

The Meaning of Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day (sometimes known informally as Poppy Day owing to the tradition of the remembrance poppy) is a memorial day observed in Commonwealth member states since the end of the First World War to remember the members of their armed forces who have died in the line of duty. Hostilities formally ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month (in 1918) which is the moment when a minutes silence is traditionally held in respect and reflection of those who gave their lives for our freedom. People throughout the Commonwealth wear paper poppies on Remembrance Day



The Last Casualty of WW1

The last person to die in WW1 was Henry Nicholas John Gunther, an American soldier. He was killed at 10:59 a.m., one minute before the Armistice was to take effect at 11 a.m. Gunther had recently been demoted, and was seeking to regain his rank just before the war ended. Gunther's squad approached a roadblock of two German machine guns in the village of Chaumont-devant-Damvillers. Gunther got up, against the orders of his sergeant and charged with his bayonet. The German soldiers, already aware of the Armistice that would take effect in one minute, tried to wave Gunther away. He kept going and fired a shot or two. When he got too close to the machine guns, he was shot in a short burst of automatic fire and killed instantly.

Remembrance Day 2018



On the Day in Dili

New Zealand Ambassador to Timor Leste, Vicki Poole invited all who wanted to honour and remember the fallen to attend at the New Zealand Embassy on Sunday 11th November. It was a subdued but very emotive occasion which included a minutes silence at the exact moment of 11am local time. As a fitting finish to the day, Ambassador Poole, called on all present to declare if family members were involved in WW1 and encouraged anyone to make comment and reflect, including other armed conflicts. United States Ambassador to Timor Leste, Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick noted the identity of the last person to die in the first world war on November 11th 1918. See the separate description herein of the last casualty.



The Poppy

'In Flanders Fields'

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
 Between the crosses, row on row,
 That mark our place; and in the sky
 The larks, still bravely singing, fly
 Scarce heard amid the guns below.
 We are the Dead. Short days ago
 We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
 Loved and were loved, and now we lie
 In Flanders fields.
 Take up our quarrel with the foe:
 To you from failing hands we throw
 The torch; be yours to hold it high.
 If ye break faith with us who die
 We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
 In Flanders fields.
 by John McCrae, May 1915



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