

Veterans Day Essay

On June 1st, 1954, Public Law 380, proposed by Kansas Representative, Edward Rees, was signed into law by former President Eisenhower. This law was established on November 11th annually as a federal holiday. One that we still know, and celebrate today, Veteran's Day. Each year, on November 11th the United States comes together to commemorate the veterans that have served our country. Dating back, celebrating our veterans has had a history of over one hundred years, so continuing this celebration is important for our past, present, and future.

Prior to Veteran's Day being established, the world had recognized this day as Armistice Day since 1919. November 11th was the ending of World War I in 1918 because of the specific end time of the war. An armistice, which is an agreement made by opposing sides in a war to stop fighting for a certain time, or a truce, was signed in 1918 to conclude the "war to end all wars". It was put into effect at exactly the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month, of 1918. Former President Wilson officially declared November 11th the first commemoration of Armistice Day in November of 1919. At this time, the main purpose of Armistice Day was to honor, and remember the soldiers that died while fighting in World War I. Raymond Weeks, a soldier of World War II from Birmingham, Alabama started the idea of Veterans Day. He felt that all veterans should be honored, not just the ones that had died in war. The name, as stated before, was changed to Veterans Day in 1954. No matter the history of Veteran's Day, Armistice Day, or whatever it should be called, the common theme is celebrating the men and women that have served in the military, or are serving in the military. It is important that we remember the past of honoring veterans so that when Veterans Day comes around in the present, we are able to remember not only the soldiers who are with us, but also the ones who have fought before, or who have passed.

It is essential to realize that America wouldn't be "the land of the free" without our veterans. The many hard working veterans have dated back all the way to when we first became our own country in the Revolutionary War. There have *constantly* been people fighting for our rights, and our safety. Since then, there have been many sizeable wars like the World Wars, Civil War, Vietnam War, and the War on Terror. All throughout these wars, America has had a militia strong enough to stay "the land of the free". As a girl in the United States, I have rights that other countries can't say they have. I have the freedom to play sports, choose whatever career I want, and to have my own opinions. I owe it all to the veterans that I have had those privileges and opportunities in life.

The literal definition of a veteran is a person who has served in the military, but there are so many more adjectives that should be used to describe them. Selfless, strong, courageous, perseverance, pride, and patriotism are all things that come to mind. I asked my grandpa, who was drafted into the Vietnam War, "What does it mean to you to be a veteran?". He started off by saying that the way he felt about it when he was serving, vs. now after being able to look back on his experience are different. He felt that although it was hard, back then it was just something you did. Now, he expressed how he now realizes there aren't as many around that have served. He said "It is more of an honor now to know that I am one of the select few that got to serve our country." I'm sure this is very true considering the amount of people who got drafted into the war, and now how serving in the military is your own choice. Schools, towns, and communities most of the time have had at least one man or woman who they know that served. Because there is only a small amount of veterans that we know, it makes them that more special and unique. The last thing he mentioned was how much it means to him when people recognize, and thank

him for his service. On Veterans Day, but also any day of the year, make sure you are thanking those veterans in your lives for all that they do.

Overall, we are here today to cherish the men and women that have fought for our freedom. Like Barack Obama said referring to veterans, “In the face of impossible odds, people who love this country can change it”. Remember to thank those veterans who you know personally, and even the ones you don’t. Appreciate all that they have done for us, and will continue to do for us. To all veterans past and present, thank you for your service!