

# Honoring Our Veterans

In 1921, an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. This site, on a hillside overlooking the Potomac River, became the focal point of remembrance and reverence for America's veterans.

Similar ceremonies occurred earlier in England and France, where an unknown soldier was buried in each nation's highest place of honor. These memorial gestures all took place on Nov. 11, giving universal recognition to the celebrated ending of World War I fighting at 11 a.m., Nov. 11, 1918. The day became known as Armistice Day.

Armistice Day officially received its name in America in 1926 through a congressional resolution. It became a national holiday 12 years later by similar congressional action. If the idealistic hope had been realized that World War I was the "War to End All Wars," Nov. 11 might still be called Armistice Day. But only a few years after the holiday was proclaimed, war broke out in Europe.



Years later, realizing that peace was equally preserved by veterans of World War II and Korea, Congress was requested to make this day an occasion to honor those who have served America in all wars. In 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed a bill proclaiming Nov. 11 as Veterans Day.

On Memorial Day 1958, two more unidentified American soldiers were brought from overseas and interred in the plaza beside the unknown soldier of World War I. One was killed in World War II, the other in the Korean War. In 1984, an unknown serviceman from Vietnam was placed alongside the others.

To honor these men, symbolic of all Americans who gave their lives in all wars, an Army Honor Guard keeps vigil day and night.

The freedoms we enjoy today – freedom of speech, freedom to worship, freedom of the press and the right of people to peaceably assemble, to petition the government – were bought with a price. We need only to look at recent events in the world and here at home to be reminded of the enormity of that price.

Friday is Veterans Day. In Life Care and Century Park, we have the honor of serving those who through their service to country assured us of these freedoms. We also have associates who themselves are veterans and/or who have family members in uniforms of the Armed Forces now serving around the world.

(more)

Take the opportunity – especially tomorrow – to say two simple words: *Thank you*. Thank them for their commitment to their country and its freedoms.

A Psalm of David: *Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle; He is my steadfast love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and He in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me* (Psalm 144:1-2 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter

