



Veterans Group

For more information, go to nalc.org/veterans

A history of Veterans Day

More than 20 percent of NALC's 290,000 active and retired members have served our country in the U.S. Armed Forces. Every year on Nov. 11, we honor these men and women and the other 18 million living veterans across the country, as well as those veterans who have perished, as we celebrate Veterans Day to honor America's heroes who have served and protected our nation.

Veterans Day began as "Armistice Day" on Nov. 11, 1919, the first anniversary of the end of World War I. Congress passed a resolution in 1926 for an annual observance, and Nov. 11 became a national holiday in 1938.

Unlike Memorial Day, Veterans Day pays tribute to all American veterans—living or dead—but especially gives thanks to living veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime. (Memorial Day is a time to remember those who gave their lives for our country, particularly in battle or from wounds they suffered in battle.)

Veterans Day occurs on Nov. 11 every year in the United States in honor of the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" of 1918 that signaled the end of World War I, known as Armistice Day. World War I—known at the time as "The Great War"—officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles outside the town of Versailles, France. However, fighting ceased seven months earlier, when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. For that reason, Nov. 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of "the war to end all wars." The United States Congress officially recognized the end of World War I when it passed a concur-

rent resolution on June 4, 1926.

An act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U.S. Code, Sec. 87a) approved May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday—a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as "Armistice Day." Armistice Day was primarily a day intended to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954—after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the nation's history, and after American forces had fought aggression in Korea—the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting in its place the word "Veterans." With the approval of this legislation (Public Law 380) on June 1, 1954, Nov. 11 became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Later that same year, on Oct. 8, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first "Veterans Day Proclamation," which stated:

In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose. Toward this end, I am designating the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs as Chairman of a Veterans Day National Committee, which shall include such other persons as the Chairman may select, and which will coordinate at the national level necessary planning for the observance. I am also requesting the heads of all departments and agencies of the Executive branch of the Government to assist the National Committee in every way possible.

In 1968, Congress ratified the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which moved several holidays so that they fell on Mondays, giving federal employees three-day weekends. The law went into effect in 1971. One of the holidays moved was Veterans Day, the first of which was commemorated on Monday, Oct. 25, 1971. People didn't care for the change, and many continued observing the holiday on Nov. 11, due to the historical significance of the date. This change lasted only a few years, as President Gerald Ford nullified the ratification in 1975, and in 1978 (and every year since then) Veterans Day was officially held on Nov. 11 once again.

Nov. 11 is a day specifically set aside each year in honor of all of our American veterans. While many people make it a habit to thank our military service members and veterans any day of the year, Veterans Day is a special day to let them know how much we deeply appreciate the sacrifices they have made in their own lives to protect the lives of others and to keep our country free.

Join the NALC Veterans Group

The NALC Veterans Group is designed to provide NALC members—both active and retired letter carriers—who are also military veterans the ability to connect with fellow NALC veterans and stay informed on issues of importance to letter carrier veterans. It is free to join.

Members receive a pin as a symbol of gratitude for their military service and membership in NALC.

If you are interested in joining the group, complete the sign-up card at nalc.org/veterans.