

# Veteran policy: protection of interests and integration in the contemporary world

June 17, 2024

# 845 days

since Russia launched its  
full-out invasion of Ukraine

Weeks have turned into years, and the death toll keeps ticking. The accompanying rhetorical question is lingering in the air: **when will this war finally end?** There is an answer, since war is indeed mathematics. The war will last as long as there are enough material, financial, and human resources.

**Five large-scale conflicts of the 20th century (Table 1) have proven the limits of belligerents' capabilities that finally force them to stop – to reconcile, surrender, or freeze the conflict:**

- Following **WWI**, the aggressor state (Germany) lost territories and was forced to sign an extremely unfavorable peace treaty, which itself later on led to another major war.

- **WWII** resulted in the aggressor state (Germany) losing its power followed by a long-term occupation and forced transformation into a prosperous democracy. It took 44 years for Germany to return its occupied territories (reunification of East and West Germany).
- **The Korean War** ended for both parties involved when the Allies forced the communists to cease fire and indefinitely freeze the conflict on the front. Western allies ensured South Korea's defense and prosperity. However, both parties have been arming up and preparing for a possible new conflict for 70 years already.
- **The Iran-Iraq war** ended when the Allies made both parties sign a peace treaty and restore pre-war borders and relations.
- **The Vietnam War** ended following the complete withdrawal of US troops under the pressure of American voters and the unification of North and South Vietnam.

The inability of states to attract people to the front and a critical number of dead and wounded soldiers reduces the parties' capability to fight, thus triggering the processes leading to ending the war. <sup>1</sup>



## Recent wars between states that lasted for years and caused the most casualties ↘ (Table 1)

War	Years fought	Total years of war	Casualties
WWI	1914-1918	4	16-17 млн
WWII	1939-1945	6	60-85 млн
Korean War	1950-1953	3	2,5-3 млн
US-Vietnam War	1965-1973	8	1,5-2 млн
Iran-Iraq War	1980-1988	8	1-1,5 млн

## ➔ **Returning to peace: supporting war veterans in Ukraine and abroad**

Any war eventually ends. However, even when they cease, society still faces many challenges. One in particular is **the returning veterans to a peaceful life**, in the greater scheme of general reconstruction. These questions became especially acute after the ends of both WWI and WWII. Back then, the governments of some countries, as well as civil society organizations, developed programs to support and reintegrate their defenders into the community. The tradition of helping and honoring soldiers has become widespread both in countries that either are currently or have recently participated in armed conflicts, as well as in those whose wars have already become history. For example, in the USA, such initiatives include free healthcare and university tuition, discounts on products and services, etc.

**Nowadays, the Ukrainian military is defending the independence of our country and fighting for its peaceful future, day in and day out.**

During these 10 years of war, Ukrainians have realized the importance of supporting military personnel both during and after service. Since the beginning of the war in 2014, many civil society organizations and initiatives intended for the military appeared in Ukraine, and in 2018, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine was established to implement state policy in the field of social protection of war veterans.



## ➔ **Examples of honoring and helping military and war veterans abroad**

- ➔ **Special greetings at the meeting.** In the UK, veteran status is granted to anyone who has served at least one day in His Majesty's Armed Forces (regular or reserve) or has been a member of the crew of merchant ships involved in certain military missions. Traditionally, when a veteran is met on the street, in a store, etc., they are greeted with a short phrase – “Thank you”.<sup>2</sup> In Georgia, the military is usually greeted with “Dideba kartul jars!” (Georgian “Glory to the Sakartvel army!”) and pressing an open palm or fist to the heart. In the USA, the traditional greeting for military personnel is “Thank you for your service!”<sup>3</sup> In 2018, the “Owing to You” national campaign was launched in Ukraine, with which the greeting and gesture of gratitude – a hand pressed to the heart – is spreading.<sup>4</sup>
- ➔ **Letters of gratitude.** One popular tradition is sending letters of gratitude to military personnel. For example, the Australian portal Kids News launched the #ThanksForServing initiative encouraging its readers to express their gratitude to the military – to either leave a message in the comments of the article or send letters to the specified email.<sup>5</sup>

The letters are addressed to veterans of world wars and participants in contemporary hostilities abroad. Another Australian project, Cardly, has developed a technology that allows people to choose and write online thank-you cards to defenders. The initiative cooperates with ex-servicemen's organizations to help distribute the thank-you cards.<sup>6</sup>

- **Meetings.** In many countries, there is a tradition of inviting veterans of wars and peacekeeping missions to speak at public events and meetings with schoolchildren and students. During these events, servicemen share their experiences of serving, and listeners have the opportunity to thank and honor them.
- **Crediting, consultancy, and mentoring.** Following WWII, the US government passed the Veterans Rehabilitation Act, which provided veterans with low-interest loans to start businesses and help them get an education (secondary or vocational). This support quickly paid off: since the 1960s, veterans have founded several world-renowned brands such as Nike and FedEx.<sup>7</sup> There are similar initiatives in many other countries that help war veterans start up their businesses. For example, such UK organizations as X-Forces Enterprise, SME Loans, and PDQ Funding grant specialized loans for start-ups and small businesses aimed at supporting military veterans. In some countries, there are public organizations that provide informational support to war veterans and their families. For example, in Australia, this is the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), where vets can seek help from Veteran Support Officers (VSO) – consultants advising members of the armed forces. The Ministry of the Armed Forces in France also has a National Office for Combatants and War Victims, which among other things, provides transitioning servicemembers with training and retraining grants.<sup>8</sup>
- **Rehabilitation and psychological support.** In the UK, there is a charity called Combat Stress, which is focused on improving the mental health of veterans. The organization was founded more than a century ago. It provides support to ex-servicemembers and their families, helping them overcome such issues as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression. Combat Stress ensures specialized treatment and psychological support to veterans who have participated in various conflicts and peacekeeping operations.<sup>9</sup>
- **Benefits and financial aid.** In Australia, veterans who served in the Armed Forces during WWII and in international wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations are eligible for a Veteran's Card. This card ensures certain benefits, including discounts when ordering services or shopping. Each business or organization independently determines the bonuses or benefits granted within its loyalty program. In Malaysia, the term “veteran” is applied to active-duty military with a certain length of service. A veteran's card helps them get various social benefits and a pension.<sup>10</sup>

➔ **In the USA, one of the important financial support tools is disability compensation.**

**\$133-\$3400** per month  
tax-free monthly disability benefits

***Veterans with service-related disabilities** may qualify for tax-free monthly disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ranging from \$171 to over \$3,400 per month after discharge from service.*

**VA disability rates depend on the following:**

- the disability severity or loss of a limb(s);
- having a spouse, child/children, or dependent parents;
- having a spouse with a severe disability;
- unemployment due to disability.

➔ **Home loans** (also known as housing loans from the Department of Veterans Affairs) **are an equally important tool for veterans' financial support.**

**from \$0**   
down payment

*Eligible veterans can purchase or build a home, or refinance an existing home mortgage, **with as little as 0 down payment, competitive rates, and no-limit financing.***

Another advantage over traditional mortgages is the absence of PMI (Private Mortgage Insurance, a monthly insurance premium charged to protect the bank until at least 20% equity is reached). Almost every loan under the VA program comes with a financing fee. This fee is directly allocated to the Department of Veterans Affairs and helps support veterans' loans in the future. Not everyone pays the fee, for example, military personnel with a service-related disability. The fee ranges from just over 2% for those applying for loans under the VA program to 3.3% for repeated purchases.

## The veteran's loan makes buying a home more affordable for millions of US veterans and active duty military personnel.

Many states also offer significant benefits to their veterans. State-level benefits range from free college tuition and employment to free hunting and fishing licenses. Most states also offer tax privileges for their veterans and special license plates, and some states even pay veterans cash bonuses for serving in the military.

- ➔ **In the UK**, the Department of Housing, Communities, and Local Government has introduced various measures to improve access to social housing for military personnel and veterans.
- ➔ **In Canada**, there are some financial programs designed to support the incomes of Canadian veterans. One such program is the Canadian Armed Forces Assistance, a monthly tax-free payment. It helps low-income Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) veterans who are no longer eligible for income replacement assistance after participating in a rehabilitation program.

For this program, VAC calculates a veteran's household income under the Statistics Canada formula. This formula takes into account any taxable income of the veteran, as well as any accrued government benefits. Who is eligible for the Canadian Armed Forces aid: Canadian Armed Forces veterans with low family income, who are searching for employment or are participating in Career Transition Services and are no longer getting income replacement assistance; family members of those killed in action, or a veteran with a child.

- ➔ The most common form of financial aid **in Australia** is pensions granted to support veterans and their families. The amount of pension paid depends on various factors such as income and assets available, the pension type, and any additional benefits they may be entitled to.
- ➔ **Croatia**, in turn, has developed a preferential system for veterans throughout the state's independent history. Currently, successful financial support programs for veterans are the following: Benefits for unemployed Croatian veterans of the Patriotic War and their family members; Attendance allowance; Priority status when renting commercial premises; One-time financial aid; Exemption from payment of certain court, administrative, and notary fees; The right to receive a land plot; The right to shares in the Croatian Fund of Veterans of the Patriotic War and their family members. The allocation of inclusive vehicles is also a significant material support for Croatian veterans.<sup>11</sup>

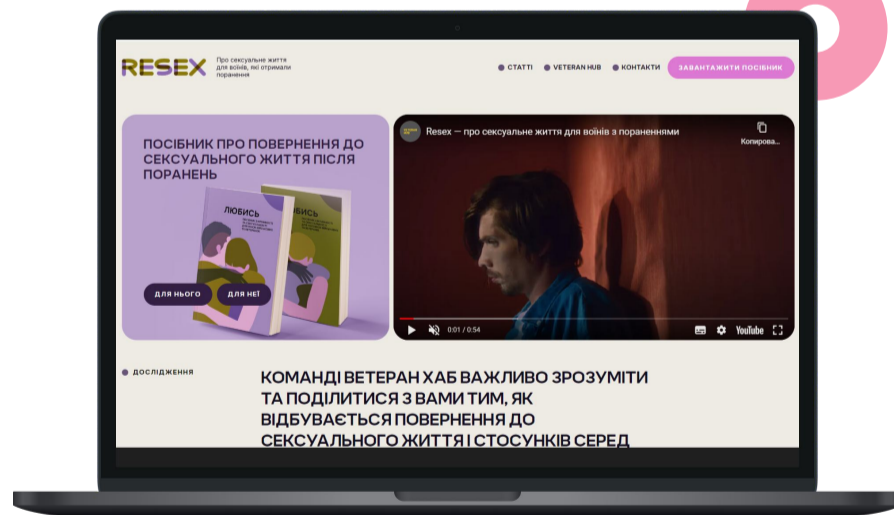
## ➔ Initiatives for veterans in Ukraine:

Firstly, the Ukrainian Veterans Fund is a public institution under the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. The Fund acts as a central node, collecting and providing information to veterans about all available opportunities for their reintegration into society. The fund also actively advocates for the rights and interests of veterans. **Therefore, every veteran can apply to this fund.**



- **The Veterans Fund “After Service”** assists veterans through a variety of programs: education, mental health, employment, and more.

- **Resex** is the Veteran Hub team's platform for returning sex and relationships to wounded warriors. They have also developed post-injury sex recovery guides to improve the sex lives of veterans and military men/women and their partners.



- **To get free prosthetics**, a person can contact the following:



Certain categories of Ukrainians are entitled to sanatorium-resort therapy. The Ministry of Veterans Affairs provides free vouchers.

- Ukrainian veterans may undergo various training **to find an occupation of their liking**. Kyiv School of Economics offers study grants from the KSE Foundation. New Horizons Hub is an IT training project for servicemen who have returned from the front line. The online course “Returning from War: Mind, Body, and Society” provides Ukrainian veterans and their family members with information on how to adapt to a peaceful life. Regardless of their level of education, veterans also may undergo training, retraining, or advanced training at the Vocational and Technical Education Centers of the State Employment Service. **Grants for veterans' training** are available at the Kyiv Academy of Media Arts. There are 12 online courses available on the Diia platform to learn how to start your own business, how to keep accounting records properly, make a financial plan, get financing for the development of your business idea, promote a product, and manage a team. Veterans can start up their businesses, and there are programs to help them with this. Business microfinancing program for veterans and their family members.
- **Children of Ukrainian defenders** are eligible for a free education grant from the Kyiv School of Economics (KSE Foundation). The website of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine informs of education benefits for children whose parents are veterans, combat veterans, or killed in action. Children of Heroes Charity Fund takes care of children who lost their parents during the war and will support them until adulthood. The Law on the Social and Legal Protection of Military Personnel and Members of Their Families stipulates benefits for the health improvement and recreation for children of combat veterans. These children are given priority when entering general education and preschool educational institutions, as well as children's health camps. Children with combat veteran parents are eligible for free meals (paid for by the local budget by the decision of the relevant council). A comic book explaining to children how to communicate with their veteran parents was published in Ukraine.

 BLYZHI

Maryna Baturynets, the founder of the Bazilik School of Communications, launched the **Blyzki educational initiative** for families and partners of military personnel and veterans. According to the Blyzki initiative head, they plan to establish a community where relatives of military personnel and veterans will be able to acquire a new occupation, learn new skills, and find their place in business or creative industries.



Maryna  
Baturynets



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## So, these are examples of the diverse approaches to honoring and assisting the military in different countries and the importance of supporting those who have served their country.

Honoring and supporting military and veterans is an important aspect of social policy in many countries around the world. Different related national approaches include annual commemorations and special holidays, government social support programs, benefits, health care, rehabilitation programs, and employment assistance. Charities also play a significant role in providing aid and support to military personnel and their families. Such activities not only express appreciation for their service but also ensure the required aid and integration of veterans back into civilian life. Thus, countries show their respect and embrace responsibility to those who defend their freedom and security.

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## Veteran policy covers a wide range of measures aimed at supporting and protecting the rights of veterans, including social, healthcare, and psychological support.

### Key aspects of such a policy may include:

- **social support:** financial aid (pensions and other cash payments; one-time payments and compensations); housing provision (provision of housing or assistance in its purchase; improvement of housing conditions); labor adaptation (vocational training and retraining; promotion of employment and job creation);
- **healthcare support:** treatment and rehabilitation (free or subsidized medical care; rehabilitation programs and centers); psychological support (consultations of psychologists and psychotherapists; programs to overcome post-traumatic stress);
- **education and culture:** educational programs (free or subsidized education in higher education institutions; advanced training courses); cultural events (support of veteran organizations and clubs; organization of cultural and sports events);
- **legal support:** legal consultations (free or subsidized legal support; protection of the rights and interests of veterans in court);
- **special programs:** social projects (projects to integrate veterans into the community; volunteer programs and initiatives); state and international programs (cooperation with international organizations to exchange experience and implement joint projects).

## The integration of veterans into society is an important aspect of veteran policy including certain initiatives and approaches to support veterans **when they return to civilian life after serving.**

### Key aspects of integration of veterans:

- education and vocational training;
- support with employment;
- social support and a network of like-minded people;
- healthcare and psychological support;
- cultural adaptation and socialization.

Successful integration of veterans depends on a comprehensive approach that combines economic, social, and psychological aspects aimed at creating favorable conditions for their **high-quality life after service.**

## The financial aspect of the veteran policy covers a wide range of measures and approaches aimed at ensuring the economic support and financial stability of veterans after their service.

### The key aspects of this policy are the following:

- benefits and pensions;
- medical insurance;
- financial support during relocation;
- lending and business support programs;
- investment in education and vocational training;
- social programs and support given hardships.

The **financial aspect** of veteran policy plays a key role in ensuring relevant support to veterans, allowing them to successfully integrate into civilian society and ensure their economic well-being after service.

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**Thus, the veteran policy must be comprehensive and integrated to effectively respond to the diverse needs of veterans and ensure their decent integration into society after service.**

The veteran policy plays a key role in providing support and honoring those who have given their lives in defense of their country. These aspects of the veteran policy show the overall importance of supporting veterans and are aimed at ensuring their dignified lives after service.

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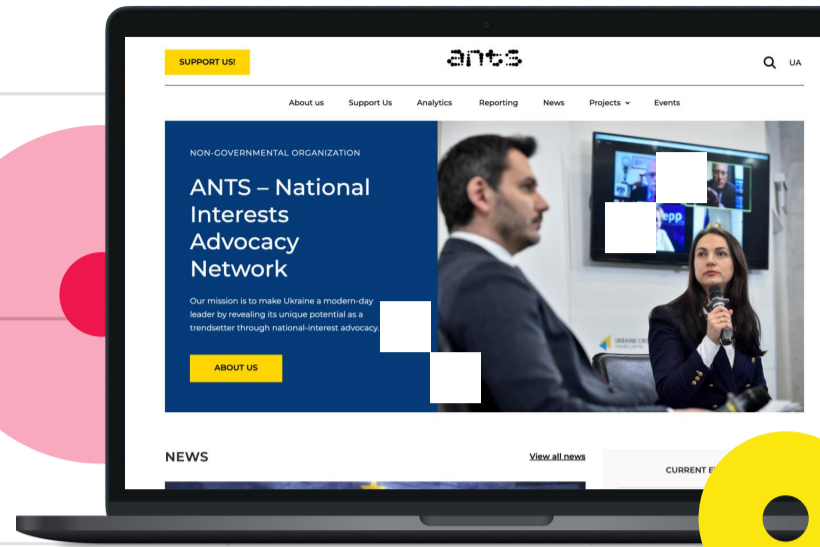
**The state program of gratitude (State of Gratitude) will play an important role in supporting and honoring veterans for their contribution to national defense and public safety.**

**This concept includes not only legal and financial aspects but also cultural and social initiatives to support and improve the morale of veterans. Here are some key aspects of the State of Gratitude:**

- **symbolic expressions of gratitude.** This includes ceremonies, public events, and celebrations where veterans receive decorations, medals, and other awards in recognition of their service;
  - **government programs and support.** This includes financial aid, healthcare and psychological support, access to education and vocational training, and other types of public aid and services for veterans;
  - **cultural initiatives.** Activities promoting the preservation of the history and cultural traditions of veterans, including museum exhibits and literary and artistic projects presenting the veterans' contribution to the country's life;
  - **social support and integration.** Programs aimed at supporting the integration of veterans into civilian society, including housing initiatives, employment support, and pensions;
  - **ethical standards and rights of veterans.** Ensuring fair working conditions, legal protection, and ethical standards for veterans that guarantee their dignified treatment in society.
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**Thus, the State of Gratitude will not only honor the veterans' service but also ensure systematic and comprehensive support for their needs, facilitate their return to everyday life, and integrate them into civilian society.**

# Sources used



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- 3 Hand on heart: join the national campaign of gratitude to defenders and veterans "Owing to You"
- 4 "Owing to You" initiative: do the military need a gesture of gratitude "hand on heart"
- 5 Saying 'thanks for serving' will show our veterans we support what they've done for us
- 6 Send the perfect card right from your computer or phone as if you wrote and sent it yourself.
- 7 How veterans are taken care of in the USA and the practices Ukraine can learn
- 8 Veterans' needs 2023
- 9 Combat Stress
- 10 Veterans' needs 2023
- 11 Veterans' needs 2023
- 12 Education, rehabilitation, entrepreneurship, and more: initiatives for veterans and their families

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