

REMEMBRANCE DAY ADDRESS
BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HOBART CENOTAPH, FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2022

I am honoured to have been invited to deliver this address on Remembrance Day, our day of National commemoration.

I begin by acknowledging all the veterans of all Australia's wars who are with us. I also pay my respects to all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who have contributed to the defence of Australia.

May I acknowledge that we are all saddened by the current significant conflict in Ukraine with impacts that threaten world peace and security. Our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine, all those displaced from their homes and country, and all those caught in the conflict.

I also recognize amongst us:

- Hon Elise Archer, representing Premier Jeremy Rockliff
- Senator Carol Brown, representing the Prime Minister the Honourable Anthony Albanese
- Senator Jonno Duniam, representing the Federal Leader of the Opposition
- Hon Guy Barnett
- Hon Madeleine Ogilvie
- Hon Craig Farrell
- Jen Butler, representing the Leader of the Opposition Rebecca White
- Cr Helen Burnet representing the Lord Mayor Anna Reynolds
- Cassy O'Connor
- attending Members of the Parliament of Tasmania and the Australian Senate
- US Consul General, Kathleen Lively
- and I warmly welcome Captain Kiefaber, Commander USS *Tripoli* and visiting sailors

This Remembrance Day is the anniversary of the Armistice that ended the four years of fighting between the Allied and Central powers in World War I. At 11 am on the 11th month of November 1918, the guns on the Western Front fell silent. The allied armies had driven the German invaders back, inflicting heavy defeats upon them over the preceding four months. Australian troops had fought courageously at Hamel, Amiens and Montbrehain in Northern France, and made significant contributions to bringing the war to an end on the Western Front.¹

As we see the USS *Tripoli* in port, we are reminded of the friendship between our two nations, partially a result of the first time that US and Australian forces fought together in the Battle of Hamel. On 4 July 1918, 1,000 US infantrymen were attached to the Australian Brigades that was instrumental in positioning the Allies for success in the subsequent months.²

The last engagement of Australian troops in the war was when the 2nd Division took Montbrehain, breaking through the Hindenburg Line and driving the enemy back. The 'line' was an 11 km defensive position with entwined trenches, machine gun posts, deep barbed wire ditches and thousands of German soldiers. The line was in fact seven separate lines, all of which had to be broken and seized, for the enemy to be defeated. 430 Australians lost their lives capturing Montbrehain.³

Across the world, at 11am on 11 November 1918, on the silence of the guns, people rejoiced and celebrated with school, fire station and church bells ringing.⁴ The Armistice marked the end of hostilities and paved the way for the unconditional surrender of the German Forces. The allied nations chose this day and time for the commemoration of their war dead.⁵

Let us reflect on the historical circumstances that led to this day of significance.

The 11th of November is universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the First World War. That conflict had mobilised over 70 million

¹ <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/first-world-war> accessed 10 Nov 22

² <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/ww1/where-australians-served/western-front/battle-of-hamel> accessed 11 Nov 22

³ <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E84335> accessed 10 Nov 22

⁴ <https://remembertoremember.com.au/blog/why-we-remember-on-11-November> accessed on 7 November 2022

⁵ <https://www.army.gov.au/our-heritage/traditions/remembrance-day> accessed 31 October 22

people and left between 9 and 13 million dead; as many as one third of these without a grave. For Australia, the First World War remains our costliest conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, more than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner.⁶ Over 2,400 Tasmanians died, including six Tasmanian Aboriginal men from Cape Barren Island.⁷

They all volunteered to serve. They were from different backgrounds. Many were immigrants. Most were young. This loss of life was tragic. They had given up everything. The many who survived and returned were damaged physically and/or psychologically in some way, their lives changed, broken.⁸ A huge toll on all our communities.

On the first anniversary of the Armistice in 1919, two minutes' silence was instituted as part of the main commemorative ceremony at the new cenotaph in London.

In 1920, the remains of an unknown soldier were interred in London, and in Paris. This added to the significance of the event, making it both a commemoration of the millions killed and a funeral service.

After the Second World War, the Australian and British governments changed the name of Armistice Day to Remembrance Day, in order that the Day might commemorate all war dead.

In Australia in 1993, the 75th anniversary year of the Armistice, an unknown Australian soldier was exhumed from a First World War military cemetery in France and was ceremonially entombed in our Australian War Memorial's Hall of Memory. The Unknown Soldier honours the memory of all those who laid down their lives for Australia.⁹ He was one of over 103,000 Australian soldiers who have died in conflicts since the Sudan in 1885.¹⁰

⁶ <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/first-world-war> accessed 25 February 22

⁷ https://www.centenaryofanzac.tas.gov.au/history/tasmanian_aboriginal_soldiers accessed 25 Feb 22

⁸ <https://165anzacs.org/background-world-war-1> citing Herring, P. (2016) World War I. Downloaded from http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/F/First%20World%20War.html

⁹ <https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/speeches/keating>, accessed 8 November 2022

¹⁰ https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/war_casualties accessed 9 November 2022

And, in 1997, then Governor-General, Sir William Deane, issued a proclamation formally declaring the 11th of November to be our Remembrance Day, to remember all of those men and women who died or suffered for Australia's cause, in all wars and armed conflicts.¹¹

As we reflect in silence, and wear the 'Flower of Remembrance', some of us remember individuals we once knew. Some will be thinking of loved family members; of friends; of fellow service people in the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Army or the Royal Australian Air Force. Some will be reflecting on the legacy of war and what it means to them.

I quote from *We Shall Keep the Faith* by Moina Michael ¹²

Oh! you who sleep in Flanders Fields,
Sleep sweet - to rise anew!
We caught the torch you threw
And holding high, we keep the Faith
With All who died.

For all of us, it is a time to remember, to value the living and hold onto hope and consider how we can work towards a better future, committed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The message of this Remembrance Day – as it has been every year, on this November 11, when the guns fell silent in 1918 at 11 am – is, that war should be the last resort.

We affirm our desire and commitment for conflicts in the international arena to be solved diplomatically and peacefully.

Thank you all for coming together to mark this important day. We remember the service and sacrifice of our service personnel in advancing the causes of freedom.

Lest We Forget.

¹¹ <https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/remembrance/tradition/>, accessed 7 November 2022

¹²