

# 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 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. Veterans Day was first held in 2006 and the name was officially changed to Armed Forces Day in 2009. Although an official event, it is not 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 links 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 service men and women for bravery.

## 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.



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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 to ensure that the contribution of veterans is 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.

### **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.



#### **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.



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### 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 on 1st April 1918, 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.



### 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 a very important part in protecting the nation's security at home and overseas.



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# Armed Forces Day Questions

1. When was the first Armed Forces Day held?

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2. Is Armed Forces Day a national holiday?

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3. When does Armed Forces Day take place?

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4. What is the Victoria Cross and when was it first awarded?

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5. How do people show their support on Armed Forces Day?

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6. Why is Armed Forces Day celebrated?

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# Armed Forces Day Answers

1. When was the first Armed Forces Day held?

**Veterans Day was first held in 2006 and the name was officially changed to Armed Forces Day in 2009.**

2. Is Armed Forces Day a national holiday?

**Although an official event, it is not a public holiday in the UK.**

3. When does Armed Forces Day take place?

**Each year, Armed Forces Day takes place on the last Saturday of June.**

4. What is the Victoria Cross and when was it first awarded?

**The Victoria Cross is a special medal awarded to armed forces service men and women for bravery. It was first awarded in 1857.**

5. How do people show their support on Armed Forces Day?

**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 or arranging a local event.**

6. Why is Armed Forces Day celebrated?

**Showing support for the armed forces provides a much valued morale boost for the troops and their families and to ensure that the contribution of veterans is never forgotten.**