

Medical Quality Assurance



FLORIDA VETERAN HEALTH

HEROES



2022



ACCOUNTABILITY

We perform with integrity and respect.

COLLABORATION

We use teamwork to achieve common goals and solve problems.

RESPONSIVENESS

We achieve our mission by serving our customers.

INNOVATION

We search for creative solutions and manage resources wisely.

EXCELLENCE

We promote quality outcomes through learning and continuous performance improvement.



VISION:

To be the healthiest state in the nation.

MISSION:

To protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

HOW WE WORK:

Medical Quality Assurance regulates health care practitioners and facilities through professional licensure, facility permitting, and administrative enforcement in order to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of the public.



A TRIBUTE

FROM THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The Department is committed to serving members and veterans of the United States Armed Forces and their families and is proud that over 1.5 million veterans call Florida home.

It is our continued goal to make Florida the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

Veterans Day: A History

1914



World War I began, known at the time as “The Great War.”

1918



World War I ended when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month; for this reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of the “war to end all wars.”

1919



The Treaty of Versailles was signed in the Palace of Versailles in France, officially declaring the end to World War I.

President Wilson proclaimed November 11th as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words:

"To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given to America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."

U.S. Congress officially recognized the end of World War I after concurrent resolution was passed with the following words:

“Whereas the 11th of November 1918, marked the cessation of the most destructive, sanguinary, and far-reaching war in human annals and the resumption by the people of the United States of peaceful relations with other nations, which we hope may never again be severed, and

1926



Whereas it is fitting that the recurring anniversary of this date should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations; and

Whereas the legislatures of twenty-seven of our States have already declared November 11 to be a legal holiday: Therefore be it Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that the President of the United States is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the officials to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on November 11 and inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples.”

1938



November 11th was made an annual legal holiday, dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as “Armistice Day.”

1939



World War II began, requiring the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen in the nation's history.

1945



World War II ended.

1947



The first celebration using the term, "Veterans Day," occurred in Birmingham, Alabama, when Raymond Weeks, a World War II veteran, organized "National Veterans Day" to include a parade and other festivities to honor all veterans.

1954



President Eisenhower issued the first Veterans Day Proclamation, stating:

"In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose. Toward this end, I am designating the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs as Chairman of a Veterans Day National Committee, which shall include such other persons as the Chairman may select, and which will coordinate at the national level necessary planning for the observance. I am also requesting the heads of all departments and agencies of the Executive branch of the Government to assist the National Committee in every way possible."

1968



The Uniform Holiday Bill was signed, which changed the national commemoration of Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holiday on its original date of November 11th.

1971



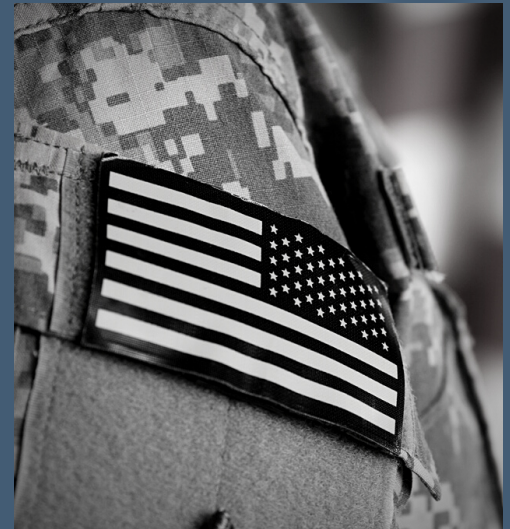
The nation's first Veterans Day was observed, although with much confusion since a great number of state legislatures, all major veteran service organizations, and citizens felt that the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance.

1975



President Ford signed Public Law 94-97, returning the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of November 11th, beginning in 1978. The restoration of the observance of Veterans Day on November 11th not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: A celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

HEALTH CARE LICENSING SUPPORT SERVICES



The Department is committed to honoring veterans, active-duty service members, and their families. By implementing special fee waivers and expedited licensing, the Department can better assist service members as they grow in their career, wish to practice while stationed in the state, or settle in Florida at the end of their service.

The Department is sensitive to the unique challenges military families face when required to relocate and strives to offer a more seamless licensing process that eliminates additional financial burdens on service members and their loved ones.

01 FLORIDA VETERANS APPLICATION FOR LICENSURE ONLINE RESPONSE (VALOR) SYSTEM

If you are a recently discharged or soon to be discharged active-duty service member seeking licensure in a health care profession in Florida, you are eligible for expedited licensure processing. Spouses of active-duty service members may also be eligible for expediting licensing.

To qualify:

- If a service member, you must apply for the license either six months before or after your honorable discharge from the United States Armed Forces.
- If you are the spouse of an active-duty service member, you must hold a valid license in another state or United States territory and must have practiced for at least three years in your desired profession.
- There is no application fee, initial licensure fee, or unlicensed activity fee for veterans or spouses of active-duty service members who qualify for this license; this waiver does not include examination fees.

02 MILITARY FEE WAIVER

If you are a military veteran, you may be eligible for a waiver of fees associated with the initial licensing process for most health care professions.

To qualify:

- Apply within 60 months of honorable discharge.
- The application, initial licensure, and unlicensed activity fees will be waived for veterans returning from active-duty service; this waiver does not include examination fees.

03 TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE TO PRACTICE IN AN AREA OF CRITICAL NEED

Active-duty commissioned medical officers (CMO) and veterans who served at least 10 years in the United States Armed Forces as a CMO may be eligible for a temporary certificate to practice in an area of critical need.

- This certificate limits you to practicing in designated areas of critical need and is only available to physicians who have an active, unencumbered license in another jurisdiction of the United States.
- There is no application fee for physicians seeking this certificate. This certificate is limited to physicians who will not receive compensation for their service.

04 MILITARY PLATFORM – TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE FOR ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONERS

Active-duty service members also serving in the United States Public Health Service may be eligible for licensure under the Military Platform. The Military Platform is a mutually beneficial training agreement with a non-military health care provider that allows active-duty health care

practitioners the opportunity to treat patients admitted to non-military facilities. This further allows service members to develop and maintain the technical skills necessary to meet the present and future health care needs of the United States Armed Forces.

To qualify:

- Applicants must be active-duty service members and hold a valid license as a health care practitioner in another state, the District of Columbia, and/or any possession or territory of the United States.
- The license is valid for six months but is renewable with proof of continuing military orders for an active-duty assignment and evidence of continuation as a Military Platform participant.

05 FEE WAIVER AND LICENSURE FOR SPOUSES OF ACTIVE-DUTY PERSONNEL

As the spouse of an active-duty member of the United States Armed Forces, you may be eligible to receive a professional license to practice your health care profession in Florida. This license allows the opportunity for you to work in your respective profession while your spouse is assigned to a duty station in Florida. To reduce the barrier of entry into your profession, the state recently eliminated its use of issuing temporary licenses for active-duty spouses and shifted to issuing full professional licenses.

To qualify:

- Your spouse must be on active duty and assigned to a duty station in Florida.
- You must hold a valid license in good professional standing as a health care practitioner in another state, the District of Columbia, and/or any United States territory or possession.

Spouses of active-duty personnel are entitled to expedited processing for initial licensure. Licenses will be issued to spouses within seven days following the receipt of a completed application. A fee waiver is available for those who qualify for this license in which applications, initial licensure, and unlicensed activity fees are waived; this waiver does not include examination fees.

06 INITIAL LICENSING FEE WAIVER FOR SPOUSES OF VETERANS

If you are the spouse of a military veteran, you may be eligible for a waiver of the initial licensing fees for most health care professions.

To qualify:

- Your application must be submitted within 60 months after your spouse's honorable discharge from any branch of the United States Armed Forces.
- A fee waiver is available for the application, initial licensure, and unlicensed activity fees if you qualify; this waiver does not include examination fees.

07 LICENSURE RENEWAL PROVISIONS

You may be able to keep your license in good standing and be exempted from certain license renewal provisions if you meet the following criteria:

- You are an active-duty member of the United States Armed Forces.
- You hold a Florida health care practitioner license in good standing with your profession's administrative board or the Department at the time of your enlistment.
- You are entitled to practice or engage in your profession prior to joining the Armed Forces.

If you meet these criteria, your license will be kept in good standing without your having to register, pay renewal fees, or perform any other license maintenance act. This provision remains in effect through the duration of your active-duty service and for six months after discharge, provided you are not actively engaged in your licensed profession in the private sector for profit.

The spouse of an active-duty service member who holds a Florida health care practitioner license in good standing may also be exempted from license renewal provisions, but only in cases of absence from the state because of their spouse's active-duty assignment.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **31 of 46 presidents have served in the military. President Teddy Roosevelt earned the Medal of Honor, the highest honor in the military. The only enlisted President who didn't become an officer was James Buchanan.**
- **The United States Military is one of the largest providers of international aid and disaster relief. Ships called Marine Expeditionary Units patrol the oceans watching for signs of danger and can reach the shoreline of nearly any location on Earth within 48 hours.**
- **Military members are more highly educated than the general population. Those who enlist are required to have a high school diploma or a GED. That means that 99 percent of the military has a high school education. On the other hand, only 60 percent of the general population has a high school education.**
- **The Lewis and Clark Expedition that mapped out the west would not have happened without the United States Army. We may remember them only as explorers, but the members of the expedition were actually a small Army unit.**



TO OUR MILITARY AND VETERAN COMMUNITY

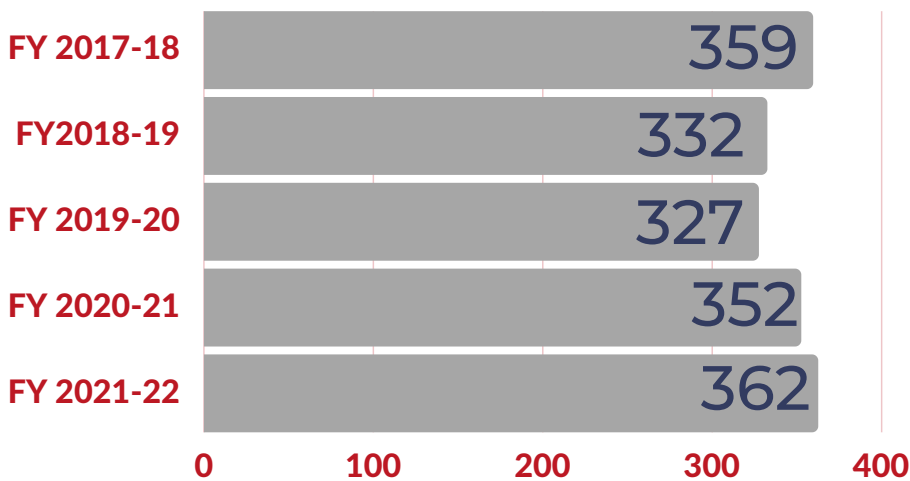
The Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA) seeks to create a veteran-friendly regulatory environment to encourage military service members to choose Florida for their health care practice after active duty. A fee waiver program began in Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-14 to ease the financial burden of applying for licensure, and participation over the last five years has remained steady.

VALOR expedites the licensure process and is designed to issue licenses for all qualified initial applicants within one day. MQA is committed to helping ease the transition of military health professionals into civilian life and seeks to encourage them to practice in Florida by making the licensure process one that reflects our gratitude for their service.

**More than
10,300**
military fee waivers
have been issued
since 2013, saving
Florida's veterans and
their families over
\$1.2 million.

**Over
8,300**
military veterans
have been licensed
through VALOR
since July 1, 2013.

Licensed Military Veterans





VETERAN HEALTH HEROES

HONORING THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE NATION AND ITS PEOPLE

They have dedicated their lives to something bigger than themselves and are marked by the urge to serve others at any cost. The willingness of America's veterans to sacrifice for our country and its freedoms has earned them our lasting gratitude. Upon returning from military service, they continue contributing to our communities as licensed health care professionals offering health and well-being services. They double as first responders, physical therapists, nurses, lab technicians, psychologists, dentists, and more. Their dedication to service is a trait that helps build up our agencies and teams. As they work tirelessly to bring about changes to improve the health of Floridians, they achieve inspiring things. We call them Veteran Health Heroes. Despite taking off their uniforms, they have never stopped serving.



DEAN EASTERWOOD

VETERAN HEALTH HERO

Sincere, humble, astute, and selfless are a few words that can be used to describe Dean Easterwood, a Board-Certified Licensed Hearing Aid Specialist in the states of Florida and Alabama. From serving the country as a soldier in the United States Army and the Pensacola, Gulf Breeze, Milton, and Jay areas of Florida as President of Ears 2 Hear hearing centers, Dean has exuded great confidence in serving others.

Recalling his six-year service in the military as a Combat Engineer - Demolitions Specialist, Mr. Easterwood stated:

“When I reported to basic training on June 3, 1980, I made the largest stride toward manhood. Attention to detail still sticks with me today as a Hearing Aid Specialist. I look at the whole picture – I can point out when a patient might need to see an otolaryngologist or dermatologist, if I suspect they might have a virus, et cetera. I learned that even the smallest details matter. In the military, if you don’t tie up your bootlaces, they come untied at the most inopportune time and potentially lead to worse things. That attention to detail aspect carries over into every part of your life. At work, you make sure tools are wiped down daily, in-between patients. Being very thorough and disciplined leads to gold service of practice. Not just in your work, but at home, too – buttons aligned, and shoes cleaned. I see this in a lot of other service members who are now civilians. But being able to take care of someone, treating people right, building relationships and teams? That’s a lot bigger than being a Hearing Aid Specialist. I feel as if I’m in the communication business. We improve the quality of life of the hearing impaired and their families by testing, dispensing, and fitting the best hearing

solution for the patient’s hearing loss, lifestyle, and budget. The tasks of that have their own reward: people crying in your chair when they haven’t heard well in so long, working with hospice units... If there was ever a time to need hearing aids but not know how to get them it, it would be through when the patient is in the hospice care. Ears 2 Hear hospice program we have provides aids for those patients.”

One of his most memorable military experiences was completing Airborne Leadership School and being awarded the Army Parachutist Badge, an accomplishment commonly referred to as “earning your wings.” Mr. Easterwood served honorably in the United States Army for six years before excelling in the automotive industry of the civilian workforce for 23 years. Mr. Easterwood has provided dedicated hearing care to the Florida community since 2006 and was notably appointed to the Florida Board of Hearing Aid Specialists in 2021.

When he is not serving patients, Mr. Easterwood is boxing at the gym, teaching Bible studies, serving older adults through the Senior Resources Roundtable, or planning his next adventure with his three children and wife of 37 years, Arlette. Mr. Easterwood is thankful the military “took a chance on a country boy from Mississippi” and salutes veterans: “I feel like I’m standing on their shoulders. They paved the way and created wonderful conditions. Compared to [those who have gone before me], I feel very humbled.” And the Department is thankful for his service to our country and continued contributions as a health care professional in Florida – thank you, Mr. Easterwood!



GERALD PADGETT

VETERAN HEALTH HERO

Paving his way in the United States Army from E-1 Private in 2002 to E-6 Staff Sergeant in 2014, Mr. Padgett answered the call to serve the nation for 12 years in various roles, including as a Heavy Construction Equipment Operator and Supply Sergeant. During his military career, Mr. Padgett completed a one-year tour in the Middle East during the Afghanistan War, carrying out tactical convoys to move supplies such as food, clothing, technology, equipment, ammunition, and radios across the country, undetected from enemy threats, and performing security details in high-threat environments.

When reflecting on his military service, Mr. Padgett stated:

“After I completed basic training, some soldiers in my unit were actively in transit to the Middle East. I volunteered to deploy and, when the opportunity came up, I completed mobilization training and arrived immediately afterward. Getting there was intense, nerve wracking. It was deafening silence, waiting in anticipation to finally arrive. But I had a job to do – I did what I was supposed to do. When I transitioned back to civilian life, I took with me many transferable skills and the ability to think logistically, see the big picture and its parts as a synchronous system. I find that massage therapy is similar in that it is rooted in holistic medicine. Even if there are not actual similarities between the two, it’s still the logistics and planning that brought me to open my own private practice. While at Massage School, I went to all the regulatory board meetings to learn what kind of decisions of the profession were being made. I brought

this knowledge back to the school with me. When I began teaching, I designed course content around business planning, professional development, and Florida Statutes and rules.”

While Mr. Padgett looks to his grandfather, a World War II veteran of the former Army Air Corps as a role model, now Mr. Padgett serves as one for his students: “One thing we work on is setting career and life goals, so you know what you’re shooting for on a regular basis. Just because your paths can change in life, doesn’t make you a failure. It is the bridge that gets you from one place in life to another.”

From his service in the military, Mr. Padgett was twice recognized with the United States Army Commendation Medal and awarded the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. In 2021, Mr. Padgett was appointed to the Florida Board of Massage Therapy (Board) where he considers his duty to serve as a Board Member “for the betterment of the profession” a humbling, rewarding experience. When not working or serving in an advisory capacity to the Board, Mr. Padgett may be found flipping another house, watching movies, or camping with his partner and four children.

Mr. Padgett, thank you for the inspiration, sense of duty, and service you have given to our country and the profession!



JORGE LOPEZ

VETERAN HEALTH HERO

Veterans' contributions to our country continue long after their service – they continue to serve our country in civilian life. Such is the case with Dr. Lopez, a veteran of the United States Air Force. After obtaining his bachelor's degree at the University of Puerto Rico and medical degree at Autonomous Metropolitan University in Mexico City, Dr. Lopez completed the specialty of Emergency Medicine at the Puerto Rico Medical Center in 1990, where he served as Chief Resident. Dr. Lopez joined the United States Air Force in 1988 as an active-duty officer while in medical training and served at Scott Airforce Base in the hospital emergency department from 1990-1992 during the First Gulf War. He was initially commissioned as a Captain and honorably discharged as a Major by 1997.

Dr. Lopez continued to contribute to the health care profession and his community following his military service through his appointment in 1994 as Medical Director and election appointment in 1999 as President/CEO of Florida Emergency Physicians, a private medical group providing emergency services to the AdventHealth system in all its Central Florida hospitals. During 2005-06, Dr. Lopez served as President of the Florida College of Emergency Physicians, the statewide professional organization representing emergency department doctors. In addition to providing emergency medicine physician services to AdventHealth in all its Central Florida hospitals, Dr. Lopez led medical relief teams as the state of Florida's Lead Physician in response to Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. Dr. Lopez was appointed as a member of the Florida Board of Medicine (Board)

from 2014 to 2022, and served as Chairman of the Board in 2018.

As demonstrated by his commitment to serve in multiple local and global medical missions, including to Ethiopia, Puerto Rico, and Peru, Dr. Lopez is the epitome of a Veteran Health Hero. Deservingly, Dr. Lopez has been awarded various accolades, including a Philanthropist of the Year Award, Better Man Humanitarian Award, Outstanding Community Service Local and Abroad Award, and the Puerto Rico Legislature Honorable Recognition. Dr. Lopez credits his father, a 99-year-old veteran Lieutenant of World War II "whose mission was to guard against any invasion the U.S. West Coast," with giving him the "guardrails and laying the foundation [for him] to learn leadership and become more disciplined."

Even in his spare time, Dr. Lopez may be seen volunteering through the Advent Health Foundation or enjoying photography and the sport of golf. He is thankful for his spouse who is similarly community-minded, stating: "I am very fortunate to have married my wife, Aida, who was recently recognized with a prestigious Women of Color STEM Award. I'm very happily married with someone who loves service as much as I do."

Reflecting on his contributions, Dr. Lopez stated: "If you live long enough, things will happen." While true, it is not lost on us that Veteran Health Heroes like Dr. Lopez who dedicate their lives to serving others could use their time differently but chose to use it selflessly, instead. We are honored you chose to serve our country and continue to do so through your profession – thank you, Dr. Lopez!

RESOURCES

As the nation's most veteran-friendly state, Florida's state agencies and partners offer an abundance of resources and opportunities to help veterans find meaningful employment, support their families, and contribute to their communities.



The Florida Department of Education (DOE) administers the Military Veterans Certification Pathway, a unique opportunity for Florida's talented veterans to obtain a 5-year temporary teaching certificate prior to earning their bachelor's degree. Specific eligibility requirements can be found at: <https://www.fldoe.org/veterans/>.

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) has worked with FDVA and First Lady Casey DeSantis to launch the Continue the Mission initiative, which recruits veterans and military spouses to be child protective investigators, mentors, and case managers. To learn more about this program, visit: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/continuethecommission/>

The Military and Veterans Assistance Program ("MVAP") was created to help educate military members and veterans on the types of scams that target their communities, what they can do to protect themselves, and how they can help protect others by reporting scams and deceptive business practices. To read more, go to: <http://myfloridalegal.com/MVAP>



Operating as the premier point of entry for Florida's 1.5 million veterans, the Florida Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) operates a network of nine state veterans' homes and provides statewide outreach to connect veterans with their earned services, benefits and support. For more information, visit: <https://floridavets.org/>

Veterans Florida is a non-profit created by the state to promote Florida's status as the nation's most veteran-friendly state. They assist military veterans and their families transition to civilian life with career and entrepreneurship opportunities through the Florida's Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS) Program. To seek more details, visit: <https://www.veteransflorida.org/>

To support frontline community workers, including veterans, Florida Housing's Hometown Heroes Housing Program provides down payment and closing cost assistance to first-time, income-qualified homebuyers. Specific eligibility requirements can be found at: <https://www.floridahousing.org/programs/homebuyer-overview-page/hometown-heroes>

Enterprise Florida, Inc., (EFI) works to support policies, programs, and benefits to ensure service members, veterans, and their families are welcomed and successful during their time in Florida, whether for one assignment or the rest of their lives. EFI also publishes the Advantage Florida Military Benefits Guide, a summary of state laws, policies, programs, and benefits for active-duty, national guard, and reserve service members, veterans, retirees, and military families. For more information, visit: <https://www.enterpriseflorida.com/>

2023 MILITARY CALENDAR

<p style="text-align: center;">JANUARY</p> <p>1: New Year's Day 17: Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FEBRUARY</p> <p>3: Four Chaplain's Day 14: National Salute to Veteran Patients 19: Coast Guard Reserve Birthday 21: President's Day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MARCH</p> <p>3: Navy Reserve Birthday 5: Seabee Birthday 13: K-9 Veterans Day 15: American Legion Birthday 21: Rosie the Riveter Day 25: Medal of Honor Day 29: National Vietnam War Veterans Day</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">APRIL</p> <p>5: Gold Star Spouses Day 9: National Former POW Recognition Day 14: Air Force Reserve Birthday 23: Army Reserve Birthday 30: National Military Brats Day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MAY</p> <p>1: Silver Star Service Banner Day 6: Military Spouse Appreciation Day 8: VE Day 21: Armed Forces Day 30: Memorial Day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JUNE</p> <p>6: D-Day 12: Women Veterans Day 14: Army Birthday, Flag Day 23: Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">JULY</p> <p>4: Independence Day 25: National Hire a Veteran Day 27: National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AUGUST</p> <p>1: Air Force Day 4: Coast Guard Day 7: Purple Heart Day 29: Marine Corps Reserve Birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SEPTEMBER</p> <p>2: V-J Day 5: Labor Day 11: Patriot Day 16: National POW/MIA Recognition Day 18: Air Force Day, National Air Guard Day</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">OCTOBER</p> <p>10: Columbus Day 13: Navy Birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NOVEMBER</p> <p>10: Marine Corps Day and Birthday 11: Veterans Day 11: Armistice and Remembrance Day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DECEMBER</p> <p>1: Civil Air Patrol Birthday 7: National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 13: National Guard Birthday</p>

Thank You

VETERANS



**FOR YOUR UNWAVERING
COMMITMENT TO SERVE!**

