

# Veterans Day: A Commemoration Evolving From Armistice to Honor

Veterans Day originated as Armistice Day, established to mark the armistice that ended World War I at the 11th hour on November 11, 1918. The first observance took place one year later, on November 11, 1919, serving as a day to honor the service and sacrifice of World War I veterans, as declared by President Woodrow Wilson.

By 1938, Armistice Day had become an official federal holiday dedicated to world peace and commemorating those who served in the First World War.

The holiday's meaning expanded after World War II and the Korean War. In 1947, a Navy veteran named Raymond Weeks organized a national Veterans Day celebration in Birmingham, Alabama, to honor all American military veterans, regardless of the conflict they served in.

Inspired by this movement, Congress amended the 1938 act in 1954, replacing "Armistice" with "Veterans" to recognize veterans of all wars. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the legislation on June 1, 1954, and later that year issued the first official Veterans Day proclamation, calling on all Americans to join in honoring the nation's veterans.

Veterans Day has not remained fixed on November 11 in every era. The Uniform Monday Holiday Act of 1968 shifted the observance to the fourth Monday of October starting in 1971, aiming to create three-day weekends for federal employees. This change was unpopular among veterans and many citizens, leading several states to continue observing the original date.

The confusion and discontent prompted Con-

gress in 1975 to restore Veterans Day to November 11, beginning in 1978, reaffirming the holiday's historic significance tied to the World War I armistice.

Over time, Veterans Day has evolved beyond remembrance of wartime service, becoming a dedicated occasion to reflect on all veterans' contributions, including those who served in peacetime.

It is a day to honor military service while also recognizing ongoing challenges faced by veterans, such as healthcare access and employment opportunities.

Veterans Day began as a solemn commemoration of the end of the Great War but has grown into a broad, national tribute to the sacrifices and service of all U.S. military veterans. It serves not only as a day of remembrance, but also as a call for public appreciation and support.



## Hancock County Veterans Day Program Nov. 11 to Honor Service Members

**All Veterans Welcome**

Please join Hancock County VFW Post 5186 as they gather again to honor those that have served this country to keep it free. Tuesday, Nov. 11 is Veterans Day, and they will host their annual program starting at 11 a.m. at the Hawesville Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. There will be a free meal and prizes provided.

Veterans Day is always observed on the 11th month and the 11th day, with official ceremonies beginning on the 11th hour, memorializing the effective end of the Great War (World War I) after millions of casualties in 1918. What was once Armistice Day was renamed Veterans Day in 1954, after World War II and Korean War veterans asked Congress to recognize all American veterans who served in any war, in order to properly honor the nation's brave heroes.

The Hancock County Road Department will deliver the tables to the Hawesville Baptist Church Fellowship Hall on Monday, and Hancock County VFW Auxiliary members will decorate and prepare in advance for the program.



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