

November as Military Family Appreciation Month

Each year, November is recognized as Military Family Appreciation Month across the nation. It honors the commitment and dedication these families make to their service members, which in turn helps keep our military organized and strong. It was first celebrated in 1993, and the following year, there was a Presidential Proclamation issued, establishing Military Family Appreciation Month as a nationwide observance.

Week 4: Showing support during the Holidays

The nearing holiday season provides yet another reason to express our support and gratitude for military service members and their families. This holiday season, many military families will unfortunately spend their holidays alone or under stress. In response, organizations have started to implement seasonal support programs to help give back to military families and express recognition for the many sacrifices they make throughout the year.

[Spirit of Sharing](#) allows individuals to “adopt” a military family in need to provide direct assistance to local active duty military families and veterans during the holiday season. Adopting a military family through their organization allows individuals to help out as much as they are able to, by purchasing grocery cards, hygiene products, and Christmas gifts for families. The goal of their company is to support military families, and to build a relationship with each family to gain better insight and understanding of individual family needs.

[Operation Holiday Joy](#) is a program implemented by the Armed Services YMCA to make holidays easier for military families. It is a donation-based program that has raised over \$1.5 million for military service members and their families since it was founded in 2004. These donations have allowed the company to distribute over 300,000 toys and 25,000 food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas to families across the country. This organization is a great option for anyone looking for a good cause to make a donation to this holiday season.

[Soldier’s Angels](#) is an organization that puts on an annual “Adopt-A-Family” program during the holiday season. They recognize that military families survive on a tight budget, and that providing a Christmas or holiday celebration for children can prove challenging because of that. The program allows individuals to adopt a military family and provide presents for the children and a grocery gift card for parents to help them purchase their holiday dinner.

The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve [Toys for Tots](#) is a program that collects new, unwrapped toys and presents from October-December each year, and helps distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community, including military kids. This is a less expensive alternative to the Adopt-a-Family programs, but still provides individuals the opportunity to make a positive impact on a military child.

This month, we are offering Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals from November 22nd to the 27th to kick off the beginning of the holiday season. As highlighted in this month’s newsletter, all customers who place an order under \$400 during this time will receive a free [Passport Wallet](#) along with their order, which is a \$40 value. Customers who spend over \$400 will receive a free

[Junior Writing Padfolio](#) with their order, which is an \$85 value. The passport wallet provides a unique and compact way to stay protected while on the go or while traveling. Weighing only 5 ounces, the NIJ IIIA bulletproof wallet offers a discreet and lightweight addition to your traveling gear. It features several micromesh slots to store identification cards, cash, credit cards, and passport. The Junior Writing Padfolio is a anti-ballistic zippered portfolio with storage space for your phone, cards, notebook, pen, and other small items. Its sleek leather design makes it the perfect option for students, commuters, or workplace professionals who desire an extra layer of discreet ballistic protection to add to their everyday gear. These two products will make the perfect Christmas gift for any individual on your list, and their unique yet discreet designs will be sure to please. We hope you have a happy and safe Thanksgiving with your family and loved ones.

Week 3: How to Honor Military Families this Month

Throughout the month of Military Family Appreciation Month, it is important to recognize military members and their families for the commitment they make to our country, as well as the numerous sacrifices they make for our freedom. Many people forget that military families face multiple challenges of their own, as we recognized during the first week of this month. Being apart from loved ones for months or years at a time, tolerating financial and emotional stress, and raising children alone are just a few of the struggles military family members endure. Below, we will give you some easy ways that you can get involved in your community and show support for the families who contribute to our freedom and the overall safety of our country.

- **Invite a service member or their family over for a holiday meal or celebration:** No one should have to spend the holidays alone, but unfortunately, many military family members will spend the upcoming holidays by themselves. If you have room at your dinner table, invite a military family or family member in your community to your holiday meal—even if you don't know them. This welcoming gesture will give them the opportunity to enjoy a holiday with supportive community members around them.
- **Offer direct support to a family in your community:** if you know a military family with kids, offer to provide childcare for the military spouse so they can have a night off. Offer to do chores around their house, cook them a meal, or offer to run errands for them. These simple, inexpensive gestures can go a long way in providing support, and helping military families feel recognized and appreciated.
- **Write a thank-you note:** If money is a concern, consider writing a letter of appreciation to military families in your community or even across the country. There are multiple organizations you can use to write letters to military families, such as [Support Military Spouses](#), and [Soldier's Angels](#). This is a free opportunity to make a lasting impact on military families across the country.
- **Consider making a donation:** If you have the financial means to do so, consider donating to a charity or a non-profit directly associated with supporting military members and their families, such as the [National Military Family Association](#) or [Blue Star Families](#).

Our [Presidential Drop-Down Shield](#) is our newest product, as featured in our November newsletter. Conveniently disguised as a briefcase when not deployed, the shield provides a

discreet yet full-body anti-ballistic solution for individuals seeking a product with total-coverage protection. Equipped with NIJ IIIA bulletproof protection, the shield can stop a 357 Magnum, 44 Magnum, 9mm, and .45 caliber hollow point ammunition, and more. The revolutionary shield is easily deployed at a moment's notice, with the largest size option instantly providing the user nearly 2,000 square inches of ballistic coverage area. The shield is ideal for politicians, executive protection, business officials, frequent travelers who want to take a proactive approach to their safety. As always, we extend our greatest appreciation to military families, who support their service members and contribute to the protection of our nation. Continue to enjoy 15% off your orders through the rest of this month if you are a current or former U.S. military member.

Week 2: Veterans Day

Veterans Day is recognized every year in the United States on November 11th, this year being observed on November 12th. A veteran is any individual who served on active duty in the armed forces of the U.S. In 2016, there were around 20.4 million veterans, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, over 80% of them having served during at least one war. On Veterans Day, and also throughout Military Family Appreciation Month, it is important to express appreciation to veterans for their service and their family members for the sacrifices they have made. The day offers civilians an opportunity to learn about the many sacrifices service members and their families make throughout the year. Here are just a few ways to honor Veterans this year:

- **Visit a veteran's hospital:** If you don't have a local VA office, contact an assisted living or nursing home facility nearby. Visiting a veteran can brighten their day, and you might get to hear some interesting stories about their life or time in service. Spending time with these individuals can help them to feel acknowledged and appreciated.
- **Express thanks:** Whenever you see someone in uniform or wearing military-related gear, extend a word of gratitude or act of kindness to show your appreciation for their service. A seemingly simple gesture could make their day.
- **Send a card:** Compile a list of the Veterans you know and send them a thank you card this year. Make it a tradition to send them out every year.
- **Go to an event:** Every Veteran's Day, cities across the country host events such as ceremonies or parades. Consider attending one of these events to show your support.
- **Fly a flag:** Fly a flag on Veteran's Day and throughout the month to express your appreciation and respect for Veterans and their families.

Bullet Blocker is a Veteran-owned company. For this reason, we are proud to offer a 10% discount on all products for military members and veterans throughout the year. This month, however, we are raising our discount to 15% off for all active and former military service members as a way to express our immense appreciation and respect for these individuals. We offer a variety of tactical gear ideal for law enforcement members, veterans, and civilians alike. In addition to our many tactical vests and backpacks, we also offer a NIJ IIIA level anti-ballistic [Responder Range Bag](#). This bag is ideal for first responders, service members, and recreational shooters who spend time at the range. The bag is equipped with a lightweight bulletproof panel, which adds only 20 ounces of ballistic weight to the overall bag. This ensures comfort and

concealability. The bag provides 112 square inches of storage, with multiple zippered pockets on the front, rear, and sides to organize your gear. We also offer a [NIJ IIIA Tactical Bulletproof Pistol Case](#), designed to meet the needs of all types of shooters. The case can securely store three handguns and protects weapons from damage during transport. These two products are ideal for individuals looking for tactical protection that is lightweight and discreet.

Week 1: The importance of this month

This month is a time to acknowledge the collective responsibility we have to honor and support the family members of military personnel for the many sacrifices they make. Most Americans understand the importance of supporting our troops. But many forget that their nearly 3 million military family members need support as well. We owe our security and freedom to the members of our armed forces, veterans, the fallen, and their families. Military family members face many challenges such as: frequent moves, financial strain, unemployment, PTSD, and adjusting to a service member's war injuries.

Frequent moves: Military families relocate 10 times more often than civilian families. In fact, the average military family moves every 2-3 years, the average military child changing schools 6-9 times throughout their academics.

Financial strain: 65% of military families report experiencing financial stress, and 90% report that they need more advice on financial planning.

Unemployment: 60% of military spouses report that employment is a top stressor, and 75% feel that their status as a military spouse negatively impacts their career. Military spouse unemployment rate is at least four times higher than the national average.

Mental Health: Prolonged deployment can have an effect on spouses and children. 36.6% of military wives report having at least one mental health diagnosis. 30% of children in military families reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks during the past year. Nearly 1 in 4 children reported having considered suicide.

War injuries: Since 9/11, more than 52,000 U.S. service members have been physically wounded in action. Nearly 320,000 service members have experienced a traumatic brain injury in Iraq or Afghanistan. More have suffered mental health problems such as depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.

These statistics shed just a small light on the many struggles military families experience. It is important to recognize and honor these individuals and their families for the many sacrifices they make to protect our country, not only this month, but also throughout the rest of the year.