



**Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**Listing of**  
**Annual Veterans Events**

## **Veterans Day at the Capitol – 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in January**

**Iowa State Capitol – 1007 E. Grand Avenue – Des Moines, Iowa**

**9:00 am – 12:00 pm**

**The Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs annually hosts a day at the Iowa Capitol so that constituents can learn about the latest veteran-related legislative activity in Iowa, hear from key policy makers, visit with event vendors about veteran-related services, and have an opportunity to meet with elected officials to weigh in on key issues affecting veterans.**

**Contact the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs office for more details: 515.252.4698**

## **Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day – May 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Vietnam Veteran Memorial – Iowa State Capitol Grounds (south of the capitol)**

**1007 E. Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa**

**11:00 am**

**In 2008, the Iowa legislature passed a resolution observing May 7<sup>th</sup> as the official Iowa Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day. Since that time, Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day has been held annually at the Iowa Vietnam Veterans Monument.**

### **The resolution reads:**

SENATE RESOLUTION NO.139

1 2 BY BEALL, RAGAN, SEYMOUR, HARTSUCH,  
1 3 MCKINLEY, WARNSTADT, KIBBIE, DANIELSON,  
1 4 HORN, and BLACK  
1 5 A Resolution honoring America's Vietnam veterans.  
1 6 WHEREAS, from 1961 through 1975, the men and women  
1 7 of America's armed forces fought on behalf of the  
1 8 South Vietnamese people; and  
1 9 WHEREAS, almost 3.5 million Americans served in the  
1 10 Southeast Asia theater of war and more than 2.9  
1 11 million served in Vietnam itself; and  
1 12 WHEREAS, during that long conflict more than 58,000  
1 13 Americans gave their lives for freedom's sake and  
1 14 another 300,000 were wounded; and  
1 15 WHEREAS, Vietnam veterans today continue to be  
1 16 leaders in all walks of life and serve to make America  
1 17 a better place to live; and  
1 18 WHEREAS, Vietnam veterans can be proud of their  
1 19 legacy of devotion to the cause of freedom and service  
1 20 to America; and  
1 21 WHEREAS, a day each year should be designated as a  
1 22 day to especially remember our Vietnam veterans; NOW  
1 23 THEREFORE,  
1 24 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, That the Senate, on  
1 25 behalf of all Iowans, humbly thanks America's Vietnam  
1 26 veterans and recognizes May 7, 2008, as Vietnam  
1 27 Veterans Recognition Day in Iowa.

**The Iowa Vietnam War Monument is dedicated to the Iowans who served during the Vietnam Era. Inscribed on its face are the names of 867 Iowans who lost their lives during - or as a result of - the conflict. The monument is constructed from black mirror-finish coldsprings granite, which is the same material used for the National Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Iowa Vietnam Veteran War Memorial was dedicated on Memorial Day, 1984, and came two years after the National Vietnam Memorial was dedicated in November of 1982.**

## **Memorial Day Ceremony – last Monday in May**

### **Fallen Heroes Monument**

#### **Iowa Veterans Cemetery – Van Meter, Iowa**

**8:00 am**

**Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. There are many stories as to its actual beginnings, with over two dozen cities and towns laying claim to being the birthplace of Memorial Day.**

**On May 5, 1868, Memorial Day was officially proclaimed by General John Logan, Commander in Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, for "the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land." On that first national celebration of the holiday, flowers were placed on the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.**

**In 1922, the Veterans of Foreign Wars made the poppy the official memorial flower to represent United States veterans.**

**In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be celebrated the last Monday in May.**

**To help remind Americans of the true meaning of Memorial Day, the "National Moment of Remembrance" resolution was passed in December 2000, which asks that at 3:00 p.m. on Memorial Day, all Americans "voluntarily and informally observe, in their own way, a "Moment of Remembrance and Respect."**

## **Veterans Memorial Day Ceremony**

### **Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center (Veterans Memorial)**

**833 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Des Moines, Iowa**

**11:00 am**

**An annual ceremony that includes the "Massing of the Colors" ceremony by local veteran's organizations, speakers, musical interlude, and other program events that vary each year. Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Executive Director, COL Robert King (Ret), presides.**

## **Iowa State Fair Veteran's Day Parade – 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the Fair**

**Iowa State Fair Grounds – Main Concourse**

**3000 E. Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa**

**11:00 am**

**Governor Branstad, the Commander-in-Chief of the Iowa National Guard, officiates the parade. He is joined by other dignitaries on the reviewing stand that is located in front of the fair's administration building.**

**The Iowa State Fair Veterans Day parade is a long-standing fair tradition. The parade route is lined several deep as the parade makes its way down the Grand Concourse and its route around the fairground. The on-lookers are as varied as the parade entries: Veterans, veteran's service and support groups, friends of veterans and patriotic Americans. Many are Iowans; many come from across the country and around the world.**

**We hope to see you in the parade or applauding our veterans from the curb.**

## **Veterans Day – November 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Iowa Veterans Cemetery – Van Meter, Iowa**

**Committal Shelter**

**8:00 am**

**Veterans Day: A celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.**

**Veterans Day is observed annually on November 11, honoring people who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. It coincides with other holidays including Armistice Day and Remembrance Day, which are celebrated in other parts of the world and also mark the anniversary of the end of World War I (major hostilities of World War I were formally ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, when the Armistice with Germany went into effect). The United States also originally observed Armistice Day; it then evolved into the current Veterans Day holiday in 1954.**

**U.S. President Woodrow Wilson first proclaimed Armistice Day for November 11, 1919. In 1945, World War II veteran Raymond Weeks from Birmingham, Alabama, had the idea to expand Armistice Day to celebrate all veterans, not just those who died in World War I. Weeks led a delegation to Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, who supported the idea of National Veterans Day.**

**Veterans Day is not to be confused with Memorial Day; Veterans Day celebrates the service of all U.S. military veterans, while Memorial Day is a day of remembering the men and women who gave their lives and those who perished while in service.**

## **Veterans Day Ceremony – November 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center (Veterans Memorial)**

**833 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Des Moines, Iowa**

**11:00 am**

**An annual event that includes representatives from all Veterans Service Organizations, speakers, musical interlude, and other program events that vary each year. Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Executive Director, COL Robert King (Ret), presides.**

## **Wreaths Across America – Usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of December**

### **Iowa Veterans Cemetery – Van Meter, Iowa**

**11:00 am**

***Wreaths Across America*** was formed as an extension of the Arlington Wreath Project — an event that began in 1992 with the donation and laying of 5,000 remembrance wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery. Unable to donate thousands of wreaths to each state, the idea of donating 7 wreaths (one for each branch of the military as well as POW/MIA) was conceived. Wreaths Across works hard to fulfill its mission to ‘Remember, Honor and Teach.’ Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, remembrance wreaths are placed at the headstones of fallen veterans at more than 800 locations across the country and overseas.

Their mission: *Remember, Honor, Teach*, is carried out in part by coordinating wreath laying ceremonies on a specified Saturday in December at Arlington, as well as veterans’ cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond. Iowa Veterans Cemetery is honored to be part of that group. IVC continues the tradition of *Wreaths Across America* by laying wreaths on every headstone, columbaria plaza, and memorial as an annual remembrance of the sacrifice that our veterans have made.

*Wreaths Across America* is made possible by thousands of volunteers who organize local ceremonies, raise funds to sponsor wreaths, and participate in the events. The cost of programs is paid by individual wreath sponsors, corporate donors, and volunteer truckers. (See more at: [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org))

Contact Iowa Veterans Cemetery for additional information on donating and volunteering: 515.996.9048.

**\*The Iowa Veterans Home, Iowa Veterans Service Organizations, Iowa counties, and other veteran-related groups also have annual veteran ceremonies. Visit their webpages or contact their offices for times, dates, and additional information. You will find many of these events listed on the bi-monthly IDVA events calendar, accessible via the IDVA webpage.**