American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

#AATeam veterans design a token of gratitude for military escorts

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Honor, duty, sacrifice. These words resonate closely with anyone who has escorted the remains of a fallen service member. At Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), a group of team members, who are military veterans representing all ages and branches of the military, recently came together to design a token to show their respect and appreciation for the honorable men and women who quietly escort fallen soldiers to their final resting place.

In most cases, these escorts accompany the remains from the point of entry and continue with any connections to their final destination. They also interact with the soldier's family and help to console and guide them through an unfamiliar process.

"We want to recognize the important role of the escorts," said Walter Obuchowski, Supervisor, Line Maintenance.

The coin was designed by Walter and fellow Line Maintenance Supervisors George Hance, James Karlesses and John Obrien. It was funded by fellow Supervisors Richard Klooster, Bill Stewart, Edward Bill, Don Jones, John Rogers, Stephen Madjar and Louis Pillarella, as well as Fleet Service Lead Rafael Sanchez-Rodriquez — all military veterans.

John said that 200 coins have been produced so far, but the group hopes to never run out of the important token of gratitude and honor.

"It made me feel very proud to be able to show our gratitude for the respect these escorts show the family and the honor they provide in their time of need," George added. "We want to show our fellow team members why it's important to respect and thank these escorts for their service."

Members of the Veteran Military Employee Business Resource Group at PHL are committed to supporting our military, veterans and their families. On Fridays, participants wear red for Remember Everyone Deployed. The group's next focus is to identify and dedicate a gate area for military activities, including Honor Flights and the annual Snowball Express.

From left, Walter Obuchowski, George Hance, Jim Karlesses and John O'Brien pose with the token they created to honor escorts who accompany the remains of fallen soldiers.

A close-up of the token