



1 4 T H A N N U A L

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association
Essay Contest



Sponsored by the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association
and the Pueblo City-County Library District



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The Pueblo Medal of Honor Association began in 1997 when Robert H. Rawlings, owner and publisher of *The Pueblo Chieftain*, began a project to create a Medal of Honor Memorial which would be a lasting testament featuring bronze statues honoring Pueblo’s four Medal of Honor recipients: William J. Crawford – U.S. Army, WWII; Carl L. Sitter – Marine Corps, Korea; Raymond G. “Jerry” Murphy – Marine Corps, Korea; and Drew D. Dix – U.S. Army, Vietnam. Additionally, the names of all the over 3,500 recipients of the Medal of Honor since its inception during the American Civil War would be listed on granite plaques.

This Association successfully bid for, and brought to Pueblo, the Congressional Medal of Honor Society for their national convention in September of 2000 to be held at the time of the unveiling of the Medal of Honor Memorial. Ninety-seven out of 147 Medal of Honor recipients living at the time were in attendance.

The mission of the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association is to preserve and expand the memorial dedicated to Medal of Honor recipients; to advance the history of the Medal of Honor; honor the legacy of those who have received the Award nationwide; to promote democratic ideals; and encourage among the people of the United States, and especially its youth, citizenship, character, integrity, and selflessness as epitomized by the Medal of Honor.

In 2010, the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association created this essay contest to draw the attention of Pueblo students to the true heroism represented by the recipients of the Medal of Honor. The Association raises money for JROTC scholarships, upkeep of the Medal of Honor memorial, as well as a Medal of Honor display inside the Convention Center. The Association also assisted with the data base for the Veteran’s Bridge at the Riverwalk. In 2017 this group again brought the Congressional Medal of Honor Society national convention to Pueblo where 40 of the 79 living recipients were in attendance.

Currently the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association is in the process of making significant changes to the inside window display at the Convention Center



Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest 2022

T H E M E

**“Veterans Day is celebrated on November 11.
What is the significance of that date and
why do you think we should honor veterans?”**

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association, in cooperation with Pueblo City-County Library District, is pleased to announce the winners of the 14th annual essay contest.

The following guidelines were required:

All entries must be typed:

300 – 500 words for grades 4 and 5

400 – 700 words for grades 6-8

500 – 1,000 words for grades 9-12

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association judges were Ray LeMasters, Margo Hatton, Kevin Cover, Don and Mary Gray, and Gary and Karen Micheli. There were 165 entries this year.

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association and Pueblo City-County Library District wish to thank teachers and parents for encouraging their students and children to participate in this essay contest.

A special thanks to the Pueblo City-County Library District for their assistance each year with this essay contest.

In addition, we would like to thank Kevin Ortiz and his staff at the Pueblo Convention Center for their help with this evening's awards ceremony.

To contact us:

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association

301 N. Main Street #101

Pueblo, Colorado 81003

www.pueblohomeofheroes.org

Our office hours vary, contact us at (719) 544-2435.



Winners

Elementary School

1st Place, Penny Jo Barr

4th Grade, Vineland Elementary School, Mrs. Vallejos

2nd Place, Metzli Montoya

5th Grade, St. Therese Catholic School, Mrs. Wren

3rd Place, Zayden Salazar

4th Grade, Eva R. Baca Elementary School, Ms. Lopez

Honorable Mention, Sofia Jansson

5th Grade, St. Therese Catholic School, Ms. Wren

Honorable Mention, Charlotte Roberts

5th Grade, Swallows Charter Academy, Mrs. Medved

Middle School

1st Place, Simona Rowell

7th Grade, Homeschool, Mrs. Rowell

2nd Place, Emma Perry

8th Grade, Connect Charter School, Mrs. Medina

3rd Place, Aliyah Carreiro

7th Grade, Pleasant View Middle School, Mrs. Granado

Honorable Mention, Lotus Fraizer

6th Grade, Swallows Charter Academy, Mrs. Medved

Honorable Mention, Chance Carter

6th Grade, Skyview Middle School, Mr. Riley

High School

1st Place, Madison Tatinski

12th Grade, Pueblo West High School, 1st Sgt. Dilcher

1st Place, Tila Taylor

10th Grade, Pueblo County High School, Mr. Grossen

2nd Place, Oceanna Arellano

12th Grade, Pueblo East High School, Mr. LeMasters

2nd Place, Tavie Hunter

9th Grade, Rye High School, Mr. Estes

3rd Place, Georgia Betty

12th Grade, Pueblo West High School, LTC Emond

3rd Place, Nola Englund

10th Grade, Pueblo County High School, Mr. Grossen

Honorable Mention, Sabina Light

11th Grade, Pueblo West High School, LTC Emond

Honorable Mention, Dakota Walters

11th Grade, East High School, Mr. LeMasters

Penny Jo Barr

1st Place, Elementary School

4th Grade, Vineland Elementary School, Mrs. Vallejos

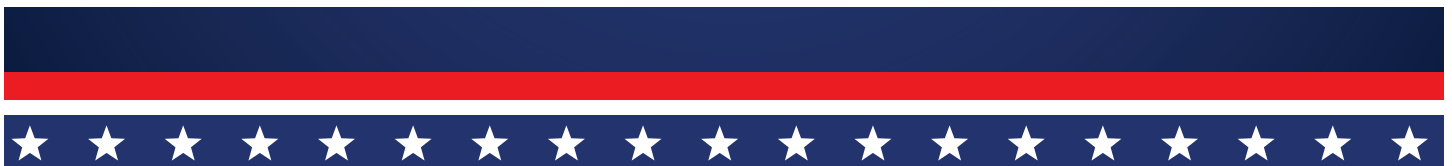
World War I ended on November 11, 1918, and that is why we celebrate Veterans Day on November 11. I think it is important because every year we celebrate and remember how many years it has been since the first World War ended. It is special to celebrate this day because we want to honor the men and women who have passed away, and those who are still alive and serving the military today.

It is particularly important to me to celebrate Veterans Day because two of my great grandpas served in World War II. My “Old Papa” Sam Stephens is still alive and will be 97 years old this year. He has said that being in the war was a really hard time for him. It was hard for him to see how people in other countries were treated. One of his favorite stories that he tells is that he shared many meals with children in the places where he served. Those people did not have the best lives, and he is proud that the United States went to help make their country better. He went to war with six other men from his town, and he was the only one to

come home. The others were killed in battle.

All veterans deserve a day of celebration because of all they have done for our country. All of the men and women in the military go fight so that the people in the United States are safe. There are people in the United States military here and in other countries. They are working to make sure America is protected and also that people in other countries are OK. Some countries need help, and American soldiers go wherever they need to in order to help. They risk their lives for all of us every day, so we celebrate Veterans Day to remember them and all they do for us and our country.

Even though Veterans are celebrated on November 11, I think about them every day when I say the Pledge of Allegiance in school, when I say my prayers, and when I hear the National Anthem at sporting events and rodeos. I love my country, the United States of America, and it would not be the great country that it is today without the men and women who serve in the military to protect our way of life.



Metzli Montoya

2nd Place, Elementary School

5th Grade, St. Therese Catholic School, Mrs. Wren

November 11 is important because it was the last day of the first World War. The fighting stopped at 11 am. It ended on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. This day was called Armistice Day. Then it was changed to Veterans Day. On this day, fighting countries came together to sign a treaty to end the first World War. 8.5 million soldiers had died. It was a truce to drop weapons and to stop fighting. It ended all fighting on the sea, in the air, and on the land. Germany agreed to the armistice, and its leaders pulled their troops back from the front line.

It is important to thank our Veterans and give them a day of appreciation. I think we should have a day to honor them for their actions in war. Another thing we should do is appreciate them for serving our country in the first World War and for keeping the war away from American soil. We should always be nice to soldiers because you never know what they go through when serving our country.

Too many civilians and soldiers have died in war from mustard gas, and bombs, and other chemicals. On one of our field trips, my class went to the Center for American Values and learned from a Veteran. I wrote about a Medal of Honor soldier who lost his hand saving his comrades from a grenade. I would like

to meet him and thank him for serving our country in two wars. I'm glad I learned about him, and also glad that President Obama gave him the Medal of Honor for his bravery in combat. I want to talk to him and ask him about his story from his point of view. Then I want to thank him for his bravery-for saving his brothers in Afghanistan. I would like to ask him how he felt, including if he was scared, or if he knew God was with him at that time that the grenade exploded.

November 11 is important in honoring Veterans who are currently serving in the military and who have served in past wars. When we celebrate the 4th of July, and we sing the National Anthem that talks about bombs bursting in the air, we should remember to always be nice to people who have served and who are serving because they could have lost their best friend or their service animals who have sadly passed away. They could have PTSD from experiences that you and I would not ever see. That's why it's always good to talk about what happened and about things that make you sad. Remember that Pueblo is the home of heroes, and we have four people who were awarded Medals of Honor. We need to thank our Veterans for serving our country. That's why November 11 is important and I thank our soldiers.



Zayden Salazar

3rd Place, Elementary School

4th Grade, Eva R. Baca Elementary School, Ms. Lopez

Veterans Day is celebrated on November 11th. It is a significant date to honor the men and women veterans who have served in the military.

To begin, November 11th is a significant date to honor the men and women who have served in the United States military. November 11th is a significant date because World War I ended at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month. Veterans day used to be called armistice day. It was called Armistice Day because November 11, 1918 was the day that the armistice was signed for all sides to stop fighting in the war.

To add, people might ask, "What is a veteran?" A veteran is a man or woman who has served in the U.S. military. Veterans are people who were in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, or my favorite the Marines. Many people who are not in the military anymore are now veterans. We should honor veterans for the work they have done for the United States

people. I had family in the military. My Grandpa Morgan Ware was in the Army and he was in Germany for six years. When he came home he was a veteran.

In conclusion, I think we should honor veterans because they have served in the military and they are as honorable as the people still serving in the military. We should celebrate Veterans Day to honor their sacrifice. Some veterans have served in wars to help the people in America keep their freedom. Some also served during a time of peace. We have the freedom of speech and religion in our country. We have the right to life, liberty, and happiness. If we did not have a military we would not have those rights. Veterans served our country and have protected us and are very brave. Their job is not easy and some veterans have been in very bad situations that were dangerous. All veterans are patriotic and that means they love their country.



Sofia Jansson

Honorable Mention, Elementary School
5th Grade, St. Therese Catholic School, Ms. Wren

November 11, 1918 is a day to remember. That was the day that World War I ended. Everyone agreed that on that day, instead of fighting, they should honor all of the fearless veterans. We call that day Armistice Day, which means to drop weapons and try to make peace. This is an important day because we honor our veterans.

On Armistice Day, we remember the veterans all around the world, not just the USA. Take a look at what happened on November 11th, 1918:

On the eleventh day, of the eleventh month, in the eleventh hour of the day, World War I ended. That day is called Armistice Day or Veterans Day. In 1938, Armistice Day became a national holiday. President Eisenhower changed the name of the holiday to Veterans Day in 1954, because he wanted to include all veterans, not just ones who fought in World War I. Even though today this national holiday is known as Veterans Day, we must always remember Armistice Day and the ending of World War I.

Many of the veterans were rewarded for their bravery in war; 3,511 individuals received the Medal of Honor for their courage. Although not every veteran receives the Medal of Honor, every single man or woman who is fighting or has fought for our country is important.

We must always remember to honor the men and

women who fight for our country. Whether it's the Army or the Navy, the Marines or the Air Force, all of the Armed Forces are important. We must always remember everyone who risked their lives for ours.

I am proud to say that I have quite a few relatives who are veterans: My great-grandfather, some of my cousins, and a few of my uncles served in the Navy. My grandfather served in the Air Force, and a couple of my cousins served in the Army. It is very special to me that I have relatives who served in different branches of the military. It is also very special to me in my life because I live in Pueblo, Colorado, the Home of the Heroes and home to four Congressional Medal of Honor recipients!

Veterans are very important to me in my life not just because I have relatives that served in the military, but because of what they do for me and my country. U.S. Armed Forces and veterans in all branches risk their lives for this country every day. They have courage, they are brave, and they have hope. Not only are these people brave, they are men and women who are an inspiration to us all.

I am very inspired by how amazing these people really are. I am very glad that the nation in which I live takes a day to honor our veterans, both living and dead, because they are worth honoring. I love living in America, and I am proud to be an American!



Charlotte Roberts

Honorable Mention, Elementary School
5th Grade, Swallows Charter Academy, Mrs. Medved

Veterans Day, a day to Honor all men and women who served for their country.

Veterans day is also the day World War I known as “the war to end all wars” ended. In November 1919, President Woodrow Wilson declared November 11 as Armistice day to honor those who fought in the war. “To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory.”-President Woodrow Wilson. It became a legal holiday on May 13, 1938. Later President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first “Veterans Day Proclamation” which stated, “In order to ensure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans’ organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose. Toward this end.” Changing Armistice Day to Veterans Day.

To give me a different perspective on Veterans Day I decided to interview some people about it.

First, I asked Isaiah Peccoco about the subject. I chose to interview him because I knew he was really keen on wars and the U.S. army. He said, “All veterans are respected on that day. Veterans aren’t as respected as they once were so even saying a simple thank you for your service is greatly appreciated. Kids probably even fought, kids my age, like 10, 11, 12. Veterans Day

is really all about those who help and serve for our country, all branches.”

Next, I interviewed my teacher. Mr. Jared Wilson, said “Veterans Day is a special day to celebrate the people who fought to protect the United States of America. Without the military we wouldn’t have some of the freedoms and technologies we do today.”

Pueblo is known as the City of Heroes because four residents, claiming Pueblo as their home town, earned a Medal of Honor. Four doesn’t sound big, however it was more than any other municipality in the United States at that time. In September 2000, a memorial was created with four larger than life size bronze statues representing Pueblo’s four heroes. We can be some of Pueblo’s heroes by saying that simple “thank you for your service.”

I think that one of the easiest, however one of the most important ways to honor our heroes is to learn about who they are and what they did for us. I have known my uncle and grandfather were involved in the army, but I am now inspired to learn more from them and how they served our country. Even though they don’t have a medal of honor, they are still heroes to me.

We can all be heroes by being patriots and supporting our country and the people who keep it safe.



Simona Rowell

1st Place, Middle School

7th Grade, Homeschool, Mrs. Rowell

President Barack Obama once said, “In the face of impossible odds, people who love this country can change it.” Throughout American history soldiers and veterans have been faced with impossible odds but because of their love for freedom, they changed the fate of this country. In this essay I want to write about the history of Veterans Day and why it is important to celebrate.

On the 11 hour of the 11 day in the 11 month in 1918 World War I officially ended. In 1938 November 11 was made a legal holiday set aside to honor only veterans from World War I. Veterans Day was originally called Armistice Day. The word armistice means truce. The idea was for the day to be filled with parades and to honor World War I soldiers business closed beginning at 11:00 a.m. The idea caught on and Americans began to celebrate. After America went through World War II and the Korean War, they changed Armistice Day to Veterans Day and made November 11 a day to honor all veterans in all wars. President Dwight D. Eisenhower a World War II veteran himself made this official on May 26, 1954. Ever since then Veterans Day has been celebrated with parades and workers get a day off.

One of the things that is special to me about Veterans Day is that my great grandfather was a World War II veteran. His name was Charles Junta. (But we all called him Nanu.) Charles graduated from high school just a little more than a year before the war ended. Two of his older brothers were drafted, but Charles went voluntarily. Charles went to the navy and did underwater welding. Not many people could do this, so he advanced quickly. He was a second-class petty officer. He was in the navy for one and a half

years before he injured his foot and was sent home with an honorable discharge. Even though my great grandfather was sent home early he was always proud of the work and service he did for his country and so am I.

Another story about veterans that shows why we should honor them, is about two men named George Welch and Kenneth Taylor. Kenneth and George were pilots. During the attack on Pearl Harbor, they managed take off in their planes, under enemy fire. There were only three other pilots that managed to do this that day. George and Kenneth, on their own faced 200-300 enemy planes. Between them they shot down at least 6 Japanese planes. George was shot in the arm, but thankfully both he and Kenneth survived. Later they received the Distinguished Service Cross becoming the first awarded soldiers in World War II. It is these kind of stories of bravery that show why we should celebrate Veterans Day.

I really liked learning about Veterans Day, as I learned about Kenneth and George and even found out more about my own history I realized just how important our soldiers and veterans are. Veterans Day is a day to remember the people that fought for us, and those people that died for our freedom. Like President Calvin Coolidge once said, “The nation that forgets its defenders will itself be forgotten.”



This picture is my great grandfather, Nanu.



Emma Perry

2nd Place, Middle School

8th Grade, Connect Charter School, Mrs. Medina

Veterans Day was established to honor veterans in the United States of America. This is a day when people come together across the U.S. to honor veterans in our lives. It is celebrated on November 11th to honor the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 when the armistice was signed to end World War I (WWI). Veterans Day was created to help people learn to honor, celebrate, and respect the military veterans who risked their lives to protect us and our ancestors; veterans throughout the U.S. risked their lives in wars to help serve their country and protect the citizens in it.

The armistice signaled the end of the long war. It meant that the U.S. soldiers could return home and give the long awaited kiss to the family, a hug to the friends, and see how their child had grown up while they were away fighting. Soldiers could finally catch up on things they missed like birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, deaths, and hugs and kisses to the family.

Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Army soldiers gave up their lives to protect us in wars the U.S. was involved in. The soldiers who fell in every war left another family to grieve. Many veterans left their homes to fight and many of those soldiers would never return home again to their families and friends. Families and friends of the soldiers who never made it home had to deal with the loss. Some of the soldiers who died barely got to live their life to the fullest and they died before they had a chance to live and have fun. Some soldiers who fought and died were never identified and their families never got to say their final goodbye.

To me Veterans Day means that I get a chance to honor and be thankful for the men and women who fought in the past to give me a life of freedom and a

chance to grow up in a good country. Veterans Day gives me the chance to think about how life would be different if veterans did not risk their lives, deciding not to fight in the wars the U.S. has been involved in and didn't give people the opportunity to have the lives we have now. If the American Revolution hadn't been fought by soldiers for America's independence, we probably would still be part of Great Britain and life for me would be a whole different life that I probably wouldn't recognize if I looked back on it from where I am today. If soldiers hadn't fought in the Civil War, the Southern states may still be separated from the U.S. and life would be a whole lot different than it is now. We may not be a free country if the veterans hadn't fought for us. Veterans Day gives me the opportunity to thank the veterans in my life for the service they did and for putting their life at risk, they have a chance to get shot, blown up, or starved (captured), so the U.S. would remain safe and a free country.

If our soldiers hadn't fought in WWI our country would probably be under German control and I wouldn't be where I am right now writing this paper; I would probably be doing something I wouldn't recognize myself doing. I would be a different person and I wouldn't be what makes me, me. If the U.S. hadn't fought World War II (WWII) our country would be taken over by Nazis. The U.S. would be under Germany's control and a lot of people would be in concentration camps. I wouldn't be sitting in the nice life I have now, I would probably be in a smaller house and I would not be getting a great education.

Veterans Day means that on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918 the soldiers who survived WWI marked a day in history that was created to honor and thank the veterans for all that they did for the U.S.



Aliyah Carreiro

3rd Place, Middle School

7th Grade, Pleasant View Middle School, Mrs. Granado

When you think of veterans, what does it mean to you? It means many things to me because I live in the land of the free and the home of the brave. Even though I'm young I can still show patriotism.

One of the first things I would like to share is what November 11th means to me. Veterans Day is important to me because of the terrorist attack on the twin towers and all the innocent people who lost their lives that day. Even though I wasn't alive when this tragic event occurred, my parents have shared their experiences about the tragic day and it has really touched my heart and makes me not take things for granted.

Our veterans rushed off to war without even taking a second thought to fight the monsters who invaded our country. They took the fight right to their front door without fear, without hesitation.

Our veterans stood on the battlefield and defended our freedom!

The men and women in the United States military deploy for months and even years at a time, they leave their families and loved ones behind and deploy to countries with people who hate us and want to cause

us harm. They tirelessly fight for our freedom and insure nothing like what happened to America on September 11, 2001 never happens again.

Our veterans are always there to answer the call so we can hold our heads high and enjoy all the simple things in life like going to football games and going on vacations with friends and family. We can do these things because we know our veterans are out there fighting the bad people who want to try to hurt us.

Not only do our veterans protect our rights and freedom, but they also provide services and aid to those in need. Our veterans ran to the aid of the American people when COVID hit. They constantly put themselves in danger helping and protecting citizens in need.

They put on those suits and helped medical personnel with testing and administering the COVID vaccine to everybody that wanted it or needed it.

I am proud of the USA, I am forever grateful for the ones who sacrificed their lives for us! We have freedom in our hands! I don't know what our world would have come to if it wasn't to our veterans. It is because of our veterans that we can live our lives freely.



Lotus Fraizer

Honorable Mention, Middle School

6th Grade, Swallows Charter Academy, Mrs. Medved

What is the significance of Veterans Day? Why should we honor veterans? These are only a few questions people ask about the national holiday, Veterans Day. In this informative essay, these, and other questions, will be answered. Join me in learning a bit more about Veterans Day.

First, what is the significance of Veterans Day? Veterans Day celebrates all the soldiers or members of the military who fought in multiple different wars. Other countries, such as Great Britain, Australia, France, and Canada also celebrate veterans of World War I and World War II. These countries celebrate Veterans Day either on November 11 or near the eleventh.

While Great Britain has Remembrance Sunday, which is the second Sunday of November, Canada, France, and Australia have a Remembrance Day, which is held on the eleventh of November.

Secondly, how did November 11 become Veterans Day? In November of 1919, President Thomas Wilson declared November 11 to be the first commemoration of Armistice Day. On June 4, 1926, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution so that November 11 would become a legal holiday. However, Armistice Day originally only commemorated veterans of World War I. In 1954, after World War II, Congress removed the word Armistice and replaced it with "Veterans." This act by the Congress was approved and Armistice Day became Veterans Day.

Thirdly, what makes Veterans Day so very special? This holiday pays tribute to both living and dead veterans. People all over the world celebrate veterans who fought in the war, veterans who were friends, and family.

There are millions of veterans who served in multiple wars. In my opinion, we all should respect, celebrate, and honor veterans even more than we do now. You may not know, but they did a lot more than you think. Two million veterans fought in the Korean War and seven million fought in the Vietnam War. Combined, nine million veterans fought for their countries in those two wars. There are not many people alive today who were veterans in those wars.

Lastly, what have veterans done and why should we honor them? Veterans are the ones who fight in wars to protect others. Veterans risk their lives for their country, their nation, and their family. By risking their lives, veterans save hundreds of lives every time they go to war.

In all, veterans have done a lot for our country and other countries too. Many people ask questions about Veterans Day and veterans and those questions need to be answered by veterans, people who know all about Veterans Day, or even the average person who studied Veterans Day very closely. People themselves can answer these questions. Veterans saved millions of people and we should honor them for what they have done.



Chance Carter

Honorable Mention, Middle School

6th Grade, Skyview Middle School, Mr. Riley

Veterans Day is one of the most important days of the year, Veterans Day is a day dedicated to honor veterans, thank them for their support in our country, and for protecting us. Veterans Day is very important for many reasons.

Many people mistake Veterans Day and Memorial Day. Veterans Day is to thank veterans that are here with us for their support, whereas Memorial Day is to thank veterans that have died fighting for us. Veterans Day is a day set aside to honor, show our respect, and thank veterans on November 11. The idea of this holiday was first celebrated on November 11, 1918 when England and France buried an unknown soldier was buried to represent the end of World War I (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs). This day was from then on known as Armistice Day, and was officially made a holiday in some countries in 1938. The first record of a Veterans Day celebration was in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1947. In 1954, the United States passed a law that Veterans Day was officially recognized and to be celebrated on November 11 (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs). Veterans Day has been celebrated with parades and festivities ever since that day.

Veterans Day is significant because it is to honor veterans for fighting for us. This is very crucial since many veterans have died fighting to protect us and our country. For this reason, Veterans Day is a way to pay

them back for helping us. We hold ceremonies in order to pay respects and thank them. Many people attend these ceremonies because it is very important for some people. This day is important because those who have a family member that was a veteran attend to recognize them and thank them.

Veterans Day is also important because it is very important to many people and cultures. For example, there are ceremonies and parades in many towns and cities, Veterans Day is very important to Pueblo in particular. Veterans Day is important to Pueblo because it is the Home of Heroes. Pueblo was given this name because it is home to four Medal of Honor recipients, William John Crawford, Carl Leonard Sitter, Raymond Gerald "Jerry" Murphy, and Drew Dennis Dix (Zach Hillstrom, 2021). Pueblo has record high Medal of Honor recipients for towns in the United States. Pueblo was officially named the Home of Heroes in 1997.

Veterans Day is very important to many people, places and cultures. Veterans Day is the day that people support the veterans in their community, hold festivals and parades to honor them, and to thank veterans for fighting for us and helping protect our country. Veterans Day is very important and significant to celebrate and thank veterans for their support and help.



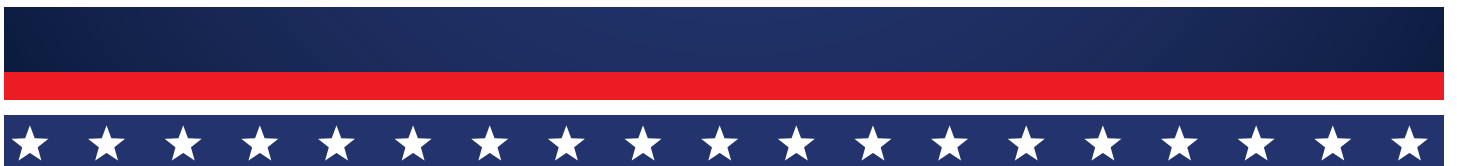
Madison Tatinski

1st Place, High School

12th Grade, Pueblo West High School, 1st Sgt. Dilcher

Veterans Day is a day that allows United States citizens to honor those who have made sacrifices for our country to protect us and fight for our freedom. Veterans Day is held on November 11th because that date marked the end of World War I. This holiday gives people a chance to thank those who have served for our country, in times of both war and peace. People in the United States military devote themselves to protecting the safety and security of U.S. citizens. Everyone who lives in the United States should be very grateful for the people that fight for our freedom and Veterans Day gives us a chance to show that gratitude. Veterans Day is similar to Memorial Day, but Veterans Day is used more to honor the veterans who are living while Memorial Day is used more to honor those who have passed. Veterans Day commemorates veterans of all wars and even those who were in duty during peacetime. Marching in the Veterans Day Parade this year allowed me to widen my perspective of Veterans Day and gain some more personal experience related to it. I got a glimpse of the impact of Veterans Day and events such as the parade dedicated to veterans because of the amount of people that lined the streets and their enthusiasm over honoring the nation's heroes. I held my head higher and was honored to be wearing my uniform down that parade route. I remember those who served every time I put my uniform on and think about how much they

gave for our country. Pueblo is known as the Home of Heroes because of the Medal of Honor recipients and even just veterans who originate there. I take pride in being from Pueblo along with so many amazing people and do the best I can to show my thankfulness for them. I try to honor veterans and those who have done so much for our country in any way I can, like through the parade. I have also gotten the chance to go to Washington D.C. and visit the amazing monuments there to honor them. It blew my mind to see some of the memorials, especially the Korean War Memorial. The vast expanse of names on the wall as well as the statues of soldiers took my breath away and opened my eyes to just how many people serve our country, and reminded me how important it is to honor them. Veterans Day helps us remember that we would not be where we are without veterans. It is a day where we can try to put ourselves in their shoes and realize how difficult it must have been. Those who have served our country went through so much to protect our freedom, but did not join the military just to be recognized as some kind of hero. They joined to do something good for the country and fight to protect our rights, safety, and peace. This provides yet another reason it is so important to be thankful for veterans and show them our appreciation, and allows people to understand just how significant Veterans Day is.



Tila Taylor

1st Place, High School

10th Grade, Pueblo County High School, Mr. Grossen

On November 11, 1918, a day to remember the war to end all wars was established. Veterans Day was established after World War I and at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, forces of war came together to sign the peace treaty.

Veterans Day was first called “Armistice Day” armistice meaning “an agreement made by opposing sides in a war to stop fighting for a certain time; a truce.” To Veterans “Armistice Day” didn’t feel very honorable to the men who served in World War I, so on June 1, 1954, Armistice Day was changed to Veterans Day. The name was changed to honor the millions of men who served in World War I, but now Veterans Day honors all the women and men who fought and continue to fight for our country. It not only honors these men and women, but this day shows honor to those who lost their spouse, their fathers, their mothers, their friends and family to the fight and wars. We honor veterans that had to go through fear and pain, the loss of their friends, and the loneliness without their family.

Veterans should be honored and appreciated because they not only fought for America’s freedom, but they risked their lives whether or not if we realized or appreciated them. Without their courage and sacrifice, we would not have the freedoms we have today. I personally honor veterans because my grandfather and my uncle had fought for our country. My mother and her three sisters were military brats and if my grandfather would have lost hope, I wouldn’t have been born and able to see the world today. On Veterans Day, I was four years old at the time and I asked my grandpa to draw himself. As he drew himself in this small notebook I gave him, he drew

himself in an army uniform standing and saluting our flag. I asked him why and he said “Today I am supposed to be remembered and honored” At that age I was confused and didn’t think anything of it, but as I’m growing older I think of him and my uncle and that same drawing every Veterans Day. I honor veterans from the heart because of the pain they had witnessed and been through. When swimming with my grandfather I noticed he had uneven circle shaped scars on his chest. I was too young to understand but when I asked about them he would always say “When I worked with men, bad men hurt me.” I would ask him how and he would say “The men hurt me with these loud tools.” I never asked what tools, but I knew they were scars from bullets. As I am writing this it forms tears in my eyes. Veterans protect us from the hurt they experienced and no matter how many stories they tell we will never know the emotions and pressure they felt. At my school we held an assembly for Veterans Day. It was emotional but it was one of the best emotional experiences I ever had. That assembly made me miss my grandfather deeply.

If you don’t know anyone in the military or anyone who is a veteran, you should still honor or even take a bit of acknowledgement to veterans on Veterans Day. This one day shows and holds so much power and no amount of time could show enough appreciation to the many men and women who fight for our country. November 11th should always be a day to remember. We remember, honor, and respect our veterans.

To our soldiers past and present, thank you for your bravery, your sacrifices, and our freedom. No thank you would ever be enough but we owe you not only a thank you, but our appreciation for our freedom.



Oceanna Arellano

2nd Place, High School

12th Grade, Pueblo East High School, Mr. LeMasters

The significance of November 11th is far beyond just honoring our veterans, this date is representative of the conclusion of the largest war known to date, World War I. Specifically, the Second Battle of the Marne, which lasted from July to August 1918, is what brought the war to an end, Germany had endured a great loss and the war ended at exactly 11 a.m. The origin of Veterans Day can be dated back to November 11, 1918, when the holiday was originally referred to as Armistice Day. The purpose of the creation of the holiday was to remember the “war to end all wars.” The Armistice was signed at Le Francport, this officially ceased any and all combat between the Allies and Germany, unfortunately, 2,738 soldiers were deceased on the final day of World War I. 40 million casualties was the result of World War I; there were 20 million deaths and 21 million wounded, this included 9.7 million deaths of military personnel and approximately 10 million civilians.

Honoring our veterans is crucial and shouldn't have to be something that should feel forced, but rather something that should come naturally. Coming home post — World War I was not the relieving experience that it should have been for all the brave men who were fortunate enough to return to their families. Returning to a segregated post-war society made it incredibly difficult for African American soldiers, for they did not receive the warm welcome home, this would result in them joining the American Legion, which was established in 1919. The American Legion was created in Paris, France and was designed with the purposes of offering rehabilitative benefits for disabled veterans, and to compensate veterans for the money lost during their time in service. Simply being able to have empathy and put yourself in the shoes of a veteran should be enough for anyone to internalize and reflect on the daily struggles of a veteran.

Did you know that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) affects about 12% of Gulf War veterans and about 15% of Vietnam veterans? Living with PTSD can be compared to living in a recurring nightmare on a daily basis. Imagine waking up every day and reliving the traumatic event that caused your trauma, imagine being on constant alert for dangerous situations, and being afraid to interact with anyone new. This is what PTSD does, it causes anyone with the disorder to disassociate and distance themselves from almost every situation. Overall, PTSD is a very overlooked issue and should be taken more seriously, we should have more empathy and try to put ourselves in their shoes, the least we can do is honor their sacrifices.

Freedom is a right that we are very privileged to have and often we take it for granted, many people

seem to forget that the only reason we have freedom is because of the brave men and women who give their lives for our country. Unfortunately, their sacrifice doesn't receive the recognition and praise that they deserve, in fact, they receive the direct opposite. According to the VA, there's an estimated 300,000 veterans that are homeless, and one in four homeless men served our country in the military. The reason behind this is because once they return home from active duty, they often get “lost” in the system. What many seem to forget is that these brave men and women willingly went on to serve our country, regardless if their efforts were appreciated or not.

As you read this, my hope is that you were able to gain a new perspective on why we should honor and acknowledge our veterans a lot more than we currently do. Next time you're walking down the street and you come across a homeless veteran, instead of walking away as fast as you can, take the time to walk up to the individual and thank them for their services. There are so many cost-effective ways to demonstrate your appreciation for these men and women, and I can guarantee that even something as simple as looking them in the eye, shaking their hand, and thanking them would be more than enough to make them smile. All it takes is having the slightest bit of empathy and compassion, just think about it next time you see a homeless man or woman, and ask yourself “what if that was my brother, my father, or my mother?” Next time you make a trip to Starbucks or McDonalds, buy that veteran a coffee or something to eat. I promise that will go a long way and that veteran will remember you because you were one of very few people who actually took the time out of their day to acknowledge them.

If you're genuinely interested in honoring our veterans, there are many more ways you can do just that. If your city hosts a Veterans Day event, go out and be proud to show your appreciation and support for our veterans. You can also write to a veteran, all you have to do is search for the closest military installation and simply mail it there, your kind words of appreciation would brighten any veteran's day. Honestly anything would mean the world to any veteran, even if you go out and volunteer at a local VA hospital by helping them prepare a lunch, that would be a wonderful way to show your support. In conclusion, understand that the lives of these brave men and women who willingly sacrificed their lives for our freedom doesn't get any easier, so if you take the time to do any of the things mentioned above, you have no idea how much of an impact that will have on them for the rest of their lives. All it takes is having empathy.

Tavie Hunter

2nd Place, High School

9th Grade, Rye High School, Mr. Estes

Veterans Day is a day where the people of America recognize all the people who have served in our military, and it is celebrated on November 11. This date is not just any random day that the people in history decided to pick to celebrate veterans. It has a lot of significance in American and world history. Here I will explain the history of Veterans Day and why I think it is important to celebrate Veterans Day.

First, what is so important about the eleventh of November. Most people know it as the day that the first world war ended. However, November 11 is only the day that all fighting ceased. On November 11, 1918, the eleventh day of the eleventh month at the eleventh hour an armistice was called between the Allied Nations and Germany. An armistice is the temporary cessation of all hostilities between fighting countries. The armistice was called which eventually led to the end of the war because the German soldiers were beginning to rebel and stop fighting. The German people were starving, and everybody on both sides of the war was tired of fighting. The war officially ended on June 28, 1919, with the Treaty of Versailles in the Palace of Versailles, France.

But why do we celebrate Veterans Day in November instead of in June when the war officially ended. Veterans Day was originally proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson in November 1919. However, at the time it was called Armistice Day. This day was to be filled with parades and celebration to show our appreciation to the people who fought in World War I. Only after World War II, which required

the most mobilization of soldiers, airmen, marines, and sailors in the nation's history, was the name officially changed to Veterans Day. The reason it was renamed was so that it included the people who fought in World War II and Korea. By changing the name, it included all the wars that did not end in an armistice, so Veterans Day was more inclusive.

Why do I think it is important to celebrate Veterans Day? In my opinion it is important to celebrate Veterans Day to show our support to all of our veterans who put so much on the line so that other people didn't have to. Many veterans lost a lot by fighting for their country. Some may have been seriously injured and some had to struggle with PTSD and other mental illnesses as a result of fighting. Because of that many appreciate the recognition that they get on this day for the sacrifices that they made. Celebrating Veterans Day doesn't have to include a parade or a big get together. While that may be something you want to do, and some veterans will appreciate it. Sometimes it is just enough to thank the veterans in your life for their service.

Veterans Day is a great day to show your appreciation to our veterans, but it is not the only day. You can show your appreciation and thanks any day of the year and they will probably appreciate it. The day November 11 is very significant to our history and marked the end of the war which is why Veterans Day takes place then. Hopefully this has shown you the importance and significance of November 11 and you will show your appreciation to veterans in your life on the next upcoming Veterans Day.



Georgia Betty

3rd Place, High School

12th Grade, Pueblo West High School, LTC Emond

November 11, 1918 was a day to end several years of destruction and harm to multiple nations. Armistice Day, now known as Veterans Day, marked the day that hostile territories were brought to a halt in the eleventh hour. It marked the beginning of peace between Germany and the Allied Powers and the end of the first World War. Many people died in the first World War, but their memory would continue to live on with their loved ones.

These days, there are too many holidays to keep track of when it comes to government declared holidays. Veterans Day, however, is a popular and widely accepted date as a remembrance of those who departed from this world into the next while serving in the line of duty. Not only do we observe those who have been lost to casualties of war, we thank those who stand before us continuing the same job despite the risk. This celebration and honoring of veterans is important because it is a reminder to the people that freedom is not free. There are other people that put themselves in danger, and the consequences of their actions allow us the ability to live our lives as we please.

Honoring veterans is a huge contributing factor in the continuation of the United States. The United States thrives off the military members that provide protection. Consider what the world would be like without our military personnel. Our gates would be wide open to the destruction of this free nation, open to crime, terrorism, and dictatorial leadership. There

would be no “We the People.” Honoring a veteran or even an active-duty member for that matter, shows the military members that they are appreciated. Appreciation goes a long way sometimes. If we were to discard our veterans and treat them horribly, would we still have as many willing and able bodies wanting to join?

Now, for one to truly appreciate and honor a veteran, it is important for them to at least try to understand an inch of what they must go through. For example, while in the service, a military member may have to leave his family multiple times throughout the year. His wife and kids, whom he misses, are back home while he may be on assignment, only able to communicate with them over a video camera. Things are already tough enough serving overseas, nonetheless having to do it away from your family. As a civilian, it is hard to be able to comprehend and to even imagine all the things that our service members are put through, and for that reason I wish not to pretend that I can understand.

Veterans Day presents the opportunity for those who served to be appreciated, recognized, and honored for their countless efforts to serve this country. It is important that these military members continue to receive this recognition and remembrance so that we the people do not forget for a single moment that there is always someone else out there risking their life while we sit cozily in our homes with our friends and family. After all, because of them we have the freedom to do so.



Nola Englund

3rd Place, High School

10th Grade, Pueblo County High School, Mr. Grossen

The Veterans Day assembly at Pueblo County High begins at 11 a.m. It's completely silent as the National Anthem is sung and the guests are introduced. The Twenty One gun salute is done and there is a moment of silence for the people who have served our country. It is an hour-long in total, lasting from eleven to twelve. The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, Armistice Day, the day World War I was officially ended, and Veterans Day. My first ever assembly in high school and since COVID left a hole in my heart, thinking about my father, who is retiring from the military in the coming year. When COVID hit, my dad was stationed in Belgium for a year. That year of being unable to see him turned into two as he was stuck there. But I've been used to him being gone and it was strange for him to stay in one place for more than a year. His job has always been a wedge in our family, since before I was born.

Before I was born, my dad served in Iraq and Quaran. He was sent home after his truck drove over a mine, injuring his leg. He's never been able to talk about it much, and it's clear it's affected him more than I know. His leg still has shrapnel in it from it, an ever-present reminder of his pain. Although I'll never be able to understand what he's gone through, it is a struggle of my own that I will never have a dad

who hasn't experienced that. Veterans Day is a day to celebrate those people who have gone through that, but I feel as though we don't have any idea what veterans have gone through to become heroes. We celebrate Veterans Day on the 11th of November, to commemorate the ending of the first World War, but for many veterans, their lives ended as soon as they joined the military or at least the lives they could have lived before it.

The best way to celebrate veterans to me is to recognize the sacrifice that they've made and realize that while they are honorable, it is a heavy weight. On Veterans Day, take a moment and think of what they've seen, and let that further your respect for them. We as people so easily remove ourselves from death if we haven't experienced it in our lives, and that allows us to see veterans as shiny painted heroes. Doing so discredits them and makes them seem less than what they truly are, which is the bravest of us.

My father's experience as a veteran has changed me and my perception of veterans. It's taught me that they are all human just as much as they are all heroes. I see my dad in all of them, his persistence to continue. Veterans Day has meant so much more because of this, as has our school assembly. For this reason, I appreciate our country's heroes.



Sabina Light

Honorable Mention, High School

11th Grade, Pueblo West High School, LTC Emond

November 11th honors military veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces. As someone who has many veterans in my life, I believe everyday should be Veterans Day. Veterans have done so much for us; they deserve much more than a day. Veterans have and still fight for us and our freedom. November 11th has many significances and there are many reasons we honor veterans.

November 11, 1918, at 11:00 a.m., allied powers ceased fire in Germany. This marks the end of World War I. It was not until 1919, a year later, that President Wilson proposed Armistice Day. Armistice Day is recognized in the United States, Great Britain, and France. After World War II, Armistice Day honored both World War I and World War II. Armistice Day was renamed Veterans Day in 1954. British countries call it Remembrance Day. No matter what you call Veterans Day, it is a day to honor, remember, and thank our veterans.

Veterans do countless things for us. They provide security, happiness, aid, hope, smiles, etc. They fought, and still fight for our freedom. They risk their lives for their fellow Americans, even those who they do not know personally. They risked their lives, not just with death but with disorders like PTSD and bipolar disorder just to name a few. Thirty percent of veterans come home with PTSD. Fifty percent come home with other unnamed disorders. Not to name the countless

veterans who come home with physical disabilities. Roughly 131 thousand veterans become homeless because they are forgotten and not appreciated. Twenty-two veterans a day commit suicide because of the hardships they endure while deployed and then the hardships of getting back into civilian life. Most people do not realize this or comprehend that so many veterans go through this. I have multiple veterans in my life, and I am blessed to have them. I constantly remind them that they have impacted my life in countless ways. I am beyond lucky to not have my family surrender to those twenty-two a day. Without veterans we would not have the freedom and peace we have today. Veterans serve everyone, not just those who they know. They need to get the recognition they deserve for their selfless service. Even if you do not appreciate it, they fought for you. They deserve to be recognized and thanked for all that they do.

Veterans do so much for us, whether we realize it or not. They do everything for us, they do not do it for themselves. Veterans are the most selfless human beings in the world. There should not be only one day to honor them. Every day needs to be Veterans Day. They did not only protect and serve us one day, but every day. Without veterans we would not be as free as we are today. If you have veterans in your life, thank them. You will not know how much it means to them to know that you care and appreciate what they do.



Dakota Walters

Honorable Mention, High School

11th Grade, East High School, Mr. LeMasters

Pueblo is the Home of Heroes. We honor the military that died for our country. The military fought on our land, oceans, and in the air. People serve willingly and give their lives for us to live freely. In World War I, 116,560 Americans died and 40,000,000 total died across the world. Our troops wake up and risk their lives for us every day. Their families and loved ones also sacrifice. Veterans make great role models. They don't stop believing and are great leaders. These brave soldiers do what they do so we don't have to live like communists. We can live a comfortable, safe life, even under threat of danger. Veterans protect us; they are able to perform under pressure; they have been through the toughest of situations and have emerged victorious. Veterans have had to make life and death decisions in a matter of seconds, giving them a keen sense of what to do in an emergency . . . an invaluable skill. November 11 was Armistice Day, now it is called Veterans Day. World War I stopped on this day and the army could go home



and see their family, kids, and friends and, hopefully never go back to war because war is a very scary place and there can be dead bodies everywhere.

Thank you veterans for sacrificing for this great place we live in now. America is the best place in the world.



