



LODGE RESOURCE TEAM

Honor Them

"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation."

— George Washington

At Saginaw Valley State University's football game against Ferris State on Saturday, my wife and I were privileged to be among 30 volunteers chosen to transport and unfurl a huge American flag on the 50-yard line. The flag was displayed during the National Anthem and was part of SVSU's tribute to veterans.

I did not serve in the military. But my bride and I were, me standing next to our daughter and son-in-law who served, proud as can be of their service to our country. We were grateful for the ability to show at least a modicum of gratitude for their sacrifice.

In all likelihood, you have veterans among the members of your lodge. Some members may be on active duty or serving in the National Guard or Reserves, which means that their families may have support needs that they wouldn't likely broadcast. I hope and pray that they know you value their service.

Let me offer a few suggestions on how you can recognize them:

- Stage a military appreciation dinner, perhaps even with a guest speaker. One of your veterans may, in fact, be willing to serve as the featured speaker. You can find other elements of a Veterans Program by downloading a helpful guide available on Grand View, under **Lodge Programs**, or through the MichiganMasons.org website. You can access it by clicking [here](#).
- Recognize your members who have served by securing a Veterans Award pin and certificate from the Grand Lodge Office. You can make a Veterans Award Request through the MichiganMasons.org website, or by clicking [here](#). Then, ask

your Secretary to mark the man's record with his military service in Grand View and whether he received a Veterans Certificate & Pin.

- If you have members on active duty or a National Guard or Reserve member on deployment, for most their military pay is all the compensation they receive. Only extraordinary employers "gross up" the pay of Guardsmen and Reservists, matching the difference between their military wages and what they would be making in their position in civilian life. As such, the financial status of the families they leave behind can become precarious. Members of your lodge ***may not*** be in the military, but have a spouse who is serving. Offer to assist those members and their families with chores, repairs around home, and perhaps a basket or two of gifts during the holidays. For those you find in distress, consider asking them to call Outreach and Member Care at (800) 321-9357. Patti Nowak may know a local agency that can assist.

Each member and his family will have different needs, or maybe no needs at all. We pray for the latter.

Let me also pass along a piece of advice, based on my experience in lodge and serving as a volunteer with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR): *please be very gentle about asking a veteran to share his "war stories."* Many will be talkative and gladly describe their experiences. But, for some, their military encounters – especially if they were in battle – may be still too fresh and horrifying to relive and relate to others. For those men, the experiences may be ones they would just as soon forget.

We owe our military members much respect. They served, or are serving, to protect us and the lives we are able to live. They need to know that we have their backs, like they have ours.

If the reader of this article is a veteran or serving in the military, thank you for your service to our country. Thank you for your sacrifices for us.



Would you like to discuss how your lodge can be even better? Would you like to learn about best practices and successful ideas from other lodges? We have lots of ideas and would love to help. Please contact me at fkaiser@michiganmasons.org. Or give me a call at (248) 544-2222.