

casket inscribed "An unknown American soldier who gave his life in the Great War," were buried at Arlington National Cemetery, after lying in state for three days in the rotunda of the Capitol in Washington. At 11 a.m., the time that the armistice had gone into effect three years earlier, the casket was lowered into the tomb. Above it was placed a block of white marble, bearing the inscription "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God."

During the 1920s, annual observances on both sides of the Atlantic became traditional. Called Remembrance Day in England and Canada, in America it was Armistice Day. The anniversary did not become a federal holiday until 1938, but as early as 1926, Congress adopted a resolution directing the president to issue an annual proclamation calling on citizens to observe the day.



A 1954 bill specifying that Armistice Day would thereafter be known and commemorated as Veterans Day was signed into law by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The purpose was to set aside a day to pay tribute to all those who had served in this nation's armed services, thus encompassing recognition of veterans of all wars.

Our local veterans' organizations and monuments will be explored in a future edition of this column, probably in May 2005, in time for Memorial Day. In the meantime, after you attend one of the area's annual ceremonies on Veterans Day, think about visiting the **Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument** at the **Fantinekill Cemetery** or the Museum to browse through the GAR War Sketches and think for a minute or two about Pelatiah Ward, who was so filled with fervor that his impassioned speech convinced 130 men from this valley to follow him into battle, or an ancestor of your own who might be recorded there. ☆


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