books in the mail, and they know they're books from daddy," says Schmidt, who explained that her children will often watch the videos of their father just before bed, so that in a way, he is present for story time.

The life of a military spouse is undeniably challenging. By the USO fostering community and providing sources of connection, military spouses can feel supported and empowered.



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# Patriotic Displays: Show off your pride in America, but don't forget the rules

Displaying the flag outside your home is one of the most common ways we celebrate our country and the military's commitment to service. But before you do, familiarize yourself with the regulations found in the U.S. Flag Code. There are specific ways Old Glory is to be handled, displayed and retired from service.

## INSIDE THE CODE

The U.S. Flag Code was approved in June 1923, and is meant to guide patriotic residents through every step of the process. Each element of the code ensures that the flag is treated with the dignity and

respect befitting this symbol of our nation. All of the following rules are found in text from United States Code Title 4 Chapter 1.

## OUTDOOR RULES

Correctly flying Old Glory during the holiday season involves following a few simple rules. The banner should only be on display from sunrise to sunset, unless the building or outdoor staff is brightly lit. American flags should be flown at the peak of a staff or stationary pole, unless they have been ordered to half-staff. Purchase flags that are marked for all weather, since they are more

durable in rain and wind and more resistant to fading or tearing.

## FLYING AT HALF-STAFF

American flags are supposed to be flown at the peak of your staff or pole. There are regular occasions, however, when it's to be lowered halfway down – including Memorial Day, which honors military members who died in action. Elected officials may also order flags to half-staff when there has been a local or national tragedy, the death of a high-ranking official, or during a national emergency.

## RETIRING THE FLAG

If your banner has begun to deteriorate over time, it's important to retire it with all due respect. The U.S. Flag Code provides strict guidelines. The flag should be folded, then burned in a fire that is intense enough to completely consume the material. As it burns, citizens should participate in a brief moment of silence, say the Pledge of Allegiance or simply salute the flag. Once the banner has completely burned, be sure to safely extinguish the ashes. If you have more questions, contact your local VFW post to find out more about local flag-burning ceremonies.



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# 4 ways you can observe National Veterans and Military Family Month

## StatePoint

When was the last time you thanked a military member or veteran for their service? November is National Veterans and Military Family Appreciation Month and an excellent time to celebrate, support and honor service members.

That's why Points of Light, a global nonprofit organization dedicated to mobilizing people to take action that changes the world, is sharing ways you can get involved, along with the stories of former military members already doing so. From volunteering to donating and beyond, these ideas are based on the Points of Light Civic Circle®, a framework that highlights nine pathways to boosting social impact.

1. Listen and learn. Being informed about an issue can help you think more critically, make better decisions and lend stronger support. Check out two podcasts created by Military OneSource. Covering topics like deployment, casualty assistance, money management and parenting, they are designed to help military members and families thrive, and can help others understand the difficulties of military life.

2. Volunteer. Hands-on support is some of the most impactful work you can do in the nonprofit sector, and organizations rely heavily on volunteer power to carry out their missions. The American Red Cross is currently recruiting caseworkers for military members, veterans and families. This volunteer



role requires some training, but can be carried out from anywhere, and shifts are flexible. Whether you're looking for remote or in-person volunteer opportunities, search Points of Light Engage, the world's most comprehensive database of volunteer opportunities around the globe.

You can also get inspired by such dedicated volunteers as Navy servicewoman and Daily Point of Light Honoree Michaela White. For the past two years, she's advocated for mental health in the military, volunteering her time with Patrol Base Abbate, a nonprofit that fosters community and purpose among service members and veterans.

3. Donate. Nonprofits and NGOs are dependent on donations to pay their staff, recruit volunteers and execute their high-impact work.

This year marks Wounded Warrior Project's 20th anniversary. You can support its mission of providing career and VA benefits counseling, mental health support, adaptive sports initiatives and more, by making a donation for National Veterans and Military Family Appreciation Month.

4. Celebrate, thank and honor veterans. Veterans and their family members are everywhere – from working alongside you to doing everyday things like grocery shopping, eating at a restaurant and more. Consider ways you can celebrate and honor military members or veterans in your community. It might be as simple as thanking a coworker for their service, writing a thank you note and dropping it off at your local VA or sending one virtually through Soldiers'

Angels. You might also attend a Veterans Day parade or event in your community or simply ask a veteran about their service. These gestures can go a long way in helping veterans and service members feel seen and appreciated.

Retired fireman, Army veteran and Daily Point of Light Honoree Tom Schneider is a great example of someone who integrates his work with causes he cares about. Since 2017, he's extended a helping hand to those devastated by floods, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes and even plane crashes as an American Red Cross volunteer.

From volunteering your time and talent, to contributing your resources, there are many ways to honor former and current military members and their families this month.

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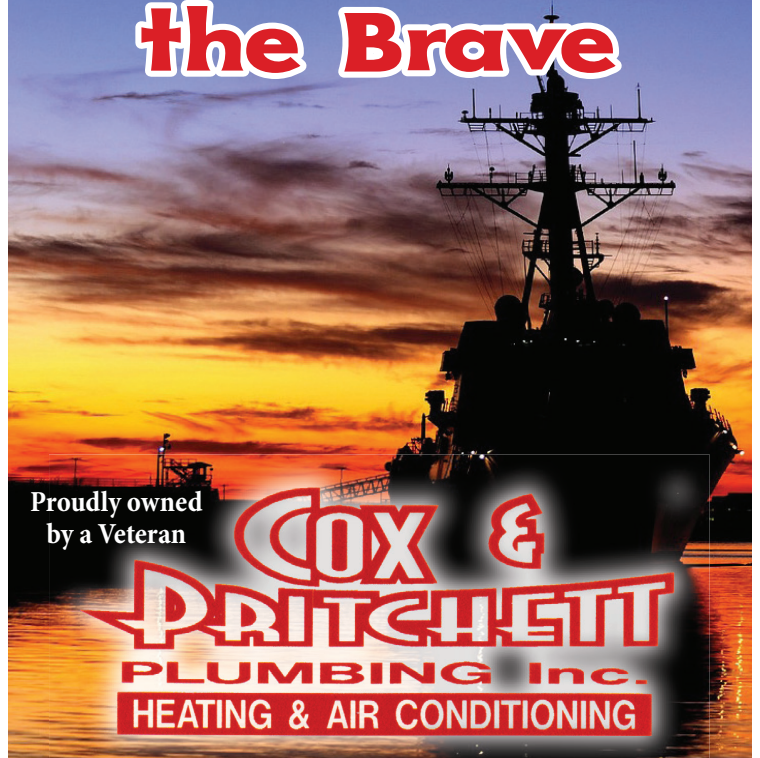


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# Holiday Viewing

Mix in some patriotic movies among your traditional Yuletide favorites

There are plenty of thought-provoking military-themed movies to be enjoyed, from 1970's "Patton" and 1986's "Platoon" to 1998's "Saving Private Ryan" and 2012's "Lincoln." But this time of year offers us all an opportunity to honor the particular sacrifices made by those who are serving in the military away from home and family during the holiday season.

Of course, time spent apart during this special time has always sparked films — as well as books and songs — but the plight of our service members and their loved ones has garnered an in-

creasing spotlight lately.

Tributes to their service have proliferated in patriotic holiday movies, perhaps most consistently on the Hallmark channel. The network's patriotic holiday movies include "Christmas Bedtime Stories" (2022), "USS Christmas" (2021), "Five More Minutes" (2021), "Operation Christmas Drop" (2020), "A Homecoming for the Holidays" (2019), "Write Before Christmas" (2019), "Time for You to Come Home for Christmas" (2019), "Christmas Homecoming" (2017), "Home for Christmas Day" (2017) and "The Christmas Note" (2015), among others.

Filmed on location in Norfolk, Virginia, "USS Christ-

mas" was written by TV news correspondent Andrea Canning, who is married to an ex-Marine Corps fighter pilot. "Five More Minutes" is set around the former Fort Bragg, and was inspired by a song of the same name by Scott McCreery, winner of the 10th season of "American Idol."

If you're more interested in the classics, cue up 1954's Michael Curtis-directed "White Christmas" movie-musical starring Bing Crosby, Rosemary Clooney and Danny Kaye, among others. Crosby and Kaye run into their former Major General while traveling as musical performers — only to discover that he's now penniless. They band

together to raise money for their former officer, and to raise some Christmas cheer, as well.

Director Billy Wilder's '50s-era "Stalag 17" starred Oscar-winner William Holden as a World War II prisoner of war and was set during the holiday season. The star of 1946's "It's a Wonderful Life," James Stewart, is a World War II veteran, unlike his character George Bailey. Stewart was heralded as the first American movie star to enlist, joining at age 33. More recently, 1992's "A Midnight Clear" told the fictional account of a brief Christmas truce between American and German soldiers just before World War II's furious Battle of the Bulge.



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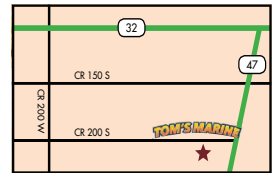
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# Paying Your Respects

Consider a holiday trip that honors our soldiers' ultimate sacrifices

With time off each year, there's ample opportunity to schedule visits to monuments and memorials that honor America's fallen service members. Here are several recommendations, found from one side of the country to another — with a few stops in between.

## **ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY**

Arlington, Virginia

Our country's best-known military cemetery sits on land once owned by Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. Arlington National is the final resting place for hundreds of thousands of military veterans and their dependents. Visitors are encouraged to visit the solemn Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a white marble sarcophagus created in 1921 to recognize anonymous service members who were killed in action.

Elsewhere, you will find the graves of former presidents John F. Kennedy and William Howard Taft, among others.

## **NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARCH**

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania

The fledgling Continental Army struggled through a brutal winter in 1777-78, as more than 2,500 soldiers lost their lives due to disease, exposure and starvation at their encampment in Valley Forge. The National Memorial Arch honors their



service and their memory. Of course, Valley Forge is also known as the spot where Gen. George Washington's war-turning advance later began.

## **NATIONAL WORLD WAR I MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL**

Kansas City, Missouri

The Liberty Memorial opened in 1926, and was designated by Congress as the country's official World War I memorial in 2004. Exhibits retrace the Great War and related events from 1914 through the peace conference in 1919 in Paris.

## **NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MUSEUM**

New Orleans, Louisiana

Formerly known as the

National D-Day Museum, this facility was likewise designated as the nation's official World War II memorial by Congress in 2004. Rotating exhibits are paired with an impressive array of memorabilia. The museum was built in New Orleans to recognize the city's role in winning the war in Europe: Amphibious boats used to transport troops were designed and built by the local Higgins Industries.

## **USS ARIZONA MEMORIAL**

Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Hawaii

Nearly 2,000 crewmen died when the USS Arizona took a direct hit during the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor that drew America into World War II.


The shipwreck was declared a national shrine in 1962, and now honors those who were killed on a date which President Franklin D. Roosevelt rightly said "will live in infamy."

## **NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR HERITAGE CENTER**

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Officially opened on Feb. 22, 2020, the National Medal of Honor Heritage Center serves as a lasting tribute to the recipients of the first Medals of Honor and all recipients since. The center reverently underscores both the heritage of the Medal of Honor and the sacrifices made by various recipients from the Civil War to the Global War on Terror.

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# What the Medals Mean

Service personnel typically only wear their medals on special occasions. Otherwise, they're likely displayed at home or perhaps tucked away in a drawer. Those humble settings don't adequately tell the stories of bravery and valor behind each and every medal.

Familiarize yourself with their meaning before gathering at the family dinner table during the holidays. You'll have an entirely new appreciation for the sacrifices your relatives made in service of our country.

## MEDAL OF HONOR

The nation's highest military honor awarded by Congress is presented by the

president, and honors conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. The medal was introduced in 1861, which created the Navy's Medal of Honor. Specific medals now exist for the Navy and Marine Corps, the Army, Air and Space Forces, and the Coast Guard.

## THE PURPLE HEART

This medal is awarded in recognition and thankfulness to those who have been wounded in combat. Those who are eligible for a Purple Heart include anyone who served on or after April 5, 1917, when the U.S. joined other Allied Forces in World War I. Families of fallen troops also

commonly receive this award to honor their ultimate sacrifice for our country.

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

The distinguished service cross is the nation's second-highest award for military valor, and is awarded for acts of bravery that do not rise to the level of a Medal of Honor. The medal was established in 1918, and follows the Medal of Honor's rules by having separate recognition for the Army, the Navy (the Navy Cross, which includes the Marine Corps), the Air Force and Space Force (Air Force Cross) and Coast Guard (Coast Guard Cross).

## SILVER STAR

The third-highest decoration for members of our armed forces recognizes gallantry in action with requirements below those of branch-specific service crosses and the Medal of Honor.

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL

This medal was established in 1918 and is awarded for meritorious service in a duty of great responsibility. The Army Distinguished Service Medal was established in 1918, followed by similar medals for the other branches of the armed forces.



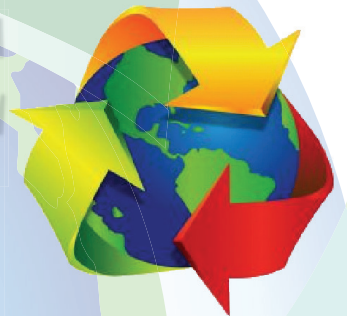
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# How to Give Back

Remember the military and their family during the holiday season

This time of year is all about family, but unfortunately members of our armed forces don't always enjoy that luxury. This puts an emotional strain on both those serving and the loved ones who've been temporarily left behind.

The good news is, there are a variety of ways for you to reach out and show gratitude for their service. You can volunteer your time, donate money, or help out with holiday-themed outreach efforts.

## **ADOPT A MILITARY FAMILY**

Families who are celebrating without their service member may feel lonely, stressed and overwhelmed by financial problems. Make the season brighter by "adopting" them. That may mean stopping by to help with chores, baby or pet sitting, or assisting with their financial burdens. Purchase prepaid gift cards that can be directed to everyday necessities like gas, groceries or household essentials.

Buy a special present if there are small children who will miss their parent this holiday season. Offer to chip in so kids can continue to pursue their personal interests or hobbies, whether that means carpooling, serving as an assistant coach, or helping out by buying needed materials. Be open to the family's specific needs, and help fill whatever voids are temporarily in place. It will be a great relief to our



brave members of the armed services, while helping ease the pain of those they're so far away from.

## **VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES**

Your local VA hospital is likely always in need of volunteer help, but particularly during the holidays when there are special events and activities planned. Ask local representatives about volunteer opportunities, even if it's just to spend quality time with the patients. Other

volunteer opportunities may be available through the local VFW, or human-resource directors at area veterans homes. Some older veterans may not have friends or family to spend the holidays with, and your presence could make all the difference.

## **MAKE A DONATION**

Seek out local non-profits that distribute filled stockings to spread holiday cheer. They're typically given to both active-duty service per-

sonnel and veterans. These organizations may need help with donations, gifts or letters, filling the stockings themselves or delivering them. If no one in your area is participating in this fun and meaningful holiday activity, consider finding a community partner and starting your own stocking drive. Just make sure you have plenty of helpers to complete packaging and distribution.

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# Know Your Military Holidays

Each of these annual commemorations has its own special meaning

The service and risks taken by members of our armed forces while defending America should be remembered year-round. We also have specific holidays dedicated to honoring the military which are spread out across the calendar and highlight their courage, bravery and sacrifice. Unfortunately, some confuse the meanings behind Memorial Day, Veteran's Day and Armed Forces Day. Here's what they recognize:

## **ARMED FORCES DAY**

Held on the third Saturday in May, Armed Forces Day pays tribute to all active per-

sonnel in our armed forces. Prior to 1949, each individual branch of the military had its own day of recognition for those currently serving. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson announced a single holiday in conjunction with the unification of all branches under the new Department of Defense. The Army, Air Force and Navy discontinued their specific days, though the Marine Corps Day continues.

## **MEMORIAL DAY**

Memorial Day honors those who died while in military service. Originally celebrated on May 30, the date has been permanently moved to the last Monday in May as part of the Congress'

Uniform Monday Holiday Act of 1971. This holiday was originally called Decoration Day, and commemorated sacrifices made by Civil War soldiers beginning in 1868. A small flag is now placed on each grave at the sprawling Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day.

## **VETERAN'S DAY**

Celebrated annually every Nov. 11, this holiday celebrates American veterans from all wars. The date was originally chosen to commemorate the end of World War I, as Allied Forces and Germany signed an armistice on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. The holiday

was originally known as Armistice Day, before being updated to honor all service members in June 1954.

## **OTHER KEY DATES**

Other key military-related dates throughout the year include the Navy Reserve's birthday on March 3, Gold Star Wives Day on April 5, the Air Force Reserve's birthday on April 14, the Army Reserve's birthday on April 23, the Army's birthday on June 14, the Coast Guard's birthday on Aug. 4, the Air Force's birthday on Sept. 18, Gold Star Spouse's Day and Father's Day on the last Sunday in September, the Navy's birthday on Oct. 13 and the Marine Corps birthday on Nov. 10.

# VETERANS DAY



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# Sending Your Thanks

Take a moment to thank those who keep us safe every day

Sending an encouraging message has never been easier, thanks to email, video upload and social media. Even if you prefer to communicate with old-fashioned letters, it's a great time to take a moment and reach out. Being away from loved ones during the holidays adds another layer of emotion to their everyday sacrifice. Here are three easy ways to express your gratitude.

## BY EMAIL

Sending an email may seem more impersonal than a handwritten note but for those who you know personally, it's the easiest and fastest way to reach out. Pack your note with lots of news from home, with updates on friends, family and things of local interest. Ask if there is anything you can do to make their service any easier.

They may want you to check on people back home, or send pictures of loved ones or their pets. Close with a note of gratitude.

Ask your service member if there are others who may need an encouraging word, and get their email addresses, too. These warm reminders of home provide welcome distractions anytime, but particularly during the holidays.

## BY LETTER

There's a reason this is such a tried-and-true method of communication with soldiers. Receiving a personal note when you're



miles away opens a conversation while providing an instant keepsake. Let them know how important their sacrifice is to everyone back home. Letters also give you a chance to share photos. There are ways to connect, even if you don't have a family member or friend who's serving elsewhere during the holidays.

Military pen-pal services like Forgotten Soldiers Outreach, Operation Gratitude and AnySoldier can connect

anyone with service personnel who might appreciate an encouraging note. Begin these notes with generic salutations like "Dear Hero," while thanking them for their service. If you feel comfortable, share stories of your time or a family member's time in the military. Include a return address in case they want to respond.

## BY VIDEO

Services members may have access to video con-

ferencing software like Skype or Google Meet, which allows real-time conversations with family and friends. Unreliable internet service might make these connections difficult to maintain, in particular with overseas military installations, but it's worth the effort to pass along face-to-face holiday greetings.



HAPPY VETERANS DAY

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