LOCKLEED NEWS

VETERANS DAY

They Came Home. They Kept Building America.

This Veterans Day, we honor a legacy that reaches far beyond the uniform.

When we think about Veterans' contributions to America, we often picture their military service: the places they served, the hardships they endured, and the people beside them.

But another chapter of American history began when they came home.

They returned to farms, factories, classrooms, and neighborhoods. They raised families, learned trades, started businesses, and became people their communities could count on.

After World War II, that next chapter unfolded on an extraordinary scale. The GI Bill, signed into law in 1944, helped returning Veterans pursue education and training, purchase homes, and establish businesses. By the time the original program ended in 1956, 7.8 million World War II Veterans had participated in education or training.

Behind that number were millions of individual decisions to begin again. A classroom entered. A skill learned. A business imagined. A future built for a family.

Opportunity mattered. So did the people who put it to work.

That history offers a powerful lesson: supporting Veterans can strengthen entire communities. The benefits of education, stability, and opportunity reach beyond one person, to families, neighbors, and generations that follow.

The story also deserves honesty. Access to opportunity was unequal, and many minority Veterans faced discrimination after returning home. Honoring their contributions means remembering both what they accomplished and the barriers they had to overcome.

Today, the legacy continues in ways that rarely make headlines: a Veteran mentoring a young person, organizing a community project, caring for a neighbor, or sharing lessons learned through service.

There is no single path after the military. Some Veterans lead publicly. Others contribute quietly. Some need time, care, and support to find their footing. Every Veteran deserves dignity, whether their next chapter is defined by achievement, recovery, family, or simply finding peace.

This Veterans Day, take time to discover a story you have never heard.

Ask a Veteran about their life. Listen to what service meant to them, and what came afterward. Preserve a family member's memories. Support a community effort. Help the next generation understand the people behind our history.

Veterans helped shape the country we inherited. How we remember, support, and include them will help shape the country we leave behind.

JOHN HENKA · CEO/FOUNDER, LOCKLEED INTERNATIONAL

VETERANS DAY · 1945 TO TODAY

They Came Home.





June 20, 1945. The Queen Mary arrives in New York Harbor with thousands of U.S. troops home from the battles in Europe.

May 25, 1945 (left). Soldiers head for the harbor at Le Havre, France, among the first sent home and discharged under the Army's new point system. Their hometowns are chalked on the car.

They Kept Building America.



June 21, 1946. Glenn V. Johnson (left) and Reese Sollars, both World War II veterans, wait to go underground at the Victory Mine, Terre Haute, Indiana.



September 1946. George Fain (center), a veteran, in his last year of high school in Wheelwright, Kentucky. He hoped to go on to the university.

7.8 million

World War II Veterans had participated in education or training under the GI Bill by the time the original program ended in 1956.

THE GI BILL, SIGNED INTO LAW IN 1944



TODAY

This Veterans Day, take time to discover a story you have never heard.

Left: a portrait of a young Marine, held at the National World War II Memorial on the 75th anniversary of Iwo Jima, February 19, 2020. **Right:** a World War II veteran at the Great Texas Airshow, San Antonio, April 23, 2022.



Photos: U.S. National Archives (1945); Russell Lee for the U.S. Department of the Interior's coal mine survey, National Archives (1946); U.S. Department of Defense (2020); U.S. Air Force (2022).

VETERANS DAY · FROM THE LOCKLEED NEWS ARCHIVE

The Legacy Continues

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Joel Peterson

U.S. ARMY · INFANTRY NCO AND RANGER · PURPLE HEART

Joel joined the Army after the 9/11 attacks. He was wounded in Iraq in 2007, spent months recovering and rebuilding his life, and retired in 2009 with a Purple Heart. He runs a lawn care company and leads the LockLeed Outdoor Foundation, which brings veterans together outdoors and backs the groups that serve them.

"I have three kids now and they're the best thing that ever happened to me!"

LOCKLEED NEWS, VOLUME 28, NOVEMBER 2025



John Mitchell

U.S. ARMY · 75TH RANGER REGIMENT

John enlisted in 2008, joined the 75th Ranger Regiment, and deployed to Iraq and twice to Afghanistan. After a final year in the Minnesota National Guard he started a firearms training company for law enforcement. In 2021 he went to work for a fencing company, found his passion, and then built his own: Cedar Solutions & Fence.

"I really like building things!"

LOCKLEED NEWS, VOLUME 23, JUNE 2024



Brandon Sullivan

U.S. AIR FORCE · PIERZ, MINNESOTA

Brandon joined the Air Force in 2015. In 2018, trimming trees to help support his family, he fell 50 feet and lost his right leg below the knee. Doctors said he would never run or climb trees again. That September he ran the Army 10-Miler. He went back to tree work in 2020 and won 10 medals at the 2024 Air Force Wounded Warrior trials in Las Vegas.

"I never thought I would be in any competition."

LOCKLEED NEWS, VOLUME 22, MARCH 2024



Mike Wolbrink

U.S. ARMY · 82ND AIRBORNE · LE CENTER, MINNESOTA

Mike served as an Airborne Ranger with the 82nd Airborne, with combat tours in Panama and Iraq. He and Jody Younger have started four businesses in 25 years. Since 2023 they have run Younger Gunworks in Le Center, where they teach safe gun ownership and de-escalation, host a weekly Bible study, and started a book study for the local teens who drop by.

"We try really hard to be interruptible."

LOCKLEED NEWS, VOLUME 29, JANUARY 2026

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