

# VETERANS DAY

“TO HONOR VETERANS OF ALL WARS”

Raymond Weeks of Birmingham, Alabama, organized a Veterans Day parade for that city on November 11, 1947, to honor all of America's Veterans for their loyal service. Later, U.S. Representative Edward H. Rees of Kansas proposed legislation changing the name of Armistice Day to Veterans Day to honor all who have served in America's Armed Forces.

In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a bill proclaiming November 11th as Veterans Day and called upon Americans everywhere to rededicate themselves to the cause of peace. He issued a Presidential Order directing the head of the Veterans Administration, now the Department of Veterans Affairs, to form a Veterans Day National Committee to organize and oversee the national observance of Veterans Day. In addition to fulfilling that mission, the committee oversees the annual production and distribution of the annual Veterans Day poster and this Teacher Resource Guide.

In 1968, Congress moved Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. However, it became apparent that the November 11th date was historically significant to a great many Americans. As a result, Congress formally returned the observance of Veterans Day to its traditional date in 1978.

The Veterans Day National Ceremony is held each year on November 11th at Arlington National Cemetery. At 11 a.m., a color guard, made up of members from each of the military services, renders honors to America's war dead during a tradition-rich ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

The President or his representative places a wreath at the Tomb and a bugler sounds "Taps." The balance of the ceremony, including a "Parade of Flags" by numerous Veterans service organizations, takes place inside the Memorial Amphitheater, adjacent to the Tomb.



June 1, 1954: President Eisenhower signs HR7786, changing Armistice Day to Veterans Day. Standing are: Alvin J. King, Wayne Richards, Arthur J. Connell, John T. Nation, Edward Rees, Richard L. Trombla, Howard W. Watts.

Eisenhower Presidential Library

# 11.11.11

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VETERANS DAY AND MEMORIAL DAY?

Many people confuse Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Both holidays were established to recognize and honor the men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States Armed Forces. But Memorial Day, which is observed on the last Monday in May, was originally set aside as 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 on Veterans Day, which is observed on November 11, Veterans Day is intended 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.

To ensure the sacrifices of America's fallen heroes are never forgotten, in December 2000, the U.S. Congress passed and the president signed into law "The National Moment of Remembrance Act," P.L. 106-579, creating the White House Commission on the National Moment of Remembrance. The commission's charter is to "encourage the people of the United States to give something back to their country, which provides them so much freedom and opportunity" by encouraging and coordinating commemorations in the United States of Memorial Day and the National Moment of Remembrance.

The National Moment of Remembrance encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day for a minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to the nation.

*Fort Smith National Cemetery*



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## STUDENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Student volunteers are an important part of the VA medical centers' treatment team. They receive valuable experience and training which will benefit them in applying for college and jobs. The James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award provides scholarship opportunities to students who volunteer at VA medical centers (your local VA health care Voluntary Service staff has current nomination criteria). Student volunteers are liaisons with their communities and provide a valuable element of caring for Veterans. The VA Voluntary Service program offers students excellent opportunities for: exploring health care career options; gaining experience in a health care environment; learning new skills; and making new friends.

There are many opportunities to explore in the Student Volunteer Program. Here are just a few of the services and specialties available to student volunteers:

- Audiology and Speech Pathology
- Nursing
- Occupational or Physical Therapy
- Information Technology
- Social Work
- Nutrition and Food Service
- Medical Administration



*Marwah Ahmed, 17, began volunteering at the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center when she was 13.*

A wide variety of assignments are available. Volunteers are selected according to the needs of the medical center, assignment preference and skills. Training is provided by Voluntary Service at each medical facility and the supervisor of the department to which volunteers are assigned. Orientation will be conducted to acquaint you with services available at the medical center where you serve.

There are two ways to become a VA student volunteer:

1) Contact the nearest Department of Veterans Affairs facility. You can locate a VA facility by visiting [www.va.gov/health/](http://www.va.gov/health/) and click on the "Locations" tab. Ask to speak with the Voluntary Service staff and express your interest in becoming a Volunteer. The staff will take care of everything else including your interview, orientation and assignment.

2) Visit [www.volunteer.va.gov/apps/VolunteerNow/](http://www.volunteer.va.gov/apps/VolunteerNow/), fill out and submit the form. Someone from the local Voluntary Service staff will contact you with further information.