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ARMISTICE DAY

BECAUSE the truce which it brought has been perpetuated, the Armistice marked the end of the most colossal catastrophe ever suffered by humanity. It is, therefore, synonymous with peace. It is the answer to millions of prayers. It is the realization of the hopes of every human loyal to the allied forces, in uniform or out, living or dead. It is proof that pure democracy will overcome mad monarchy at any humble cost of lives and limbs and minds and blood and treasure.

The day on which the Armistice was signed makes its anniversary one of only two "world" days. The other is Christmas. For Americans the day embodies the reverence of Memorial Day, the joyousness of the Fourth of July, and the spirit of Thanksgiving.

If Armistice Day is properly observed there will be repeated the happiness of a world that has ceased wholesale bloodshed, yet in the midst of such celebration there will be moments of silence. The men and women who fought and died on the side of right, and those who fought and have since departed, aye, and the children who lost their lives because of the conflict, will be commemorated by the living. Honor will be paid to the sleeping, the known and the unknown. Comforting words will be spoken to the bereaved and comforting acts will be done for the needy.

Armistice Day should be celebrated, for it is at once a declaration and a consummation of independence from kaiseristic militarism. Freedom means happiness. Old Glory waves o'er land of the free and home of the brave, and all lands are now freer than they ever were because of the Armistice. Joy should be unbounded over the collapse of the Hohenzollerns, the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs and the birth of many republics.

Thanks should be given to the Almighty for the Armistice, for it returned sons and daughters to mothers and fathers, husbands to wives, lovers to sweethearts, fathers to children, friends to friends. It ended indescribable anguish. It kept millions of heart aches from becoming heart breaks. It proved again that right will prevail.

But, although the guns and gas ceased taking toll of lives and limbs and lungs and eyes and minds when the Armistice ended hostilities, the war goes frightfully on for uncounted thousands of those who fought—prisoners of pain for whom there will be no armistice until death ends their suffering. Hospitals house them in all the nations engaged. Many are in their own homes, others are wandering about the earth, homeless and friendless. They shuffle through life on crutches or canes with shattered or missing limbs, they wheel themselves in chairs, they clutch unsteadily with maimed hands or stumps, they cough in agony, they grope in blindness, they mutter strange sounds or sit silently, staring, hearing the ghost of guns of battle.

Armistice Day should recall vividly, poignantly, the hell of steel and poison mangling the flesh of stalwart boys and men and women; the refugees, old and crippled and ill, people of all ages, stumbling in terror from their homes in the stricken areas; the groans and supplications of the wounded and dying; the pitiful plight of the disabled. It should cause lovers of mankind to grieve among the crosses and stars and crescents "over there" and by the "tents of clay" in God's silent gardens here, before the crypts of the unknown and at the thoughts of the unmarked graves. It should make us think tenderly of the Gold Star mothers and the widows and orphans, and should inspire every one who emerged from the war, whether combatant or not, to give the last measure of helpfulness to the living victims. It should make us cry out for lasting peace, peace through human understanding, peace with honor and security built upon true conception of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. It should move us to register a mighty plea to all humanity to save the children of today from the horrors of another conflict.

The American Legion and its noble ally, the American Legion Auxiliary, have kept faith with the comrades who made the supreme sacrifice. They have met and are meeting their responsibility to the disabled and veterans' needy dependents. They have rendered and are now rendering distinguished peace service to our country in the spirit of Americans, all which enabled America to triumph in 1917-'18.

But our work, well started, has only begun. We may do infinitely more in the future than we have in the past. We know the significance of the Armistice as no other group knows it. We must make of the Armistice in our lives all that its creators wanted it to be. We must meet the challenge of the generations to follow us, and dedicate our all to the perpetuation of that spirit in which the Armistice was won and in which we have since observed it.

Armistice Day IS a peace day to be celebrated. If humanity would act in accord with the hopes and prayers of the survivors of the World war, if it would listen to the agonized cries of the living victims, if it would hear the voices of the spirits of the slain, there would be no more war.

But, instead of a world at peace on this anniversary, we live in a world of greed, suspicion and hate, with the very atmosphere charged with rumors of more outbreaks. A great part of the world is seething with revolution or on the verge of it. Military engines of destruction are larger and infinitely more deadly than ever before in peace time. Competent observers see no escape from another catastrophe unless the mind of humanity changes completely. Experience teaches that a war can no longer be confined to the areas covered by the nations which start it, but that it soon spreads all over the earth.

Humanity is said to be crying for peace, but humanity is either crying out of only one eye or is in the hands of jingoes. The World war failed to settle all of the disputes from which it sprung, and new disputes have arisen. The nations appear to have halted only to catch their breath, so to speak, and are now bending every energy toward renewing hostilities. Another World war would be far more frightful than the last one, but humanity seems to be blind.

True, there have been many moves for lasting peace; all of the great powers have signed a pact outlawing war save in self-defense, but how effective is it in the light of the preparations which are being made and the fact that every nation claims that it will fight defensively, never "offensively" nowadays?

The United States has been the outstanding leader in world peace movements. We are a peaceful, peace-loving people. Our military should offend no one. Our army and navy are small, comparatively, we have few fighting planes compared with the number of some other powers, our national guard and reserve forces are loyal and zealous, but conditions under which they train do not equip them for immediate field duty. We are, with due respect to our standing forces and civilian units, poorly armed compared with other great nations.

The American Legion, in convention after convention, has reiterated its position in favor of world understanding that disagreements may be settled without bloodshed, but rightly insists that our national defenses should be kept up to the provisions of the National Defense act. Our national defense can not be honestly called militarism because we depend so largely on citizen soldiery.

No one who knows anything about war wants it, but hellish as it is, no true American prefers dishonor to it. Those Americans who sincerely think that by abolishing all training and doing away with our regular army and navy we should contribute toward world peace simply do not know history and world conditions. Those who dishonestly advocate ideas which would make the nation defenseless before attack are plain, unmitigated traitors. May all Americans on Armistice Day, peace day, consecrate themselves to every honorable proposal for permanent peace which might be successful, but may none be led astray by visionary remedies, especially those advanced by the elements who plot the nation's overthrow.

The American Legion's gigantic membership in 1931 of more than one million is conclusive evidence that American World war veterans recognize the Legion's soundness on the questions of war and peace now before humanity. The Legion is attractive in many respects but it could not win the support of so many if it did not strike the very chords of true Americanism.

Nothing appeals to the hearts and minds of veterans like service to God and country and fellow men, because that was the ideal for which they donned the uniform and risked their lives. The service welded comradeship as no other experience could. Men can undergo no ordeal which will so bind them together forever as to defend their nation in war. They love to get together and reminisce. What if some of the stories do grow with time; what if imagination and recollection do become confused in aging minds—comrades know and understand.

The American Legion at this time has been conducting a nationwide campaign urging posts to hold some kind of rally by counties. Where weather permits there will be barbecues outdoors; where it does not, indoors. Following the Armistice Day parades the veterans and the patriots who served in the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Y. M. C. A., the Knights of Columbus and other organizations "over there" and "over here," and members of the draft boards, state councils of defense, and all others who in any way contributed to victory, will be invited to assemble.

Armistice Day might well be made a day for annual encampment of the veterans. All of the lofty sentiments of the event could be brought out impressively. The ingenuity of Legionnaires could produce numerous appropriate features which would appeal to the public as well as to the veterans. In such programs comradeship would spread and grow warmer, and out of the spirit of the day and the get-togethers the value of American Legion membership could be more deeply impressed upon the comrade outside, and the Legion could be lifted higher in the esteem of the communities.

Our American Legion fiscal year begins on October 20. Thousands of Legionnaires pay their dues on that date and many more thousands always do within a few days afterward, but some are slow, and there are still thousands who have never belonged to the Legion who would join if properly approached. Moreover, there are many comrades who once

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were Legionnaires, who have not been for awhile, but are ready to return to our ranks for the asking.

Let's make Armistice Day so vividly and forcefully recall the ideals with which the Americans served in 1917-'18, that all of the survivors will be reached and moved. Few there are who do not like comradeship, therefore the Legion must prove to the outside buddies that it is the best medium through which the war comradeship may be perpetuated.

Armistice Day should afford a golden opportunity for working Legionnaires to place the Legion program before all of the people. Legionnaires should thoroughly familiarize themselves with it so that they may readily present it clearly. The Legion's position on war and peace, why we believe in adequate national defense, should be carried to every possible mind by every possible means. Facts and figures are available from national and state headquarters of the Legion.

What the Legion and the Auxiliary have done for the disabled is a glorious story in itself, but, unfortunately, because it so involves the enactment of laws, many loyal Legionnaires do not know it well enough to relate it. How the Legion accepted the responsibility of pushing relief measures to alleviate suffering in Congress and the legislatures, of rehabilitating the maimed and shattered, of having hospitals erected, should be known by all Americans, and no one should be better able to impart such information than a Legionnaire. The story of the establishment of the U. S. Veterans' Bureau through Legion influence, of the Legion's immediate and effective action when crooked officials put it under clouds, of the Legion's steady cooperation with it and of the immense good it has done, is doing, and will continue to do, should be broadcast in every city, town, village and hamlet in the country.

The Legion's intense interest in education as a means to promote better citizenship, its alliance with the National Education Association, out of which has come observance of Education Week the nation over, the awarding of scholarship prizes by hundreds of posts to students, should interest the public and a host of comrades not now Legionnaires.

The Legion's child welfare program should strike response in millions of hearts, for who that is human is unmoved by children? What the Legion has done to give the orphans of veterans better opportunities in life, the Legion's raising of the Endowment Fund and the Legion's sponsorship of Junior Baseball and support of the Boy Scouts should have tremendous effect on public opinion.

The Legion's community service is another great story alone. Since community service was made a part of the Legion's Americanism program at the San Francisco convention in 1923, literally thousands of posts have done literally thousands of constructive things for their respective communities. Any one who travels about the country sees community buildings, swimming pools, children's playgrounds, safety signs and numerous other evidences of the Legion's community interest.

The Legion's proposal of universal service in time of war will win support from an overwhelming majority of the people and veterans eligible to membership if clearly explained. It is the most practical idea yet conceived to at once provide the nation with a mighty, non-militaristic defense and peace insurance. It strikes at both profiteering and slackerism in the event of another war; it would mobilize all of the people and the resources of this nation for emergency, which would have the two-fold effect of immediately impressing the people of their responsibilities for the nation's safety and impressing enemies with our strength.

The Legion's continued interest in unemployment, which so flamed in the industrial depression of 1921 that almost a million men were placed in jobs in a few days, and the fears of bolshevism from a jobless army were quelled, merit the admiration of all who love mankind and our form of government. Again the Legion sprung to action to solve a similar problem when the national executive committee in May of this year resolved to make an intensive study of the financial depression.

The Legion's prolonged and mighty fight for economic justice through the enactment of the adjusted compensation bill must have the gratitude of hundreds of thousands of veterans out of the Legion as well as in it, as well as the gratitude of millions of others to whom it directly or indirectly meant benefits. The national executive committee's endorsement of the bill to broaden loan provisions of the adjusted service certificates again proved it to be alert to veterans' needs.

The Legion, immeasurably more than any other organization, has inspired observance of patriotic holidays. The Legion knows that a people who cease to honor their saviors and defenders do not deserve to be saved or defended. They believe most Americans are patriotic but they see a disposition by some to neglect their responsibilities. Knowing something of the cost of preserving the republic as they do, Legionnaires through their organization gladly accept leadership in the movements to keep America close to the ideals of those who have made it what it is in war and in peace.

The Legion's relentless fight on destructive elements, the reds, hyphenates and others who are not in accord with true American ideals, wherever opportunity affords, but always in full recognition of the constitutional guaranties of free speech and free press, has amounted to a service in peace akin to that which the American forces rendered in war.

The Legion's record should commend it to every eligible man and woman. Great have been its opportunities for service, great has been and is its organization to render service. The membership is of those veterans who from the conception of the duties of citizenship they gained during the war are fired with determination to give the nation their utmost in time of peace. The Armistice to Legionnaires means no cessation of effort to try to make our beloved country rise to the heights of service to God and all the world. The Legion realizes that if the nation is to grow with God and man it must progress along the lines mapped out by its founders and defenders in war and in peace from the signing of the Declaration of Independence to the signing of the Armistice through which our organization came.

Great are the Legion's possibilities in the future. Though it has done much, the peak of its power has not yet been reached. The coming three decades will see it soar to superb heights in activities which should appeal to every one proud of his service in 1917-'18 and cherishing the earnest hope that succeeding generations will exemplify the same high spirit.

Armistice Day, of all days, with its significance, offers Legion posts and individual Legionnaires boundless opportunities to greatly enlarge our membership, and win greater public approbation for the greater glory of God and country. May every Legionnaire meet the challenge!

HANDY NOTES FOR THE SPEAKER

Armistice Day embodies Memorial Day, July Fourth and Thanksgiving.

Observe it with celebration and moments of reverent silence.

War goes on for uncounted thousands.

Recalls terrors of battle.

Legion and Auxiliary have kept faith.

Dedicate ourselves to perpetuation of patriotic duty.

It is a peace day.

War can not be confined to definite nations.

All disputes not settled.

U. S. outstanding leader in world peace.

American Legion continually promoting world peace.

Legion's soundness shown by membership of more than one million.

Service welded comradeship.

Rallies advocated for Armistice Day.

Day could well be made annual encampment.

Relief measures for the disabled.

Americanism programs.

Child welfare activities.

Community service in thousands of places.

Universal service in time of war.

Unemployment.

Fight on the reds.

No armistice on service.

A challenge to every Legionnaire.

GET PUBLICITY FOR YOUR SPEECH

Extracts from your speech printed in the local newspapers are needful if your message is to reach beyond the walls of the structure in which you speak.

Write your speech out in full. Whether you use the speakers' letter in toto, or use it as basis for your own expressions, write out your speech. You do not necessarily have to follow it in full in delivery. You can use the topics therein mentioned as you will, so long as you touch upon them.

Write the speech on a typewriter.

Make sufficient copies on onion-skin paper, so that all the local newspapers, morning and afternoon, and the press associations may each have a copy. Double-space the speech.

Mail or send a copy of the speech to the newspapers and press associations. Have extra copies on the date of delivery if reporters ask for it.

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