



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

November 11, 2018

*Bells of Peace Commemoration*

On November 9, 1918, facing an unwinnable war abroad and a revolution at home, Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated his throne, ending four centuries of Hohenzollern rule in Prussia and creating Germany's first republican government. Two days later, at 11 o'clock in the morning, in the Forest of Compiègne in Picardy, France, civilian representatives of the combatant powers signed an Armistice to end what was then known as "The Great War" or simply "The World War."

Each year on November 11, as required by state law, my office issues a proclamation declaring Veterans Day in the State of California. This federal holiday was originally called Armistice Day, and its date still marks one of the most momentous events in modern history. I applaud the efforts of the United States World War One Centennial Commission to keep the memory of the Armistice alive.

"The Great War" was not as "great" as its successor, for which we retroactively renamed it, much as our nation has renamed the former Armistice Day to honor veterans of other wars in addition to the 4.7 million Americans who served and the 116,516 who perished in the First World War. But we should not let these changes in nomenclature diminish the relevance of the Armistice and the conflict preceding it to our world today. The errors of propaganda, nationalist arrogance and underestimation of the risks of modern weaponry are still just as prevalent and potentially much deadlier than they were in 1914 or 1939.

For this reason, I encourage all Californians with the means to do so to join the Centennial Commission in the *Bells of Peace* commemoration by tolling bells at 11 o'clock this morning, marking the hundredth anniversary of the conclusion to what President Woodrow Wilson foolishly called "the war to end war."

Sincerely,

  
EDMUND G. BROWN JR.