FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Veterans Plan Armistice Day Events in Cities Across the U.S. and in the U.K.

Veterans For Peace chapters across the United States and in the United Kingdom are gathering to celebrate the original Armistice Day. Fighting ceased in the "war to end all wars" on the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, ending World War I. The horror and senselessness of the Great War pushed the world to come together in realization that war is so horrible, we must end it now.

Never before had people witnessed such industrialized slaughter. Congress responded to a universal hope among Americans for no more wars by passing a resolution calling for "exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding … inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples." Later, Congress added that November 11th was to be "a day dedicated to the cause of world peace." On June 1, 1954, Congress changed the name of Armistice Day to Veterans Day.

However, history tells us that lessons about the futility of war had already been learned by those fighting on the frontlines, and an informal armistice declared four year prior. In the days leading up to December 24th, 1914, ordinary soldiers from opposing armies stopped fighting, and whole sectors of the Western Front fell silent. What we now call "The Christmas Truce", with soldiers spontaneously deciding to lay down their weapons. They emerged from the trenches, exchanging cigarettes and gifts, singing carols, burying their dead and, in some places, participating in impromptu football games. This extraordinary moment, when enemy combatants recognized each other's humanity and chose peace rather than war, was denounced and actively crushed by politicians and generals.

It took four more years and thirty million soldiers killed or wounded for global leaders to catch up to what these troops already knew on the battlefield. Millions of lives could have been saved and a whole continent spared enormous destruction if the world had listened. Veterans For Peace is celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Christmas Truce and call on our nation and the world, on November 11th, to restore the tradition of Armistice Day and to observe Veterans Day by following the example set by the Christmas Truce soldiers who rejected militarism and the glorification of war. We call on the nation to honor veterans and all those who have died in war by working for peace and the prevention of war. There is no better way to honor the dead than to protect the living from the fear, terror and morale deprivation of war.

Veterans For Peace was founded in 1985 and has approximately 5,000 members in 150 chapters located in every U.S. state and several countries. It is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) by the United Nations, and is the only national veterans' organization calling for the abolishment of war.

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