

November 2019

# Veterans Day: Honoring Service & Recognizing Unique Challenges for 100 Years

## We All Have Someone to Thank

Veterans Day is a nationwide movement for a reason. According to the most recent Census statistics, there are over 18 million veterans in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Between relatives, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and others, most of us know at least one person who has served.

What we now know as Veterans Day was originally known as Armistice Day and marked the anniversary of the end of World War I.<sup>2</sup> It was first recognized in 1919 by President Woodrow Wilson and was made a holiday in 1938.<sup>3</sup>

It should be understood that the Veterans Day holiday is not why we celebrate – it's a reminder. But Veterans Day should also serve as a time to think about the challenges that those who have served face after returning home.

Finding a civilian job and reconnecting with loved ones after being away are big enough challenges on their own, but veterans also often struggle with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and addiction, including gambling addiction. Did you know that gambling addiction is treatable?



## Why Veterans are at Risk for Gambling Addiction

Prevalence research indicates that veterans and active military members are twice as likely to develop a gambling addiction than the general population. Did you know that there are nearly 3,000 slot machines on overseas military bases?<sup>4</sup>

**As many as 56,000 active duty personnel meet the criteria for problem gambling!**<sup>4</sup>

Life is different when you're an active military member. Many of the conveniences we're used to in everyday civilian life, like an abundance of entertainment choices and relatively flexible schedules, don't apply. On-base slot machines or even a simple deck of cards make it easy to engage in gambling when there may not be much else to do.

Gambling can be a safe recreational activity for most adults. But for those who lose the ability to control their betting activity, the results are devastating: from financial woes to anxiety, depression, relationship troubles, and even suicidal ideation. On top of that, gambling addiction is still widely misunderstood. Unfortunately, stigma prevails, and the majority of those who are suffering don't reach out for help as a result.

## How You Can Serve Those Who Have Served

Veterans deserve to know that help and hope are available for gambling addiction. In the State of Florida, services and supports for problem gambling can be sourced any time of day or night through the 888-ADMIT-IT HelpLine. Show your support for veterans and others suffering from problem gambling by remembering and sharing the HelpLine!

Another important way to support veterans who struggle with gambling addiction is to support the GAP Act, a bipartisan effort that requires the Department of Defense to implement policies and programs, including screening, to combat problem gambling. You can show your support today by visiting [ncpgambling.org/gap-act](http://ncpgambling.org/gap-act) to sign the NCPG's NDAA Support Letter.

Let's make this Veterans Day a reminder to serve those who have served our country, because they may need our help, too. If you or someone you know may be suffering from gambling addiction, call Florida's 24/7, Confidential, and Multilingual Problem Gambling HelpLine at 888-ADMIT-IT (236-4848). It's available for loved ones, too!



## GET CONNECTED

Florida's Problem Gambling HelpLine

 888-ADMIT-IT

 321-978-0555

 [gamblinghelp.org](http://gamblinghelp.org)



# References

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2. Lange, Katie. "5 Facts to Know About Veterans Day." U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, 5 Nov. 2018, [www.defense.gov/explore/story/article/1675470/5-facts-to-know-about-veterans-day/](https://www.defense.gov/explore/story/article/1675470/5-facts-to-know-about-veterans-day/).
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4. Shane, Leo. "Why Gambling Addiction among Active-Duty Troops May Pose National Security Risks." Military Times, 10 July 2019, [www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/07/09/gambling-addiction-remains-a-troubling-problem-among-active-duty-troops-advocates-warn/](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/07/09/gambling-addiction-remains-a-troubling-problem-among-active-duty-troops-advocates-warn/).