

# EXPLORING: WHERE YOU LIVE

## Memorial



### PURPOSE

Cadets should understand God's command to seek peace and pursue it, but must also be ready to go to battle when it's right to do so. They should remember and celebrate the courage and service of those who have fought in wartime.

### Longing for Peace but Going to War

Those who serve in the military not only have to deal with being in a physical battle that may end their life here on earth, but also an inner battle with their own moral issues. For Christians that means being attuned to a God who on one hand calls them to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9) and to love their enemy (Matthew 5:44) and on the other hand makes them aware that they live in a fallen world (... wars and rumors of wars, Matthew 24:6) where evil sometimes takes the form of a group or government that seeks the destruction of their friends and family. As Solomon stated in Ecclesiastes, "... there is a time for war and a time for peace." Knowing that there will be war — that it's a fact of life in a fallen world — does not make it easier for those who serve in the military. We should have the utmost respect for those who go to war, even as they desire peace. We are called to honor those who serve in the military, not only for their service to our country, but for the tough job they have in being peacemakers in a fallen world.

### LEARNING

1. As Christians, we should be peacemakers. Because we are to love our neighbor as ourselves, we should try to do what is best for him as well as what is best for ourselves. In our consideration, we not only need to be peaceful, but to work hard to make peace.
2. The passage in Romans says that no one is righteous, and goes on to describe people as worthless, no good, deceitful, lying, bloodthirsty sinners who have no fear of God. That's pretty extreme.
3. The willingness of a person to lay down his life for his friends is a sign of ultimate love. Those who go to war for the right reasons are doing so because they love their fellow countrymen.

### FOR CANADIAN CITIZENS

4. a. Remembrance Day in Canada has its origins with the cessation of fighting in World War I on November 11, 1918.  
b. The day was specifically dedicated by King George V of England, on November 7, 1919 as Armistice

Day. From 1923–1931, Armistice Day was held on the Monday of the week in which November 11 fell.

- c. In 1931, Parliament decided to hold Armistice Day on November 11 and changed the name of the holiday to Remembrance Day.
5. Remembrance Day is a public holiday in all provinces and territories except Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba.

Seven Books of Remembrance are kept in the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, to honor Canadians who died serving Canada in war. There are separate books for the South African War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. There is a Book of Remembrance for the Merchant Navy, and another one for Newfoundlanders, since Newfoundland did not join Confederation until 1949. The seventh Book of Remembrance was dedicated in 2005 to honor Canadians who gave their lives for Canada since October 1947.

Many civic ceremonies take place across Canada on Remembrance Day including parades and gatherings where speeches are given by local dignitaries. Often the poem "In Flanders Fields" is read.

6. A poppy flower worn on Remembrance Day is a visible tribute to all those who have died in service to their country. All over Canada, you will see people wearing a poppy on Remembrance Day. The tradition comes from the poem "In Flanders Fields" by Canadian John McCrae. The poem was written in the trenches at the Battle of Ypres in 1915 when a close friend of McCrae's was one of 6000 Canadian casualties in just 48 hours. The poem mentions the poppies that grow in the fields where the war dead are buried.

7. In Flanders Fields by John McCrae

*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe,  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch, be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields*

## FOR U.S. CITIZENS

4. a. World War I, known at the time as “The Great War,” officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919. However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice (temporary cessation of hostilities) between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month — November 11, 1918.
- b. In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed the 11th as the first commemoration of Armistice Day. An Act of Congress on May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday — a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as “Armistice Day.”

Armistice Day was originally a day to honor veterans of World War I. But in 1954, Congress amended the original law by replacing the word “Armistice” with “Veterans,” making November 11 a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

- c. In 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Holiday Bill which was intended to ensure three-day weekends for federal employees by celebrating national holidays on Mondays. The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed on October 25, 1971.

Because the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance to many citizens, on September 20, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed a law which returned the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of November 11, beginning in 1978.

5. Veteran’s Day is a federal holiday, so many Americans have the day off from school or work. Non-essential federal government offices are closed. No mail is delivered. All federal employees are paid for the holiday; those who are required to work on the holiday sometimes receive wages for that day in addition to holiday pay.

At exactly 11 a.m. every November 11th, a color guard, made up of members from each of the military branches, renders honors to America’s war dead during a heart-moving ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery. The President or his representative places a wreath at the Tomb and a bugler sounds Taps. The balance of the ceremony, including a “Parade of Flags” by numerous veterans service organizations, takes place inside the Memorial Amphitheater, adjacent to the Tomb.

Local observances vary but often they include a parade where local veterans from all wars, conflicts, and military actions are invited to participate. The parade will end at a central gathering place — such as a town square or veterans memorial. Local dignitaries

are invited to speak and friends or relatives of those who have given their lives for their country are asked to share their thoughts on the significance of their loved ones sacrifice.

6. a. It is hard to say when/where Memorial Day had its beginnings. It probably began in small communities after the Civil War. Relatives of the Civil War dead decided to dedicate a day to visit the graves of their loved ones and honor them in some way.
- b. It was originally called Decoration Day because the way many chose to honor their fallen loved ones was to place flowers and flags on the grave sites.
- c. Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic with a general order that was first observed on May 30, 1868.

It is now celebrated in almost every state on the last Monday in May as passed by Congress with the National Holiday Act of 1971.

7. Many Americans have forgotten the meaning and traditions of Memorial Day. At many cemeteries, graves of the fallen are increasingly ignored and neglected. Many people no longer remember proper flag etiquette for the day. Some towns and cities hold Memorial Day parades, but many have not held a parade in decades. Some people think the day is for honoring any and all dead, and not just those fallen in service to our country.

Since the late 50s, on the Thursday before Memorial Day, soldiers from the Third U.S. Infantry place small American flags at each of the more than 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery. Following their lead, many veterans groups (such as the VFW) also place flags on veteran’s grave sites in local cemeteries.

In recent years, bills have been introduced in Congress to restore Memorial Day to the actual day of May 30, in hopes that if the day was separate from a three day weekend it would receive more recognition. So far these attempts have not received enough support to pass and become law.

## DOING

1. The best way to help a boy learn the importance of honoring those who have served their country in the military is to have them actually spend some time with a veteran. Chances are someone within your circle of friends, family, or congregation has served in the military. Hopefully they will be willing to be interviewed by a boy from your club. Local veterans organizations are another source of possible interviewees.

Some veterans would rather not talk about their experience; respect their privacy and thank them for even considering the possibility.

Prior to interviewing a willing veteran, it is important for the boys to list the questions they would like to ask. Go over these questions with the boys. Your Cadets are probably naïve about this topic and could ask a question that would be inappropriate. Because of this, an adult's input and guidance is mandatory.

A good way to open the interview is to let the veteran know that if any question is too hard for them to answer they should feel free to say that they would rather not answer the question. Questions about when and where they served are good openers. Allow the veteran to talk about what was most important to them. Ask if they have a story about a favorite moment in the service. If they are able to answer, ask what their toughest time in the service was. If the veteran is a Christian, be sure to ask how their faith sustained them during this time and/or how their faith was challenged.

Be sure that the boys thank the veteran for being willing to talk about their service.

2. Self-explanatory.
3. There are many opportunities to take part in the official ceremonies on these special days. A good place to start is to call your local veterans organizations or the local government offices that organize the ceremonies. It can also be very meaningful if you take time at your club meeting to recognize these special days.

No matter how your boys and counselors become involved, the most important ceremony is when an individual Cadet or counselor takes a moment out of his day to just be silent and remember the sacrifice of those who have served. Take the time to explain to your boys what these days are for and how blessed they are because of what these service men and women have done. If ever there was a good reason to use modern technology, this may be one of the best — send an e-mail, twitter, or text to remind your boys to observe the day in some special way.