

Nov. 3, 2010

**Serving Those Who Served**  
*By Terry Tottenham*

On Veterans Day, we come together as a nation to honor our brave men and women in uniform who have put their lives on the line for our country — and to remember those who didn't make it back home to their families.

But honoring our veterans shouldn't be confined to just one day out of the year. Our veterans and their families deserve much more. Our nation has a proud military tradition, which continues through the men and women currently serving in this country and on foreign soil. Once our servicemen and women return home, it's up to us to ensure they are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve — but unfortunately, that is not always the case.

As President George Washington said, "The willingness of our young people to serve in any war ... is directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated." These words resonate just as strongly today as they did when spoken. Many of our veterans are returning home to find themselves facing various hardships and challenges as they transition back into civilian life. They may be struggling with serious medical problems or suffering from the mental stresses of combat or unable to access the benefits they are due. They may have family problems or financial struggles or be at risk of losing their home. They may find themselves in need of medical, legal, or financial assistance but not know where to turn for help or how to get started.

Texas lawyers want to do their part to thank our veterans and are committed to helping veterans make a successful transition home. Lawyers across the state are volunteering for a program called *Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans*. This State Bar of Texas initiative establishes pro bono legal clinics where volunteer lawyers provide free assistance, advice, or referrals to military veterans and their families who cannot afford basic legal services.

This month, to commemorate Veterans Day, legal advice clinics for veterans are taking place across the state thanks to the efforts of countless volunteers who want to give back to those who have given so much to this country. Many of these attorney volunteers are veterans themselves or have family members who served or are currently serving. For all of them, it is a chance to express their gratitude to those who have defended our nation and fought to preserve the ideals of our country. In addition, veterans legal clinics are now being offered on a regular basis in every major metropolitan area of the state. To learn more about when clinics and events are planned, visit [www.texasbar.com/veterans](http://www.texasbar.com/veterans).

As part of the *Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans* initiative, we are partnering with veterans groups, mental health professionals, and government agencies to ensure veterans have access to the care and resources they need. Veterans groups and social services providers in this state are working tirelessly to provide veterans with necessary help and services, but the need remains great.

I believe we all have a responsibility to help serve those who have served us. As a former Marine, I am proud to be part of the effort to move our state and nation toward the goal of improving services for our veterans. As the beneficiaries of the freedoms our armed forces have

fought to protect, we owe it to our veterans to give them our time or expertise by volunteering with a local veterans group or community organization that serves veterans. The highest gratitude we can show them is not to utter words of appreciation but to live by them.

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