



NFL CLUBS SALUTE MILITARY FOR VETERANS DAY

Two NFL players are in the military. Others have been. So they have an appreciation for the sacrifices the military has made through the generations, as do NFL fans.

Seattle Seahawks defensive end **BRYCE FISHER** has just been sworn in to the Washington Air National Guard. Houston Texans safety **C.C. BROWN** is a member of the Mississippi National Guard.

Former NFL military personnel are running back **MIKE ANDERSON** of the Denver Broncos (Marines) and linebacker **ROBERT MC CUNE** of the Washington Redskins (Army). Many coaches have been in the military, including four with the New York Giants – **MIKE PRIEFER, MIKE SULLIVAN, MIKE SWEATMAN** and **MIKE WAUFLE**.

“Whenever I put on my uniform, I think about all the people I know who put on the uniform and do things more important than what I do,” says Fisher. “I’ve got friends of mine that have been back and forth to Baghdad and Afghanistan, and those people are the ones I really do my best to honor.”

New England Patriots linebacker **LARRY IZZO**, whose father was a West Point graduate and retired from the Army as a full colonel, has certainly shown his appreciation of the military.

Last spring Izzo and Atlanta Falcons running back **WARRICK DUNN** headed an NFL-USO tour of Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan to raise morale of U.S. soldiers and dedicate the Pat Tillman USO Center in Afghanistan.

On October 24, with many of his Patriots teammates in attendance, Izzo conducted “A Benefit for Our Troops and Their Families” in Boston. Nearly 1,000 people attended and more than \$200,000 was raised, with funds going to the Fallen Heroes Fund, Operation Enduring Christmas, the USO of New England, and Fallen Patriot.

“This was to benefit families of the American troops who have died in combat, and those American veterans left disabled as a result of their military service in Iraq and Afghanistan,” says Izzo. “As a tribute to my father and the influence he had on my life, I have always wanted to do something to help the families of our American troops.”

Many NFL teams have followed that spirit, and have/will conduct ceremonies in honor of Veterans Day, which is this Friday, November 11.

A sampling of NFL club activities for Veterans Day:

- **ARIZONA CARDINALS:** Honored veterans of the United States armed forces last Sunday, including former Cardinals safety and Army Ranger **PAT TILLMAN**. The tribute coincided with what would have been Tillman’s 29th birthday that day.

The Cardinals recognized a veteran from World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam and Iraq Wars during a pregame ceremony on the field. The U.S. Army color guard presented the colors and national recording artist **KENI THOMAS**, a former Army Ranger, sang the national anthem. In addition, volunteers from the Marines, Navy and Air National Guard along with Cardinals alumni unfurled a giant field-sized American flag during the singing of the anthem. Four F-16s performed a flyover before kickoff.

- **BUFFALO BILLS:** Will honor this Sunday nearly 80 veterans in a pregame ceremony. The former servicemen and women represent those who served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War as well as veterans in all branches of the armed forces. The ceremony will include a flyover with T-6 Texans, former training planes in World War II.

Selected veterans also will present a flag to the Bills’ organization that was flown over Camp Kalsu in Iraq. Camp Kalsu was named in honor of former Bills guard **BOB KALSU**, who started eight games in 1968 for the team. Following that season, Kalsu fulfilled his ROTC obligation in the U.S. Army and began his tour of duty in November of 1969. He was killed in action in Vietnam in July 1970. He is one of two NFL players killed in Vietnam, along with Cleveland Browns defensive end **DON STEINBRUNNER** in 1967.

- **CAROLINA PANTHERS:** Will honor at its game this Sunday retired **COL. QUINCY COLLINS**, a former fighter pilot and POW for 7 1/2 years in Vietnam. Present also will be 50 cadets from the Naval Junior ROTC from A.L. Brown High School in Kannapolis, North Carolina.

Panthers check presentations will be made to the Air National Guard Recreation Center/145th Airlift Wing of the North Carolina Air National Guard and the Carolinas Freedom Foundation. The ceremonies will conclude with a flyover by the 1st Attack Helicopter Battalion of the 130th Aviation Regiment that has made its mark historically as the "Panther Battalion."

- **CHICAGO BEARS:** Will hand out to all fans this Sunday a flag lapel pin in conjunction with the Boeing Company. Boeing has donated 100 tickets to the USO for all five military branches. A giant flag will be unfurled on the field before the game, held by the military. A color guard and U.S. Army battalion will be on the field for the national anthem, which will conclude with a flyover.
- **CLEVELAND BROWNS:** Paid special tribute to the military at their game last Sunday. The national anthem was performed by The Cleveland Opera with the colors presented by all five branches of the armed services. During a pregame ceremony, **NORMA LERNER**, wife of Browns' late owner **ALFRED LERNER**, and the Marine Corp. Law Enforcement Foundation presented checks to eight widows of military servicemen from Northeast Ohio who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. There also was a flyover of four Harrier fighter jets before kickoff.
- **INDIANAPOLIS COLTS:** In celebration of Veterans Day, Colts players visited patients at the Roudebush Veterans Administration Medical Center this week. Players went room-to-room to share in conversation with patients, sign autographs and pose for pictures. Some of the veterans do not receive many visitors and certainly welcomed the Colts' players.
- **JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS:** Will salute the military in both pregame and at halftime on Sunday. A joint military color guard will stand as the Navy Band Southeast and a vocalist from the Army Field Band perform the national anthem before the game, with an F-18 flyover. At halftime, veterans groups will be on the field along with the Navy Band as nationally acclaimed vocalist **RONAN TYNAN** sings "God Bless America."
- **MINNESOTA VIKINGS:** Players **ANTHONY HERRERA**, **SPENCER JOHNSON** and **CORY WITHROW** will visit the Minneapolis Veterans Home this Tuesday (November 15) to call bingo and meet and greet the veterans housed at the facility. Prior to that visit, the Vikings will stop to see **FR. TIM VAKOC** and his family at the hospital. Fr. Vakoc was on his way to visit a fallen soldier in Iraq when his military vehicle was blown up by a roadside bomb in May of 2004.
- **NEW YORK GIANTS:** Will honor the armed forces throughout the day at their game this Sunday. Recruiters from all the services will be at Giants Stadium gates before the game. Before kickoff, a full military color guard will present the colors, military honorary captains will be named, and the anthem will be sung by former Army Ranger and country singer **KENI THOMAS**, who performed last week at Arizona Cardinals ceremonies. A flyover will coincide with the anthem. Throughout the game, military spots will be shown on video screens.
- **ST. LOUIS RAMS:** Will conduct their annual military salute sponsored by Boeing on November 20. The Rams will welcome members of the various branches of the services and recognize them on the field. A color guard and bands will support the military theme, and at halftime there will be a military review.
- **SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS:** Had a flyover and saluted 100 Purple Heart veterans of World War II and the Korean, Vietnam and Iraq Wars at halftime of their game last Sunday.
- **TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS:** This Sunday will be Military Appreciation Day at Raymond James Stadium. The armed forces will be stationed at the south end of the stadium to greet fans and exhibit displays on their specific branch.

In a pregame ceremony, the team will honor the family of Medal of Honor recipient and Tampa native **SGT. PAUL SMITH**, who was killed in Iraq. President **GEORGE W. BUSH** recently presented the Medal of Honor to Smith's wife and children at the White House. Sgt. Smith was the first Iraq-based soldier to receive the Medal of Honor. A tribute to him will be shown on stadium video screens and his family will be presented by team Executive VP **BRYAN GLAZER** with an encased Buccaneers helmet signed by players.

Family members of a deployed soldier will serve as honorary captains during the coin toss. Six Blackhawk helicopters will perform a flyover at the conclusion of the national anthem. At halftime, approximately 100 recruits will be inducted into the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard and National Guard.

- **TENNESSEE TITANS:** For their game on November 20, the team will conduct its “Veteran’s Salute,” which includes 100 members of the Tennessee National Guard who have just arrived home from active duty. They will be honored prior to the national anthem and a flyover. At halftime, the Tennessee National Guard Band will perform and color guards from all branches of the military will stand.
- **WASHINGTON REDSKINS:** The Veterans of Foreign Wars partnered with the Redskins at their game last Sunday night with their representatives distributing 93,000 of the VFW’s “America Bands Together” red wristbands to the crowd at FedExField.

“America Bands Together” (ABT) is one of the VFW’s signature initiatives and was launched by the nation’s largest combat veterans organization to encourage Americans to publicly display their support of service-members and veterans by wearing the red wristband inscribed with “I Support the Troops.” Proceeds from ABT support emergency assistance for troops, as well as established VFW programs such as Operation Uplink, the National Veterans Service and the Military Assistance Program.

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