

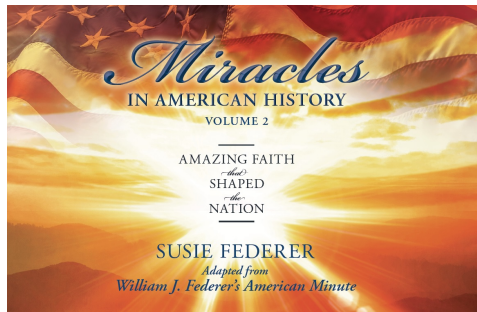
American Minute with Bill Federer
Veterans Day "The Soldier is required to practice the
greatest act of religious training--Sacrifice" -General
Douglas MacArthur

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The 11th hour of the 11TH
DAY OF THE 11TH
MONTH of 1918, World
War One ended ...

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Though the “cease-fire,” called “Armistice,” was signed at 5:00am in the morning, it specified that 11:00am would be the time the actual fighting would cease. Tragically, in the intervening six hours of fighting, an additional 11,000 more were killed.

Following World War One
-- “the war to end all wars”
-- President Warren
Harding, in 1921, had the
remains of an unknown
soldier killed in France

brought to Arlington Cemetery to be buried in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Inscribed on the Tomb are the words: "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God."

On October 4, 1924, President Calvin Coolidge stated at the dedication of the Monument to the American Expeditionary Forces: "They did not

regard it as a national or personal opportunity for gain or fame or glory, but as a call to sacrifice for the support of humane principles and spiritual ideals ...

If anyone doubts the sacrifices which they have been willing to make in behalf of ... what they believe to be the welfare of other nations, let them gaze upon this monument and other like memorials that have been reared in every quarter of our broad land.

Let them look upon the representative gatherings of our VETERANS, and let them remember that America has dedicated itself to the service of God and man."

In 1926, President Coolidge began issuing proclamations honoring veterans every year, and in 1938 the day became a legal holiday.

In 1954, the name "Armistice Day" was changed to "Veterans Day" to honor all soldiers of all American wars. Four million Americans served in World War One. Sixteen million served in World War Two.



Nearly seven million served in the Korean War. Nearly nine million served in the Vietnam War.

From the First Gulf War till the present, 7.4 million men and women served.

While Veterans Day honored the living soldiers, Memorial Day honored those who died while serving.

General Douglas MacArthur told West Point cadets, May 1962: "The soldier, above all other men, is required to practice the greatest act of religious training -- sacrifice. In battle and in the face of danger and death, he discloses those Divine attributes which his Maker gave when He created man in His own image ...

No physical courage and no brute instinct can take the place of Divine help which alone can sustain him. However horrible the incidents of war may be, the soldier who is called upon to offer and to give his life for his country is the noblest development of mankind."

In 1958, President Eisenhower placed a soldier in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier from World War Two, and another soldier from the Korean War.

In 1968, Lyndon Johnson signed The Uniform Holiday Bill which moved Veterans Day to Monday to create a three day weekend for federal employees.

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan placed a soldier from the Vietnam War in the Tomb of the Unknown.

DNA test later identified the body as that of pilot Michael Blassie, who was flying an A-37B Dragonfly when he was shot down near An Loc, South Vietnam.

In 1998, the body of Michael Blassie was reburied at

Jefferson Memorial Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri. Michael Blassie was a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1970, and before that, a graduate of St. Louis University High School in 1966, the same High School that the author of this article graduated from ten years after him.

On Veterans Day, November 11, 1921, President Warren G. Harding stated: "On the threshold of eternity, many a soldier, I can well believe, wondered how his ebbing blood would color the stream of human life, flowing on after his sacrifice ...

Standing today on hallowed ground ... it is fitting to say that his sacrifice, and that of the millions dead, shall not be in vain ...

I can sense the prayers of our people, of all peoples, that this Armistice Day shall mark the beginning of a new and lasting era of peace on earth, good will among men.

Let me join in that prayer. 'Our Father who are in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.'"

U.S. Army veteran Charles Michael Province wrote the poem:

"It is the Soldier, not the minister
Who has given us freedom of religion.
It is the Soldier, not the reporter
Who has given us freedom of the press.
It is the Soldier, not the poet
Who has given us freedom of speech.
It is the Soldier, not the campus organizer
Who has given us freedom to protest.

It is the Soldier, not the lawyer
Who has given us the right to a fair trial.
It is the Soldier, not the politician
Who has given us the right to vote.
It is the Soldier who salutes the flag,
Who serves beneath the flag,
And whose coffin is draped by the flag,
Who allows the protester to burn the flag.”

The American Legion is the nation’s largest wartime veterans service organization. It was formed in 1919 with the help of four chaplains: Charles Brent, who was Roman Catholic; Francis Kelly, who was an Episcopalian; and two Baptists, Thomas Wiles and John Inzer.

Baptist Chaplain John Inzer spoke at The American Legion’s founding meeting in St. Louis in 1919:
“Gentlemen ... if you can only think about this Legion ... as the jewel of the ages ... I cannot say anything greater than this: I believe God raised up America for this great hour. I can say that the strong young man of the time is to be The American Legion in this country and in the world.”

The Preamble to the American Legion Constitution begins “For God and Country.”

In 1954, The American Legion sponsored a Back-to-God program. President Dwight Eisenhower addressed them in a broadcast from the White House, February 7, 1954: "As a former soldier, I am delighted that our VETERANS are sponsoring a movement to increase our awareness of God in our daily lives.

In battle, they learned a great truth-that there are no atheists in the foxholes. They know that in time of test and trial, we instinctively turn to God for new courage and peace of mind. All the history of America bears

witness to this truth. Out of faith in God, and through faith in themselves as His children, our forefathers designed and built this Republic ..."

Eisenhower continued: "We remember the picture of the Father of our Country, on his knees at Valley Forge seeking divine guidance in the cold gloom of a bitter winter. Thus Washington gained strength to lead to independence a nation dedicated to the belief that each of us is divinely endowed with indestructible rights.

We remember, too, that three-fourths of a century later, on the battle-torn field of Gettysburg, and in the silence of many a wartime night, Abraham Lincoln recognized that only under God could this Nation win a new birth of freedom ..."

Eisenhower concluded: "Today as then, there is need for positive acts of renewed recognition that faith is our surest strength, our greatest resource.

This 'Back to God' movement is such a positive act. As we take part in it, I hope that we shall prize this thought:

Whatever our individual church, whatever our personal creed, our common faith in God is a common bond among us. In our fundamental faith, we are all one. Together we thank the Power that has made and preserved us a nation. By the millions, we speak prayers, we sing hymns -- and no matter what their words may be, their spirit is the same -- 'In God is our trust.'"

The next year, on February 20, 1955, President Dwight Eisenhower again addressed the American Legion Back-To-God Program: "The Founding Fathers ... recognizing God as the author of individual rights, declared that the purpose of Government is to secure those rights ...

In many lands the State claims to be the author of human rights ... If the State gives rights, it can - and inevitably will - take away those rights. Without God, there could be no American form of Government, nor an American way of life.

Recognition of the Supreme Being is the first-the most basic-expression of Americanism.”

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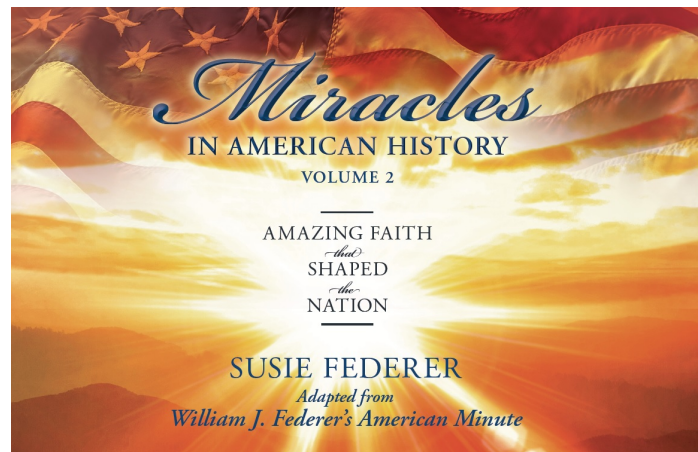
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