

The meaning of Veterans Day

Among the national holidays of the United States of America, two hold special meaning for those who have served and their families – Memorial Day, in honor of those who died in service of their country, and Veterans Day, which honors those who have served and continue to serve.

Veterans Day is the chance to honor all of those who have served America in both war and in peace, a chance to say “thank you” and honor the sacrifices made in order to protect our nation.

Originally, Veterans Day – there is no apostrophe, according to the defense.gov website – was called Armistice Day, to commemorate the end of World War I. That war officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919, but the fighting ended about

seven months before that – on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

With World War I initially considered “the war to end all wars,” it gained national holiday status in 1938. It was, however, originally a day set aside to honor veterans of that specific war.

With more wars that followed, though, the name evolved from Armistice Day to Veterans Day, so it would honor American veterans of all wars.

While the date of celebration changed over the years, it was permanently kept at Nov. 11 when President Gerald Ford signed a law in 1975 returning it to Nov. 11.

America is not the only country to celebrate Veterans Day. Canada and Australia call Nov. 11 “Remembrance Day,” as does Great Britain (though that country celebrates it on the

Sunday closest to Nov. 11).

Some information from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs:

- Veterans Day is always observed officially on Nov. 11, regardless of the day of the week on which it falls. The Veterans Day National Ceremony, like most ceremonies around the nation, is held on Veterans Day itself. However, when Veterans Day falls on a weekday, many communities choose to hold Veterans Day parades or other celebrations on the weekend before or after Nov. 11 so that more people can participate.

- Some schools close and some remain open on Veterans Day, because there is no legal requirement that schools close on Veterans Day, individual states or school districts are free to establish their own policies on school closings.



Most schools that do not close for Veterans Day schedule assemblies or other activities to honor America's veterans on Veterans Day and throughout the week that includes Veterans Day.

- Many people confuse Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Memorial Day is a day for remembering and

honoring military personnel who died in the service of their country, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle. While those who died are also remembered, Veterans Day is the day set aside to thank and honor ALL those who served honorably in the military - in wartime or peacetime. In

fact, Veterans Day is largely intended to thank LIVING veterans for their service, to acknowledge that their contributions to our national security are appreciated, and to underscore the fact that all those who served - not only those who died - have sacrificed and done their duty.



A hero is someone who understands the responsibility that comes with his freedom.”

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