

Veterans Day: History and Background

World War I



- In 1918, World War I, “The Great War”, was being fought between the Allies and Germany
- An armistice was implemented at the 11th hour of the 11th day of November, 1918
- The war officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919 in France

Photo courtesy of Drake Goodman
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/29007475@N08/3550475347/>

An armistice is a temporary cessation of fighting by mutual consent; a truce. TheFreeDictionary
<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/armistice>

Armistice Day

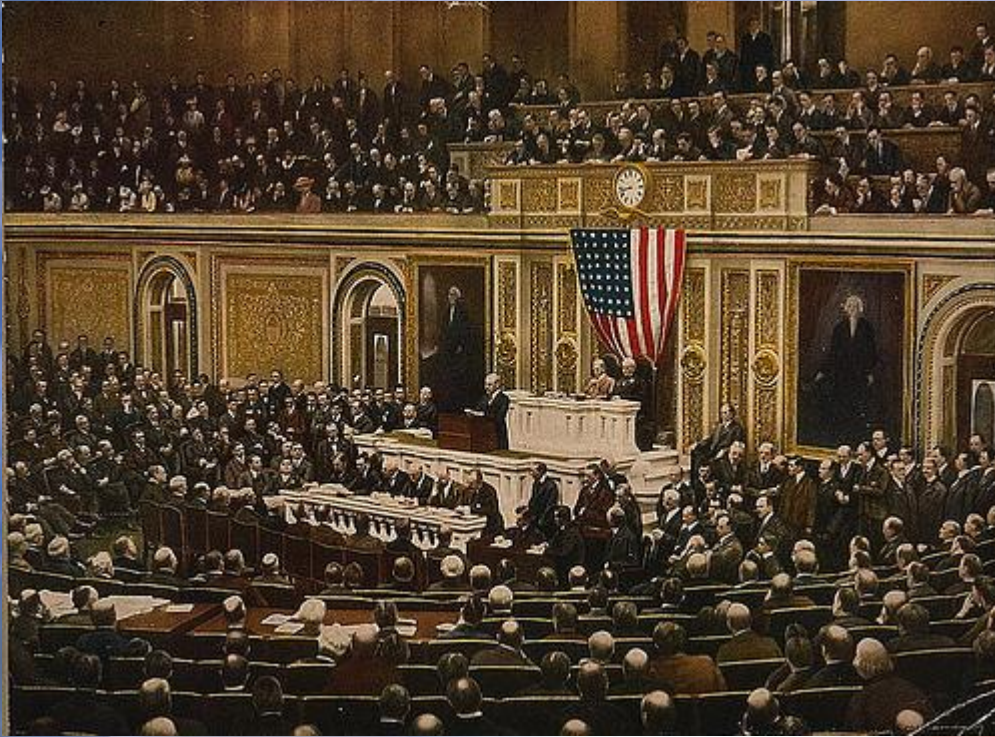


Photo courtesy of Bob Bobster

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- In November 1919, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed November 11th as the first commemoration of Armistice Day
- Events such as parades, public meetings and a brief suspension of business were held beginning at 11 am

Presidential Quote

"To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."



Photo courtesy of The Library of Congress

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- President Woodrow Wilson,
November 1919

Recognized by Congress

- 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 dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be celebrated and known as "Armistice Day."



- The day was established to honor World War I veterans

Photo courtesy of Lenton Sands

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Veterans Day



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp>

- On June 1, 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed legislation changing Armistice Day to Veterans Day
- This day would now honor American veterans of all wars
- On October 8, 1954, the President issued a proclamation for all organizations to work together “in order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary”

Observance Date Changes

- On June 28, 1968 legislation was signed to have Veterans Day celebrated on the 4th Monday of October
- Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holiday on November 11th
- On September 20th, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed legislation to return Veterans Day to its original date of November 11th



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/08images/9.jpg>

Veterans Day Presently



Veterans Day remains a celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

Photo courtesy of Brian Walter

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ptchfork/3023728732/>

References

United States Department of Veterans Affairs
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<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp>

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