American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

Floating down Fifth Avenue

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There's building a float. And then there's building a float with a giant inflatable Dreamliner on it.

Labros Dulos, a Plant Maintenance Mechanic at JFK, knows all about that. He worked on American's entry in the New York City Veterans Day parade last year when our Boeing balloon float made its debut. "This is going to be an annual event for us at American," said Labros. "And as a visible symbol of our support for the troops … we want to do it right."

American is a proud sponsor of the New York City Veterans Day parade, now an annual highlight for team members in New York and part of the long-held tradition of patriotism and spirit in the community. This year's parade, held in Manhattan Nov. 11, commemorates the centennial of the end of World War I. The United States Army is the year's featured military branch.

"This year is especially important to me," said Brian Galarza, an Army veteran and Fleet Service team member at JFK. "We're honoring and saluting my beloved Army, where I proudly served my country."

Parade participants include public officials, active members of the military and uniformed services, Medal of Honor recipients, veterans groups, city organizations and our very own team members, some who come from stations around the system to march in the parade alongside the Veteran Military Employee Business Resource Group.

A lot goes into getting ready for this important day. And, of course, none of it would be possible without teamwork. Along with Labros, a group of team members at JFK have been focused this year on building a permanent base for the float. Constructed primarily out of wood and held together with nails and screws, the base can now be placed on the back of any truck quickly, easily and safely to use for years to come.

“It’s an honor to be able to do my part and drive our float down Fifth Avenue,” said Chris Kiernan, a Marine Corps veteran and Plant Maintenance Mechanic at JFK. “This is now my second year driving, and seeing the crowd react to our float is something I will always remember.”

Supporting those who serve

With more than 6,000 team members who are active or retired military, and many thousands more with family members who serve, American is proud to support the military, veterans, first responders and their families through several programs year-round.

Last month, American raised $2.75 million at Sky Ball XVI for the Airpower Foundation. This week, the airline will host wounded service members from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center at Salute to the Troops, an extended weekend of relaxation, entertainment and sightseeing in Las Vegas. Additionally, more than 100 wounded service members will head to Dallas/Fort Worth from San Antonio next week to participate in for Seats for Soldiers, which includes courtside seats at a Dallas Mavericks game. Next month, American will fly 1,500 children and spouses of fallen service men and women to Orlando for five days of fun and fellowship at the 13th annual Snowball Express celebration.

At American, active military members board early for every flight, but it’s not just the daily trips that make an impact. Throughout the year, American flies hundreds of veterans to New Orleans and Washington, D.C., to see the museums and memorials built in their honor. It’s our privilege to serve those who have served us.

The finished product, ready to float down Fifth Avenue

Frank Loiacono (left), Maintenance Support at JFK, and Labros Dulos, a Plant Maintenance Mechanic at JFK

Labros (left) with Chris Kiernan, a Plant Maintenance Mechanic at JFK

Labros making sure the platform will fit perfectly