



In Brief: Armed Forces Day 2012

Standard Note: SN06352
Last updated: 15 June 2012
Author: Louisa Brooke-Holland
Section: International Affairs and Defence

The city of Plymouth hosts the national event to mark Armed Forces Day on Saturday 30 June 2012. The Day is an annual event to raise awareness of and celebrate the Armed Forces. Local authorities and organisations are organising their own events around the country on the same day.

The Armed Forces Day [website](#) says the purpose of the Day is two-fold:

Firstly, to raise public awareness of the contribution made to our country by those who serve and have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces, Secondly, it gives the nation an opportunity to Show Your Support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community: from currently serving troops to Service families and from veterans to cadets.

Armed Forces Day was introduced by the previous government in response to a recommendation by [The Report of Inquiry into National Recognition of our Armed Forces](#), published in May 2008. It expressed support for an "Armed Forces and Veterans Day" to incorporate the annual Veterans Day. The Report recommended it be held at the end of June on a Saturday to enable school children and most working adults to attend. The report said the aim of the day "should be to provide a focus for media-directed initiatives on Defence and Service issues, and an occasion for scheduling public events involving the Forces."

The Government declared its support and announced plans to hold the first British Armed Forces and Veterans' Day on 27 June 2009 in October 2008 in [The Government's Response to the Report of Inquiry into National Recognition of our Armed Forces](#).

Kevan Jones, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence, announced the selection of Chatham Historic Dockyard as the location for the main event in January 2009. He said: "The intent is to provide an occasion during which the whole nation has the opportunity to show its appreciation for the contribution made to society by all those who serve and have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces."

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties and is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. It should not be relied upon as being up to date; the law or policies may have changed since it was last updated; and it should not be relied upon as legal or professional advice or as a substitute for it. A suitably qualified professional should be consulted if specific advice or information is required. This information is provided subject to [our general terms and conditions](#) which are available online or may be provided on request in hard copy. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing with Members and their staff, but not with the general public.

Mr Jones explained that the title for the event – Armed Forces Day – was chosen “to reflect the wider armed forces family of serving personnel (both regular and reserve), veterans and the cadet forces.”¹

The choice of Plymouth as the host city for Armed Forces Day 2012 was announced by the Minister for the Armed Forces, Nick Harvey MP, in a [speech](#) on Armed Forces Day in 2011. He said: “the warmth and hospitality the city has shown our Armed Forces, our veterans, cadets, and their families over the years, has been outstanding, and truly demonstrates the historic link between the military, the city, and the nation.”

Plymouth is holding events throughout the week preceding 30 June. On the day itself, troops from all three services, including military bands and veterans, will parade through the city, finishing on Plymouth Hoe for a drumhead service. There will be a steam past of Royal Navy vessels on Plymouth Sound and an Air Show including the Red Arrows. More information on planned events in the city is available on the [Visit Plymouth website](#).

Cardiff hosted the 2010 celebration and Edinburgh hosted the 2011 event. Armed Forces Day will be held on 29 June 2013.

Local authorities and smaller organisations across the country are holding events to mark the Day. The Armed Forces Day [website](#) contains a list. It also provides resources and advice for people wishing to organise and promote an event.

Armed Forces Day replaces Veterans Day. Veterans Day was introduced by the previous government in February 2006 and held for the first time in June 2006.²

A number of MPs have signed Early Day Motion 190, sponsored by Bob Ainsworth MP and tabled on 13 June 2012:

That this House recognises the outstanding contribution to our country made by serving personnel, reservists and veterans; notes their sacrifices in the name of national security; applauds the unparalleled professionalism, dedication and bravery of our armed forces and the vital role played by their supportive families; further recognises the importance of Armed Forces Day as a moment to remember and give thanks, as well as celebrate achievements and demonstrate united backing, for our armed forces; and commits to honour the service community by pledging support and assistance both on the frontline and at home.³

¹ HC Deb 22 January 2009 c40WS

² HC Deb 27 February 2006 c2W

³ EDM 190, 13 June 2012 session 2012-13