

November: A Time to Give Thanks to Those Who Served

by Ted Block



Ah, November, a busy month indeed. Yes, there are the “usual suspects,” Election Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving...but did you know that November is also Child Safety Protection Month, National Adoption Awareness Month, Native American Heritage Month and Peanut Butter Lovers Month (go figure). Not only that, the following “days” occur during our eleventh month – All Saints Day, Sandwich Day, Book Lovers Day, Young Readers Day, World Kindness and World Peace Day, National Adoption Day, Eat a Cranberry Day and, of course, in our intensely acquisitive world, Black Friday.

I think you’d agree that of all of those, November is most identified by Thanksgiving, if for no other reason than it is, for many, a four-day, holiday enhanced by a great, if not coma-inducing, meal. More importantly, Thanksgiving’s heritage is based on the idea that, in an agrarian society, thanks should be given for the blessing of the previous year’s harvest.

But, if there’s one holiday in November that does deserve our everlasting gratitude, it’s Veterans Day.

Most of you are old enough to remember that November 11 was originally celebrated as Armistice Day, commemorating the end to hostilities in World War I at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. I doubt there are many around who actually remember that precise day which ended one of the most unnecessary and tragic wars of modern history, the inaptly named, “War to end all wars.” My only remembrance is the probably apocryphal story my great-aunt Rachel used to tell about watching the returning “doughboys” victory parade down Fifth Avenue.

“Yossele,” she told me she yelled to my Grandpa Joe as he marched by, “nu, vas machsta. Why is everyone out of step but you?” Old joke, sorry.

From Armistice Day, commemorating one horrific war, to Veterans Day, honoring those who served in all

America’s wars, it is truly a day to remember...and give thanks to those who served in defense of our country.



And, as a veteran myself, USS McCloy DE-1038, it’s also a day to savor those free Veterans Day meals. My typical 11/11 starts off early with coffee and doughnuts at Dunkin’, breakfast at IHOP, lunch at CPK, dinner at Applebee’s, finally ending with frozen yogurt at Menchie’s. (BTW, I’m still waiting for New York Prime to honor me with a free meal.) Thank goodness it’s only once a year. More than one of these days and I wouldn’t be able to maintain my manly physique!

So, to all you veterans out there, thank you for your service. And to everyone else, remember, November is more than turkey and the NFL on Thanksgiving; it’s truly a time to give thanks to those who sacrificed to serve us.

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