



AFSA International Family Matters Trustee



November 2018

God Bless the veterans for their service to our country and for the many sacrifices they made protecting our freedoms. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

November is not only the month of Veterans Day and Thanksgiving, but it is also **NATIONAL MILITARY FAMILY MONTH** – “Military families are the backbone of our nation's armed forces, and often go underappreciated. This month, we celebrate the commitment of our 1.3 million military families each and every day, and recognize and honor their sacrifices — through deployments, relocations and, sadly, sometimes through the ultimate sacrifice of their loved ones for our country's continued freedoms. A grateful nation sincerely thanks you for all you do for your service member and, in turn, for all of us.”

I received the above statement in an email with my Military Families magazine and I want to extend my personal thanks to all our military spouses and their families. We ARE the backbone of our nation's armed forces. Truer words were never spoken as those cited in the above paragraph.

If you all don't subscribe to this free publication, I suggest you do so. There are some great articles and stories on all sorts of topics -- <https://militaryfamilies.com/>.

Listed below are ways to honor our Military Families – some are just for the month of November, but most should be done all year long.

- 2018 Discounts for Military Family Appreciation Month -- <https://www.military.com/military-family-appreciation-month/discounts-for-military-family-appreciation-month-and-beyond.html>.
- Show your appreciation for our military spouses by surprising them with a gift card to a spa, restaurant, favorite store, or to one of the care packages cited in this web site -- <https://www.military.com/spouse/military-deployment/military-care-packages/care-package-for-military-spouse.html>.
- SAY thank you! Write a thank-you note to a family for what they've sacrificed. It's not just the spouses who have made sacrifices, but also the children.
- Offer to babysit. Imagine 6-9 months with no spouse at home to support you! Yep – let THAT sink in! Offer to babysit. Often. It can be a sanity saver.
- Perform a random act of kindness for the family, while remaining anonymous.

<https://careylohrenz.com/10-ways-to-recognize-military-family-appreciation-month/>,

Elaine Sanchez of the American Forces Press Service created a Top 10 list of **What I most appreciate about military families** and I thought I'd share it with you.

10. Their sense of humor. I think this is a prerequisite for military families -- kind of an "If you don't laugh, you cry," complex, particularly when it comes to deployments.
9. They're passionate -- about everything. They give their all, whether it's volunteering in their communities, with their family readiness groups or in their kids' schools. What's even more impressive is they do so while balancing careers, home life, kids and education.
8. They're strong, even under extraordinary circumstances.
7. They're always willing to lend each other a hand.
6. They're resilient. A decade of war, frequent deployments, moves, career and school changes. Need I say more?
5. Military spouses. From the moment they say "I do" to a military member, they begin a life of service every bit as valuable as their spouse's. They give up careers to follow their military loved one around the world, hold down the home front during deployments, and offer their unfailing love and support. It's a lot to ask of anyone, and they voluntarily shoulder this burden.
4. Military kids. They're just amazing. They change schools, on average, six to eight times over the course of their parent's military career. They deal with long separations from loved ones -- who aren't headed out for a business trip, but for a year in a combat zone. Despite everything that's thrown at them, they are strong, brave and adaptable.
3. Other family members. People often forget about the extended family members who serve, too. The grandparents who open their homes to grandkids during deployments, the sisters and brothers who call and send care packages, a host of uncles, aunts and cousins offering their unwavering support.
2. Their service and sacrifice. They, too, serve this nation. They weather holidays, birthdays and major milestones without their military loved one. In the worst cases, they must deal with their loved one's ultimate sacrifice.
1. They stand behind their service member.

<https://www.military.com/military-family-appreciation-month/reasons-to-appreciate-military-families.html>

I've said this before and I'll say it again -- Be sure to involve your **Family Members** in your Chapter meetings, social activities, fundraisers, etc. Ask them what they would like

to do, what they're interested in – maybe it's something you could do as a fundraiser. When scheduling your events, you want them to be FUN for everyone! Social activities are the BEST way to keep your members engaged and to keep them coming back. Make your meetings fun, too! Also, it's important to include Family Matters as an agenda topic in every meeting.

With all that said, I want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving – be thankful for every little blessing!

Until next month, thanks so much for all you do for our country and for AFSA.

Take care and God Bless!

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