



# Take a Veteran to School Day: Virtual Edition

HISTORY's popular **Take a Veteran to School Day** initiative links veterans with schools nationwide to learn about service and to give our veterans a heartfelt thank you. This year, due to Covid-19, we have modified our approach and developed ideas for students to explore the history of Veterans Day and to honor veterans in a safe and socially-distanced fashion.

*Note to Teachers: These activities can be adapted based on your students' skill and curriculum levels.*



# Suggested Activities

Below is a list of proposed activities modified for this year's Take a Veteran to School Day effort that continue the tradition of honoring local heroes of all stripes while keeping participants safe.

- 1. HONOR A VET.** One of the easiest ways to honor the veterans in your life is to give them a call on or around Veterans Day or send them a letter giving them a heartfelt thank you. Schools and communities can also reach out to local veterans' organizations, retirement homes or veterans hospitals to send letters of thank you and support. Older students can also post a video or photo on social media using #HonorAVet. HISTORY® will donate \$1 to Team Rubicon ([www.teamrubiconusa.org](http://www.teamrubiconusa.org)) for each post using this.
- 2. CHALK TRIBUTE.** Chalk drawings on sidewalks, driveways, and outside of community buildings such as schools, have become a "go-to" method for sharing inspirational messages. Identify veterans in your town or community and encourage students to create chalk drawings outside of their homes. Simple messages of support and thanks for their service or even imagery that tells the veteran's story (branch of service for example) can make for a beautiful and impactful acknowledgment of service.
- 3. FLAG DELIVERY.** Students deliver flags to local veterans to display on their lawn, front porch, or in windows this Veterans Day. Make it even more special by including personalized "care packages" or "thank-you boxes" containing everything from messages of thanks from students, and even PPE to help keep them safe. Identify a list of local veterans for participation and encourage students to select a specific day of honor/delivery for these local vets. Students can also place flags, flowers or wreaths at the grave sites of those who have served. Visit <https://prestonsharp.net/> to learn about Preston Sharp's efforts to honor veterans.
- 4. HONK FOR HEROES!** Maintaining a safe distance but still being able to gather together in celebration is invaluable during tough times. Enter car parades! Communities can organize local car parades in towns to drive by the homes of local veterans saluting (and honking!) for them as they pass by. Students and community members would can a parade experience that honors local heroes who can enjoy the tribute from the safety of their front porch. Alert local veterans to the day/time of the drive by tribute so that they are ready to receive their thank-you salute.
- 5. VIRTUAL Q&A.** Ask veterans to participate in a virtual Q&A session using technology such as Zoom or Google Classroom. Students could create a list of questions vetted by school staff to be asked during their virtual interview. to be shared with participating veterans which would be answered live on screen. If technology proves challenging, questions could also be distributed to participants in advance and their responses could be recorded on video to be of their interviews would later be shared.
- 6. A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND SALUTES.** Enlist local photographers to graciously volunteer their time to photograph local veterans in front of their homes. Photos could be printed in large scale featuring the name and branch of service for each hero. These images could then be displayed and featured throughout local communities in store fronts, outside of public buildings, on lamp posts, etc. on Veterans day and beyond. ALTERNATIVE: Students could help to collect photographs of veterans during their time in active duty and use those archived photographs for display.



# Exploring Veterans Day

**These activities can be adapted for the age level of students.**

## **Why do we celebrate Veterans Day?**

Students can explore the history of Veterans Day on History.com: [www.history.com/topics/holidays/veterans-day-facts](http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/veterans-day-facts). Students can explore and discuss the origins of Veterans Day and its meaning in our society today. Students should also review the difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

## **What does “service” mean?**

Veterans have served in the U.S. armed forces. Discuss the term “service.” What are other forms of service people in our country perform? Ask students if they have participated in any service projects. This might also be a good time to talk generally about civic responsibility and commitment. (Other related terms students can define might include: *civilian, draft, duty, enlistee, patriotism, sacrifice*, and military terms such as *squadron*.)

## **Stories of Service.**

Americans from all backgrounds, races and ethnicities have served in uniform, from the American Revolution through today. Ask students to choose a veteran from a diverse background and create a short presentation, video, or article about their service.

## **Veterans Organizations.**

Students can research a veterans’ organization that does work nationally or is a local organization in the community, find out about their work, and learn more about how veterans continue to serve even after they are no longer in uniform. Visit [www.history.com/resources-for-veterans-and-military-families](http://www.history.com/resources-for-veterans-and-military-families) to see some examples of some national organizations HISTORY supports.

## **Do You Know A Veteran?**

Ask students if they know any veterans and if so, who they are and what they know about their military careers. Many students may have relatives who have served at some point over the past decades, or who are currently serving. Students can write short bios about the veterans in their lives. Advanced students can research the history of veterans affairs and write short essays about the treatment or benefits veterans have received after a particular war or conflict. (Example: students could research Civil War pensions, or the GI Bill.)





# Research Activities for High School Students

**Veterans History Project.** The Library of Congress sponsors the Veterans History Project which collects oral histories of U.S. veterans. Students can visit this site ([memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/html/search/search.html](http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/html/search/search.html)) and choose one or more stories to explore.

**Center for American War Letters.** Students can read letters from those who served in the U.S. military at [digitalcommons.chapman.edu/wla/](http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/wla/). This activity can align with course units related to many eras of U.S. history.

**Primary Source Activity:** Desegregation of the Armed Forces. Some students may be surprised to learn that the desegregation of the armed forces did not take place until 1948. Visit [www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=84](http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=84) to read President Truman's order to desegregate the armed forces and explore the impact of this landmark document.

## Learn More

**History.com:**  
[www.history.com/topics/holidays/history-of-veterans-day](http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/history-of-veterans-day)

**Veterans.com:**  
[www.history.com/history-honors](http://www.history.com/history-honors)

**Library of Congress: Veterans History Project**  
[www.loc.gov/vets/](http://www.loc.gov/vets/)

**Smithsonian: Price of Freedom Exhibition**  
[americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/price-of-freedom](http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/price-of-freedom)

**The Center for American War Letters:**



# Our Veterans are Stars

Ask students to label these stars with the name of a veteran and their branch of service to display publicly or to send to a veteran or one of their family members with a thank you letter.

