

Veteran's Day



Sunday, November 11, 2018, marks the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. In the United States, the annual event is called "Veterans' Day" and has broadened its scope over the years. It not only remembers the cessation of hostilities between the Allied Powers and the German Empire, but it honors all Americans who have stepped forward to serve in the United States military in peacetime as well as during periods of war. The families of veterans are also singled out for the sacrifices they make/made.

For many of us, it is a time to reflect on both the good and bad experiences we endured during our service. Terms like "Soldier's Heart," "Shell Shocked," and "Post Traumatic Stress" attempt to put a name on our brain's attempt to address abnormal, psychological jolts in a "normal" way. Often mental health issues result, sometimes decades after the "bad experiences." As a 2015 study found, a U.S. veteran commits suicide at the rate of one an hour, every day. The average age of the veteran is 55.

The Lutheran Military Support Group (LMSG) has existed for three years. Fifteen WELS/ELS veterans are on the Board of Directors. Some 400 WELS/ELS congregations have joined our efforts. More than \$60,000 a year (2016, 2017, 2018) has been "granted" by LMSG from your generous donations; these monies support and expand Synod programs. We also have a veteran resource website (lutheranmilitary.org) and are found on Facebook and Instagram.

During early November, LMSG is sponsoring an "Ammo Can" collection so we can look into adding things like support to mental health programs in congregations for those who suffer from trauma. We intend to soon complete a small, religious handbook for WELS/ELS military members when they join up. We also hope to continue to provide stipends to WELS/ELS Seminary students as well as other needy programs for vets and families.

Many thanks to all of you who have been so generous in supporting LMSG with your prayers, offerings and encouragement.

Erhard P. Opsahl, LMSG President

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