



Celebrating National Military Appreciation Month

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In penning this article, I began to think of the many ways that individuals will be observing the Memorial Day weekend by celebrating with family barbecue's, trips to the beach, or just relaxing at home during the extended holiday weekend. However, the month of May is much more than just one distinct holiday celebration, it is a time for us to reflect and extend our gratitude to the members of the Armed Forces for their continued contributions to our nation. Officially, the month of May bears the distinction of being known as National Military Appreciation Month which is observed from May 1 to May 31. This official designation was included in legislation passed by the United States Congress on April 30, 1999.

The fifth month of the year was accorded this honor since it contains various holiday's recognizing current and former members of the military, which include Memorial Day, Loyalty Day, Victory in Europe Day, Military Spouse Day, and Armed Forces Day. While Military Appreciation Month originally directed itself towards current Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard members, it has evolved to include a much broader scope which represents the diverse nature of our nation's armed forces.

As a proud former member of the United States Navy and Air Force, every day of every month signifies military appreciation for me. With many Americans having family, friends, and neighbors serving or who have served in the armed forces, this thought also rings far and wide. Throughout the veteran community, the memory of days gone harkens to a time in their lives when individuals with whom they served often became closer to them than members of their immediate family. As citizens of a diverse nation, it is our duty to embrace all members of our society, which in the simplest terms, is the kindest act of humanity.

This month affords us the opportunity to rectify a misconception among many members of the civilian population that veterans are difficult to understand. In that respect, I offer you the opportunity, over the month of May, to reach out to a veteran or veterans and extend a sincere thank you or well done for the selfless dedication and service which they have provided to our county. While celebrations are wonderful venues bringing together close friends and family, we must remain focused upon the reason that we celebrate these holidays.