

# Armed Forces Day

This year, Armed Forces Day in the UK is on Saturday 25th June. People celebrate the men and women who serve and have served in the armed forces.

## What Is Armed Forces Day?

Armed Forces Day (formerly Veterans Day) in the United Kingdom is a chance to show support for the men and women who make up the armed forces community, from currently serving troops to reserves and veterans. It is important to remember the difference between Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Day. Armed Forces Day generally focuses on celebrating living current and ex-servicemen and women, whereas Remembrance Day focuses on honouring the dead service men and women.



## The Origins of Armed Forces Day

Veterans Day was first observed in 2006 and the name was officially changed to Armed Forces Day in 2009. Following the first celebrations in 2007, Jim Devine, the Member of Parliament for Livingston, called for Armed Forces Day to be a public holiday because he thought we should recognise the outstanding contributions which veterans have made to the country. Although an official event, it is not yet a public holiday in the UK.

## When Does Armed Forces Day Take Place?

Each year, Armed Forces Day takes place on the last Saturday of June. The celebrations for Armed Forces Day begin on the Monday prior to this, when the Armed Forces Day flag is raised on buildings and famous landmarks around the country. The date of the last Saturday in June was chosen as it coincides with the date when the first Victoria Cross was awarded in London in 1857. The Victoria Cross is a special medal presented to armed forces personnel for outstanding bravery.

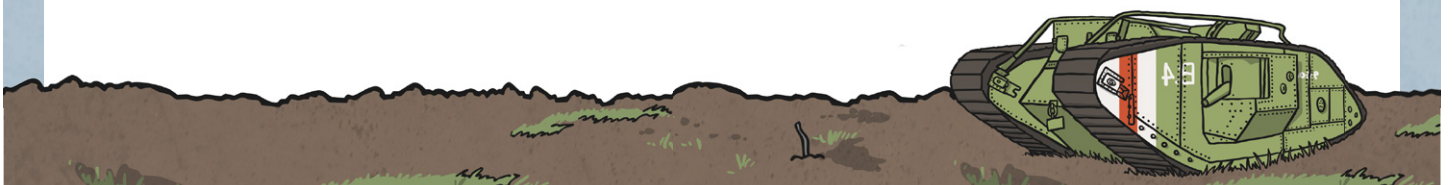


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## Where Does Armed Forces Day Take Place?

Each year, the Armed Forces Day celebrations take place in a host town in the UK. It is called the National Event. In addition to this, hundreds of smaller, celebratory events also take place in other locations across the country.

## How Is Armed Forces Day Celebrated?

There are many ways for people, communities and organisations across the country to show their support and get involved, from attending an event or throwing a party, to arranging a local event. An estimated 50,000 people attend the celebrations in the host location each year.

The day-long celebrations, at the National Event and other locations, include events such as:

- The presentation of medals to living ex-servicemen and women
- Military parades
- Activities and artistic performances staged on land, sea and air
- Drumhead services
- Fly-overs by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, the Red Arrows and Helicopter Formation
- Arena displays including the Royal Marine Commando Display Team and the Royal Marine Band
- Military displays representing all of the armed forces
- Firework displays

## Why Do We Celebrate Armed Forces Day?

Showing support for the armed forces provides a much valued morale boost for the troops and their families. Plans for a Veterans Day were announced in February 2006 by the then-Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, who said the aim was to ensure the contribution of veterans was never forgotten. You can find out more about what they are doing at home and around the world by visiting the official sites of the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force.

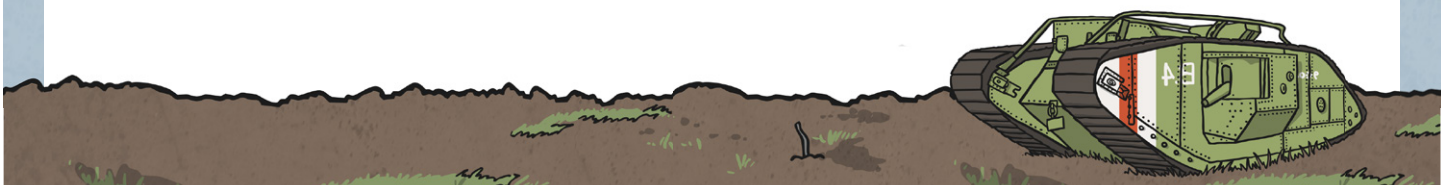


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## Who Are the Armed Forces?

The UK Armed Forces defend the UK and its interests. They are busy working around the world, promoting peace, delivering aid, tackling drug smugglers, providing security and fighting terrorism.

The Armed Forces consists of the following departments:



### Royal Army

The British Army is the main land warfare force of the United Kingdom. Throughout its history, the British Army has seen action in a number of major wars involving the world's great powers, including the Seven Years' War, the Napoleonic Wars, the Crimean War, the First World War and Second World War.



### Royal Navy

The Royal Navy is the United Kingdom's principal naval warfare force. The modern Royal Navy traces its origins to the early 16th century, making it the oldest of the UK's armed services.



### Royal Marines

The Royal Marines are highly specialised and adaptable. The Royal Marines are trained for rapid deployment worldwide and capable of dealing with a wide range of threats.



### Royal Air Force

The Royal Air Force is the United Kingdom's air-based warfare force. Formed towards the end of the First World War, it is the oldest air force in the world. Since its formation, the RAF has taken a significant role in British military history, in particular, playing a large part in the Second World War, where it fought its most famous campaign, the Battle of Britain.



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### **Reservists**

Reservists give up their spare time to serve in the reserve forces, balancing their civilian life with a military career to ensure that should their country require them, they would be ready to serve.

The reserve forces make up approximately one sixth of our armed forces personnel and as such, are integral to protecting the nation's security at home and overseas.



### **Veterans**

A veteran is anyone who has served in the HM Armed Forces at any time (including National Service and reserve forces). Armed Forces Day celebrates their continued role within the military community.



### **Cadets**

The Cadet Forces (Sea Cadets, Army Cadets, Air Cadets and the Combined Cadet Force) currently support over 130,000 young people in more than 3,000 locations across the UK. Cadets learn life and career building skills, as well as gaining vocational qualifications.



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# Armed Forces Day Questions

1. What was the original name of Armed Forces Day?

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2. What is the purpose of Armed Forces Day?

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3. How do we know that MPs believe Armed Forces Day is so important?

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4. How is Armed Forces Day different to Remembrance Day?

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5. Why is the date of Armed Forces Day significant?

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6. What is the main difference between each of the Armed Forces?

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7. Why are the reservists so important?

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8. What evidence tells us that becoming a cadet would be very fulfilling?

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# Armed Forces Day Answers

1. What was the original name of Armed Forces Day?

**Veterans Day.**

2. What is the purpose of Armed Forces Day?

**To show support for the men and women who make up the armed forces community, from currently serving troops to reserves and veterans.**

3. How do we know that MPs believe Armed Forces Day is so important?

**Due to the fact that on 25th June 2007, Jim Devine, the Member of Parliament for Livingston, called for Armed Forces Day to be a public holiday, because he believed that we should recognise the outstanding contribution that veterans have made to the country.**

4. How is Armed Forces Day different to Remembrance Day?

**Armed Forces Day generally focuses on celebrating living current and ex-servicemen and women, whereas Remembrance Day focuses on honouring the dead service men and women.**

5. Why is the date of Armed Forces Day significant?

**Due to the fact that it coincides with the date when the first Victoria Cross was awarded in London in 1857.**

6. What is the main difference between each of the Armed Forces?

**Where they are based – land, sea or air.**

7. Why are the reservists so important?

**The Reserve Forces make up approximately one sixth of our armed forces personnel and as such, are integral to protecting the nation's security at home and overseas.**

8. What evidence tells us that becoming a cadet would be very fulfilling?

**Cadets learn life and career building skills as well as gaining vocational qualifications. Also it is clearly popular because over 130,000 young people in more than 3,000 locations across the UK are involved.**