

## Remembrance Day.

On Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> November, at 11.00 o'clock in the morning, people in schools, offices, factories, shops, hotels, clubs, in the street, in fact everywhere, all stopped and observed a minute's silence in honour of fallen service men and women.

A lot of people gathered at Memorial Shrines and RSL Clubs all over Australia to hold wreath laying ceremonies.

Why??



A Wreath laying ceremony was held at the Kedron Wavell Services Club (Brisbane) and was attended by a large number of people who wished to show their respect to the fallen.

Back in 1918, at 11 am on the 11<sup>th</sup> November, the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years continuous warfare. WW1 was at an end. The allied armies had driven the German invaders back, having inflicted heavy defeats upon them over the preceding four months. In November the Germans called for an armistice (suspension of fighting) in order to secure a peace settlement. They accepted the allied terms of unconditional surrender.

The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month attained a special significance in the post-war years. The moment when hostilities ceased on the Western Front became universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the war. This first modern world conflict had brought about the mobilisation of over 70 million people and left between 9 and 13 million dead, perhaps as many as one-third of them with no known grave. The allied nations chose this day and time for the commemoration of their war dead.

On the first anniversary of the armistice, 11 November 1919, the two minutes' silence was instituted as part of the main commemorative ceremony at the new Cenotaph in London. The silence was proposed by an Australian journalist working in Fleet Street, Edward Honey. (Honey was born in St Kilda in 1885, went to Caulfield Grammar School and worked on [The Argus](#) newspaper before moving to London.) At about the same time, a South African statesman made a similar proposal to the British Cabinet, which endorsed it. King George V personally requested all the people of the British Empire to suspend normal activities for two minutes on the hour of the armistice "which stayed the world wide carnage of the four preceding years and marked the victory of Right and Freedom." The two minutes' silence was popularly adopted and it became a central feature of commemorations on Armistice Day.



On the second anniversary of the armistice, 11 November 1920, the commemoration was given added significance when it became a funeral, with the return of the remains of an Unknown Soldier from the battlefields of the Western Front. Unknown soldiers were interred with full military honours in Westminster Abbey in London and at the Arc de Triumph in Paris. The entombment in London attracted over one million people within a week to pay their respects at the Unknown Soldier's tomb. Most other allied nations adopted the tradition of entombing unknown soldiers over the following decade.

In Australia on the 75th anniversary of the armistice, 11 November 1993, Remembrance Day ceremonies again became the focus of national attention. On that day the remains of an unknown Australian soldier, exhumed from a First World War military cemetery in France, were ceremonially entombed in the Australian War Memorial. Remembrance Day ceremonies were conducted simultaneously in towns and cities all over the country, culminating at the moment of

burial at 11 am and coinciding with the traditional two minutes' silence. This ceremony, which touched a chord across the Australian nation, re-established Remembrance Day as a significant day of commemoration.



People who attended the ceremony at the Kedron Wavell RSL Sub Branch, gathered together in the Community Centre afterwards, for light refreshments and to tell each other tall tales.

Four years later, in November 1997, the Governor-General, Sir William Deane, issued a proclamation formally declaring 11 November Remembrance Day and urging all Australians to observe one minute's silence at 11 am on 11 November each year to remember those who died or suffered for Australia's cause in all wars and armed conflicts.

## **The Poppy.**

November is poppy month, the time of the year when by the wearing of a simple emblem, a red poppy, we salute the memory of those who sacrificed their health, their strength and in some cases their lives that we might live in a free country.

In the years immediately following the first World War, governments and the whole of society, had not accepted the responsibility for those incapacitated and bereft as a result of the war. In Australia and Britain unemployment accentuated the problem. Earl Haig, the British Commander-in-Chief, undertook the task of organising the British Legion (the equivalent of the RSL of Australia) as a means of coping with the problems of



hundreds and thousands of men and women who had served under him in battle and in the Nursing corps and support corps.

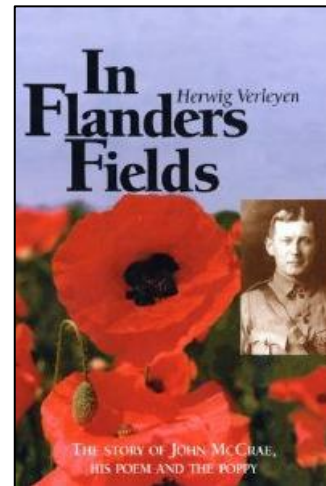
Then, in 1921, a group of widows of French ex-servicemen called on him at the British Legion Headquarters. They brought with them from France some poppies they had made, and suggested that they might be sold as a means of raising money to aid the distressed among those who were incapacitated as a result of the war.

The first poppies were sold on the streets of London on Armistice Day in 1921. The experiment was an immediate success as the poppy was a touching reminder of the battle fields of Flanders, where the small red flower grew in profusion. The Poppy Day sales were greatly assisted by the publication of a hauntingly beautiful poem written by John McCrae on the battlefields of Flanders.

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.



## **Anzac Day Dawn Service.**

Most people know about, and a lot have been to, an Anzac Day Dawn Service – but how did that start?

No-one really knows for sure, as there are two popular ‘stories’ about how the first Dawn Service came about. One concerns a Padre from Albany in WA, named Arthur Ernest White and the other concerns a Captain Harrington from Toowoomba.

Reverend White was a padre with the earliest ANZACs to leave Australia with the First AIF in November 1914. The convoy assembled at Albany’s King George Sound in WA and at 4 am on the morning of their departure, he conducted a service for all men. After the war, White gathered some 20 men at dawn on 25 April 1923 on Mt Clarence overlooking King George Sound and silently watched a wreath floating out to sea. He then quietly recited the words ‘As

the sun rises and goeth down we will remember them'. All were deeply moved and the news of the ceremony soon spread. White is quoted as saying that 'Albany was the last sight of land these ANZAC troops saw after leaving Australian shores and some of them never returned. We should hold a service (here) at the first light of dawn each ANZAC Day to commemorate them.'

In Toowoomba, back in 1919, at 4 am on the 25<sup>th</sup> April, Captain Harrington and a group of friends visited all known graves and memorials of men killed in action in World War I and placed flowers (not poppies) on the headstones. Afterwards they toasted their mates with a rum. In 1920 and 1921 these men followed a similar pattern but adjourned to Picnic Point at the top of the Great Dividing Range and toasted their mates until the first rays of dawn appeared. A bugler sounded the 'Last Post' and 'Reveille'.



Irrespective of who was the instigator, ANZAC Day Dawn Service has since become an integral part of commemorations on 25 April. There is no standard format for the Dawn Service, but Brisbane's traditional (since 1931) service is:

- Assembly,
- Bugle calls 'Long G' followed by 'Last Post' at exactly 4.28 am (the time of the original ANZAC landing),
- Two minutes' reverent silence,
- A hymn,
- Short address,
- Placing of floral tributes,
- A second hymn,
- Bugle call 'Reveille' and
- The singing of 'God Save the Queen'.

## **Keys to the City.**

You often hear of people being given the Keys to the City – but what does that mean??

These days the Keys to the City is an award to acknowledge the contribution of an individual, group or organisation to furthering the ideals of the city, or to recognise outstanding achievement in sport, entertainment or humanitarian work at a national or international level. An ornamental key is presented to the individual or group the city wishes to honour. The decision to bestow this honour is often spontaneous and has traditionally been used to provide an opportunity for mass public recognition. But where did the practice originate?

The practice of bestowing a ceremonial "key to the city" dates back to medieval times. Feudal lords protected their cities with high walls and imposing gates. All manner of legal papers and customs taxes were required to enter and exit. A "key to the city" gave an important diplomat or merchant the authority to enter and leave the city at will as a trusted friend of city residents.

A similar ceremonial honour, "freedom of the city," is an ancient honour granted to martial organisations, allowing them the privilege to march into the city "with drums beating, colours flying and bayonets fixed".



This honour dates back to the laws of ancient Rome that made it a capital offence for Roman legions to enter the city in formation or with weapons without permission. This was meant to ensure that ambitious generals did not mount a military coup against the Senate. (It was the law that Julius Caesar broke when crossing the Rubicon.) Similar laws were passed by cities throughout the Medieval era, also to protect civic security and rights, even against their own king's troops.

However, legions, regiments, or other martial groups that had given heroic service or whose honour was beyond question, might be granted Freedom of the City. The group would not have to disarm or break ranks before the city gates were opened to them. Given the serious risk the city would be running, this was a rare honour.

Today, martial freedom of the city is an entirely ceremonial honour, but remains the oldest and one of the highest civic honours in the Commonwealth of Nations.

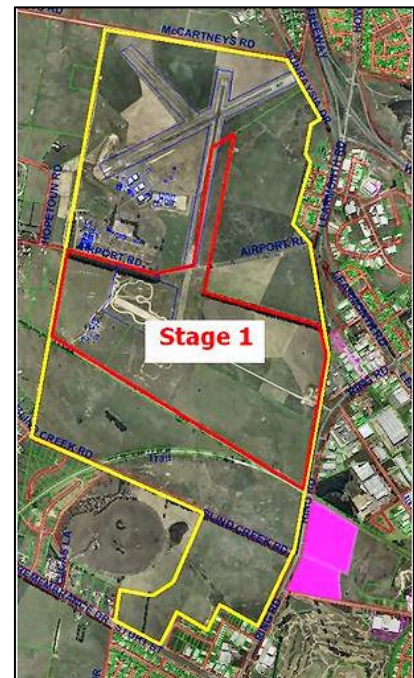
## Progress??

What do they say about Time and Tide??? It seems Progress is similar, it just marches on and waits for no man.

Blokes and Blokettes who spent time at Ballarat will be sad to see that very shortly the base they lived and worked on and knew so very well will no longer exist but will soon become an industrial zone and home to a myriad of different commercial sites.

There are plans to chop up the base and establish the Ballarat West Employment Zone. These include:

- A Ballarat Freight Hub
- An Industrial Precinct
- Redevelop the Airport.



Once developed, it is hoped the Ballarat West Employment Zone will generate 3,900 jobs and if that happens, it can't be a bad thing.

At last!!!

