



Veterans Day, 1989

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year, on November 11, we Americans pause to express our respect and gratitude for the millions of men and women who have served our Nation as members of the United States Armed Forces. On that day, 71 years ago, the Armistice marking the end of World War I was signed. It is fitting that we choose the anniversary of "Armistice Day"—a day dedicated to peace—to honor those who have helped keep our Nation strong and our freedom secure. America's veterans have been steadfast guardians of peace and liberty not only here at home, but also around the world.

The selflessness and valor of the 2,000,000 American servicemen who fought in Europe during World War I were essential in bringing that bitter conflict to a conclusion in 1918. In the Argonne Forest, Belleau Wood, Chateau-Thierry, and in other less celebrated but no less decisive confrontations on land and sea, American "Doughboys," Marines, and sailors demonstrated extraordinary courage and skill. The anniversary of the signing of the Armistice for "The War to End All Wars" shall always remind us of their heroic efforts and unflinching patriotism.

Only 23 years after the signing of the Armistice, members of the United States Armed Forces were called again to the battle-scarred fields of Europe. During the Second World War, American military personnel fought—and helped defeat—the tyrannical forces of Nazi Germany and its allies. Many other World War II veterans made their stand for freedom in the Pacific and in North Africa. Thousands of American service men and women later returned to East Asia and the Pacific during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

Each American veteran is a source of strength and pride for our country. As members of the Armed Forces, these courageous individuals not only protected the national security interests of the United States, but also upheld the principles upon which this great Nation was built. Americans—and millions of people around the world as well—enjoy the blessings of freedom, peace, and representative government because our veterans were willing to risk their lives for them. We are forever grateful to these selfless individuals, especially those who have given "the last full measure of devotion" for our well-being.

Today, the United States continues to look to its veterans as leaders. They have carried their patriotism and concern for others far beyond the battlefield, participating in all levels of government, community groups, charitable organizations and voluntary service programs. Across the country, individual veterans and veterans associations are helping to provide health care for ill and disabled colleagues. They are rallying to join the war on drugs and the campaign for better schools. And they are helping to foster in young people a genuine love of country and a profound sense of personal duty, honor, and civic responsibility.

We Americans owe a great debt to all our military veterans, who have shown us—in peacetime as well as times of strife—the value of individual liberty and free and democratic government. Today, let us renew our determination to keep faith with those who have so faithfully served and defended us. We can begin by remembering the cause for which they have labored and by working hard to ensure that their efforts have not been made in vain.

In order that we may pay due tribute to those who have served in our Armed Forces, the Congress has provided (5 U.S.C. 6103(a)) that November 11 of each year shall be set aside as a legal public holiday to honor America's veterans.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Saturday, November 11, 1989, as Veterans Day. I urge all Americans to honor the courage and sacrifice of our veterans through appropriate public ceremonies and private prayers. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials to display the flag of the United States and to encourage and participate in patriotic activities in their communities. I invite civic and fraternal organizations, churches, schools, businesses, unions, and the media to support this national observance with suitable commemorative expressions and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "George H. W. Bush".