

Chandler Lodge #138 F &AM
Lodge Education Program

Subject: Veterans Day

Date: 11 Nov 08

World War I – known as “The Great War” - officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919 outside the town of Versailles, France. However, November 11 1918 is generally regarded as the end of “the war to end all wars.” because fighting actually ceased seven months earlier when the allied forces and Germany agreed to a temporary cessation of hostilities that went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. One year later in November 1919 President Wilson proclaimed Nov 11th as the first commemoration of Armistice Day.

The United States Congress officially recognized the end of World War I when it passed a resolution on June 4, 1926, which included a request to the president that he issue a proclamation calling upon officials to “display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on November 11 and inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies”. The original concept for the celebration was for a day observed with parades and public meetings and a suspension of business beginning at 11 a.m.

Twelve Years later an Act of congress approved May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday - - to be thereafter celebrated and known as "Armistice Day." Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor veterans of World War I, however after World War II and later aggression of Korea, veterans service organizations urged congress to amend the act for all veterans. In 1954, congress amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting in its place the word "Veterans." With the approval of this amended legislation November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars. Later that same year, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first "Veterans Day Proclamation" which designated the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs as Chairman of a Veterans Day National Committee.

In June 1968 The Uniforms Holiday Bill was signed to designate three-day weekends for Federal employees by celebrating four national holidays on Mondays: Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Columbus Day. Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holidays on their original dates, and with much confusion the new law celebrated Veterans Day on a Monday in October 1971. It became apparent that the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance to a great number of US citizens, and so on September 20th, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 94-97 which stated that beginning in 1978 the annual observance of Veterans Day would return to its original date of November 11th.

Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week on which it falls. The restoration and continued observance of Veterans Day on November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus on the purpose of Veterans Day which is “A celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.”

Source:
Dept of Veterans Affairs