



# WITNESS FOR JUSTICE

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**A Time of Remembrance**

Veteran's Day is upon us. Each year when this important day of remembrance comes around, we should recall the originating action that created it as Armistice Day. President Woodrow Wilson issued the following proclamation on November 11, 1919 with these words, "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, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."

It wasn't until 1938 that a legal holiday was actually officially voted into law. That action was taken with two purposes in mind. One was to reserve a day dedicated to the cause of world peace. The second was to honor the veterans of World War I, commonly referred to as the "war to end all wars." Following World War II and the Korean War, the Act was amended in 1954 to change Armistice Day to Veteran's Day, continuing a long held value of honoring veterans of all wars who serve on our behalf.

Veteran's Day is a day of remembrance. During this week, we will hear many stories about the bold and courageous acts carried out by our troops, especially in war-torn places. I hope we will also listen to the stories of those who went against their basic

moral principles, making difficult choices to protect themselves and others. Experts at The Soul Repair Center of Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas say, “Moral injury is found in feelings of survivor guilt, grief, shame, remorse, anger, despair, mistrust, and betrayal by authorities. In its most severe forms, it can destroy moral identity and the will to live. The struggle of combat veterans to return to civilian life can be even more difficult than serving in war and last a lifetime.”

Veteran’s Day is a time of remembrance. It is a time to remember families affected by violence or by long spells of absence and separation. We must not forget the impact of war on the world’s children. Even though I didn’t have to worry about a war being fought in my back yard, I am reminded of what it felt like to be a teenager in the 1960’s. We were only 17 years old; terrified that loved ones would be called into the Viet Nam War. Let’s not fool ourselves, that war had long lasting effects on my generation. Viet Nam veterans are now speaking out about their experiences and their life-time struggle from the effects of the moral injury. They deserve to be finally heard.

Veteran’s Day is a time of remembrance. It is now quite clear that World War I was not the “war to end all wars.” As a nation, we have been involved in international conflict for nearly a century. This year, we can turn the tide and remember that this holiday was once named Armistice Day. This year, we must reclaim that this holiday was also dedicated to the cause of world peace.

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