



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, November 11, 2018 marks the centennial of the end of active fighting during World War I, with the signing of the Armistice of Compiègne that brought an end to the conflict on land, sea, and air, representing a critical victory for the Allies who stood in defense of the values of freedom and democracy that were under attack in Europe; among them were many courageous New Yorkers who answered the call to uphold the founding values of our nation with unparalleled dedication, valor, and sacrifice; and

Whereas, World War I was one of the bloodiest and costliest conflicts in human history, claiming 17 million lives between 1914 and 1918, including those of more than 116,000 United States troops; more than 500,000 New Yorkers served in the American Expeditionary Forces under General J. Pershing – fully ten percent of the United States troops; they fought with courage and determination, helping to secure the Allied Victory by facing the enemy at the Aisne-Marne offensive, the Somme offensive, in the Argonne Forest, at the battle of Meuse-Argonne, and offensives breaking the Hindenburg Line; and

Whereas, New York State's regiments were honored for their selfless service and courage, including the 69th Infantry Regiment, known as the "Fighting 69th," and the 369th Infantry Regiment, called the "Harlem Hellfighters" or the "Black Rattlers," the first African-American regiment to serve in combat during World War I; twenty-five New Yorkers received the Congressional Medal of Honor for their valiant service in World War I; and

Whereas, we acknowledge the contributions of women of New York and nationwide during WWI when, for the first time in our history, women were associated in an official capacity with several arms of U.S. military and government agencies, allowed to serve as Yeomen with the Navy and the Marine Corps, as members of the Army Nurse Corps and, in France, where 223 American women served as long-distance switchboard operators for the U.S. Army Signal Corps; on the home front, women stepped up in unprecedented ways to fill jobs as ammunition testers, switchboard operators, stock takers, and in factories that produced war materials; thousands more formed and joined relief organizations, dedicating themselves in patriotic support of the war effort; and

Whereas, we solemnly remember the valor and sacrifices made by the 13,956 New Yorkers who died fighting for our country in World War I; we owe our deepest gratitude to the many thousands of New Yorkers who returned home wounded from the World War I battlefields, marked by the dawn of modern weaponry, and acknowledge that the injuries and scars of war – both seen and unseen – brought many challenges and difficulties to these individuals and their families; and

Whereas, to honor the 100th Anniversary of World War I and the integral role played in this conflict by New York State and New Yorkers, the State Legislature passed and Governor Cuomo signed Bill #6856 on November 29, 2016, creating the New York State World War I Centennial Anniversary Commemoration Commission; and

Whereas, New Yorkers join to recognize the members of the Commission and their work to further public engagement with the legacy of New York State and New Yorkers who actively served and fought in World War I, up until November 11, 2018 – the centennial of the signing of the Armistice to end active fighting; we likewise extend appreciation to the Commission members for their efforts to collaborate with federal, state, and local governments, public and private resources, and other entities to promote a wide variety of programs across the state that commemorate and explore the legacy of World War I, with commemorative ceremonies, museum and library exhibits, speaker panels, film screenings, and musical performances; and

Whereas, the last of the surviving individuals who served in World War I are gone, we will forever look to the example set by those New Yorkers of heroism and self-sacrifice – a proud example that inspires us all and that lives on in generations of their family members who followed them;

Now, Therefore, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim November 11, 2018 as

A DAY TO HONOR AND REMEMBER THE SACRIFICES MADE BY NEW YORK STATE AND NEW YORKERS IN WORLD WAR I

in the Empire State, as we mark the centennial of the signing of the Armistice of Compiègne and an end to active fighting in World War I – an event of such great consequence to global humankind.



G i v e n under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this twenty-fourth day of September in the year two thousand eighteen.


Governor


Secretary to the Governor
Melissa DeRosa