



VICTORY MEMORIAL DRIVE

**100TH ANNIVERSARY
WORLD WAR I
REMEMBRANCE**

Flagpole Plaza at 45th Avenue North
and Victory Memorial Drive

10 A.M.

Sunday, November 11, 2018

World War I timeline

July 28, 1914

World War I began

May 7, 1915

German sinking of the British liner Lusitania; the loss of life included 128 Americans

January 1917

German submarines sank U.S. merchant ship

April 6, 1917

U.S. declared war on Germany

Late June 1917

First U.S. combat soldiers arrived in France

May 1918

First independent U.S. military victory in Cantigny, France

June - July 1918

Heavy involvement by American forces

September 26, 1918

Meuse-Argonne offensive launched, which led to the armistice

November 11, 1918

Armistice

Armistice

The armistice called for a ceasefire effective at 11 a.m. Paris time on November 11, 1918 (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). It ended fighting on land, sea and air between U.S. allies and their last opponent, Germany.

**Today marks the 100-year anniversary
of the World War I armistice.**

Commemorating World War I

We remember the Great War for the examples of perseverance in the harshest of adversities and conditions. The tragedy of the war and the countless victims claimed by the conflict should not be forgotten. The course of the world was influenced by the events of 1914-1918 and their aftermath, as were the lives of our ancestors, and so we remember.



Dedication of Victory Memorial Drive, June 11, 1921

History of Victory Memorial Drive

In the spring of 1917, with World War I still raging on, Theodore Wirth, superintendent of the Minneapolis park system, introduced a plan to establish a memorial for the soldiers of Hennepin County. Prominent leaders, including Charles M. Loring and Hennepin County Sheriff Earle Brown, made substantial contributions to the project.

The parkway was completed in 1921 and was dedicated as a memorial to the 568 servicemen and nurses from Hennepin County who died in the war. 568 Moline elm trees were planted in memory of these service members. Then on November 11, 1928, a bronze marker was placed in front of each tree bearing the name, rank and company of each fallen soldier. In 1953, the markers were replaced with plaques embedded in the ground.



Photo credit: Robbinsdale Historical Society

Dedication in 1921

More than 30,000 spectators joined international leaders in the dedication ceremony, which included messages from U.S. President Warren Harding and Vice President Calvin Coolidge.

Historic designation in 2003

Victory Memorial Drive was designated as a state historic district to help ensure that the memorial will “remain a living emblem to the hallowed memory of those of our loved ones who made the supreme sacrifice for liberty, justice, and humanity.” (A.A. McRae, former Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board president).

Rededication in 2011

Hennepin County worked with community partners and local veterans to rededicate the memorial in 2011. Improvements include a revamped flagpole plaza, gateways marking the entries to the drive, expanded flowerbeds, new lighting, sidewalks and a resurfaced road. New trees replace those that had died of Dutch elm disease.

About the Memorial

The memorial is one of the longest World War I memorials in the country and stretches approximately four miles.



The profile of a World War I soldier's face is visible between the columns in the granite.



The flagpole casts a shadow across the cement plaza marker on Armistice Day at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.



At flagpole plaza, a small park and statue of Abraham Lincoln was dedicated on May 25, 1930 by surviving members of the Grand Army of the Republic in honor of their comrades who gave their lives in the Civil War.



“In formal gardening there is nothing more beautiful than long parallel rows of stately trees. If planted far enough apart to permit each tree to become a fully developed specimen, they will in time become giants of strength and beauty. What better or more noble symbol of strength and character of our victorious soldiers could be chosen to serve as a memorial to the fallen heroes and noble defenders of our liberty?”

- Theodore Wirth

U.S. service during the war



1917-1918

Dates of U.S. service



4,734,991

Troops



116,516

Deaths

2 million Americans volunteered for the army and nearly **3 million** were drafted.

More than **350,000** African Americans served in segregated units.

13,000 women served in the Navy as Yeoman and in the Marines.

More than **20,000** women served in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps.



Fighting for Respect: African-American soldiers in World War I

By Jami L. Bryan

Excerpted with permission from The Army Historical Foundation

On May 18, 1917, Congress passed the Selective Service Act requiring all male citizens between the ages of 21 and 31 to register for the draft. Even before the act was passed, African American males from all over the country eagerly joined the war effort. They viewed the conflict as an opportunity to prove their loyalty, patriotism, and worthiness for equal treatment in the United States.

African Americans experienced racism, segregation, non-combat roles, and in some camps were often treated badly and sometimes went for long periods without proper clothing. There were also reports of blacks receiving old Civil War uniforms and being forced to sleep outside in pitched tents instead of warmer, sturdier barracks. Some were forced to eat outside in the winter months, while others went without a change of clothes for months at a time.



Veterans return from war to racism and segregation

After the Armistice, as the troops returned, there was an increase of racial tension. Anti-black race riots erupted. The lynching of blacks also increased from 58 in 1918 to 77 in 1919. At least 10 of those victims were war veterans, and some were lynched while in uniform.

The long road to equality

Despite this treatment, African American men continued to enlist in the military, including veterans of World War I that came home to such violence and ingratitude. Many went on to fight in World War II. It was not until 1948 that President Harry S Truman issued an executive order to desegregate the military, although it took the Korean War to fully integrate the Army.



Poppy flower

A symbol of remembrance

- May 1915 – Military physician Colonel John McCrae wrote “In Flanders Fields,” a poem that depicts the poppies that bloomed in some of the most bloodied battlefields of Flanders during World War I.
- McCrae’s poem inspired Anna Guerin of France and Moina Michael of Georgia to begin selling artificial poppies to raise money for veterans with disabilities and their families.
- 1922 – The Veterans of Foreign Wars made the poppy the official memorial flower to represent United States veterans.
- Today – People still wear poppies on Veterans Day, and money is still collected to assist veterans and their families.

Event participants

Patrick Burns

Burns, a resident of the Victory Neighborhood, served on the task force that undertook the revitalization of the drive. He also served in the U.S. Army as an active duty officer and graduated from the Army's Judge Advocate General's School and the United States Army Airborne Infantry School.

Tina Burnside

Burnside is a co-founder of the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery, and is the museum's curator and development team lead. She is a civil rights attorney, playwright and author. Burnside has worked on several projects for the Minnesota Historical Society and the Hennepin History Museum related to Minnesota African American history.

Steve Chicoine

Chicoine is the author of numerous acclaimed books and scholarly articles on American and military history. Learn more about his latest book, "Captain Mallon: Doughboy Hero," and his other work at freedomhistory.com.

Charles Knaeble VFW Post #494

The Crystal Veterans of Foreign Wars serves veterans and supports other local community organizations.

The bottom section of the page features a dark blue background with a blurred image of several American flags. Two white stars are overlaid on the right side of the image.

Thank you to our event participants.

The Reverend Linda Koelman

Koelman is a chaplain with the Minneapolis Police Department and a retired pastor from the United Methodist Church.

Robert Robinson

Robinson is a long-time local and national gospel performer. Named “Minnesota’s Master Male Vocalist” by the *Star Tribune*, he served for 20 years as executive and artistic director of the Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir. He is immersed in community service, and the We Win Institute recognized him for his commitment to community, youth and positive change.

General Colin L. Powell Leadership Academy JROTC

The academy is a STEM – science, technology, engineering and mathematics – focused school committed to leadership, academic excellence, discipline and service. Located in Minneapolis, the school offers an engaging academic environment where military ideals inspire cadets to become better scholars, leaders and citizens.





As we join communities across the nation and world in this day of remembrance and celebration, we would like to thank all ceremony guests and participants.

hennepin.us/victorymemorialdrive

Event supported by



Additional support by the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, City of Minneapolis Police Department, and City of Robbinsdale Police Department