

ADJOURNMENT

Remembrance Day

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (8.39 p.m.)—The lone bugler's haunting melody of the last post resounded today—at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month. This is when we Australians commemorate those diggers who lost their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today. Daniel Webster said, 'Although no sculptured marble should rise to their memory, nor engraved stone bear record of their deeds, yet will their remembrance be as lasting as the land they honoured.'

In 1993 the government brought 'home' the body of a fallen warrior. Today he rests in the Hall of Memory as the Unknown Soldier. In his prime he left Australia to fight for his country and today he represents over 100,000 of his brothers and sisters killed in war for the freedoms we enjoy. He represents over 10,000 Australian soldiers who lie in unmarked graves. Freedom is never free. It is purchased through the blood of the martyrs and maintained through eternal vigilance.

Compared to many other countries Australia is still a fledgling nation but boasts a proud and rich military history. Her military have trained and fought with pride and valour. World War I was the first time Australia had gone to a significant conflict as a federated nation. With enthusiasm and a longing to serve, over 416,000 men and women enlisted out of a population of under 5 million. The urge to serve meant many lied about their ages; they were boys entering a man's world.

In 1914, with little training, our boys marched into battle. For more than four years they fought with allied nations, for a freedom in far away countries, on the battlefields of Europe, seeing death, hearing the dying and seeing the dead lying around. Over 60,000 Australian soldiers would not come home; over 135,000 were wounded—for a war that would end all wars.

On 11 November 1918, 90 years ago, the Armistice treaty was signed at 5 o'clock in the morning and at the 11th hour on that same day the French and Belgium battlefields fell silent. At its conclusion the First World War had cost more Australian lives than any other war would in our history. As the red poppy sprouted in Flanders field, it became a timely reminder of the blood that so freely flowed. As Eric Bogle once sang:

The sun's shining down on these green fields of France;

The warm wind blows gently, and the red poppies dance.

The trenches have long vanished under the plow;

There's no gas and no barbed wire, no guns firing now.

But here in this graveyard it is still No Man's Land.

The countless white crosses in mute witness stand

To man's blind indifference to his fellow man,

And a whole generation who were butchered and damned.

After the Second World War Armistice Day was renamed Remembrance Day to include commemoration of the over 19,000 men and women who died during World War II. This day now commemorates all of our military who have paid the ultimate sacrifice. While

the lone bugler trumpets the losses of war we remember the boys and men, the girls and women that left Australia to defend their nation and we honour their sacrifice.

Remembrance Day is also the day that the names of the fallen are added to the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial. This morning six Australian heroes were added to the Roll of Honour: Private Dennis Michael Millane, who died in Borneo during confrontation; and five brave soldiers who died in Afghanistan—Sergeant Matthew Raymond Locke, Private Luke James Worsley, Lance Corporal James Paul Marks, Trooper David Ronald Pearce and Signaller Sean Patrick McCarthy. Today at the 11th hour we added these men to our thoughts as we stood like the guns of the Western Front, silent and still.

As a former Army officer I feel a special affiliation with these men and their families. My family has fought in most of our wars, starting with the ultimate sacrifice when a cousin, a young lieutenant, led his men to their death at the Nek in Gallipoli in August 1915. Likewise I am very conscious that, of the six names added to the Roll of Honour, two of these heroes have families in the electorate of Fadden. Trooper David Pearce, loving husband to Nicole, father to Stephanie and Hannah, was tragically killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan on 8 October 2007. Signaller Sean Patrick McCarthy, loving son of David and Mary, brother of Leigh and Clare, was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan on 8 July 2008. Their families should be very proud and our nation is forever grateful for their courage. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten. It will be remembered.

I acknowledge the men and women who are today overseas serving their country. They help those who cannot help themselves. Today, just as they did 90 years ago, regardless of the danger, our military men and women risk their lives. We will remember them.
(Time expired)