

## Remembering America's Veterans on the 11<sup>th</sup> Day of the 11<sup>th</sup> Month

At the opening session of the AzFRW Biennial Convention on October 27<sup>th</sup>, the patriotic spirit was very much alive and well among those assembled as an inspiring invocation was delivered, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and our National Anthem was sung, while the Patriots Color Guard performed the Presentation of the Colors ceremony. The members of the Patriots Color Guard, from the American Legion Earl E. Mitchell Post 29 in Glendale, are among all those whose service to our country will be remembered and honored on **Veterans Day, November 11<sup>th</sup>**.

It was at 5:10 a.m. on Nov. 11, 1918, that representatives of the German government signed the WWI armistice agreement which, at 11 a.m. that day, would effect a ceasefire between Germany and the victorious Allied Forces, finally halting "the war to end all wars".

To commemorate the events of Nov. 11, 1918, which led to the June, 1919, signing of the Treaty of Versailles that officially ended WWI, Woodrow Wilson issued a Presidential Proclamation which established the Nov.11 Armistice Day observance. It was to be a day for Americans to "be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory". In 1938, Armistice Day was made a nationwide legal holiday honoring WWI veterans, and in 1954, during the Eisenhower presidency, the Nov. 11 holiday became Veterans Day, a day to remember and pay special tribute to American veterans of all wars.

President Ronald Reagan had great respect and admiration for America's Armed Forces and veterans. This was evident in the thoughts and sentiments he expressed in a Veterans Day speech given at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on November 11, 1988. It included the following:

*"We're gathered today, just as we have gathered before, to remember those who served, those who fought, those still missing, and those who gave their last full measure of devotion for our country.*

*"... We remember those who were called upon to give all a person can give, and we remember those who were prepared to make that sacrifice if it were demanded in the line of duty. ...Most of all, we remember the devotion and gallantry with which all of them ennobled their nation. ...Yes, for all of them, those who came back and those who did not, their love for their families lives. Their love for their buddies on the battlefields and friends back home lives. Their love of their country lives. ...And our nation itself is testimony to the love our veterans have had for it and for us. Our liberties, our values, all for which America stands is safe today because brave men and women have been ready to face the fire at freedom's front. And we thank God for them."*

Americans should never forget how much we owe to our veterans, to those currently serving and protecting our country, and to their families.

Priscilla Poese, AzFRW Americanism Chair