



Compassion Ranch – Personal Leadership - Patriotism in Action – Veterans Day Founding Education

Dr. Busbin/Blake

Curriculum Committee for Alabama Social Studies

[DRAFT improved February 10, 2:40 p.m.](#)

To you and your colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to make recommendations and requests we believe will serve students and get us from D+ to A+ on teaching positive national history that happened in Alabama, *America's Veterans Day Started in Alabama* in 1947.



After WW II, veteran and former student Raymond Weeks petitioned Gen. Dwight Eisenhower at the Pentagon to establish National Veterans Day and to support the first observance in Birmingham, Alabama November 11, 1947. The national movement began and expanded, and President Eisenhower signed the holiday into national law in 1954 for annual commemoration.

A group of concerned veterans came to me 10+ years ago asking for help because they perceived only an estimated 2% of Alabamians knew the national history Veterans Day started here. They felt most people around Birmingham had at least heard of the parade or seen stories on television, yet the depth of an inspiring story was largely lost on all but a few.

In 2012, we designed a poster, updated the book [Patriotism in Action](#), obtained video from the White House of President Reagan honoring Mr. Weeks of Alabama on national television, wrote proposals to the Governor of Alabama, Mayor of Birmingham, US Senate, and the State Superintendent of Education. All approved and received posters.

[This history is positive for student development and character traits as well as for Alabama's brand and tourism, yet it has been largely overlooked in most schools for 75+ years. Educational leaders can make a few simple additions to standards and traditions.](#)

America's Veterans Day Started in Alabama in 1947

1. **Veterans Day programs:** state in school events the holiday started in AL (you may use our donated card or the content with the suggested 7 Points).
2. **November 1-10:** use the mandated 10 minutes per day for character traits to teach 5 of the 25 character traits illuminated by the state and national history of starting and sustaining America's Veterans Day--*patriotism, courage, perseverance, citizenship, and loyalty*. They can internalize better their vision or desired results with "courage" and "patriotism" by writing a sentence or more of their best-selves fulfilling the traits. Regular review of vision and goals to develop can boost internalization. Patriotism in Action provides short lessons on the five traits plus five more related to Veterans Day--Peace, Freedom, Trust, Honor, Leadership (free online www.PatriotismInAction.us).
3. **In 4th grade or your choice for Alabama history**, teach students the who-when-where-why Veterans Day began in Alabama and spread throughout the nation. Please review www.VeteransDayFoundingEducation.us to see proof from the White House, US Senate, Patriotism in Action, and more, plus teaching materials you may like – card, poster, book....
4. **Pledge of Allegiance** – teach the words and the meaning of the Pledge early in school. You may use our complimentary card stating the Pledge and meaning teaching *Patriotism* and fulfill the 1995 mandate to teach character and include the Pledge.
5. **Riderless Horse** – we love to celebrate the brave and victory though there are sacrifices. Some warriors die and "will not ride again." Show students a riderless horse aka caparisoned horse with the empty saddle, boots backwards, and the soldier (cap walker) leading the horse in memory of our honored warrior. Hank the Tank is a cap horse from Arlington National Cemetery where served the funeral of General Colin Powell. He retired to Central Alabama with Compassion Ranch, the first time Alabama has received a retired MWE (military working equine) from the Old Guard at Arlington. Hank was the first horse from Arlington to walk in the National Veterans Day Parade, 2023. We produced a card about Hank the Tank and the Pledge of Allegiance as resources to give to parade observers and other students.

We have official recognition and have made good progress. Now, we need to ensure sustainability with Alabama education setting a standard to ensure teachers and students know this history. Thank you.

Dr. David Dyson

On behalf of

- ☆ Patriotism in Action (Veterans Day history, character trait *Patriotism*, riderless horses...)
- ☆ Life Leaders Institute (planning, character traits *Courage, Perseverance*...)
- ☆ Compassion Ranch (care of animals, character traits *Compassion, Cooperation*...)
- ☆ National Veterans Day (historian for founding education and character traits...)

Advising and supporting:

Major Steve Vance, Patriotism in Action and riderless horse volunteer

Mr. Mark Ryan, President, National Veterans Day in Birmingham

Mrs. Barbara Weeks Minor, daughter of Raymond Weeks

P.S. We highlight next a few resources we created you may use or advise how to improve

Poster

In the 75th anniversary year, the updated poster was framed and displayed statewide in 60+ Veteran Service Offices. Also, numerous schools and veteran organizations. We provide the most recent design online for your use and we can print for \$1+.



America's Veterans Day Started In Alabama In 1947



November 11, 1946: General Dwight D. Eisenhower receives a program announcing *National Veterans Day 1947* to be presented in Birmingham and directed by Raymond Weeks



Patriotism in Action book cover: President Ronald Reagan honored Raymond Weeks with the Presidential Citizens Medal on national TV in 1982 as the "driving force" for establishing America's Veterans Day.

U.S. history: Birmingham, Alabama hosted the first national celebration honoring all veterans in 1947 and started America's National Veteran Award in 1954, the year President Eisenhower signed Veterans Day into law as a federal holiday. The U.S. Senate passed a resolution proposed by Patriotism In Action in 2012 recognizing Birmingham as "home to the first and longest running celebration of Veterans Day."

Alabama: a national leader organizing Veterans Day events and educational resources to honor veterans, celebrate freedom of liberty and rights, and teach character traits to build good citizenship.

Character traits and values to teach, learn, and use related to the national movement for Veterans Day

**Patriotism - Courage - Perseverance - Loyalty - Citizenship
Freedom - Peace - Honor - Trust - Leadership**



VeteransDayFoundingEducation.us • PatriotismInAction.us • NationalVeteransDay.org



Pledge of Allegiance Card

This is our first publication of the Pledge to give to students at our ranch programs. If you see changes needed to make this better for use in schools, please advise.

The U.S. Pledge of Allegiance



Boy at Veterans Day
Parade Birmingham

Our Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy. The American Legion and Daughters of the American Revolution recommended changes in the 1920s, and the Pledge has been revised with the last change coming on Flag Day 1954 when Congress passed legislation adding the words "under God." President Eisenhower signed the Pledge and Veterans Day into law in 1954.



In Daddy's Honor



Patriotism in Action
www.PatriotismInAction.us



Meaning of our Pledge

The Pledge of Allegiance has 31 words in 10 phrases.

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE: I, you, we promise to serve our country loyally.

TO THE FLAG: our country's symbol of freedom recognized around the world.

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: 50 independent states joined together through a constitution.

AND TO THE REPUBLIC: a country led by representatives chosen by the people.

FOR WHICH IT STANDS: a defender of human rights and fairness for all.

ONE NATION: a single nation for millions of people.

UNDER GOD: affirmation our individual rights and values come from a source higher than our government and should be protected.

INDIVISIBLE: our country must not divide into parts, focusing on common ground and staying together even in disagreements.

WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE: freedom to live one's life while honoring our laws and be treated fairly.

FOR ALL: you and me, for every citizen in our country!

★ Dr. David Dyson & Col. (Ret) Bob Barefield, Patriotism in Action, December 17, 2023 ★

U.S. Senate resolution restoring Alabama's Historical Distinction for starting National Veterans Day

112th CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 591

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding Raymond Weeks
and his efforts in the establishment of Veterans Day.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 13, 2012

MR. SESSIONS (for himself and MR. SHELBY) submitted the following resolution;
which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding Raymond Weeks and his efforts in the establishment of Veterans Day.

Whereas November 11, 2012, is the 65th anniversary of National Veterans Day in Birmingham, Alabama; Whereas the National Veterans Day in Birmingham is the longest running celebration of Veterans Day in the Nation;

Whereas, on November 11, 1946, World War II veteran Raymond Weeks presented General Eisenhower a program design proposing to replace Armistice Day with a National Veterans Day in 1947;

Whereas the very first Veterans Day celebration was held in Birmingham by the National Veterans Day Organization in 1947;

Whereas President Eisenhower signed into law on June 1, 1954, the Act proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day (Public Law 380; 83rd Congress);

Whereas in 1954, the National Veterans Day Volunteer Organization, started by Raymond Weeks, expanded to organize a multi-day celebration including, but not limited to, a Veterans Day Parade, a World Peace Luncheon, and presentation during the National Veterans Award Dinner of the National Veterans Award;

Whereas these three events have been held every year since 1954;

Whereas the briefing for President Reagan by Elizabeth Dole for the Presidential Citizens Medals cited Raymond Weeks as the 'Father of Veterans Day';

Whereas President Reagan recognized Raymond Weeks as the driving force behind Veterans Day while presenting Raymond Weeks with the Presidential Citizens Medal on November 11, 1982;

Whereas Raymond Weeks should be recognized for his push to honor the great men and women who have served their country with a special day of recognition; and

Whereas Birmingham, Alabama, should be recognized for its contributions to the institution of Veterans Day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate--

(1) recognizes Birmingham, Alabama, as the home to the first and longest running celebration of Veterans Day;

(2) recognizes Raymond Weeks for his pioneering efforts in the establishment of Veterans Day; and

(3) honors the sacrifices of, and pays tribute to, the men and women of the United States in uniform who risk life and limb for their country at home and overseas.

We pursued this resolution in 2012 because we learned the state of Kansas had gotten approval 10 years before from the US Congress that they founded Veterans Day. This was a partial truth because as the home state of President Eisenhower, he signed the documentation establishing the national law with the delegation from Kansas in 1954. Alabama was left out of the historical documents even though Birmingham started National Veterans Day in 1947, seven years before KS claimed they had the idea.

Tough truth for education: the main reason we lost the official

national distinction was because in history lessons it was not common knowledge where Veterans Day began, not even in Alabama. The national commemoration had the taproot in Alabama though no one seemed to have thought to add even a sentence to our history curriculum. We won the war on the event though was losing the war on educating about the event. We were losing a positive example of *patriotism, courage, and perseverance* for students plus the brand of Alabama was less than it could be, affecting tourism. The key to us making that situation successful and sustainable is through Alabama education so every teacher and student knows at least that it started here.

Hank the Tank

Military Working Equine from Arlington Retired to Alabama

Hank

Military Working Equine (MWE)
Arlington National Cemetery
Led by The Old Guard, US Army, Ft. Myer, VA

At the full military honors funeral for
Gen. Colin Powell (USA Retired),
Hank served as the caparisoned (riderless) horse,
with boots backward signifying
this warrior will not ride again.



A caparisoned (riderless) horse and soldier from the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) honor the late Gen. (ret.) Colin Powell during a special military funeral at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, in 2021. (U.S. Army photo by Elizabeth Fraser / Arlington National Cemetery)

Hank "The Tank"

US Army (Retired)

After 10 years of military service, Hank retired to
Compassion Ranch in Alabama directed by
Dr. David Dyson to inspire students and serve in
the Patriotism in Action program led by
Col. (Retired) Bob Barefield.



Hank the Tank is the first riderless horse from
The Old Guard and Arlington Cemetery
to walk in the Birmingham Parade.

www.CompassionRanch.org
www.PatriotismInAction.us

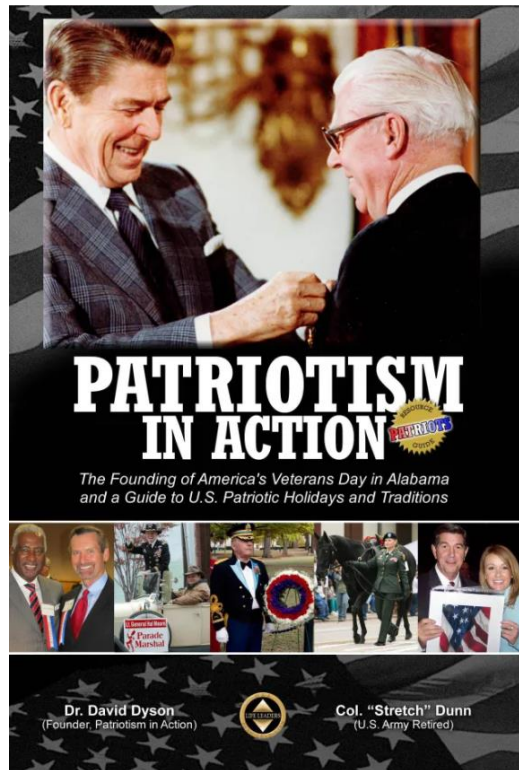
Riderless horses, boots backwards, warrior will not ride again, first in Alabama...



Alabama National Cemetery, funeral of Col. Bob Barefield

The only Book we know that tells how Veterans Day Started

(free online for teachers, history and patriotic guide, character traits ...)



"The character that takes command in moments of crucial choices has already been determined. It has been determined by a thousand other choices made earlier in seemingly unimportant moments. It has been determined by all those "little" choices of years past—by all those times when the voice of conscience was at war with the voice of temptation—whispering that 'it doesn't really matter.'"

It has been determined by all the day-to-day decisions made when life seemed easy and crises seemed far away—the decisions that, piece by piece, bit by bit, developed habits of discipline or of laziness; habits of self-sacrifice or self-indulgence; habits of duty and honor and integrity—or dishonor and shame."

—Ronald Reagan—
Former President of the United States

School Values Illuminated by Veterans Day Founding

Character education is growing in America. Most states have identified core values or character traits to teach in school. Increasing numbers of universities have honor codes. Many companies have added codes of honor or ethics. Students preparing for college or career should know of honor and values, learned through family, school, and community organizations.

The Alabama Legislature voted to adopt 25 character traits to teach in our schools, along with citing the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. The State of Alabama Character Education Program "focuses on development of character traits to complement goals" of the Alabama Course of Study. The Education Statute calls for "a comprehensive character education program for all grades to consist of not less than 10 minutes instruction per day focusing upon the students' development of [these] character traits." The Alabama Department of Education adopted these traits. We list them, placing first and bolding the five traits on the list supported best by the history of founding Veterans Day:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Patriotism | 14. Compassion |
| 2. Courage | 15. Tolerance |
| 3. Perseverance | 16. Diligence |
| 4. Loyalty | 17. Generosity |
| 5. Citizenship | 18. Punctuality |
| 6. Honesty | 19. Cleanliness |
| 7. Fairness | 20. Cheerfulness |
| 8. Respect for others | 21. School pride |
| 9. Kindness | 22. Respect for the environment |
| 10. Cooperation | 23. Patience |
| 11. Self-Respect | 24. Creativity |
| 12. Self-Control | 25. Sportsmanship |
| 13. Courtesy | |

Life Leaders proposes adding:

Freedom, Peace, Honor, Trust, Leadership

