



Holiday
SALUTE

Display the Flag

Displaying a flag at your home or business is a great way to show support to the armed forces.

It should be displayed often but is especially important during national holidays and other special occasions. Be sure to follow proper flag etiquette.

GENERAL RULES

Do display the flag, when hanging vertically, with the union to the north and east.

Don't fly the flag upside down, unless you are in distress.

Don't ever attach any thing to the flag. This includes marks, insignia, words or lettering, numbers and drawings of any kind.

Do clean and mend the flag when necessary.

DISPLAYING THE FLAG OUTDOORS

Do illuminate your flag at night.

Don't place other flags above or higher than the American flag.

Don't use the flag to hold, carry or deliver anything.

Do place the flag at half-staff in mourning.

DISPLAYING THE FLAG INDOORS

Do always position the flag in its place of honor — to the right of any speaker, staging area or focal point. Any other



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flags should be displayed to the left.

Do keep the American flag at

the center and in the highest position when in the company of other flags.

Don't use the flag as a covering for a ceiling, or fasten or store it in a way that it can be

easily torn.

Don't allow the flag to touch the ground or floor.

Patriotic Holidays

Here are some details about 10 holidays that celebrate our country and its people.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

Observed: Third Monday in January
Established: 1986 as a national holiday, but was not celebrated in all 50 states until 2000.

This day commemorates the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who advocated for civil rights and led the Civil Rights movement.

PRESIDENTS' DAY

Observed: Third Monday in February
Established: 1971

Originally established in 1885 in recognition of Washington's birthday, the holiday was renamed to consolidate the celebration of Washington, Lincoln (whose birthday was a holiday in several states) and all other American presidents.

MEMORIAL DAY

Observed: Last Monday in May
Established: 1868

This federal holiday commemorates those who died in service to the United States. Every year on this day, many volunteers place an American flag on each grave in national cemeteries.

FLAG DAY

Observed: June 14
Established: 1916

While not an official federal holiday, the day commemorates the official adoption of the U.S. flag by the Second Continental Congress. President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the day to be a celebration of freedom, but only Pennsylvania has adopted the day as a state holiday.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Observed: July 4
Established: July 4, 1776

This day recognizes the United States' independence from England. It celebrates the moment we became a country that so many fought for and so many continue to fight for.

LABOR DAY

Observed: First Monday in September
Established: 1894

While not directly connected with the military, this federal holiday honors the

nation's working people and the great strides that have been taken to secure our country's strength and well-being.

CONSTITUTION DAY

Observed: September 17
Established: 2004

The day the U.S. Constitution was signed. It became an official federal holiday in 2004, after many years of being known as "Citizenship Day."

VETERANS DAY

Observed: November 11
Established: 1954

This day commemorates all veterans of the U.S. military. It is celebrated on November 11 to honor the Armistice, which ended World War I in 1918.

BILL OF RIGHTS DAY

Observed: December 15
Established: 1941

This day celebrates the addition of the Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution. On the 150th anniversary of its ratification, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared the day a national holiday.



While the holiday season is a great time of year to pay tribute to the armed forces, it is certainly not the only holiday that reminds us to be thankful for our freedoms.

Honoring Our Veterans

Honoring and serving our troops at home while they serve elsewhere is vital both to morale and the physical and emotional well-being of our armed forces.

There are multitudes of ways to show thanks and give back to those who have given — and continue to give — so much in the name of our freedom. Here are 10:

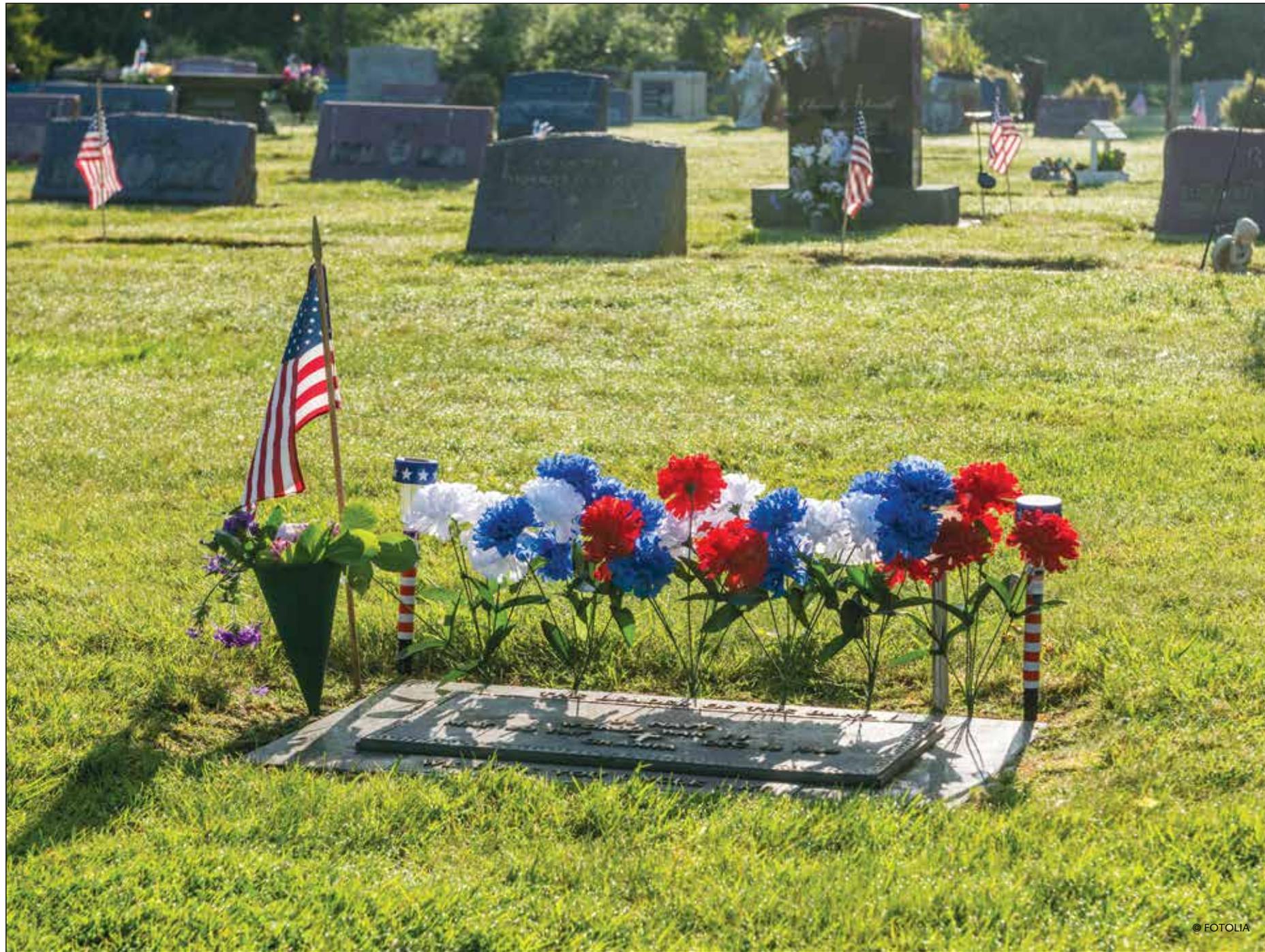
Say “thank you.” Veterans never get tired of hearing a sincere thanks of appreciation for their sacrifice. Say it to someone you love or a complete stranger. The result will be the same.

Volunteer your time. Help out at a “welcome home” event or offer to drive veterans to or from local VA offices and hospitals so they can access the services they need.

Volunteer your expertise. Think about what skills you have and how you could help. For example, if you are good with a camera, offer to take photographs. If you are great with numbers, help a vet with his taxes or benefits.

Attend a celebration or memorial. This could be a cemetery, city celebration or neighborhood block party.

Organize a celebration or memorial. If you cannot find a celebration or memorial



near you, help organize one. There likely are others who would love to help out to honor our vets and current servicemembers.

Visit a cemetery. Stop by your local hardware store or craft store to purchase mini American flags, which can be found inexpensively. Many

vets have no one caring for their graves any longer, and a little TLC from you is a thoughtful touch.

Visit a VA hospital. Sit with veterans who don't receive many visitors. You might find a lasting friendship.

Listen to a veteran's story. Veterans have amazing life

stories. Some devastating, some ordinary — all heroic. Ask a veteran about her experience and give her the attention she deserves.

Make a donation. There are dozens of organizations working tirelessly to honor, help and protect veterans of the United States. Pick one that is

meaningful to you and donate. Remember there is no such thing as a donation too small.

Pick up the tab. If you feel inclined and are able to do so, discreetly cover the tab of a veteran while at a restaurant or coffee shop. It's a small way to show your appreciation.

Visit a War Memorial

This holiday season, one way to honor the brave men and women who have served in the United States armed forces is to visit a monument memorializing their service.

Here are just a few of the many monuments that exist throughout the country:

TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER Arlington, Virginia

The soldier in this tomb died in France while fighting in World War I, but his identity remains unknown. This grave site was chosen to represent all American soldiers who have lost their lives serving their country. Engraved on the tomb are the words: “Here rests in honored glory, an American soldier known but to God.”

MARINE CORPS WAR MEMORIAL Arlington, Virginia

Also known as the Iwo Jima Memorial as it was erected from a photo of six soldiers who raised an American flag in Iwo Jima in 1945 at the end of World War II. It commemorates no specific war but honors the dedication of Marines.



NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARCH King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

This memorial honors the

winter George Washington and his troops endured at Valley Forge during the Revolutionary War. Inscribed at the top are the words:

“Naked and starving as they are, we cannot enough admire the incomparable patience and fidelity of the soldiery.”

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL WALL Washington, D.C.

The wall memorialized all soldiers killed or missing in action during the Vietnam War. The wall exists in two pieces that together stretch almost 300 feet in length. They hold 58,000 names, organized by the date of casualty.

KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL Washington, D.C.

This outdoor monument is known for its 19 larger-than-life, stainless steel soldier statues and the black granite wall covered in etchings of photos from the National Archives. It commemorates the 5.8 million Americans who served in the war — of which more than 54,000 died and more than 100,000 were wounded.

USS ARIZONA MEMORIAL Honolulu, Hawaii

This is the resting place for the more than 1,000 sailors killed when the ship sank during the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL Washington, D.C.

Opened to the public in 2004, this memorial honors the World War II effort — including the 16 million members of all armed forces who served, the more than 400,000 who died and the civilians who worked tirelessly on the home front.

Our 'Little Patriots'

The holidays can be especially difficult for the smallest family members of service men and women. Spread a little Christmas cheer and go out of your way to remind them they are not alone.

REMEMBER MILITARY FAMILIES

Military families sacrifice so much in their support to defend our freedom. It is fitting, perhaps, that November is declared Military Family Month.

Many organizations host adopt-a-family programs that help to distribute the wish lists and Christmas lists of military families. But you don't have to go through one of these organizations to help out a military family.

You may prefer to contact a local church, or help a family known to a friend or loved one.

DEALING WITH DEPLOYMENT

Separation during the holidays is particularly hard if it is the first holiday season a military family has to spend apart. If you know a family that is struggling with a deployment, take extra care

to stop by and visit.

You might offer support in the form of providing meals, taking care of a house-hold chore or offering to babysit.

When the community rallies around its military families, not only do those fami-

lies feel stronger, but the deployed soldier can rest easy that his or her family is being looked after.

LITTLE PATRIOTS EMBRACED

Little Patriots Embraced is

an organization focused on reducing the emotional stress of military families during the holidays. There are 1.9 million children who have parents in the military.

Little Patriots Embraced works with affiliates and vol-

unteers to help create packages for these children, and monetary donations are put toward providing relief when times get tough. Care packages include items such as teddy bears, blankets, music and journals.



Send a Card or Package

Members of the United States armed forces have an undying commitment to our country. Many service men and women serve far away from their own friends and family, and the holidays can be especially hard on them.

Sending a thoughtful card during the holidays is a great way to show how much you appreciate their service.

GIVE THANKS

While email and social media make it much easier for military members to stay in touch with loved ones, there is nothing quite like getting a letter in the mail.

There are many organizations that work solely to encourage our troops through collecting and sending celebratory cards and notes. Whether you choose to send a note of gratitude through an organization, or just to someone you love, giving thanks this holiday season for the freedoms you enjoy can easily become your new holiday tradition.

SHARE THE LOVE

If you have a particular soldier you write to, ask for the names of those in his unit. Gather friends and family together and have them each draw their own card for a member of the unit.

Both your loved one and the rest of the unit will be appreciative that such thought was given to them.

CREATE A CARE PACKAGE

Whether you are putting together a gift for a soldier



you know, or just want to show your gratitude to any soldier, assembling a care package is a great way to show those in the armed forces

that they are remembered and loved.

Be sure to include favorite snacks — or introduce them to yours.

Ask your loved ones what they need during their deployment. Don't be afraid to include practical items, such as lip balm and sun-

screen. These thoughtful additions can be used throughout the year, depending on where the service-member is stationed.



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Visit with a Veteran

Often, the most valuable gift you can give to someone is your time. This can be particularly true for the United States veteran population.

Veterans are in great need of our attention given their high

risk for depression, anxiety, homelessness and suicide.

In fact, according to the United States Department of Veteran Affairs, as of 2014, approximately 20 veterans die of suicide every day, and six of every 20 were users of VA services.

FIND A VA HOSPITAL

VA Hospitals are a wonderful outlet to visit veterans. Not only are the veterans in these facilities wounded in some

manner, but the hospital will likely have visiting programs that can make a visit easier.

If you don't know who you should visit with, staff are happy to recommend the names of veterans who would love to chat with you.

SURPRISE A VETERAN

If you can't visit with a veteran, consider donating to an organization that helps veterans develop healthy social lives.

Brown Paper Ticket is one such organization. The group facilitates unique gifts for veterans through a partnership with the Veteran Tickets Foundation to get tickets to events such as concerts, plays, baseball games and more to veterans with an honorable discharge, as well as their immediate families.

GIVE UP YOUR AIRLINE MILES

Another way to honor veter-

ans is to help facilitate a visit for them. It might seem like a small gesture, but donating your unused airline miles to a veteran or active soldier can make the difference of them being able to see and visit with a loved one.

Go through the Hero Miles Program, which has helped arrange for more than 50,000 tickets to members of the military and their families. After all, all any of us wants is to not be alone during the holidays.