

# Armed Forces Day 2025

## May 17, 2025

Armed Forces Day in 2025 will be celebrated on Saturday, May 17. This day honors the men and women serving in the United States Armed Forces and is part of Armed Forces Week, which begins the second Saturday of May

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Learn about the origins, significance, and celebrations of Armed Forces Day, a holiday to honor the U.S. military. Find out when it is, how to observe it, and some fun facts about military uniforms and history.

- Armed Forces Day is a special holiday for people all over the world to come together and thank the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. First conceived by President Harry S. Truman, the holiday was established in 1949.
- The creation of a single day celebration for all five branches of the United States military made sense due to its recent unification under the Department of Defense.
- Today, Armed Forces Day is celebrated on the third Saturday of every May, this year falling on May 17. Be sure to mark your calendar & support our military!

## History of Armed Forces Day

- The history of the United States Armed Forces spans over two centuries. The United States rapidly evolved from being a new nation fighting for independence against Great Britain between 1775 and 1783, to fighting in the landmark American Civil War from 1861 to 1865, to proving their valor and strength during World War II, and finally emerging as a world superpower towards the end of the 20th century. The U.S. armed forces comprise five branches of the military: the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard.
- The origin of the United States Army dates back to 1775 when the Continental Congress established the Continental Army, Continental Navy, and Continental Marines, commanded and led by General George Washington. This newly assembled military force fought the British during the American Revolutionary War with French soldiers by its side, leading to the Treaty of Paris and its independence. In 1789, the new Constitution delegated the president as the commander in chief of the military, with the authority to create laws, levy taxes, and declare war.
- Ever since its formation, the primary responsibility of the Army division of the Armed Forces is to fight battles on land and deploy the military for takeover. The United States Army Corps of Engineers mainly control the rivers of inland America. Following the war against the British Army, the U.S. Army was still relatively small and operating in peacetime. This changed in the 1940s when the Air Force became a completely separate unit outside of the Army Air Forces. In 1947, control of the U.S. Army switched over from the War Department to the Defense Department.
- The major wars that the U.S. Army participated in were the Indian Wars of the 1790s, the War of 1812, the American Civil War in 1861, the Spanish-American War of 1898, World Wars I and II in 1917 and 1941 respectively, the Korean War in 1950, and the Vietnam War in 1965. The U.S. military also took part in the Gulf War in 1991 and the war in Afghanistan.
- As of 2019, the Armed Forces of America fall under the command of the Department of Defense and the Coast Guard, which is authorized by the Department of Homeland Security.
- The President of the United States is the commander in chief and they exercise their authority through the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who supervises combat operations.

## TRADITIONS OF THE DAY

- Many events take place in cities across the U.S. to pay homage to those who serve on this day. These include military service displays for the public such as air shows, parades, open days, educational exhibits for children, and ‘Support the Troops’ motorbike rallies.
- Many people also go on picnics to celebrate this day with family members and friends who are veterans. There are several shopping discounts available on this day. Some throw military dress-up parties or war-movie marathons, with so many classics to choose from like “Saving Private Ryan,” “Black Hawk Down,” “Fury,” “Apocalypse Now,” “The Hurt Locker,” “Full Metal Jacket,” “American Sniper,” and “Unbroken.”

## BY THE NUMBERS

- **1950** – the year when America first celebrated Armed Forces Day.
- **30** – the number of American presidents who served in the U.S Army.
- **2** – the number of presidents who became five-star generals, Dwight Eisenhower and George Washington.
- **1** – the number of presidents awarded with the Medal of Honor — Theodore Roosevelt.
- **1,760** – the number of PlayStation 3s used to assemble a supercomputer for the Department of Defense.
- **30 million** – the acres of land owned by The Department of Defense.
- **800** – the number of military installations overseas by the United States.
- **1817** – the year when bell-bottom trousers were introduced for the Navy men.
- **4.6 billion** – the gallons of fuel used by the U.S. military annually.
- **95%** – the percentage reduction in the ripping noise on soldiers’ uniforms achieved by the U.S. Army by using a silent type of Velcro.

## Armed Forces Day FAQs

- **What day is National Armed Forces Day?** - National Armed Forces Day is every year on the third Saturday in May, falling on May 15 in 2021.
- **What are the seven branches of the U.S. military?** - The Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard make up the armed forces of the United States. The Army National Guard and the Air National Guard are reserve components of their services and operate, in part, under state authority.
- **What is the difference between Armed Forces Day and Veterans Day?**

## 5 FUN FACTS ABOUT MILITARY UNIFORMS YOU NEVER KNEW

1. The army changed from green to blue - Current army troops wear blue instead of green as a tribute to George Washington and the men in his first command.
2. The Marine Corps wanted their uniforms to be unique - The Marine Corps went to the extent of including the letters “USMC” when designing their uniforms so that other branches wouldn’t be able to use their design.
3. Stripes on Navy uniforms were a fashion choice - It turns out there’s no significance to the three pin-stripes on the Navy jumper other than the fact that a majority of the men were decorating their collars with various types of white stripes — so it became part of the uniform.
4. Sailors wear bell-bottoms for a reason - The wide-bottomed pants that sailors famously wear are constructed that way so that they can easily be folded up when performing duties that involve them getting their feet wet.
5. The flag patch is backwards on purpose - The American flag patch on military uniforms has the stars on the right and stripes on the left in order to give the effect that it's blowing in the breeze.

## Why Armed Forces Day is Important

1. The armed forces deserve our respect - Joining the US Armed Forces is an incredibly selfless act that deserves recognition. Soldiers and other military personnel risk their lives every day to keep citizens safe. This holiday is an opportunity for the average person to show support for that sacrifice.
2. It helps spread awareness and understanding - National Armed Forces Day is an opportunity to educate yourself or others. The holiday was originally designed to help citizens better understand the military and its role in our society. We can all do our part by spreading knowledge and understanding.
3. It is for all five branches of the military - The military is made up of five branches — the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard. This holiday is intended for members of all five of these branches. Originally it was meant to replace separate branch appreciation holidays, but these are also still celebrated today.

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