



(U) Expressing Thanks on Veterans Day

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Although our nation "pauses" several times a year to honor the women and men who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, Veterans Day is among the most meaningful.

If you've ever seen the Civil War documentary produced by Ken Burns you may have been moved by the poignant footage at the end which shows veterans of that terrible war, in the twilight of their lives, reaching across a stone wall to shake hands--Union to Confederate. Despite finding one another on opposite sides of that conflict, you can see in their eyes how they understood that only those who had been there can truly appreciate the sacrifice of service in combat.

Much attention has been paid in the last decade to "the greatest generation," women and men who in the 1940's sacrificed their youth and some cases their lives to preserve the values for which this nation stands. As their numbers fade, their experience echoes through those who walk behind them in any parade -- veterans of Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq.

In 2004 the Veterans Administration estimated that there were approximately 25 million veterans in civilian life, of whom 18.5 million are wartime veterans. We owe an extraordinary debt to these individuals, many of whom have lifelong needs resulting from their service. Through the Combined Federal Campaign you have an opportunity to support programs that directly and indirectly benefit these special Americans.

A keyword search on "veteran" in the CFC online donation site yielded 27 organizations that extend services to veterans. But there are a great many more opportunities to give to medical, social, recreational and financial organizations that our veterans depend upon. If you've been waiting for the inspiration to make your contribution this year, take time this Veterans Day to consider saying thanks to those who have accepted the call to service.



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