WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT®



VETERAN EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION GUIDE

Honoring Veterans in Your Company and Community

★ DIGITAL BOOKLET

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT®

As America's leading veteran service organization, it's our mission to honor and empower warriors, although we support veterans of all eras through government advocacy.

We want to ensure that the 16.2 million veterans* who live and work in our communities receive the gratitude they deserve.

This booklet provides valuable information about how to show appreciation to veterans on your team and in your community throughout the year.

Thank you for doing your part to help honor those who served and continue to serve.

Sincerely,

Your Friends at Wounded Warrior Project

Wounded Warrior Project
4899 Belfort Road, Suite 300 | Jacksonville FL, 32256
woundedwarriorproject.org

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*2022 U.S. Census

REASONS WHY VETERANS ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR COMPANY

Honoring the contributions and sacrifices of your veteran employees and recognizing the value their unique strengths bring can foster a more inclusive culture, boost morale, and inspire your entire workforce.

1. **Proven leaders:** Veterans often have superior leadership abilities because of their training and discipline, often from a young age.

2. **Goal-oriented:** Veterans are trained to set clear objectives and deliver results. Their military experience emphasizes accountability, efficiency, and mission completion..

3. **Mission-focused:** Veterans are comfortable working in a team environment where everyone is focused on the same mission.

4. **Communication:** Veterans are skilled at communicating clearly and efficiently across all levels of an organization, ensuring alignment throughout the chain of command.

5. **Teamwork:** Veterans understand the value of trust and collaboration, having relied on one another in high-stakes situations - skills they carry into any team-oriented workplace.

6. **Strong work ethic:** Veterans are known for their dedication and perseverance, often going above and beyond to complete tasks under pressure and see them through to the end.



★ To see 10 more reasons, click here.

Who is considered to be a United States veteran?

A veteran is someone who has served in the military as a reservist in the National Guard or an active-duty service member in one of the six military branches: the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy, or Space Force.

How many veterans are there in the U.S. workforce?

According to the Department of Labor, in 2000, there were 13.5 million veterans in the workforce. Due in large part to retirements, that number has decreased to just under 8.4 million veterans as of 2025 with 78% working in non-government positions. Veterans currently make up about 5% of the U.S. workforce of almost 169 million people.

CREATE A VETERAN EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION CALENDAR

We encourage you to review the plans in this guide and choose the ones that you believe will resonate with your veteran employees and customers.

Before you start planning consider these questions:

1. **How many veterans does your company employ?** If you don't have information about when and what branch of service they served in, consider sending out a survey to find out. You can also survey all employees to identify veterans or veterans' family members within your organization.

2. **Who can help provide valuable input?** As you create a calendar, consider inviting a selection of your veteran employees to serve on a planning committee to help guide your company's activities. Their insights and buy-in can make your efforts more meaningful and impactful. Invite staff, including those from non-military backgrounds, from across different service branches, ages, and departments for a broader perspective.

3. **What times of year work best for our organization?** Review the event calendar on page 9 to incorporate veteran recognition into existing company events or to plan new ones that align with your culture and schedule.

4. **How will we communicate plans?** Work with your internal communications team to announce plans in advance and send reminders.

5. **How do we know it worked?** Plan to conduct post-event surveys and focus groups to determine what worked well and identify areas of improvement before planning for the next year's activities.



> "Veterans Day is meaningful for me because it makes me proud to recognize the service of all of my brothers and sisters who have served. It reminds me of the great men and women I have served with."
>
> — WARRIOR
> **MARK LALLI**

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HONORING YOUR COMPANY'S VETERANS ON VETERANS DAY AND THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Whether it's Military Appreciation Month in May, or Veterans Day in November, these ideas can be implemented at various times throughout the year.

1. **Implement Veteran-Friendly Workplace Policies:** Review current policies to ensure they support veteran mental health and provide support, services, and resources to those who have recently transitioned from military to civilian work life.

2. **Observe Veterans Day on November 11:** This day should be at the top of your list! Think about planning a series of activities and events leading up to this important day. Your company might want to add Veterans Day to the list of paid holidays or give veterans a paid day off. You could also evaluate the option of providing floating holiday pay for employees who need to be at your place of business on Veterans Day.

3. **Showcase their stories:**
   - ★ Share a profile of veteran employees' valuable service on the company's intranet or in the company newsletter throughout the year. Be sure to obtain employee's approval first.
   - ★ Add a moderated panel or ask a veteran employee to share their story in person at a company gathering.

   Questions can include:

   - Why did you go into the service branch you did?
   - What did you do in the military?
   - How long did you serve?
   - What was your favorite moment during your time in the service?
   - How has your service helped you in your position with our company?

   If a veteran chooses not to share their story, it's important to offer respect and support to help them feel valued and included in the workplace.





> The American flag stands for freedom. Not just freedom as in the ability to walk around and go where you want, but also the freedom to believe what you want to believe. I think sometimes we take these freedoms for granted, but when I see the flag, I am proud to know that I am an American.

— WARRIOR
BETH KING

4. **Recognize veterans personally:** Collaborate with company executives and managers to ensure all veterans feel personally recognized and appreciated by leadership. Simply saying "thank you" to veterans by name is a powerful way to show them that their company appreciates them and acknowledges their significant role in the company's success.

5. **Organize a flag etiquette clinic:** With the help from veteran employees, host a clinic to teach proper flag etiquette. Consider planning a special flag-raising ceremony on Flag Day, or anytime of year. (see pages 10-11)

6. **Provide professional development opportunities:** Offer veteran employees professional development opportunities which could include leadership training, skill-building sessions, and educational workshops that align with their career goals.

7. **Host a "lunch-and-learn" series:** Educate and inspire all employees with a company-wide lunch-and-learn event with speakers from a veteran service organization like Wounded Warrior Project®. You could also offer a veterans-only program to focus on topics like veterans' benefits, leadership, or coping with combat-related PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Whether you plan one or a series of events, your veteran employees will value the opportunity to participate.

8. **Have an in-office celebration:** Consider catering breakfast or lunch honoring veterans hosted by their department to show appreciation and foster a sense of community and support among all employees.

9. **Hold employee fundraising events:** Encourage friendly competition by having different locations or departments compete to see who can raise the most money for a military or veterans service organization, awarding the winning team a prize. These donations can help impact the lives of veterans and their families.

   ★ For workplace fundraising ideas, click here.

10. **Engage in team-building games:** Ask veterans to lead a military-themed trivia competition focused on history, famous leaders, achievements and facts. For a more active group, consider organizing a flag relay race to foster both a sense of teamwork and patriotism.

IDEAS TO SHOW GRATITUDE TO VETERANS AND ACTIVE MILITARY IN THE COMMUNITY

Your company can be a visible supporter of those who have served or are currently serving. **Here are a few ideas to consider:**

1. **Provide a unique offer to veterans:** Whether you offer veterans a special reason to visit your business on Veterans Day or any day of the year (like a free product or service or a discount), showing your appreciation to them will encourage the goodwill of your employees and your community.

2. **Sponsor local veteran events:** Get involved with veterans' service organizations to make a difference in your local community. Your organization can make financial contributions or sponsor special events around military or patriotic holidays and throughout the year, like a **WWP Carry Forward® 5K event.**

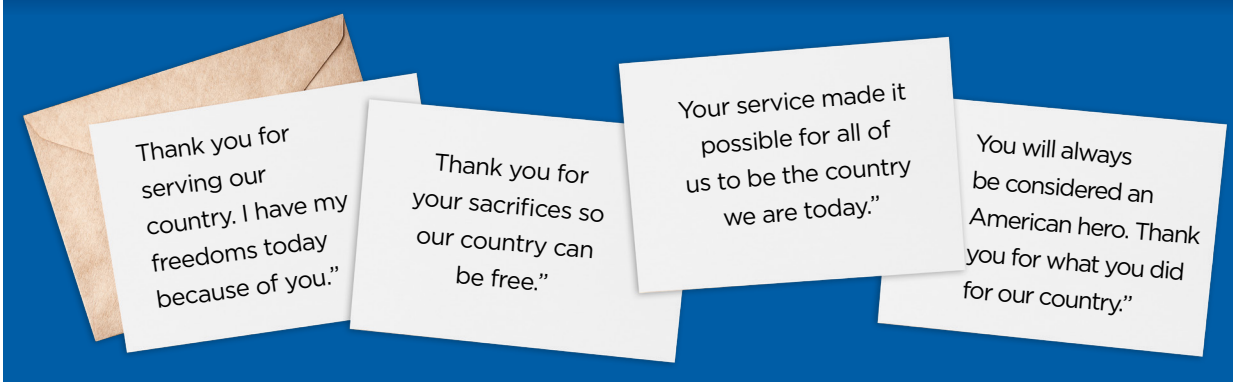
3. **Share employee notes with veterans at a nursing home or VA (Veterans Affairs) hospital:** Throughout the year (but especially before Veterans Day), ask employees to write notes that can be brought to an assisted living facility or Veteran Administration Hospital for distribution. Thanking a veteran for serving their country and letting them know their service is appreciated and respected is a small recognition that will mean the world to an older or ill veteran.

> **"I celebrate Independence Day by spending time with my family and friends. It's unique because it provides an opportunity to join with other Americans in a shared space, all with a collective feeling that any trial or tribulation that we come against, we will survive, and we will thrive."**

— WARRIOR
TYSHAWN JENKINS



These are simple tribute messages employees can include if they need suggestions:



4. **Support veterans nonprofits:** Partnering with or donating to a 501(c)3 organization that serves the veterans community such as Wounded Warrior Project can provide meaningful volunteer opportunities, strengthen customer loyalty, and offer tax benefits to your company. **Learn more about how to partner with WWP.**

5. **Use your social media voice:** Sharing how your company honors its veteran employees and paying tribute to all who serve on your social media platforms will show your support for veterans and our military.

6. **Write letters to members of the military serving overseas:** Consider adding a letter writing activity to your next staff gathering or set a goal of writing a certain number of letters that can be sent out to those who are deployed in time for a holiday.

Best practices to share with employees:

- Be positive and encouraging.
- Address notes generically — Dear Soldier or Hero.
- Avoid store-bought greeting cards with pre-printed messages.
- Include positive messages only. Avoid mentioning death, killing, suffering and injury.
- Share the impact their service has on you, your community, and our country as a whole.
- Recognize their sacrifice and that of their families.
- Thank them for protecting our freedoms.
- Don't use glitter, confetti, or anything not securely attached to the letter or card.
- Don't be disappointed if you don't hear back from a soldier.

7. **Plan a Day of Service:** Provide an opportunity for all employees to volunteer their time with a local veterans organization. Create camaraderie for your employees and show gratitude to these heroes by spending time with senior veterans at a retirement home, helping with an event for injured veterans' families, or similar activities.

8. **Host a Donation Drive:** Partner with a local veterans service organization, hospital, or shelter to identify their most needed items. Common donations include: clothing, hygiene products, non-perishable food, and gift cards. If you're aligning the drive with a specific holiday or observance, be sure to schedule collection and delivery well in advance.



"At BSRO, we are fortunate to have military veterans on our teams and in our stores, every day. We honor our veterans for their incredible sacrifices and service to our great nation, and we are continually dedicated to supporting their success."

— **HEATHER ROBERTSON,** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HR AT BRIDGESTONE RETAIL OPERATIONS, LLC



> Memorial Day is a solemn day that I use to reflect on friends and family who have paid the ultimate price for the under-appreciated freedoms we all enjoy.

— WARRIOR
BRIAN VINES

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VETERANS DAY AND MEMORIAL DAY?

Veterans Day is a federal holiday observed annually on November 11; the day World War I ended in 1918. **It is a time for us to pay our respects to all those who have served in the U.S. military.** We celebrate and honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good. It recognizes the contributions of military veterans who are our co-workers, neighbors, family, and friends.



Memorial Day is a federal holiday commemorated on the fourth Monday of May. **It is a time for us to honor those who have died in service to our nation.** Originally known as Decoration Day, many people visit cemeteries and memorials on Memorial Day and decorate the headstones with flowers and flags. Although viewed by most Americans as a day for picnics and special sales that marks the beginning of summer, it is a somber day of remembrance for those who have lost loved ones or comrades with whom they served and died for our freedom. Companies should be sensitive to using "Happy Memorial Day" and celebratory language in internal and customer communication.

IMPORTANT MILITARY AND NONPROFIT RECOGNITION DAYS

We have compiled a list of military, veteran, and other recognition days throughout the year as a reference for you to use as your company plans ways to honor veterans and active military members.

JANUARY



27 Vietnam Peace Day

FEBRUARY



16 National Caregiver Day
18 Corporate Social Responsibility Day
19 U.S. Coast Guard Reserve Birthday

MARCH



Month of the Military Caregiver

3 U.S. Navy Reserve Birthday
13 K-9 Veterans Day
15 American Legion Birthday
25 Medal of Honor Day
29 National Vietnam War Veterans Day

APRIL



Month of the Military Child

5 Gold Star Spouses Day
9 Nat'l Former POW Recognition Day
14 U.S. Air Force Reserve Birthday
23 U.S. Army Reserve Birthday

MAY



National Military Appreciation Month, Mental Health Awareness Month

2ND SUN Military Spouse Appreciation Day
11-18 Armed Forces Week
18 Armed Forces Day
LAST MON Memorial Day

JUNE



PTSD Awareness Month

6 D-Day
12 Women's Veterans Day
14 U.S. Army Birthday
14 U.S. Flag Day
23 Coast Guard Auxiliary Day

JULY



4 Independence Day
25 National Hire a Veteran Day

AUGUST



4 U.S. Coast Guard Birthday
7 Purple Heart Day
14 Navajo Code Talkers Day
17 National Nonprofit Day
29 U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Birthday

SEPTEMBER



National Suicide Prevention and National Service Dog Month

11 Patriot Day (9/11 Remembrance)
18 U.S. Air Force Birthday
3RD FRI National POW/MIA Recognition Day
LAST SUN Gold Star Mother's Day

OCTOBER



National Depression Awareness Month

13 U.S. Navy Birthday
26 Day of the Deployed

NOVEMBER



National Veterans & Military Family and Warrior Care Month

TBD National Veterans Small Business Week
10 U.S. Marine Corps Birthday
11 Veterans Day
15 National Philanthropy Day

DECEMBER



7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
13 U.S. National Guard Birthday
18 Nat'l Wreaths Across America
20 U.S. Space Force Birthday

AMERICAN FLAG ETIQUETTE AND TRADITION

As we celebrate the freedoms and values that define America, and the brave men and women who fought to defend them, let's proudly display our flag with honor, respect, and dignity.

Display with Pride.
Fly from sunrise to sunset. If displayed at night, flags should be illuminated.

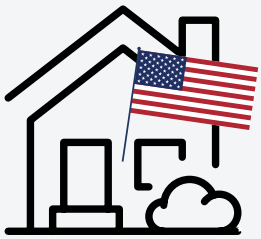
Handle with Respect.
The flag shouldn't be flown in inclement weather unless it's an all-weather flag.

Long May She Wave
The flag should never touch the ground or anything beneath it.

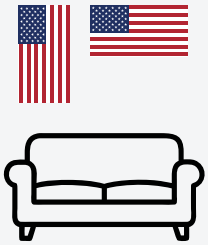
Salute with Honor.
During the Pledge of Allegiance or the National Anthem, individuals should stand at attention facing the flag with their right hand over their heart.

Retire with Dignity
When a flag becomes worn or tattered, it should be retired by burning it in a dignified manner not thrown away in the trash.

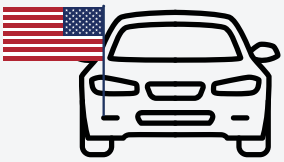
WHEN DISPLAYING THE FLAG...



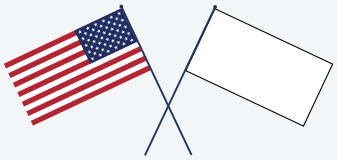
From your house or fence, place the blue field (union) at the peak of the staff.



On a wall or window, the blue field should be on the observer's left.



On your vehicle clamp the staff to the right front bumper.



When displayed with another flag, place the U.S. flag to the observer's left when crossed.

★ For more information on the American flag and flag etiquette, click here.

FOLDING THE U.S. FLAG

Use the following steps to properly put away the American flag, paying tribute to the principles of liberty and justice for which it stands.

1. **Hold the flag waist-high with another person so that its surface is parallel to the ground. Fold in half lengthwise with the stripes pointing outward.**



2. **Fold in half lengthwise again, aligning the edges.**



3. **Starting at the striped end, make a triangular fold by bringing the folded edge to the open edge, creating a 45-degree angle.**



4. **Turn the outer point inward to form a second triangle.**



5. **Continue folding the flag in triangular folds, until only the blue field with starts is visible.**



6. **Tuck the remaining portion of the flag into the folds to secure it in a triangle.**



Thank you for supporting warriors who were injured in their service to defend our freedoms. Learn more at woundedwarriorproject.org

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT®

SOURCES:

click on titles to link to source article

Wounded Warrior Project Newsroom
The Vital Role of Veterans in the Workplace and How to Support Them

Department of Labor
Veterans in the Labor Force: 6 Stats

Forbes.com
From Uniform to Workplace: Why America's Veterans are Great Hires

Indeed.com
Indeed.com (How to Honor Veterans at Work)

NoWorkerLeftBehind.com
5 Ways to Show Appreciation for Veteran Employees

US Bureau of Labor and Statistics
Employment Situation of Veterans Summary - 2025 A01 Results

Unexpected Virtual Tours & Training
12+ Ways to Honor Veterans Day at Work - Unexpected Virtual Tours & Training

USAFacts.org
Who are our nation's veterans and how is their standard of living changing?

WWP is 501 (c)3 organization.

Charity Navigator FOUR-STAR

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