

## A Brief History of Veterans Day

Veterans Day, formerly known as Armistice Day, was originally set as a U.S. legal holiday to honor the end of World War I, which officially took place on November 11, 1918—at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month. In legislation that was passed in 1938, November 11 was "dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be hereafter celebrated and known as 'Armistice Day.'" As such, this new legal holiday honored World War I veterans.

In 1954, after having been through both world War II and the Korean War, the 83<sup>rd</sup> U. S. Congress, at the urging of the veterans' services organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting the word "Veterans." With the approval of this legislation, on June 1, 1954, November 11 became a day to honor American veterans of all wars

### The Difference Between Veterans Day and Memorial Day

Memorial Day in May honors service members who died in service to their country or as a result of injuries incurred during battle. Deceased veterans are also remembered on Veterans Day, but the day is set aside to thank and honor living veterans who served honorably in the military - in wartime or peacetime.

### Veteran's Day Poem

While many of us may be familiar with John McRae's famous poem "In Flanders Fields," few of us have heard of another poem, "We Shall Keep the Faith," written by Moina Michael. She was so moved after reading his poem that she made a personal pledge to "keep the faith", as he had urged, and wrote her own poem. From that day she vowed to wear a red poppy

of Flanders Fields as a sign of remembrance and to use the poppy flower to raise funds for ex-servicemen returning from the First World War. She described the way that the idea came to her in her autobiography, *The Miracle Flower, The Story of the Flanders Fields Memorial Poppy*, published in 1941.

As a result of Moina Michael's tireless campaigning, her complete dedication to the cause and the inspiration her idea gave to others, the delicate red field poppy has become an internationally-recognized symbol of remembrance and welfare for war veterans



**We Shall Keep the Faith**  
by Moina Michael,  
November 1918

Oh! you who sleep in Flanders Fields,  
Sleep sweet - to rise anew!  
We caught the torch you threw  
And holding high, we keep the Faith  
With All who died.  
We cherish, too, the poppy red  
That grows on fields where valor led;  
It seems to signal to the skies  
That blood of heroes never dies,  
But lends a lustre to the red  
Of the flower that blooms above the dead  
In Flanders Fields.

And now the torch and poppy red  
We wear in honor of our dead  
Fear not that ye have died for naught;  
We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought  
In Flanders Fields.