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By ROBERT PIERCE • Daily Leader

President Woodrow Wilson first proclaimed an Armistice Day for November 11, 1919.

Congress passed a concurrent resolution seven years later on June 4, 1926, requesting the President issue another proclamation to observe Nov. 11 with appropriate ceremonies.

An act approved May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday; “a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as ‘Armistice Day.’”

In 1953, Al King had the idea to celebrate all veterans, not just those who served in World War I. So he began his campaign to turn Armistice Day into “All” Veterans Day.

King was an Emporia shoe store owner actively involved with the American War Dads during World War II.

King had promoted his notion so much that the Emporia Chamber of Commerce decided to get involved. With the help of then-U.S. Rep. Ed Rees, also from Emporia, a bill for the holiday was pushed through Congress. President Dwight Eisenhower signed it into law on May 26, 1954.

Congress amended this act on Nov. 8, 1954, by replacing “Armistice”

with Veterans and it has been known as Veterans Day since.

This year, many schools, churches and organizations throughout the area will celebrate Veterans Day.

One of those organizations is Liberal's American Legion post, which will present a special program Tuesday afternoon.

Legion members finalized plans for the event Thursday at their monthly meeting.

Part of the program will include the unveiling of the addition of Liberal's Jose Marin Dominquez Jr.'s name inscribed on the Veterans Memorial Stone in front of the Seward County Courthouse.

Dominquez died in the Iraq war.

Mayor Joe Denoyer will do the main part of the program, according to Legion Commander Al Orr, who said a gold star flag will be presented to Marin's mother.

"I'm going to present the flag to them and do a short deal before I present the flag," he said.

Legion member Howard Dunn is getting a Fallen Soldier memorial which features a rifle in the ground and a helmet on top. He said the memorial was created in Garden City for the American Legion.

"It goes around all over Western Kansas, and they put it in businesses like the banks," he said. "They've got a little mail box on there. They've got things where you can make donations to the soldiers or their families."

Veterans who served in the military and are still serving citizens in the public sector will also be honored.

Orr will read the names of local veterans, and a single balloon will be released as each name is read.

Also featured in the Liberal program will be a 4-foot cross with a wreath, along with a 21-gun salute, posting of the colors and a prayer by the Rev. Dee Estes of Trinity Faith Church.

A gold star flag will also be presented to the Marin family.

Prior to the Legion service at 3 p.m., the organization will provide a ham and bean feed from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. to show off the remodeling of the Post Home at 25 W. Third.

The ham and beans will be a free will offering, and desserts will be available for purchase.

Plains and Kismet elementary schools will host their annual Veterans Day programs on Tuesday.

Plains Principal Kyle Griffitts said his school's program will start with the posting of the colors.

"We usually have about 50 to 60 veterans in attendance – people from the community or people related to students that are going to school here," he said. "Jennifer Stanfield is the music teacher who kind of gets it together. She will have each grade come up and do a song."

Griffitts said at the end of the program, the entire elementary will perform a song.

“I usually recognize all of the veterans that are here for that day,”

he said. “We recognize the spouses of deceased veterans as well.

After the program, we invite the veterans to go to the classrooms and talk about their experiences. Teachers and kids really like that.”

Griffitts said for many who work at the Plains school, the Veterans Day program is the highlight of the school year.

“Just to see the community involvement, to see the lessons that are learned for the students and seeing how we are to be respectful and to honor and never forget what our veterans have done,” he said.

Griffitts said K-5 students will perform in the program, and there will be many people from the community coming as well.

The Plains program will take place at 9 a.m. Tuesday in the school’s multipurpose room. The Kismet Elementary program will commence at 1:30 p.m. in the school’s gym. The public is invited.

The Turpin High School student council would also like to invite all area veterans to a breakfast and program in their honor on Tuesday.

The breakfast will be at 8 a.m. at the Turpin school cafeteria. A Veterans Day program will take place at 9 a.m. in honor of those that have served and that are presently serving the country.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For schools, churches and other organizations who are hosting Veterans Day programs, please send pictures to robert@hpleader.com . If possible, please send pictures Tuesday night.

Watch next week's Daily Leader issues for pics of programs.

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