

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY NOVEMBER 11



Dedication of the West Virginia Veterans Memorial

The West Virginia Veterans Memorial was dedicated on November 11, 1995.

CSO: SS.8.1, ELA.8.1

Investigate the Document: (*The Caperton Years: 1993-1997*)

1. How many names were inscribed on the monument at the time that the Veterans Memorial was dedicated on November 11, 1995?
2. How many years did it take to complete the monument?
3. Governor Caperton made brief remarks at the Jefferson-Jackson Dinner later that evening about the monument. This event was highlighted by the keynote speaker, _____, who was the current Vice President of the United States.

Think Critically: What is the difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day? How can you, as a citizen, show your patriotism by observing Veterans Day? Veterans Day was originally known as Armistice Day due to the Congressional recognition of November 11, 1918 being the end of *this* “war to end all wars.”

- Leaders must be motivated more by purpose than power. They must develop a vision of hope for people, inspiring them to believe in themselves and their possibilities.

President Clinton again called Governor Caperton for assistance in October 1995, inviting him to participate in a Midwest Region Economic Conference in Columbus, Ohio.

"It is the third of a series of economic conferences around the country and will bring together a diverse group of business and community leaders from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, West Virginia, and Wisconsin," Clinton wrote in his invitation to Caperton. "This conference will highlight key issues affecting the Midwest economy and, among other things, will focus on what remains to be done to raise the living standards and increase security for middle-class Americans. Accordingly, the conference will consist of a series of small group discussions, followed by roundtable panels addressing the theme of 'making the economy work better for working people.' I hope you will be able to join us in Columbus for this important conference."

Caperton capitalized on the opportunity by talking about West Virginia's leadership in education technology and how education contributes to economic development.

Even though Caperton was focused on the future, he enjoyed opportunities to reflect on the past and, in the case of the West Virginia Veterans Memorial, a striking tribute to past sacrifices. The memorial's dedication on November 11, 1995, marked the completion of what had been a decade-long project to commemorate the military service of 429,616 West Virginians during the 20th century.

Begun in 1985 by then Governor Arch A. Moore Jr., the project had languished in the late 1980s until Caperton renewed efforts for it in 1990, when he funded its \$491,000 foundation. U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller was recruited as a fund-raising co-chairman for the project in 1992 and garnered private support, allowing work on the structure to move forward. The Legislature later dedicated some West Virginia Lottery video lottery proceeds to fund its final construction phase.

The memorial was described this way: "The \$2.8 million granite and limestone oval monument with reflecting pool is formed of two-story monoliths dedicated to each of the century's four major wars, and displays the names of West Virginia's identified war dead and missing within its sanctuary."

It was designed by Charleston sculptor Paul Joseph Mullins.

**VETERANS MEMORIAL DEDICATION
November 11, 1995**

To our distinguished guests, to Senator Rockefeller, to our Congressmen Bob Wise, Nick Joe Rahall and Alan Mollohan, to our men and women in uniform and their families, to our veterans, to my fellow West Virginians.



Governor Caperton and Senator Jay Rockefeller are among those honoring veterans at the dedication of the new Veterans Memorial Monument at the State Capitol.

Photo courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives

I am honored to share with each of you this special Veterans Day Ceremony when we dedicate this magnificent Veterans memorial. In front of this Capitol stands a statue of President Abraham Lincoln. No words could better express our thoughts and feelings today than those immortal words he spoke at the Gettysburg address:

“From these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from this earth.”

As Lincoln so eloquently said, it is the soldier above all who has paid the price for our peace and freedom. It is, thus, fitting that we in West Virginia, whose men and women have demonstrated such remarkable patriotism, should dedicate this monument as a memorial to the West Virginia soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifices.

As I looked at each individual name etched on the wall of the memorial, some 10,197 in total, I am reminded that the dedication, courage, patriotism of each of these men and women was born and nurtured in a very special West Virginia way — in our families and communities, in our places of worship, and in our schools.

From these West Virginia hills come a remarkable people.

Let us tell the nation this November 11 that West Virginia's 10,197 men and women who died for their country and West Virginia's veterans made a difference and we are deeply proud of them.

As we dedicate this monument, we will never forget the pain of loss. But in the darkness, we see light. Each veteran we honor today makes us proud to be a West Virginian, proud to be an American. Our nation faces many internal and international crises that will determine our history. Greed and hatred are still with us today, torching our vision of a free and powerful America. But we must continue our battle with a deeply rooted hope and belief in a brighter tomorrow.

Let us pray that we will never again have to erect more monuments in tribute to sacrificed loved ones. Let us hope the words of the Psalm will ring true: "The Lord will give strength unto his people. The Lord will give his people the blessing of peace."

This is the enduring message of our West Virginia Veterans Memorial.

The building of this prominent and meaningful tribute to veterans has been a difficult and demanding campaign, taking 10 years to complete with the painstaking responsibility of raising \$2.8 million.

Time does not permit me to honor all the men and women listed in your program who held the vision of this monument close and played a role in its completion. People such as West Virginia's very own P. Joseph Mullins, whose breath-taking design and artistry will forever stand tall on our Capitol grounds. People such as Jim Altmeyer, who first chaired this monumental effort. People such as our most esteemed Senator Robert C. Byrd, who could not be with us today.

I would like to thank all of you, but time does not allow. I would like to honor eight individuals with the highest honor* a governor can bestow for their efforts well above the call of duty — heroic efforts befitting this most heroic day.

Kyle Workman — For years, this Veterans Memorial has been Kyle's holy passion, as he himself describes it. Not only has he sacrificed much as a Vietnam veteran, but he has sacrificed many years of his life caring for this project. I know it is a personal victory for him to realize this day and we honor you, Kyle, for your unending commitment.

Patty Ferrell Workman — Patty not only is married to the Veterans Memorial's executive director, she has been married to this project, as well. She has never received an ounce of compensation for her archival work and general assistance.

**Editor's Note: The highest civilian honor the governor can give is a Distinguished West Virginian Award, which was presented to each.*

Herbert Jones — When this project began to falter, we knew it would take one of West Virginia's best to make it a success. Herbert Jones' leadership abilities are well known and equally important. He has a profound devotion to our veterans. This monument today reflects the pride and soul of Herbert Jones. Herbert, you have our deep appreciation.

Dick Northup — Dick was our fund drive co-chair and his diligence, focus and efficiency really were the glue that held this project together. We appreciate your hard work, Dick.

Senator Oshel Craigo — Oshel, too, carries a deep passion for this project and he is the sole reason for legislative funding. It was his idea to take this before the Legislature and it was his drive that resulted in subsequent support.

Alan Drescher and Rolfe Richmond — Alan has done legal work without charge for the project for 10 years and, likewise, Rolfe has been its unpaid accountant. Both of you gentlemen have given untold hours to keep the memorial fund on track and for that, we thank you.

Buck Harless — There are many contributors to the Veterans Memorial Fund, but by far the most generous is West Virginia's own Buck Harless. When good work is being done, Buck is always at the front.

That evening, West Virginia Democrats from around the state gathered in Charleston for the annual Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner, the major fund-raising event for the State Democratic Party. Vice President Al Gore was the keynote speaker.

Caperton made brief remarks, noting the Veterans Memorial dedication earlier in the day, the dedication of veterans who served, such as Gore, and the celebration of a state that has such goodness in the hearts of its people.

JEFFERSON-JACKSON DAY DINNER
November 11, 1995

Mr. Vice President, how wonderful it is to have you here in the great state of West Virginia, where Democrats do it the right way, right now; where you find the key to success in our churches, our homes, our communities, and in the hearts of our people; where West Virginia is great because West Virginia is good.

I wish you could have joined us earlier this morning in a moving tribute to our state's veterans, where we unveiled the most permanent, most prominent, and most meaningful tribute to veterans our state will ever know.