



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2018

Sunday 11 November, 2018

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP, Premier of Victoria

The Hon Matthew Guy MP, Leader of the Victorian Opposition

The Hon John Eren MP, Minister for Veterans

Mr Danny O'Brien, Shadow Minister for Veterans

The Hon Bruce Atkinson MLC, President of the Legislative Council

Dr Samantha Ratnam MLC, Leader of the Victorian Greens

Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield MP, Representing the Prime Minister and Federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Senator Kimberly Kitching, Representing the Leader of the Federal Opposition

Members of State and Federal Parliaments

The Right Hon the Lord Mayor Sally Capp, Lord Mayor City of Melbourne

The Hon Ted Baillieu, Former Premier and Chair, ANZAC Centenary Committee

Air Vice-Marshal Chris Spence AO (Retd), Chairman, and the **Trustees** of the Shrine of Remembrance

Lieutenant Colonel Laureen Grimes, Chair, Victorian Veterans Council

Dr Robert Webster OAM, State President of the RSL Victorian Branch

Senior Officers of the Australian Defence Force:

Major General David Coghlan AM

Commodore Greg Yorke, CSC, RANR

Air Commodore Glen Braz, CSC, DSM

Former and current service men and women

Members of the Consular Corps

Distinguished guests

And all who have gathered here today

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us today.

Exactly 100 years ago today, a war that saw the loss of more than 62,000 Australians – almost 20,000 Victorians amongst them – finally ended.

Despite its massive time and toll, the ending of the war was notified in briefest form to Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, the Governor-General of Australia, in a cablegram delivered just a few hundred metres from where we stand today, at Government House in Melbourne, the home of the Governor-General at that time.

It read: ‘Governor General Melbourne. Most urgent armistice signed 5 AM this morning.’

Shortly after, the Australian public was notified of the signing of the Armistice that would see hostilities cease between the Allies and Germany at 11 o’clock on the morning of the 11th day of the 11th month.

That would see the guns fall silent.

That would see silence after more than four years of the thunderous noise of continuous warfare. The noise that had ended the lives of so many, wounded so many more, and decimated families, communities and nations around the world.

As the silence fell on the Western Front, noisy jubilation erupted in the streets of Melbourne.

Confirmation of the Armistice was posted outside newspaper offices. Train and tram drivers passed on the news to commuters. Crowds poured into the city. The spirit was described as spontaneous and joyous. A mixture of exultation and relief.

Many waved flags, overjoyed that sons and brothers and sweethearts would be returning, and that the difficult conditions of wartime were coming to an end.

The next day was declared a public holiday. In Melbourne, a celebratory meeting was held at the Town Hall. Over the following days the revelry of the crowds continued.

However, profound feelings of pain and loss were also apparent, as Australians took stock of the heavy cost of four years of war.

Churches were packed for thanksgiving services. Large crowds gathered at a Memorial Service held on the steps of the Federal Parliament, located as it was then in Spring Street in our Parliament building.

The bitter-sweetness of the time was of course felt keenly by those who had lost loved ones, and by those who had served, or were still serving.

Corporal Roger Morgan, was a 21 year old clerk from Richmond, who in 1915 had sailed to the Western Front to serve with the First Australian Field Ambulance. Although wounded twice, he had survived his injuries. When told of the Armistice, at about noon on 11 November, 1918 he wrote in his diary:

'... It was hardly creditable ... one sits and ponders sadly of those pals who are gone to that 'home from which no wanderer returns'. It seems so strange that it should be, that one's dearest pals should fall and that ... I should still be here.'

Like Corporal Morgan, the public also 'pondered sadly' those who were gone.

As did another Australian soldier – later a journalist at *the Argus* – Edward Honey, who, leading up to the first anniversary of the Armistice, called for the day to be commemorated with silent reflection for 'Communion with the Glorious Dead who won us peace'.

It was. And so today, on the centenary of the Armistice, we gather for the 99th time to commemorate that day.

We reflect – with a brief silence – on that war, and on subsequent wars and battles and peace-keeping duties that have seen our Australian men and women leave the safety of our shores to serve for us.

We remember all those who have paid the ultimate price. We remember all those who have suffered and been injured. We remember the families, friends and communities who have experienced loss.

And we take time to remember those who are serving today. It is important that they know that they are not absent from our thoughts and our appreciation.

We do not forget them or those who have gone before.

Lest we forget.