

# We honor to remember



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**A**t the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, an armistice to temporarily cease hostilities between allied nations and Germany was signed, marking the end of fighting in what was dubbed “the war to end all wars.” Eventually known as Armistice Day, this day was observed by many countries around the world in recognition of the end of World War I. On May 13, 1938, Congress declared the 11th of November to be a legal annual holiday, dedicated to the cause of world peace. But unfortunately, World War I did not live up to the hype to end all wars.

Since the end of World War I, United States military missions have been carried out on every continent in the world, as well as on the seas and in the air. Many more of America’s sons and daughters have served, fought and died in defense of the United States, her allies and the freedoms we all enjoy. Following World War II and the Korean War, Congress amended the name of the holiday at the urging of veteran organizations, changing the name from “Armistice Day” to “Veterans Day” in honor of all American veterans.

Along with the name change, there also came a change to the date on which the holiday would be celebrated. In 1968, Congress signed the Uniform Holiday Bill to ensure that certain federal holidays, including Veterans Day, would be celebrated on a Monday. It is said that Congress did this in hopes of spurring additional commerce and stimulating the economy from travel that would come as a result of the long weekends. It wasn’t until Oct. 25, 1971, that the first Veterans Day under the new bill was celebrated. The date change resulted in a lot of confusion, causing many states to become unhappy—these states chose instead to continue to celebrate Veterans Day on Nov. 11. On Sept. 20, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law Public Law 94-97, changing the date of observance of Veterans Day back to the date of the World War I 1918 armistice—Nov. 11.

Many nations joined forces with the United States during World War I in

an allied effort to defeat tyranny. Likewise, the date of Nov. 11 held significance with our allies, as they too wanted to commemorate and honor the heroism of their veterans. Canada and Australia both call their recognition of veterans on Nov. 11 “Remembrance Day.” However, their observances are somewhat different. Canada’s recognition is similar to ours in that it honors all veterans. The main difference is that red poppy flowers are worn to honor their war dead. The recognition in Australia is more similar to the Memorial Day observance in the United States. Great Britain also calls its recognition of veterans “Remembrance Day,” but the country observes it on the Sunday closest to the 11th of November. Its observance is capped by two minutes of silence in London to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in war.

Every year, Veterans Day is celebrated by parades, concerts and a day off from work, to name a few events. But we must be reminded that while almost all veterans carry the pride of their service, many also endure the wounds, whether physical or psychological, that came along with it. As a society, we must never allow our commitment to our veterans to end at the point they leave the battlefield. In honoring our nation’s veterans, we must understand that as long as people exist who desire to conquer others, there will be those who must take up arms to defend freedom, resulting in a never-ending stream of veterans who ask only that their sacrifice and those of their comrades not have been made in vain.

Let us never forget that, as our veterans did before them, soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines continue to stand watch every second of every day all around the world so that we can sleep soundly at night under the blanket of freedom.

