

ELMHURST HISTORY HIGHLIGHT: Veterans Day

In 1926, Congress passed a resolution calling for the observance of November 11th with appropriate ceremonies to mark the end of World War I. In 1938, it was declared a legal holiday to be known as Armistice Day, dedicated to the cause of world peace. In 1954, following World War II and the Korean Conflict, Congress changed the name of the holiday to Veterans Day in order to honor American veterans of all wars.

Over the years, November 11th has been observed with church services, memorial ceremonies, and school programs throughout Elmhurst. The American Legion dedicated a memorial site in the northwest corner of Wilder Park in 1927 to honor three Elmhurst residents who were killed in World War I: Ernest Timrott, Richard Hintz, and Kinsley Buck. This was the site of many Armistice Day observances.



Elmhurst Veterans Memorial in Wilder Park circa 2016, M2017.2.91

In September 1943, 2,000 people gathered for a parade of patriotic and civic organizations that stepped off at York and Grantley and traveled south to 119 N. York for the dedication of an Honor Roll that listed the names of 1045 Elmhurst men and women who were serving in the military. The Honor Roll was on a field of blue, under glass, topped off by a 14' x 12' carved eagle.

On November 11, 1987, Elmhurst dedicated Veterans Square on the northwest corner of York Street and Park Avenue. It consisted of a commemorative plaque and four flags. Although it was in a central location, there was not much space for people gathering, and there was a problem with noise from passing trains.

In 1989, the [American Legion T.H.B. Post 187](#) and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2048 approached the City of Elmhurst and the Elmhurst Park District with the idea to build a new Veterans Memorial in a more appropriate location—Wilder Park. The Elmhurst Veterans Memorial Committee was formed. In a cooperative effort, with assistance from the public, a fund-raising drive by the Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and volunteer services of both the architect and general contractor, a new memorial was dedicated in 1993. It is dedicated to *all U.S. veterans who have honorably served our country to defend our freedom and American way of life.*

By Nancy Wilson, Elmhurst History Museum Staff, Updated October 2021