

Armistice Day

The German armistice delegation had attempted to secure better terms, but had failed at doing so, apart from a slight extension of the two-week timeframe to evacuate Belgium, France, and Alsace-Lorraine. On November 10, they received notification that the Kaiser had abdicated, and received instruction from the new Chancellor, Ebert, that they were to sign the armistice as they had been drafted. Shortly after 5AM local time on the 11th, German representatives signed the armistice. The armistice was slated to go into effect six hours after the signing, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. Interestingly, fighting continued until 11am that day, because the armistice didn't take effect until then. In some sectors, six hours was not enough time to convey news of the armistice to troops in the thick of fighting. Parts of 89th Division, which had attacked at 4am that morning, did not stop fighting until noon. There are no known reports of any shooting continuing beyond 12:30 in the afternoon.

An artillery soldier remembered: "We heard the announcement of the Armistice when we were still in the Forest de Mormal on a cheerless, dismal, cold, misty day. There was no cheering or demonstration. We were all tired in body and mind, fresh from the tragic fields of battle, and this momentous announcement was too vast in its consequences to be appreciated or accepted with wild excitement. We trekked out of the wood on this dreary day in silence."

The war was over and our soldiers are returning home. Here is an excerpt from the Red Circle Guide for Soldiers Sailor and Marines published in 1919 "Discharge in Sight? Oh boy! You've had a rough time of it. You've fought hard and well. You've suffered and toiled. But now that's over, or soon will be, and you'll be back in the Good, Old U.S.A."

In President Wilson's November 11, 1919 address, he stated that the day would be "filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory,"

Why was a dining car used as the location for the armistice, you might ask. According to the best research I've found, most of the towns near the Allied headquarters had been brutally attacked by the Germans earlier in the war and safety of the German delegation was a great concern, so the dining car in a forest was used.

Today, world leaders helped commemorate the ending of the war to end all wars. French President Macron and German Chancellor Merkel signed a book of remembrance in a replica of the car used in 1918. Merkel said she was the first post-war German chancellor to visit the site with a French president.

Sweetie Bev and I attended an excellent Veterans Memorial ceremony at Arizona's American Legion Post 66. I wore my Moorhead Legion Post 21 cap to the ceremony.