

VETERANS DAY

Veterans Day, observed generally in the United States by Presidential proclamation, honors the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces. Veterans Day replaces the earlier holiday, Armistice Day, that each year marked the anniversary of the armistice agreement signed on November 11, 1918, to end World War I. In 1954, Congress changed the name of the celebration to Veterans Day to make this day one that includes veterans of all wars. In Canada, however, November 11 continues to be celebrated as a holiday called Remembrance Day.

When the armistice was signed in Europe in 1918 it meant great rejoicing because four years of war were over. Hope of peace for all time to come was in everyone's heart. But this was not to be, and today we come together to commemorate and give thanks not only to veterans of World War I, but of World War II and the later conflicts fought in Asia and the Middle East. We think of millions of living veterans, and pause to remember those who have died.

For many years, solemn Veterans Day ceremonies have been held in Arlington National Cemetery. The President or his representative places a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. In cities across the land, there are parades and programs.

On this day we salute the members of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard. As we do so, we hold the hope that a permanent peace will be achieved among the nations of the earth. Perhaps, one step toward such a peace is taken when we become better acquainted with our world neighbors.