

# Veterans Day

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, the armistice to end World War I was signed by the Allied and German forces in a railcar in northern France. The aftermath of WWI, after more than four years of fighting between 1914-1918, resulted in 33.4 million dead, wounded, imprisoned or missing. The casualty toll for the U.S. military was nearly 275,000.

From November 11, 1919, through 1953, Armistice Day in the U.S. specifically honored those who served in WWI. Beginning November 11, 1954, after World War II and the Korean War, Veterans Day became the official day to thank, commemorate and honor our living service members and all who have honorably served in the U.S. military during both wartime and peacetime, and in all military branches: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy and Space Force.

Every November 11, at 11 a.m., a wreath is laid at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. Veterans Day ceremonies, parades and celebrations take place in Washington, D.C. at our national monuments and in cities and towns across the U.S. The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency and local government websites list the most up-to-date information for celebrations around the state and close to home. Attending meaningful events honoring our service members is one of many ways to show support for the sacrifices these individuals make to serve and protect our country.

## Appreciate, Support and Connect with a Veteran

WRITER | JULIE FORD

### Get Involved

Sharing your skills and giving your time and energy to organizations that support veterans is a significant way to thank and honor our veterans.

### Send a Note

Do you enjoy writing letters or sending care packages? Contact Operation Gratitude at [OperationGratitude.com](http://OperationGratitude.com). Especially for service members deployed overseas, getting mail is a morale booster. Imagine mail call, where you gather to hear your name announced because you have mail from home, but your name is not called. A veteran friend of mine says it feels pretty brutal. Yes, the internet helps, but letters and care packages are tangible and long-lasting. In 2026, Operation Gratitude is rolling out new parameters of how to send mail, and letter writing is one of several ways to show gratitude to service members and first responders.

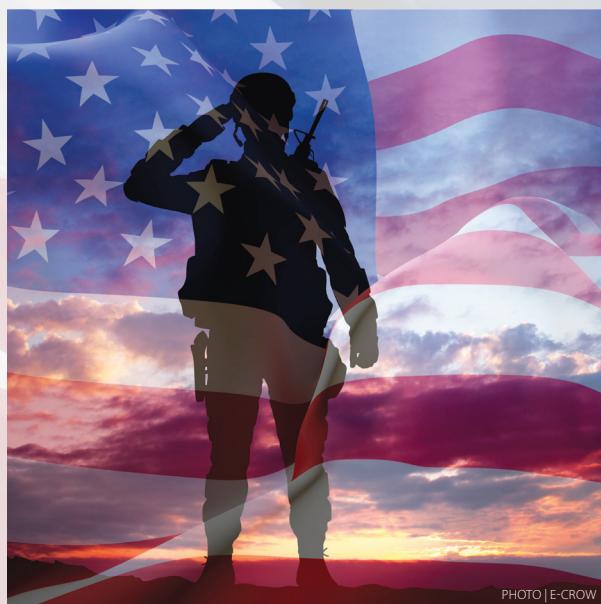


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### Stitch a Memory

How are your sewing skills? The mission of Iowa-based Quilts of Valor Foundation (QOVF) is "to cover Service Members and Veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor." Michigan is home to many QOVF groups across the state and there are several ways to get involved. Visit [QOVF.org](http://QOVF.org).

### Plant a Seed

Is gardening a passion? Michigan has veteran-specific gardens that welcome volunteers to

help in the many facets of garden management. While each is unique in its scope, the common theme is supporting veterans and late fall and winter are great months to get in touch with these organizations in order to be ready to dig in and help in the warmer months.

**Green Boots Veteran Community Horticulture Marketplace, Detroit, GreenBootsGardens.com**

**VA Detroit Healthcare System Rooftop Gardens, Detroit, 313-576-3332**

**Hope Floats for Veterans, Clio  
HopeFloatsForVeterans.com**

**Raven Wood Gardens, Menominee  
RavenWoodGardens.org**

**MSU Extension Veterans Therapy Garden, Paw Paw, Email: grahamw9@msu.edu**



## Veterans Day and Memorial Day What's the Difference?

The general public often confuses Veterans Day with Memorial Day, a federal holiday on the last Monday in May. However, Memorial Day is designated as the official day to remember fallen service members, especially those who died in battle while serving and protecting their country. Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day and dates to after the Civil War, when soldiers' graves were decorated with flowers and flags. The name gradually changed to Memorial Day and was declared a federal holiday in 1971. Because it's a solemn day, it's not appropriate to wish someone a "Happy Memorial Day."

## Show Your Support

Volunteer with one of Michigan's three hubs of the national Honor Flight network: Upper Peninsula Honor Flight, Mid-Michigan Honor Flight and Talons Out Honor Flight. From welcoming home veterans to sponsoring a guardian and many volunteer opportunities in between, time and talent are needed to send veterans from WWII, Korean War and Vietnam War to see their memorials in Washington, D.C. See our article on Honor Flights in this issue of Michigan HOME and Lifestyle for more information.

Local Veterans of Foreign Wars (V.F.W.) and American Legion posts may offer many volunteer opportunities to support veterans and military families in your community. Veterans Administration (VA) medical centers also need volunteers, and Michigan has VA medical centers located in Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Detroit, Iron Mountain and Saginaw. From baking cookies to shuttle driver to the No Veteran Dies Alone palliative care program, the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service program is one of the Federal government's largest volunteer programs. Learn more at [AMVETS.org/VAVS](http://AMVETS.org/VAVS)

As Veterans Day grows near, mark your calendar or set your watch for 11 a.m. and take a moment to reflect on the sacrifices our service members in all military branches make to ensure our nation's security. Then gather family and friends and find a way to share your time and talents to support and thank a veteran. □