

# Armistice Day

## Remembrance Day/Veterans Day

By Judy Haynes

*How many young people would recognize the word, Armistice? The clue to its meaning is in the title. There is perhaps only one or two alive today who would remember hearing the news in-person. It was on November 11, 1918 when the news headlines announced:*

*“Armistice Signed, End of the War! Berlin Seized by Revolutionists: New Chancellor Begs for Order: Ousted Kaiser Flees to Holland.”<sup>1</sup>*

The Allied Powers and the Central Powers effectively ended all military operations and hostilities in all theatres and fronts of World War I at Compiegne, France.<sup>2</sup> The date was November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918 when most firing ceased; however, some soldiers who lived it said the “shelling ...continued for the rest of the day, ending only at nightfall.”<sup>3</sup> The significance of the date was that all hostilities were to end at the

*“eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month”*



**JOHN B. COYLE**  
(1914-1990)  
Husband of Ruth Donaldson  
BHSM Photograph Collection

in 1918. The initial armistice expired after 36 days; it was renewed several times, and a “formal peace agreement was reached only when the Treaty of Versailles was signed the following year.”<sup>4</sup>

The Armistice honored the military dead from the First World War and a return to peace, but as years went by and war returned with WWII, the holiday focused on honoring all veterans of our armed services. Several nations adopted Canada’s name and called it Remembrance Day, and finally in the United States in 1954 it was changed to All Veterans Day and later it was shortened to Veterans Day.<sup>5</sup>



**PRIVATE BROWN**  
BHSM Photograph Collection



**PRIVATE PETER BARTON**  
BHSM Photograph Collection

*“In the United States, Veterans Day honors American veterans, both living and deceased. The official day of national remembrance of those killed in action is Memorial Day, which predates World War I.” Some “have urged Americans to resume observation of 11 November as Armistice Day, a day to reflect on how we can achieve peace as it was originally observed.”<sup>6</sup>*



**GARRETT G. HOLLANDS**  
(1943-2018)  
Husband of Brenda Smith  
BHSM Photograph Collection

Armistice Day in Boylston was a day in the year where military personnel were honored and could take a moment to spend time on a project with family or neighbors. In 1921, perhaps Boylstonians had a holiday from formal and paid work and chose to use their day off to further their plan for building a new clubhouse. This article appeared in the local newspaper:

Old Car Barn Is Town Down  
Boylston, Nov. 11 –

*The Boylston Men’s Club, which bought the Worcester Consolidated [railway], the old car barn, on the Clinton road about one-fourth of a mile from the center of Boylston, began this morning to celebrate Armistice Day by tearing it down and carrying the lumber from it to the two and three-quarters acres on the Worcester road, where the club plans to build its clubhouse. About a dozen men worked on it this morning, and about 20 this afternoon. Tonight the roof is nearly down. The club concluded its Celebration with a whist party tonight in the Town Hall.<sup>7</sup>*



**BREAKING GROUND**  
BHSM Photograph Collection



The clubhouse later became known as the Town House and was built with the labors of men in Boylston. It was used then, and still is now, for many a peaceful event by several organizations. Perhaps this was a fitting and peaceful way to honor the men who had served the country: they were serving their community.



*Let us take a few moments to reflect and remember all the military men and women who have served our country.*



<sup>1</sup> The New York Times headline, November 11, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> From Shushkewich, Val (2005), *The Real Winnie: a one-of-a-kind bear*, in Wikipedia.

<sup>5</sup> Osborne, Samuel (11 November 2015), “Armistice Day, Remembrance Day and Veterans Day – what’s the difference?” quoted in Wikipedia.

<sup>6</sup> Fanning, Rory, “Why doesn’t the US observe Armistice Day? We’re more comfortable with war than peace” (11 November 2014), *The Guardian*, quoted in Wikipedia.

<sup>7</sup> News item from Mary French Scrapbook collection, Boylston Historical Society Museum Collections.

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NOTE: Some photographs of our Boylston Veterans are shown in this article. The museum is seeking photographs of all Boylston men and women who have served in the military for its collection.