

Remembrance



On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918 the guns of Europe fell silent. After four years of the most bitter and devastating fighting, The Great War was finally over. The Armistice was signed at 5am in a railway carriage in the Forest of Compiegne, France on November 11, 1918. Six hours later, at 11am, the war ended.

The first Remembrance Day was conducted in 1919 throughout Britain and the Commonwealth. Originally called Armistice Day, it commemorated the end of hostilities the previous year. It came to symbolise the end of the war and provide an opportunity to remember those who had died.

After the end of the Second World War in 1945 Armistice Day became Remembrance Day to include all those who had fallen in the two World Wars and later conflicts.

In a letter published in the London Evening News on 8 May 1919, an Australian journalist, Edward George Honey, proposed a respectful silence to remember those who had given their lives in the First World War. This was brought to the attention of King George V and on 7 November 1919, the King issued a proclamation which called for a two minute silence:

“All locomotion should cease, so that, in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead”

The second Sunday of November is Remembrance Sunday. At 11am a two minute silence is observed at war memorials, cenotaphs, religious services and shopping centre's throughout the country. The Royal Family, along with leading politicians and religious leaders gather at The Cenotaph in Whitehall, London for a service and all branches of the civilian and military services are represented in ceremonies throughout Britain and the Commonwealth.

