

# How to show appreciation for military personnel

Courtesy of Metro News Service

Military personnel are unsung heroes whose sacrifices for their country make it possible for hundreds of millions of people to enjoy freedoms that many people across the globe do not have. In recognition of those sacrifices, many people want to show their appreciation to both active and retired servicemen and women. Fortunately, there are many ways to do just that.

**Pitch in at home.** According to the United States Department of Defense, the United States military currently deploys active duty personnel in nearly 150 countries. Many of those troops are separated from their families for months at a time, and that separation can make things difficult for their loved ones back home. If a neighbor's spouse is deployed overseas, offer to help around the house. Whether it's mowing their

lawn, dropping their kids off at school or inviting the whole family over for dinner one night each week, such gestures can go a long way toward easing the burden faced by spouses of deployed military personnel.

**Send gifts to active personnel.** Servicemen and women on active duty do not enjoy many of the luxuries that tend to be taken for granted back home. But men and women who want to show their appreciation can send care packages to active personnel serving overseas. An organization such as Operation Gratitude (operationgratitude.com), which to date has sent nearly 1.3 million care packages to active personnel, sends care packages filled with snacks, entertainment, personal hygiene products and handmade items. This provides active personnel a taste of home while also letting them know their extraor-

dinary efforts are appreciated and not forgotten.

**Volunteer at a veterans hospital.** Unfortunately, many servicemen and women return home from their deployments with injuries or health conditions that require longterm care. By volunteering at veteran hospitals, men and women can help veterans overcome their injuries and provide muchneeded help to staff at hospitals that could use a helping hand. Visit [volunteer.va.gov](http://volunteer.va.gov) for more information.

**Make a financial donation.** For those who want to support servicemen and women but don't have much free time to do so, financial donations can go a long way toward improving the quality of life of active and retired military personnel. Many programs work with veterans to improve their quality of life, and such organizations rely heavily on financial donations

to make their missions a reality. The Wounded Warrior Project ([woundedwarriorproject.org](http://woundedwarriorproject.org)), for example, works to honor and empower servicemen and women who incurred physical or mental injuries or illnesses on or after September 11, 2001. The organization relies on the generosity of individuals who want to help wounded military personnel overcome their injuries and illnesses. Based on audited financial statements of the 2014 fiscal ending on September 30, 2014, 80.6 percent of total expenditures went to services and programs catering to wounded military personnel and their families, assuring prospective donors that their donations will go toward helping those in need.

There are many ways that civilians can express their gratitude to active and retired military personnel.



**Thank you...**

*To all the men and women who have served our nation  
and to those serving now, we are forever grateful.*

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