

CENTENARY OF THE
FIRST WORLD WAR
THE CENTENARY
OF THE ARMISTICE

**A National Service of Thanksgiving
to mark the Centenary of the Armistice**

Westminster Abbey, London

11 November 2018

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The Right Honourable Theresa May MP
The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the millions of men killed or injured in the trenches to the millions more civilians who lost their lives, their homes or their loved ones, the impact of the First World War was truly global.

In the century since the Armistice, our views and understanding of the conflict, its aftermath and its lasting effects have changed and evolved with the passing years. Yet as time continues to shape our collective perception of the war, one thing remains constant: the huge debt of gratitude we owe to all those who sacrificed so much in the defence of the freedoms we enjoy today.

That is why, over the past four years, we have held national events to mark the centenaries of some of the war's most significant moments: in August 2014 we remembered the British Empire's entry into the war; in 2015 the Gallipoli Campaign; in 2016 the Battles of Jutland and the Somme; in 2017 Passchendaele; and, this August, the beginning of the end of the war at the Battle of Amiens.

Every part of the United Kingdom was touched by the war, and every part has been involved in the commemorations – responding to the significance and importance of this centenary in extraordinary, creative and imaginative ways. Perhaps most importantly, young people in their thousands have participated in events at school and in their communities, discovering their own personal connections to those who played a role in the war and drawing inspiration from their stories.

Today, four years of commemoration draw to a close as we reflect upon the end of the four years of conflict. We remember all those who died. We give thanks for the hard-won victory of the United Kingdom and her allies. We express our profound gratitude to all those who sacrificed so much to achieve it. And we recognise that the suffering, hardship and uncertainty did not end with the end of hostilities – and that the impact of the war was felt for many years to come.

A century ago, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the guns finally fell silent on the Western Front in what was supposed to be the war to end all wars. A century later, let us all take the time to honour those who fought for the generations that followed, to learn from their experiences and the stories they left behind and, above all, to rededicate ourselves to ensuring that "their name liveth for evermore".

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T.M.', which is the signature of Theresa May.

A NATIONAL SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING TO MARK THE CENTENARY OF THE ARMISTICE

In the presence of:

Her Majesty The Queen

His Excellency Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of The Federal Republic of Germany

The Right Honourable Theresa May MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England and Metropolitan

The service is conducted by The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster

The service is sung by the Choir of Westminster Abbey, directed by James O'Donnell, Organist and Master of Choristers

The organ is played by Peter Holder, Sub-Organist, Westminster Abbey

The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment is directed by Flight Lieutenant Tom Rodda

ORDER OF SERVICE

MUSIC BEFORE THE START OF THE SERVICE

Music before the start of the service is performed by:

Peter Holder, Sub Organist
The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment

SERVICE

Please stand

Her Majesty the Queen is received at the West Gate by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

Fresh flowers are laid by Her Majesty the Queen and His Excellency The President of the Federal Republic of Germany at the Grave of the Unknown Warrior.

Silence is kept

Prayer by The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster

Let us pray.

God, who wouldest fold both heaven and earth in a single peace: let the design of thy great love lighten upon the waste of our wraths and sorrows; and give peace to thy Church, peace among nations, peace in our dwellings, and peace in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn *Thou Whose Almighty Word*
Composed by Felice Giardini
Words by John Marriott

During the hymn the procession, together with Her Majesty the Queen, members of the Royal Family, and His Excellency The President of the Federal Republic of Germany, will move to places in Quire, the Lantern, and the Sacarium.

**Thou whose almighty word
chaos and darkness heard,
and took their flight:
hear us, we humbly pray,
and where the gospel-day,
sheds not its glorious ray
let there be light.**

**Thou who didst come to bring
on thy redeeming wing
healing and sight,
health to the sick in mind,
sight to the inly blind,
O now to all mankind
let there be light.**

**Spirit of truth and love,
life-giving, holy Dove,
speed forth thy flight;
move o'er the waters' face,
bearing the lamp of grace,
and in earth's darkest place
let there be light.**

**Blessed and holy Three
glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, Love, Might,
boundless as ocean's tide
rolling in the fullest pride,
through the world far and wide
let there be light.**

The Bidding by the Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster

All sit

Reading

Extract from the Diaries of Beatrice Webb, 11 November 1918

Peace! London to-day is a pandemonium of noise and revelry, soldiers, and flappers being most in evidence. Multitudes are making all the row they can, and in spite of depressing fog and steady rain, discords of sound and struggling, rushing beings and vehicles fill the streets. Paris, I imagine, will be more spontaneous and magnificent in its rejoicing. Berlin, also, is reported to be elated, having got rid not only of the war but also of its oppressors.

The peoples are everywhere rejoicing. Thrones are everywhere crashing and the men of property are everywhere secretly trembling. 'A biting wind is blowing for the cause of property', writes an Austrian journalist. How soon will the tide of revolution catch up the tide of victory? That is a question which is exercising Whitehall and Buckingham Palace and which is causing anxiety even among the more thoughtful democrats. Will it be six months or a year?

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Reading

Private (later Corporal) John Jackson, The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders from 'John Jackson, Private 12768: Memoir of a Tommy'

The news must have been welcome at home, and in most countries of the world, but no non-combatants could have any idea what the message meant to the men in the trenches. I think we were slow to believe it could really be true after the long years of fighting. It was strange to think, and know, that once more we could move about fully exposed without fear of being shot at. No more would we need to 'duck' our heads down in the trenches, as we'd had to do for so long. The long nerve-wracking suspense was at last ended, and we were glad, but there were too many saddened memories to think of, too many old pals to mourn, friends who gave their all in brave sacrifice for their country, which was sufficient to keep us from going wild with excitement. Instead, there were just quiet congratulations and a good hand-grip, pregnant with well-meaning, between old friends, still to the fore, who had battled side by side in many a fierce fight, and many a stirring escapade. All that morning of the 11th November, the guns crashed and battered, with their customary thunderous roar, as if in protest that the end of the war had come, and as though an armistice was the last thing in the world that could happen. Just as in a game of football, which is ended only when the final whistle blows, we fought on to the last minute; till on the stroke of the eleventh hour the sounds of war ceased abruptly, succeeded by the 'Great Silence'. To us, after years of noise, the calm and quietness of that cold, November, day was bewildering, surely it was the strangest day of the whole campaign.

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Music *The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me*
Written by Edward Elgar

The spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he hath anointed me,
to preach the gospel to the poor:
he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted,
to preach deliverance to the captives,
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;
to give unto them that mourn a garland for ashes,
the oil of joy for mourning,
the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,
that they might be called trees of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,
and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring forth before all the nations;
as the earth bringeth forth her bud.

Reading by The Right Honourable Theresa May MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Isaiah 58: 6–12

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward.

Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:

And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.

Please stand to sing

Hymn *All My Hope On God Is Founded (Meine Hoffnung stehet feste)*

Composed by Joachim Neander, Herbert Howells

Translated by Robert Bridges

**All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.**

**Pride of man and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.**

**God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore
from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.**

**Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.**

Address by The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby,
Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England and Metropolitan

Anthem *The True Light*

Composed by Judith Weir CBE, Master of the Queen's Music

Commissioned by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
for this service

The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.
O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious,
and his mercy endureth for ever.
Let them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed
and delivered from the hand of the enemy;
and gathered from out of the lands, from the east, and from the west,
from the north, and from the south.

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Prayers led by The Reverend Christopher Stoltz, Minor Canon and Precentor

Let us pray to the One who causes light to shine out of darkness, fount of
hope and life of the world.

Please kneel or remain seated

Prayer

For all who gave themselves in service to this nation during the First World War;
for the sacrifice of those in the Armed Forces and for the contribution of men and
women across the Empire who offered themselves in service to the Crown.

Lord hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Prayer

For the health and happiness of our nation; for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and all
members of the Royal Family; for all who serve the public good both nationally and
locally, and for Her Majesty's Armed Forces deployed throughout the world.

Lord hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Prayer

For nations, peoples, and communities divided or at war, and for people of conscience and goodwill, of all faiths and none, who strive after peace and the flourishing of humankind.

Lord hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Prayer read by The Reverend Anthony Ball, Canon in Residence

For a deeper sense of gratitude for the freedom we enjoy; that we may be renewed in our love of all that is good and holy; and for the grace and strength to continue the never-ending work of diplomacy and peace-making.

Lord hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

The Lord's Prayer led by The Reverend Christopher Stoltz, Minor Canon and Precentor

Longing for the fulfilment of God's perfect kingdom of love, let us pray as Jesus Christ has taught us:

Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading

Extract from "The Unfinished Task" by Winston Churchill from "Winston. S. Churchill, Volume IV Part 1" by Martin Gilbert

The penalty of defeat is ruin. The reward of victory is responsibility. It is an awful recompense. The nations who have drawn the sword in the cause of right and justice, who have persevered together through all the vicissitudes of this fearful journey, whom no danger could appal nor hardship weary, have now become responsible under Providence for the immediate future of the world. They can no more divest themselves of this responsibility than they could in the first instance have stood out of the war. To do so would be to sacrifice at a stroke all the fruits which have been gained by an infinitude of sufferings and achievement. We should have won the victory only to cast it away. We should let slip from our relaxing fingers all the advantage which nearly a million Britons gave their lives to gain. We should leave our responsibilities undischarged, our task unfinished. In place of honour there would be dishonour; in place of order there would be confusion; in place of lasting peace there would be a reviving of strife. And all for the sake of rest and repose! But such hopes themselves would be gain. We should get no rest and no repose from their indulgence. Our unfinished task would follow us home. Therefore we must at this juncture not only be prompt and decisive in our action, but steadfast and persevering as befits those to whom all the world is looking for guidance and example.

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All stand to sing

Hymn *God is Love: Let Heaven Adore Him*
Composed by Timothy Rees, Cyril Taylor

**God is love: let heaven adore him;
God is love: let earth rejoice;
let creation sing before him,
and exalt him with one voice.
He who laid the earth's foundation,
he who spread the heavens above,
he who breathes through all creation,
he is love, eternal love.**

**God is love: and he enfoldeth
all the world in one embrace;
with unfailing grasp he holdeth
every child of every race.
And when human hearts are breaking
under sorrow's iron rod,
then they find that selfsame aching
deep within the heart of God.**

**God is love: and though with blindness
sin afflicts the souls of men,
God's eternal loving-kindness
holds and guides them even then.
Sin and death and hell shall never
o'er us final triumph gain;
God is love, so love for ever
o'er the universe must reign.**

Reading by His Excellency Frank-Walter Steinmeier,
President of The Federal Republic of Germany

1 St John 4: 7-11

Ihr Lieben, lasst uns einander lieb haben; denn die Liebe ist von Gott,
und wer liebt, der ist von Gott geboren und kennt Gott.

Wer nicht liebt, der kennt Gott nicht; denn Gott ist die Liebe.

Darin ist erschienen die Liebe Gottes unter uns, dass Gott seinen
eingebornen Sohn gesandt hat in die Welt, damit wir durch ihn
leben sollen.

Darin besteht die Liebe: nicht dass wir Gott geliebt haben, sondern
dass er uns geliebt hat und gesandt seinen Sohn zur Versöhnung für
unsre Sünden.

Ihr Lieben, hat uns Gott so geliebt, so sollen wir uns auch
untereinander lieben.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one
that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent
his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent
his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Reading by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales

St John 15: 9–15

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Blessing by The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The National Anthem

**God save our gracious Queen.
Long live our noble Queen.
God save The Queen.
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save The Queen.**

Please remain standing as the procession moves to the west end of the Abbey Church

The bells of the Abbey Church are rung

Members of the congregation are kindly requested to remain in their seats until directed to move by the Honorary Stewards

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS

Her Majesty's Government wishes to thank:

The Very Reverend Dr John Hall,
Dean of Westminster, BA, HonDD,
HonDTh, HonDLitt, FSA, FRSA, FCT

James O'Donnell, Director of Music, and
Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey,
KCSG, FRCM, FRSCM, HonRAM

Judith Weir CBE, Master of the
Queen's Music

The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment
Director of Music: Flight Lieutenant Tom Rodda
BMus (Hons) ARAM LRAM LRSM RAF
Fanfare Team Leader: Sergeant Adam Smith
BSc (Hons) PGDip Dip ABRSM

Prayer readers

Jasleen Singh

Jasleen Singh is a first place winner of the 2017-2018 Never Such Innocence Poetry and Art Competition, for her poem, *'The Indian Soldier'*. Her inspiration came from her great, great grandfather, Honorary Captain Subedar Major, Sardar Bahadur, Sardar Lehna Singh, Order of British India, 1st Class, 45th Rattray's Sikhs, and her great grandfather, Subedar Major Labh Singh, of whom she is extremely proud. Her poem commemorates all the 1.3 million Indian soldiers who came to an unknown country to fight for the British Empire in the First World War.

Rebecca Pinkerton

Rebecca Pinkerton is a Cadet Corporal with the Royal School Armagh Combined Cadet Force. She and fellow cadets worked together on a project to research service people in their families and local communities who had served in the First World War. They were moved by the tale of Private Edward Murphy, the great great uncle of one of the cadets, who lost his life at the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916.

Joel Williams-Modeste

Joel Williams-Modeste, a pupil at St John's Catholic Comprehensive School in Kent, participated in the First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours Programme, which has provided opportunities for students and teachers to visit battlefields on the Western Front. As part of the programme, Joel helped research and produce the Gravesham War Memorials books. Moved by the 565 names on his local war memorial, Joel created an artwork dedicated to Corporal James Lawrence, 6th Battalion, The Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) who was killed in action on the Somme in 1916.

Flower layers

Morgan McArthur

Morgan McArthur was a member of the National Citizen Service team that supported the commemorations of the Battle of Passchendaele in 2017. As preparation for this role, she researched the life of her great grand-uncle, Private Hugh Harper Johnstone of 2nd Battalion of Princess Louise's (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders), who died of gunshot wounds on 26 September 1917, aged 28. He is buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery in Belgium.

Jhonattan Goncalves

Zach Opere-Onguende

Jhonattan and Zach from the Vale Special School in Haringey, London, were inspired to write and produce the song *'My Mate George'* after a First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours Programme took them to the grave of Private George Baxter Lawson at Tyne Cot Cemetery in Belgium. Private Lawson, from Tottenham, died at Passchendaele on 22 August 1917. The song – later transformed into a dance, drama and musical show – has been played at events in London and on tour in Belgium, also featuring on BBC Radio 2 and BBC1's News at Six.

Baljodh Singh

Baljodh Singh volunteered for a Heritage Lottery Funded project called Journey from Home run by Believe in Me Community Interest Company. This community heritage project explored the experiences, feelings and stories of South Asian soldiers during the First World War. Coming from an Indian Sikh background, Baljodh was inspired by the Chattri Memorial in Brighton and Hove, which commemorates the Indian dead of the First World War, at the place where Hindu and Sikh soldiers who died in 1914-1915 were cremated.

Flower layers continued

Perna Acharya

Perna Acharya was a member of the National Citizen Service team that supported the commemoration of the Battle of Passchendaele in 2017. As preparation for this role, she researched the life of Lance Serjeant Horace Edgar Shenton of 3rd Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, who died at the age of 38 and is commemorated at Sutton Coldfield Cemetery. Perna also volunteered to support at the commemoration of the Battle of Amiens in August 2018.

Michaela McKay

Michaela McKay is a member of the St Michael All Angels Steel Orchestra in London, which has been commemorating the First World War since they learned to play the Last Post in 2014. In 2015, the band marked the Battle of Gallipoli, playing *Çanakkale türküsü*. In 2016, the Project took part in a commemoration at Willesden Cemetery where Michaela laid a wreath at the Cross of Sacrifice with His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge. The Project also took part in Pilots of The Caribbean, at RAF Hendon, an exhibition commemorating African-Caribbean people who served in the Royal Air Force, including William Robinson Clark, the first black pilot to serve in the First World War.

Rebecca Dunning

As a Football Association Apprentice, Rebecca Dunning joined the Tull100 – Football Remembers Youth Advisory Group to commemorate footballer, Second Lieutenant

Walter Tull, who was killed at the First Battle of Bapaume on 25 March 1918, aged 29. Commemorated on the Arras Memorial, he was one of the first infantry officers of black heritage in the modern British Army. Drawing on her experience of women's football, Rebecca helped to form the central message of the Tull100 project, No Barriers. She also featured on the social media campaign with England footballers, Dele Alli, Kieran Trippier and Danny Rose.

Lauren King

Lauren King is a pupil of St Albans Girls' School in Hertfordshire. During her studies, she was inspired by Lieutenant Wilfred Edward Salter Owen M.C., Manchester Regiment, one of the leading poets of the First World War. He was killed on 4 November 1918, aged 25, during the battle to cross the Sambre-Oise canal at Ors, exactly one week (almost to the hour) before the signing of the Armistice.

Elmer Djassi

Elmer Djassi is a pupil at Bow School in East London. Elmer was inspired by Rifleman William Dethridge from the Rifle Brigade, who fought at the Battle of the Somme and died, aged 22, on 23 October 1916. William was also from Bow. Elmer worked with pupils at a school in Amiens to produce a poem and a song about William whose name is engraved on the Thiepval Memorial in France. Elmer laid a wreath at the commemoration of the Battle of the Somme at Thiepval Cemetery on 1 July 2016.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport wishes to thank the following organisations for their support in nominating guests to attend the Service:

14-18 NOW
Commonwealth War Graves Commission
Department for Education
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Heritage Lottery Fund
Historic England
Imperial War Museums
Ministry for Housing, Communities and
Local Government

Ministry of Defence
National Citizen Service
Never Such Innocence
The Northern Ireland First World War
Centenary Committee
Royal British Legion
The Royal Parks
The Scottish Commemorations Panel
The Welsh Government's *Cymru'n Cofio*
Wales Remembers 1914-1918 Programme
Western Front Association

THE ROAD TO PEACE

In the spring of 1918, German forces launched a major offensive on the Western Front intended to break the Allies. With the arrival of American troops in France, it was only a matter of time before the balance would be tipped inexorably in the Allies' favour. Having seen their submarine fleet fail to have a decisive impact at sea, German commanders staked a great deal on the success of the *Kaiserschlacht* – the 'Kaiser's Battle'.

In the six weeks between 21 March and the end of April, British Empire casualties were estimated at 240,000 (wounded, killed or captured) and French around 92,000. But they ultimately succeeded in halting the advance, and German casualties reached nearly 348,000. German attacks in May and June brought them within striking range of Paris, but with further heavy losses.

On 18 July, the Allies launched a surprise counter-attack, beginning what became

known as the Second Battle of the Marne. Fighting together, French, American and British soldiers forced the Germans back between Reims and Soissons. Suffering from inadequate rations and a growing influenza crisis, German forces were unable to resist. The battle marked a turning point: after surviving the spring, the Allies were now planning for the defeat of Germany.

At 4.20 a.m. on 8 August 1918, just before first light, almost 100,000 Canadian, Australian and British infantrymen advanced to the east of Amiens. Launched through thick mist with a devastating artillery barrage, the assault was a complete surprise to the Germany Army. At the same time, French forces attacked to the south, while wire-crushing tanks and ground-strafting aircraft supported the infantry. The day was a stunning Allied success and a triumph of all-arms co-

operation. British Empire forces reached nearly all their final objectives by early afternoon, and German casualties were estimated at 27,000 including many prisoners of war. The German Army and its leaders had been dealt an overwhelming physical and psychological blow.

HUNDRED DAYS

The Allies' success at Amiens was followed by a series of co-ordinated assaults across the Western Front, from Belgium to the Meuse, which provided impossible to resist. They began by driving the Germans from the old Somme battlegrounds, back to the formidable prepared defences of the Hindenburg Line. After several gruelling encounters, the Allies approached and then, in early October, overcame these vital positions. Such successes would have been inconceivable only a few months previously.

German troops concentrating in the wrecked streets of St. Quentin, immediately prior to the Spring Offensive, 19 March 1918. © IWM (Q55479)



The Battle of Amiens. German prisoners marching through the ruins of Maricourt l'Abbe, 8 August 1918. © IWM (Q9195)



The campaign on the Western Front over the summer and autumn of 1918 became known as the 'Hundred Days' offensive, recalling the Napoleonic Wars. It was fought by service personnel from many parts of the world: the French and Belgian armies; British Empire forces from Australia, Canada, India, Newfoundland, New Zealand, South Africa, and the West Indies, as well as all parts of Britain and Ireland; American forces; and units from several other allies, including Portugal, Italy and Siam (now Thailand).

Many contributed behind the lines: labour corps raised in China, India and South Africa; doctors and nurses working in a network of medical facilities which stretched from the front to the coast and across the Channel; troops engaged in logistics, supply, and lines of communication. At sea, the role of naval forces was a vital element in the eventual Allied success, fighting for command of the oceans and maintaining the crucial global links which enabled the armies to operate.

COLLAPSE

On 4 October, Germany sent a formal request to US President Woodrow Wilson for an armistice to be negotiated, on the basis of his 'Fourteen Points' first articulated earlier in the year. The breaking of the Hindenburg Line was only one of

several factors which culminated in a crisis among the German command. While the Western Front was the defining theatre of war, it was only one of several fronts on which the Central Powers were coming under increasing pressure by late 1918.

On 29 September, Bulgaria had become the first of the Central Powers to seek an armistice, after an Allied offensive into Serbia and the mountains north of Salonika. The last of Germany's allies to join the conflict, Bulgaria had achieved many of its aims by late 1916, with the capture of territory in Serbia and the defeat of Romania. After this, the social, economic and human costs of fighting the war became difficult to countenance for the Bulgarian military and public alike, who came to resent perceived German domination. In the aftermath of Bulgaria's collapse, and the breaking of the Hindenburg Line, German commander Erich Ludendorff advised the Kaiser's crown council that peace terms should be sought immediately.

In Palestine, the Battle of Megiddo precipitated the collapse of the Ottoman Empire's war effort. The population of modern Turkey was beset by food shortages and disease, brought about by poor harvests, Allied blockades and the heavy demands of the military. By 1918,

The advance through Palestine and the Battle of Megiddo: Australian members of the Imperial Camel Corps near Jaffa in Palestine. © IWM (HU75737)



Italian troops marching on the Val d'Assa mountain road. © IWM (Q25976)



Ottoman commanders were struggling to prevent mass desertions from an already severely depleted army. On 30 October, at Mudros harbour – a key Allied naval base at the Aegean island of Lemnos – the Ottomans signed an armistice aboard the Royal Navy warship HMS *Agamemnon*.

The Battle of Vittorio Veneto in northern Italy, which began in late October, proved the turning point in the campaign against Austria-Hungary. Italian forces, supported by British and French troops, successfully crossed the River Piave and advanced across the Asiago region, towards the Dolomites and across the plains north of Venice. By this time, the old Habsburg Empire was already disintegrating. Food shortages and famine throughout Austria-Hungary had strengthened socialism and led to political unrest. Woodrow Wilson's emphasis on 'the freest opportunity of autonomous development' buoyed those agitating for the many ethnic minorities

of the empire – from Czechs and Slovaks to Bosnians, Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes. Allied naval forces occupied Trieste on 3 November as an armistice was agreed, which came into effect the following day.

Each of the Central Powers sued for peace individually, demonstrating the disintegration of their alliance and fatally undermining Germany's war effort. Meanwhile, talks between the Allies and German envoys proceeded throughout late October and early November even as co-ordinated Allied attacks continued on the battlefields.

LAST BATTLES

By the end of October 1918, with negotiations ongoing and winter approaching, Allied commanders debated how long to continue the advance. Many were hopeful that another major blow might induce the German High Command to accept armistice terms before the end of the year.



Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of the 51st Division crossing the railway at Douchy-lès-Ayette by the ruins of the blown up railway bridge, 22 October 1918. © IWM (Q11413)

Retreating German forces attempted a last-ditch stand on the line of the Sambre-Oise Canal and at the Forest of Mormal near the Franco-Belgian border. Just before dawn on 4 November, infantry advanced through dense mist across difficult country behind a supporting bombardment. Heavy casualties were suffered during the British 1st Division's attack on the canal, while 32nd Division faced stern German resistance near Ors, where the poet Wilfred Owen was among those killed. Yet vital bridgeheads were eventually secured by infantry, sappers and pioneers. In the north, Allied infantry strove to drive the Germans from their positions within the dense woods of Mormal, while the ancient citadel of Le Quesnoy was dramatically captured by the New Zealand Division.

It was the last formal battle of the war for British Empire forces, although sporadic fighting continued over the following days. British and Canadian troops pushed

Portrait of Wilfred Owen © IWM (Q79045)



closer to the familiar territory of the Belgian mining town of Mons, where the British Expeditionary Force had first confronted the German Army in 1914. Meanwhile, Belgian forces advanced through Flanders and along the Belgian coast, reaching Ghent by 11 November. On the right of British and Empire forces, French troops crossed the Aisne early in November and pushed on towards Mezières, while American forces advanced up the valley of the River Meuse towards Sedan.

Between mid-July and mid-November, the Allies had suffered just over 1 million casualties wounded, killed, and missing. Of these, more than 530,000 were French troops, around 410,000 from British Empire forces, and 127,000 American forces. But German forces had lost over 1.1 million casualties, including over 380,000 captured. There may have been no decisive battle, but the Allies' campaign of attrition eventually meant an irreversible erosion of manpower and

morale. Following Ludendorff's demand for an armistice in early October, later reversals fatally damaged his credibility among German leaders, and he was dismissed. Hunger, political crisis and revolution engulfed Germany, while military leaders now recognised that a favourable peace would be all but impossible to achieve.

On the battlefields, Allied soldiers were aware of the ongoing negotiations, but continued to fight throughout the grey November days and rain-soaked nights. Their supply lines were stretched, roads became muddy swamps in the wet conditions, and German troops demolished bridges and set booby-traps on delayed action fuses. While the civilians of newly-liberated villages often greeted them with joy, there was disagreement among Allied commanders about whether further casualties could be justified.



Troops of the 8th Battalion, the King's (Liverpool Regiment, Liverpool Irish, 57th Division) entering the outskirts of Lille, 18 October 1918. © IWM (Q9580)

ARMISTICE

By the beginning of November 1918, the German Armies on the Western Front were nearing the end of their endurance. Repeatedly pushed back by relentless Allied advances, and with few reserves to fill the ranks, morale was ebbing away. Germany's allies had collapsed in southern Europe and the Middle East. Military collapse was matched by chaos on the German home front. The Allied maritime blockade had contributed to overwhelming hunger, with strikes and rioting taking hold in many cities, while the devastating influenza pandemic was killing thousands each week.

On 3 November, German sailors mutinied at Kiel and Wilhelmshaven, in protest at plans for a last-ditch foray into the North Sea. Within days, these ports – along with other regions – were under the control of revolutionaries. On 6 November, an armistice commission was appointed in Berlin, chaired by government minister Matthias Erzberger, along with military and diplomatic representatives. The following day they travelled by invitation to the French lines near Haudroy, near La Capelle. A cease-fire was arranged and the delegation was conveyed in French cars to a special train, which brought them in the morning of 8 November to a railway siding near Rethondes, deep within the forest of Compiègne, where another train contained the mobile headquarters of Marshal Foch, Head of the Allied Commission.

There had been disagreement among Allied commanders about the best course of action: whether to press on with the advance until German forces were comprehensively defeated, despite the inevitable casualties this would entail, or – as British Commander-in-Chief Douglas Haig advocated – agree an armistice before the onset of winter and ensure that the terms would effectively mean a German surrender.

Eventually, the pragmatic approach was adopted. The necessary terms of any German surrender had been discussed among Allied political leaders over the previous weeks, with further differences of opinion on the severity with which Germany should be treated. In the end, the Allies' terms demonstrated their comprehensive military superiority by the autumn of 1918. Germany was to withdraw from all the territory it still occupied, including all territory it had gained from victory over Russia in Eastern Europe, as well as ceding Alsace-Lorraine. Its military forces were to be cut to the bone, surrendering almost all its artillery and aircraft, and its fleet would be disarmed and interned at the British naval base of Scapa Flow in Orkney. The Allies would be granted overwhelming powers of requisition as well as occupying the Rhineland.

Presented with the Allies' terms, the German delegation was given a deadline of 11 a.m. on 11 November to accept. German requests for an immediate

French Military and British Naval Representatives outside the train where the Armistice was signed.
© IWM (Q43225)



general ceasefire were refused. Meanwhile, Germany was in turmoil, with a Republic declared on 7 November and riots in Berlin. Emperor Wilhelm II abdicated two days later. It was clear that the armistice terms would be devastating, but there was little option other than to accept.

In the early morning of 11 November, the German delegates entered Foch's dining car, which had been prepared for the signing of the armistice. After several hours of further discussion and a few minor amendments, Erzberger became the first signatory at 5 a.m., followed by his three colleagues. Foch signed

for France, and Admiral Weymss, First Lord of the Admiralty, for Britain. At 11 a.m., on a dull and cold Monday morning, the Armistice came into effect, officially ending hostilities on the Western Front.

11 NOVEMBER

Fighting continued until and, in some areas, after the Armistice came into effect. At the Belgian city of Mons, under German occupation since August 1914, British and Canadian forces were advancing cautiously. Private George Ellison of the Royal Irish Lancers and Private George Price of the Canadian Infantry were killed not long before

Children play on a captured German 10cm Kanone 17 field artillery gun exhibited in Waterloo Place, London.
© IWM (Q31250)



Captain A W L Paget M.C. and Second Lieutenant P R J Barry M.C. of the 1st Battalion Irish Guards reading news of the Armistice to their men at Maubeuge, 12 November 1918.
© IWM (Q3365)



The first released British prisoners to reach Tournai, 14 November 1918.
© IWM (Q9688)

11 a.m., and are believed to be the last British and Commonwealth combat casualties on the Western Front.

The troops on the ground had endured several days of anti-climax – particularly after news of the Kaiser's abdication had filtered through. It was not until late on 10 November that rumours of the Armistice began to spread. Some celebrated prematurely, while others remained unaware until relatively late in the day. Many were suspicious, after

so much false hope, even after official notices were displayed at headquarters.

As 11 a.m. approached, many of those in the front lines experienced palpable tension. Artillery shelling continued sporadically, in some cases to avoid having to transport any remaining munitions. While many troops sought to avoid casualties, others kept firing right up until the ceasefire.

Soldiers would later struggle to articulate how they felt at the moment the guns stopped firing. It was a mixture of joy, relief, numb disbelief, and grief at what – and whom – they had lost. Many described quiet moments among comrades, wordless handshakes and individual reflection. There was also, for many, a sense of achievement and justice at what they regarded as a significant victory. In a few cases, firing continued even after 11 a.m., but for most the tension and stress of war was quickly replaced with thoughts of the future, both hope and trepidation at what awaited them back home.



German soldiers watching the entry of the 2th Lancers into Spa, 29 November 1918.
© IWM (Q7189)

Within hours of the Armistice, church bells rang across Britain. 'Victory Day' celebrations soon followed, with workers given leave from their factories, pubs opening their doors and impromptu

street parties breaking out, particularly in big cities where crowds surged in public spaces and flags flew from buildings. In London, civilians mingled with troops from across the Empire.



A group of people in an American automobile in London on the day the Armistice was signed, 11 November 1918. © IWM (Q65858)

Crowds waving and smiling around the Victoria Memorial outside Buckingham Palace in London on Armistice Day. © IWM (Q47894)



German troops return to Berlin at the end of the war © IWM (Q79345)



A mass demonstration marches down the Bellvuestrasse, Berlin. The placard held by one of the protesters reads 'We shall fight against any illegal seizure of power by the Right or by the Left.' © IWM (Q110885)

On the battlefields, the Armistice had brought with it an unnerving silence. At home, a cacophony of noise was the herald of peace. Guns were fired, sirens sounded, and bells rang. Bands played in street parades, wounded soldiers used tins

and saucepan lids as makeshift cymbals. There were songs, and cheering, and fireworks. 'We have won a great victory,' declared Prime Minister David Lloyd George, appearing at Downing Street, 'and we are entitled to a bit of shouting.'



Celebrations took place across France and Belgium, but in Germany, news of the Armistice was overshadowed by the abdication of the Kaiser and the outbreak of revolution. With little awareness of the crisis on the battlefield, many Germans felt a sense of confusion, outrage, or denial. As soldiers began to return from the front, after having been on French soil when their leaders sued for peace, suspicions began to grow that the military had been undermined by political weakness. The priority for the new socialist Chancellor, Friedrich Ebert, was to restore law and order. Such turmoil would not be confined to Germany in the months and years to come.



Armistice celebrations in Birmingham.
© IWM (Q63690)

News of the end of the First World War travelled far and wide on 11 November 1918. The following pages feature recollections from people across the UK and the world who experienced the news of the Armistice at first hand.

David Lloyd George, Prime Minister, London

In the House of Commons that afternoon, immediately after prayers, I rose and announced the signing of the Armistice, the terms of which I proceeded to read. I concluded by saying: "Those are the conditions of the Armistice. Thus at 11 o'clock this morning came to an end

the cruellest and most terrible war that has ever scourged mankind. I hope we may say that thus, this fateful morning, came to an end all wars. This is no time for words. Our hearts are too full of a gratitude to which no tongue can give adequate expression. I will, therefore, move: That this House do immediately adjourn, until this time to-morrow, and that we proceed, as a House of Commons, to St. Margaret's, to give humble and reverent thanks for the deliverance of the world from its great peril."

From 'War Memoirs of David Lloyd George 1918' by David Lloyd George

Maude Onions, Boulogne, France

I like to look back to eight 'o' clock on the morning of November 11th, 1918, because it was then that I tapped out the official message to the armies in the field, which helped bring peace to a war-weary world.

'Hostilities will cease at 11.00 November 11th. Troops will stand fast at the line reached at that hour which will be reported to Army headquarters. Defensive precautions will be maintained. There will be no intercourse of any description with the enemy. Further instructions to follow.'

In the little signal office at Boulogne nothing ever happened at eleven 'o' clock, nothing except a silence, and an involuntary glance at the clock. Outside, nothing happened. It was the first great silence of armistice. It was as though France had just heaved a vast sigh of relief. It was not until the afternoon that any signs of rejoicing became evident. Then, as I made my way down to the quay side, on the stroke of three, every siren

and hooter was let loose, every church bell clanged out- a deafening roar. But not a sound, not a movement, came from the hundreds of beings who thronged the streets. The stricken soul of France seemed to have lost even the desire to rejoice.'

From 'A Woman at War: Being The Experiences Of An Army Signaller In France 1917-1919' by Maude Onions

Olive Wells, London

We came to school this morning hardly realising what a great day this was going to be. Miss Bassett told us that the Armistice was signed – we had received the news at about 5 o'clock a.m. We cheered until we were hoarse. At 11 a.m. the guns were fired, the church-bells were rung, the sirens were blown – we did not think of air raids as we would have done any other day. We went out into the road and cheered. The Union Jack was sent up the staff and there it fluttered in the breeze. Our homework was excused for the week. It was not a bright day but very damp. The guns are booming while I write this. We are coming out of school at 12.30 p.m. instead of 12.45 p.m. this morning. Wherever we go, we see flags flying- big ones and small ones. This has started as a day of rejoicing and I am sure will end as happily.

From the 'Imperial War Museum Book of 1918: Year of Victory' by Malcolm Brown. Reproduced with the kind permission of Pan Macmillan Books © 1999

Malcolm Hancock, West African Regiment, Sierra Leone

We did of course hear the news of the armistice – we didn't hear that until two days afterwards when someone came up from Freetown came up the river bringing stores and that sort of thing to the camp and he brought the news up. We had quite a celebration. I remember we lit an enormous bonfire; all the troops understood very well what the end of the war meant for them and they entered into the spirit of the thing very well. You see, we'd had five years of it, it was terribly wearing. It affected one's outlook all the

time. You felt you couldn't do this; you couldn't do that because there was a war on. It was a terrific relief.

Reproduced with the kind permission of Imperial War Museums © IWM

Harry Smith, Sheffield

They were rejoicing everywhere, it was a right carry on. It was announced at 11 o'clock in morning. All the hooters blew from the works – all the works' hooters were going at the same time round about; you could hear them from miles away, you could hear them in Sheffield and the local pits and all round. Everybody was rejoicing and they all walked out from work. I did the very same thing. I packed up work, what I was doing, and got myself washed and dressed up and I went off to Sheffield to see what was going off in Sheffield. And I never saw owt like it in my life. There was rejoicing and everybody... they were just on the streets, they were dancing, the streets were full of people. They didn't have much to show off with, as regards having a celebration, but they were just getting a drink or two down them and dancing and singing in the streets. You can't explain it, only that everybody was happy and relieved.

Reproduced with the kind permission of Imperial War Museums © IWM

Maisie Nightingale, Southampton

We went round in lorries, didn't we, with little flags. We all went round in the lorries, all round everywhere, singing and laughing and had a jolly good time. We were in work, but as soon as the armistice was out, everybody come out. Men, all the workmen and all, didn't matter who it was, all cluttered up in the lorries and we went round in our overalls and our mob caps and all over the town. Yes, it was a wonderful day, I can remember that.

Reproduced with the kind permission of Imperial War Museums © IWM

Private George Richards, Barry

It was like a big weight had been lifted. One chap there, he had his leg off (yet) he was the life of the party. We used to carry him about on a stretcher with a Union Jack over him and he had a tin whistle. We had the time of our lives and we were invited to the nurses' homes.

Quote taken from 'Hidden Stories of the First World War' by Jackie Storer and reprinted with kind permission of the British Library © 2014

Stanley Downing, Lincoln

Two of the cathedral dignitaries – one with a long white beard and both in cassocks, gowns and mortarboards – met in the middle of the Cathedral lawn, joined hands and performed a little jig of jubilation. In those days the Cathedral clergy were almost as stately as God himself, and the sight of those two elderly dancers is my strongest memory of the day.

From 'A Stillness Heard Round the World' by Stanley Weintraub and reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford University Press © 1985

Winifred Deans, student at The University of Aberdeen

There was tremendous excitement; newsboys were shouting, apprentices from the shipyards were dashing about, all sorts of people had abandoned their work and were out on the pavements shouting and hurrahing. I never expected to see such a stir in Aberdeen, where people are on the whole staid and undemonstrative... In the days that followed I often thought of Wordsworth's lines, written in the early days of the French Revolution; 'Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive...'

From 'A Stillness Heard Round the World' by Stanley Weintraub and reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford University Press © 1985

Artillery Gunner Alex Booth, Basra, Iraq

Patients, bed-ridden, seriously ill, some with temperatures up to 105, lurched out of bed....shambled to the door [of the ward], and went out into a heavy

downpour and a sea of warm mud, about a foot deep. A military band of sorts miraculously appeared and played all the popular, well-loved tunes – 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary,' 'Good-bye Piccadilly, Farewell Leicester Square,' 'Keep the Home Fires Burning,' 'Dear Old Blighty,' and then finally 'God Save the King.' There we stood at attention as far as the mud would allow, with hearts full and visions of homeland ahead. Then we trudged back to the ward and bed, apparently none the worse..... Surely, if ever, a triumph of mind over matter. I was 22 years of age...

From 'A Stillness Heard Round the World' by Stanley Weintraub and reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford University Press © 1985

Christopher Fry, Bedford

We cheered and thumped on our desks, bouncing up and down in our seats, quite prepared to run out of the building and into the street. We could hardly believe that Shepard-Smith meant us to go on with our work, as though the world had not been completely transformed. The world was at peace, a state of affairs I could hardly remember, and at peace perhaps for ever. There would be bonfires, and flags, and fireworks, and no more death until the time for death...

From 'Can You Find Me: A Family History' by Christopher Fry and reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford University Press © 1978

Reverend Andrew Clark

News of the signing of the armistice by Germany (at 5 a.m. this morning, hostilities to cease at 11 a.m.) reached Chelmsford soon after 11 a.m. The works there immediately went on holiday. 'Jim' Carpenter, who works at Crompton's Arc Works, Chelmsford, when he came back said that the workers were so excited that it would have been no use carrying on. The news reached Braintree about the same time. The high school (Upper forms only at school; lower forms discontinued till Wednesday, 13 Nov. (because of the

influenza epidemic)) was given a holiday. Leonard Port, when he came back from School, said that Braintree was wild with excitement. The news was passed on to Great Leighs Post Office from Chelmsford; spread rapidly and the cottagers were very excited. Major Wm. Brown gave his men a holiday. Mrs E.A. Hammond sent across from the Church School to ask a half holiday. The school flag was hoisted. (The Council School was closed due to influenza).

Mr Sam. Woodurvin, Great Waltham, who was at Great Leighs PO said he might now hope to have back undamaged his son who had been at the front line in France for four years.

From 'Echoes of the Great War: the diary of the Reverend Andrew Clark 1914-1919' and reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford University Press © 1985

The Shetland Times, 16 November

The news was received with deep, unspeakable pleasure by all, but there were no indications of hilarity. The strain had been too great, the tensions too strong to permit of levity. There was no

A military band plays to crowds gathering on Winchester High Street to celebrate the Armistice. © IWM (Q31229)



pretence at what is commonly called popular rejoicings. It was with subdued feelings, a sensation too deep for words, that people met each other, and with genuine hand clasps congratulated each other that the maiming and the killing were at an end.

From 'Flowers of the Forest: Scotland and the First World War (2006)' and reproduced with the kind permission of Trevor Royle

Acting Captain Llewelyn Evans, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welch Fusiliers, France

What a glorious autumn day it was! Dry, Hazy, and with promise of sunshine – a rare, crisp, good-to-be-alive-in winter's day. There was excitement in the air, too, because rumours were rife, hopes high and spirits never brighter since somewhere we had begun to feel that the end was very near, and a sensation of release, which we had hardly dared express, was persistent in our hearts...

The morning wore on, but still that sense of its being unbelievable also prevailed. As 11 o'clock approached, 'orders' were evidently being obeyed with zeal, for rifles were being 'unloaded' into the air, as also were pouches and all stray small arms ammunition around.

A band appeared from somewhere and played. I well remember it, Ap Shenkin,' that rousing march of the gallant 41st, and later our Royal Welch Fusilier march 'The Men of Harlech,' rent the air. There was a 'pay-day' atmosphere, and flags and bunting appeared miraculously in almost every cottage, kept heaven knows where throughout those long four years of occupation! ... A colossal task was over, and – a colossal task remained to be done.

Reproduced with the kind permission of the Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum Trust © RWF

AFTERMATH

For many in Britain, late 1917 and early 1918 had been tumultuous, with the pace of events at times scarcely believable: from the shock of the Russian Revolution and the German Spring Offensive, to the relief and exhilaration of the Allied advance. At home, the situation had been equally unsettling, with the introduction of rationing and stricter economic controls, and a troubling proliferation of strikes across society from munitions workers to policemen. Most terrifying of all was the arrival of influenza, during an outbreak which became one of the most destructive pandemics of all time. Known as 'Spanish Flu', since the absence of press censorship in neutral Spain enabled the first reports to emerge, this deadly strain of a familiar virus killed an estimated 228,000 in Britain.

Emergency military hospital during influenza epidemic, Camp Funston, Kansas, United States. Image courtesy of the National Museum of Health and Medicine, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington, D.C., United States.



Yet this paled in comparison to the impact worldwide, with a global death toll in the region of 50 million – far overshadowing the 9 million deaths on the battlefield – over the course of three waves from the spring of 1918 to early 1919. The causes and full effects of the outbreak remain the subject of intense debate among virologists, but it is clear that the war amplified the spread and effects of the flu, with catastrophic effects on communities across the world. News of the Armistice with Germany coincided with the second, deadliest, wave of influenza.

HOMECOMING

The end of the fighting brought with it a widespread desire to return to normality, whether recalling the pre-war past or imagining a better future. Servicemen were often desperate to return home, but around 4 million soldiers, sailors, and airmen, along with many others from nurses to engineers, spent Christmas of 1918 in uniform. The demobilisation process was slow: a year later one million men were still serving. British troops entered Germany in December 1918, and some would later be assigned to the occupation force known as the 'British Army of the Rhine'. Others spent their time undertaking endless inspections, guard duties, cleaning shifts or taking part in sports tournaments.

With the civilian populations along the old Western Front beginning the long task



British soldiers and German prisoners burning old direction signs in the fire. © IWM (Q3759)

of reclaiming farmland, and rebuilding villages and towns, the battlefields had to be searched and cleared of the debris of war. Army Graves Registration Units recorded wartime burial grounds

and recovered the remains of thousands who had lain unburied for years, often with any clues to their identities long lost. Among those who helped with this task were labourers from many



Grave Registration Unit burial party at Passchendaele New British Cemetery, Belgium 1919. Remains being unloaded from a wagon by a line of stretcher bearers and taken into the cemetery for burial.
© CWGC



Burial party in Passchendaele New British Cemetery, Belgium 1919. An army chaplain conducting a funeral.
© CWGC

nations including Britain as well as India and China, whose government committed to assisting the Allies. First arriving near the front in mid-1917, tens of thousands of Chinese workers contributed to the efforts of British and French forces, particularly at dockyards, repairing roads or digging trenches. Almost 100,000 were in service with British forces between 1917 and 1920. With the end of hostilities, the Chinese Labour Corps helped with battlefield clearance: dealing with unexploded ordnance, filling in trenches, and recovering bodies. It was difficult, dangerous and often demoralising work carried out amongst the most horrifying circumstances.

Demobilisation policy initially prioritised men who were married, combat veterans, or those who had a guaranteed job

or skills vital to key industries. After protests and lobbying, this was eventually amended to ensure that those who had been away the longest were sent home soonest. Men arriving home were provided with a rail pass, a ration book and a set of civilian clothes. While some were able to find employment quickly, others found the process much more challenging.

Over 40,000 British servicemen suffered the loss of a limb, and thousands suffered damage to their sight. Around 80,000 had been treated for shell shock, but many more would live with psychological scars that never truly healed. Although efforts were made to ensure employment for wounded veterans, the plight of those who had served became a controversial political issue for many years afterwards.



A man undergoing radiographic treatment, No. 4 London General Hospital.
© IWM (Q27805)



An invalided soldier with an artificial arm attempting to write.
© IWM (Q54574)



A doctor takes a plaster cast of the remainder of an amputee's right leg at Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, Surrey, in preparation for fitting a specially made artificial limb.
© IWM (Q33684)

A general election was announced the day after the Armistice and took place on 14 December 1918. What became known as the 'khaki election' was framed by Lloyd George as a referendum on the war cabinet, on plans for harsh peace terms, and on a vision of creating 'a country fit for heroes to live in.' Those Liberal MPs without a 'coupon' of endorsement from the government found the electorate difficult to persuade. It was the first general election held after the passing of the Representation of the People Act (1918), which extended the franchise to men over the age of 21, and some women over the age of 30.

The result was a landslide victory for the coalition government, although the Labour Party greatly increased its share of the vote, albeit with only a modest increase in seats. There were immediate reforms including the

creation of a Ministry of Health, the extension of the school leaving age to 14, and wide-ranging construction proposals for 'council houses' under a new Housing and Town Planning Act. Yet by the time the Treaty of Versailles was signed in July 1919, much of the optimism of November 1918 was already slipping away.

MAKING PEACE

The Armistice was technically a ceasefire, albeit with swingeing terms intended to make any resumption of hostilities impossible. But the campaign in East Africa (centred on modern Tanzania) would continue even after the fighting in France had come to an end. Commanded by Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, German-led forces fought a mobile campaign across the region, only agreeing a ceasefire in northern Rhodesia on 25 November 1918.



Prime Minister David Lloyd George leaving the Trianon Palace, Versailles, after the signing of 7 May 1919, when the terms of the Peace Treaty were handed to the German delegates. © IWM (Q14991)

By this time, thousands of troops from across Africa and India had been brought into the conflict under British command, along with hundreds of thousands of African carriers. Their war was often horrific, transporting weapons, equipment and supplies by hand across hostile terrain. Even today, the precise number who perished is still not known, but at least 100,000 – perhaps as many as 1 in 5 – are thought to have succumbed to exhaustion, malnutrition or disease, carried by the deadly tsetse fly. Both sides relied heavily on African manpower, as well as the resources of communities through which they passed. Entire villages were displaced, or saw their homes destroyed. Famine killed several hundreds of thousands of civilians.

It was not the only part of the world where bloodshed continued even while peace talks began. In Ireland, conflict erupted between the Irish Republican

Army and the British military forces which eventually led to the division of the island between Northern Ireland, which remained part of the United Kingdom, and a newly independent Irish Free State. In Russia, the post-revolution years saw a bloody civil war, in which a short-lived Allied expedition sought to bolster the 'White' forces, a loose coalition of capitalists and anti-Communists, in their struggle against the armies of the 'Red' revolutionaries. An Afghan invasion of the north-west of British India in 1919 led to the Third Anglo-Afghan War, and eventual British recognition of Afghanistan's independence. Across Eastern Europe, ethnic conflict was precipitated by the dislocation of the war and the redrawing of national boundaries.

Meanwhile, formal discussions took place at a conference in Paris which began in January 1919. Each of the

Central Powers was presented with separate treaties, with terms drawn up by representatives of the Allies. On 28 June 1919, the treaty with Germany was signed at Versailles. It formalised and extended many of the Armistice conditions, including strict limits on German military strength and confirming the loss of Alsace-Lorraine.

What became known as the 'War Guilt' clause meant that Germany admitted responsibility for the war, paving the way for reparations to cover the cost of reconstruction. Totalling around 132 billion gold marks, they attracted criticism from the economist John Maynard Keynes, who argued that such punitive measures would have counterproductive economic consequences. Yet their payment became as much of a political problem as a fiscal one, leading to

controversy within Germany as well as diplomatic clashes.

In January 1920, at the end of the Paris Conference, a League of Nations was formally established. Intended to provide an international forum for conflict resolution, it was a recognition of the need to resolve the inevitable tensions created by the dissolution of empires, the creation of new nation states, and the redrawing of territorial borders. In Eastern Europe and the Middle East, in particular, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire precipitated conflict and bloodshed which remained unresolved until the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

On 19 July 1919, 'Peace Day' celebrations marked the signing of the treaties in what the King termed 'a festival of victory'. A bank holiday was declared and festivities took place



Members of Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps saluting the Royal Box (Buckingham Palace). King George V taking the salute, 19 July 1919. © IWM (Q28777)

around the country, although in places there were demonstrations and even riots by veterans in protest at the inadequacy of provisions for former soldiers, particularly those who still bore the physical and mental scars of battle.

In London, Allied generalissimo Ferdinand Foch and British Commander-in-Chief Douglas Haig led troops parading through the streets to

Whitehall, where they marched past a temporary memorial created for the occasion. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, it took the form of an empty tomb, or Cenotaph. Soon, wreaths and flowers were piled high at its base. It proved so successful that a permanent version was commissioned, and unveiled the following year with a simple inscription to 'The Glorious Dead'.



Spectators after the parade at the Cenotaph, Whitehall, 19 July 1919. © IWM (Q28762)

Spectators outside Buckingham Palace after the parade, 19 July 1919. © IWM (Q28765)



COMMEMORATION

The end of the First World War might have seen celebrations, but underlying the public mood was a complex mixture of emotions. Britain and the Empire forces had suffered around one million deaths, with at least two million wounded. This death toll represented around 12% of all those who served, although a higher proportion of those who served on the front lines lost their lives. Such unprecedented losses cast a long shadow. The years following the war saw a growing interest in spirituality and séances, in which the bereaved sought to commune with their lost loved ones. This epitomised the challenges faced by a society seeking to make sense of an unimaginable calamity and find solace in honouring their dead.

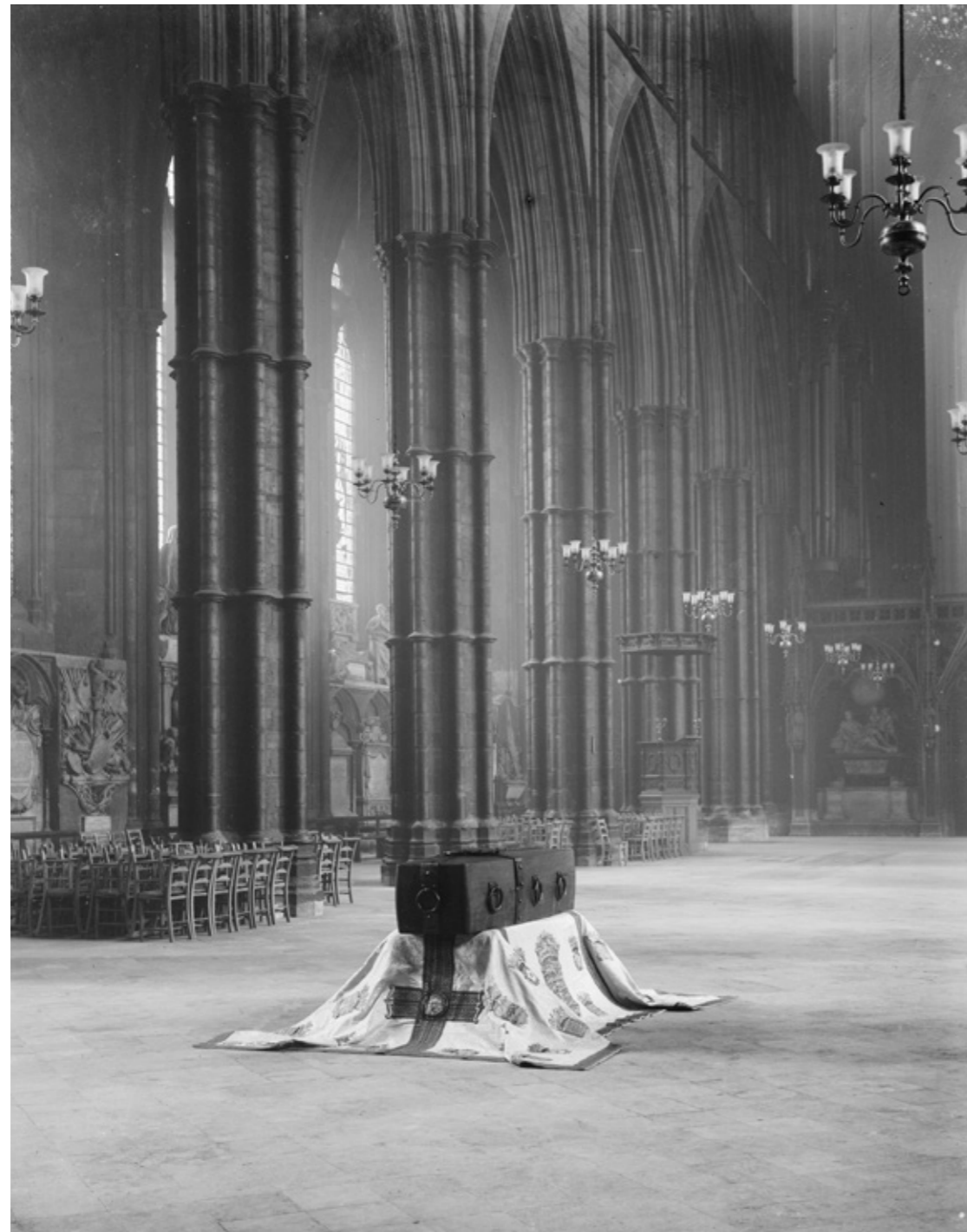
In the aftermath of the war, new rituals and forms of remembrance took shape. Around 74,000 community war memorials were installed – from crosses on village

greens to plaques and monuments, as well as registers of the dead and books of remembrance. Many had a practical purpose, such as memorial halls, clock towers and pavilions, even donations of land for public use. It was exceptionally rare for villages in Britain not to have been touched by the war – of around 16,000 in total, only around 50 avoided any casualties, becoming known as 'thankful parishes'.

The anniversary of the Armistice in 1919 saw the first national two minutes' silence. By 1920, many of the now-familiar rituals of Armistice Day were in place, including the permanent Cenotaph. That November also saw the burial of the 'Unknown Warrior': the brainchild of former army chaplain David Railton, who had written to the Dean of Westminster proposing the exhumation of an unidentified soldier from the battlefields, to be laid to rest alongside Kings, Queens and poets.

Several bodies were exhumed and brought to the French town of St. Pol, where they were covered and laid out in a makeshift chapel near to the railway line. Brigadier-General Wyatt, in command of British forces in France, selected one which was placed in an oak coffin draped with a Union flag, and carried by destroyer to Dover then on to London. It was brought to the Abbey on

a gun carriage along with a military escort, witnessed by enormous crowds, and attended by a guard of honour formed of one hundred servicemen who had been awarded the Victoria Cross. After being lowered into his tomb, the Unknown Warrior's coffin was covered with soil from the battlefields. Days later the queue to lay flowers in the Abbey was still several miles long.



7 November 1920, the oak coffin for the Unknown Warrior lies in Westminster Abbey ahead of its journey to France. © IWM (Q31515)

King George V prepares to unveil the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London, by pressing a button on the pillar in front of him which caused the two Union Jack flags to fall on Armistice Day, 11 November 1920. The coffin of the Unknown Warrior lies on a gun carriage behind the King. © IWM (Q14965)



THE IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

Early in the war, the British military authorities had banned the repatriation of mortal remains from the front. This meant that the majority of Britain's dead lay overseas, many in France and Belgium but also further afield – around the Mediterranean in northern Italy and Greece, in the Middle East, and across Africa. In 1917, the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) had been established to oversee the commemoration of the British Empire's war dead through the compilation of exhaustive records and the creation of war cemeteries and memorials to those with no known grave.

The driving force behind its creation was Fabian Ware, a former journalist and educator, who served with a Red Cross Unit during the early months of the conflict. By 1916 he was leading a Directorate of Graves Registration

and Enquiries, which documented the locations of burials and provided photographs of graves to relatives. Early the following year, a proposal was submitted to the Imperial War Conference for the formation of a permanent, civilian organisation to care for the dead of the British Empire, and the IWGC was established by Royal Charter on 21 May 1917.

From the outset, this new body was conceived as a multinational organisation. 'On every field of battle,' wrote Ware, 'soldiers of the United Kingdom fell and were buried side by side with their comrades from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland, from India and from all the British Colonies.' All would be represented on the new Commission, in an unprecedented collaboration. Even as the war continued, the IWGC began to plan its work. A report by Sir



The unveiling and dedication of the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, 24 July 1927. © CWGC (21393)

Frederic Kenyon, Director of the British Museum, established the earliest tenets: that the memorials should be permanent, and that there should be no distinction made on the basis of rank or class, whether military or civilian. Furthermore, wrote Kenyon, 'no less honour should be paid to the last resting places of Indian and other non-Christian members of the Empire than to those of our British soldiers.'

Once the Commission's proposals began to be formed, there was vociferous debate over the most fitting way to commemorate the dead, and particularly over the tension between individual freedom and collective equality. The principle of non-repatriation, although emotive, was less contentious than the proposal for a uniform headstone. Thousands signed an unsuccessful petition requesting that families should be able to choose a cruciform marker for their loved ones.

This tension between the secular and the sacred, the demands of military commemoration with the personal grief of mothers and widows, matched the wider debates in post-war society on the tons of remembrance rituals that were taking shape.

Several of Britain's leading artists were employed to design cemeteries and memorials, among them Edwin Lutyens, Reginald Blomfield, Herbert Baker, Robert Lorimer, John Burnet and Charles Holden. Arthur Hill of Kew Gardens advised on planting, the writer Rudyard Kipling served as literary advisor. Macdonald Gill designed the font which would be used on the headstones, and sculptors such as Charles Sargeant Jagger were commissioned. Assistant architects were responsible for the specific designs of most of the cemeteries, with preference given to veterans, as Kenyon explained: 'Those who have themselves

served, and whose comrades lie in these cemeteries, are best qualified to express the sentiment which we desire the cemeteries to convey.'

By 1927, over 400,000 headstones had been installed, spread across 5,000 burial grounds in 100 different countries: from Archangel to Zanzibar. Two-thirds of the graves were in France and Flanders, where the planting of 63 miles of hedges and 540 acres of grass transformed once-desolate ground.

Great memorials listed the names of the 'Missing': those whose bodies were never found, whose graves had been lost in the fighting, or who could not be identified and were buried beneath a headstone bearing Kipling's haunting inscription 'Known Unto God'. The most famous was the Menin Gate in Ypres, inaugurated in 1927, when General Plumer told

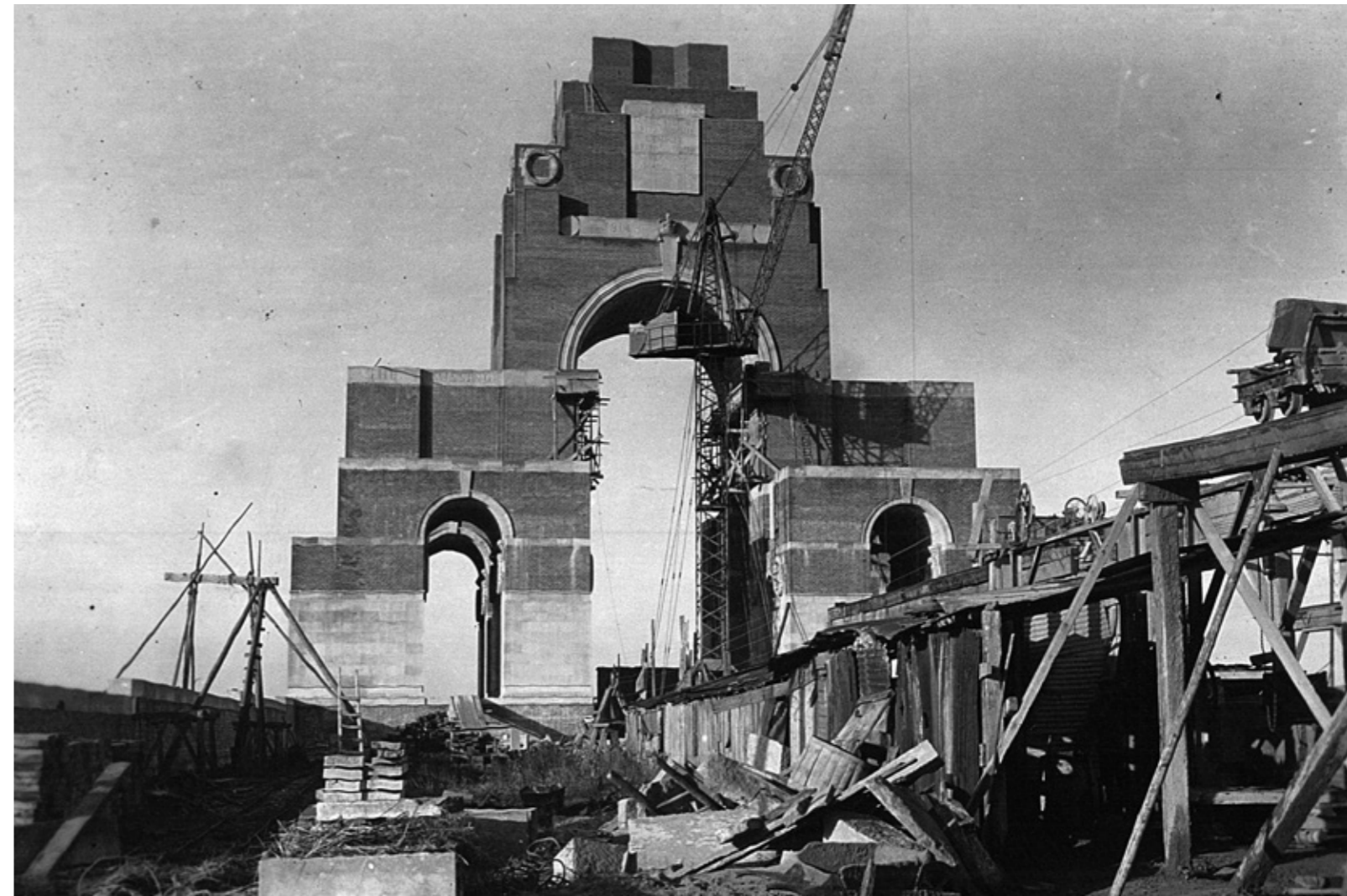
the families of those lost without trace, 'He is not missing; he is here'.

The opening of the Thiepval Memorial on the Somme in 1932 was seen as the crowning moment in the Commission's work. At its unveiling, the Prince of Wales expressed the desire to honour the dead not only in words, but also by 'material expression... as enduring as human hands and human art can make it.' The final memorial – at Villers-Brettoneux – was completed in 1938, but the following year saw the world descend into a second global conflict even more destructive than the first.

LEGACY

What became known as the First World War had a profound effect across the world. Old empires were broken apart and new nations were formed. In many regions, decisions taken during the peace process

View of the Thiepval Memorial, France, under construction, taken from the east, 1 December 1931. © CWGC



created conditions which would cause conflict for decades to come, in some areas even to this day. While Communism took hold in Russia, the position of the United States as dominant industrial power was confirmed. For some of the populations of the vanquished powers, the outcome of the war and the peace settlements engendered resentment. Many others came to believe in peace at all costs.

The aftermath of the First World War saw Britain's imperial territories grow to their greatest extent, but the financial burden of the military effort critically undermined Britain's ability to protect and sustain this empire. For Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India, the war contributed to growing demands for greater political and military independence, although the process of change would be slow. For many countries, sacrifices on the battlefield would be invoked to define national values and identities.

Within British society, pre-war norms of class and deference had been challenged by the wartime experience. Women had played a vitally important role in wartime industry and the armed forces, but the effect this had on post-war society was not straightforward. Voting rights had been granted to some women over the age of 30, but universal adult suffrage took another ten years to achieve. Party politics were permanently reshaped, with the Liberals' decline matched by the rise of Labour as a parliamentary force. With revolution and social unrest across Europe, widespread strikes in Britain exacerbated fears of a similar domestic crisis, while the economic depression which took hold over the coming years led to rising unemployment and further disillusionment.

State intervention in economic and domestic life had proven its potential, and there was a renewed concern for

social housing, welfare and education. New technologies, industrial processes and medical treatments were employed for peacetime purposes. Over the coming years, many would embrace cultural modernism, with its artistic, musical and literary experimentation. But the liberal hedonism of the so-called 'jazz age' was matched by fear of decline and destruction, and many sought reassurance in an imagined past. These were years characterised by great advances but also retrenchment and nationalism; by optimism and hope for the future, but also by pessimism, recrimination and anxiety.

By the late 1920s, tens of thousands of pilgrims were visiting the battlefields of a decade before. The unveiling of the great memorials, particularly the Menin Gate at Ypres, encouraged a boom in tourism and guide books to the Western Front proliferated. Perhaps the most famous novel of the war, Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Western Nicht Neues* (published in translation as *All Quiet on the Western Front*) was first published in book form in 1929 and sold millions of copies. Many of the texts which came to define the British perception of the war emerged at that time – from Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That* to the poetry of Wilfred Owen. Yet it was not until the 1960s – in the aftermath of the Second World War and in the shadow of Vietnam – that this literature assumed the status it still holds. More recently, historians have sought to frame the First World War as more than simply futile slaughter, seeking to subvert easy assumptions about the motivations of its participants, and highlighting its profound significance for the modern world.

The First World War still lives with us: in our cities and towns, in our parish churches, in our popular culture, in our art and literature, and in our imaginations. We continue to discover personal, emotional or communal links to this



© Michael St. Maur Sheil

This photograph of Tyne Cot Cemetery in Flanders is from the exhibition 'Fields of Battle, Lands of Peace and Reconciliation', created by photographer Michael St. Maur Sheil, which is currently on display in St. James's Park.

Tyne Cot Cemetery is the largest Commonwealth Cemetery in the world with almost 12,000 graves. In 1922 King George V visited Tyne Cot and said, "I have many times asked myself whether there can be more potent advocates of peace upon earth through the years to come than this massed multitude of silent witnesses to the desolation of war."

epochal conflict. It retains a peculiar power to move us, and when we stand before a headstone in a war cemetery, we reflect not only on the lives of those who lived through those days, but also on our own values and our own world.

With thanks to Dr Glyn Pryor who has written historical essays for each of the Government's First World War Centenary Commemorations. Dr Pryor is Chief Historian at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and has acted as historical advisor for many of the national and international events marking the centenary.

WAR MEMORIALS

One hundred years on, and we still remember the losses of the First World War with poignant awe. Around three quarters of a million British men (and women) lost their lives. The casualty rate was about 12% of those who served, and of the youngest adult male age group, those up to 25 years of age, one in seven, died. There was pride in a hard-won victory, but celebration was tempered by an awareness of just how many young lives had been lost in gaining it.

Early on, the decision was taken not to repatriate the British and Empire dead. And because of the nature of modern warfare, with high explosive shells raining down on a largely static Western Front, many of the dead had disappeared. Over half a million men of the British Empire were 'missing': 528,000 fatalities had disappeared or could not be identified. One of these bodies was to be buried amid great fanfare in Westminster Abbey, in 1920, as the Unknown Warrior. Never in modern times had there been such widespread grief across the land.

The Imperial (now the Commonwealth) War Graves Commission was established in 1917, and was responsible for "the largest and most inspired programme of public design ever completed by a British government agency", in the words of the distinguished historian, the late Gavin Stamp. Official remembrance led both to fine battlefield cemeteries and memorials to the missing, and on a personal level to commemorative scrolls and plaques.

The (now Royal) British Legion organised visits to the war cemeteries, enabling graveside tributes to be paid by a much wider section of society than was used to travelling abroad. Liverpool's moving Cenotaph, sculpted by H. Tyson Smith, captures one such pilgrimage in a bronze relief. Families remembered their dead in a variety of ways, from elegant church monuments for the affluent, to mantelpiece photographs in memorial frames. Subsequent children might be named after the men who had not returned: memories lingered in a thousand untold ways.

For everyone, the Cenotaph in Whitehall stood as the nation's memorial to British and Empire dead. At first intended only as a temporary structure, Lutyens' chaste design struck such a chord with the popular mood when raised in 1919, that it was rebuilt in permanent form in 1920. Grief needs a focus: and with no graves to mourn over, memorials provided that tangible place of memory. They were to become the centres of annual gatherings on Remembrance Sunday, and they continue to capture the public imagination. Rumours of their irrelevance have proved to be ill-founded.

How would communities remember? They existed in many forms: from parishes to regiments, commercial firms to schools and colleges, streets to counties, Masonic lodges to railway companies. Some fortunate places witnessed the return of every single

Relief of mourners
from the Liverpool
Cenotaph by
Herbert Tyson
Smith (1930).
© Roger Bowdler



person despatched to serve: there are over fifty of these so-called "thankful villages" – a tiny fraction out of the tally of 16,000 or so local communities. All of the others had to bear losses. And these could be devastatingly heavy.

Raising a memorial was a key way of ensuring that the names of the dead would live on. These could be practical affairs, designed to ensure that the lives of the living would be enhanced through their sacrifice: public parks, school swimming pools, hospital wings, or football stands were opened across the

Meldon War Memorial, which stands outside the former School House, was given Grade II listing status on 28 August 2018 by Historic England. The memorial commemorates those who had left the parish to serve in the First World War who all came home. The stone base originally hosted a timber flagpole. © D. Moon



country. Village halls were a particularly popular form of utilitarian monument. Others sought symbolic witness to a shared sense of loss by raising a war memorial.

The peak of the late Victorian cult of mourning had passed by 1900, but the many memorials raised to the dead of the Boer War (1899-1902) showed that there was a strong appetite among the Edwardians for the public expression of military tribute. Newcastle's was among the grandest, a tall shaft crowned with a bronze statue of Victory. Many of the dead had come from Territorial units, which ensured a strong link between places and the men who marched away, and who did not come back. This sense of locality and loss was even more strongly felt in the First World War, which led to a wave of memorials being raised all across the land.

Sculptors and architects were trained in an academic tradition, and the design of memorials was an established line of business for them. Monumental masons existed everywhere: supplying churchyard and cemetery tombs had become quite an industry, using increasingly mechanised

methods and imported materials, like marble and some granites. After 1918 the industry rose to the challenge of remembrance and produced tens of thousands of memorials: the last great wave of monument-making in Britain.

Most village war memorials took traditional forms, and belonged to this tradition of the commercial monument. Gothic crosses, obelisks, marble angels and statues of soldiers were raised in huge numbers: we still do not know just how many war memorials there are. Many would not be out of place in a cemetery. Some are beautiful: Eric Gill's wayside cross at Trumpington, outside Cambridge, has exquisite lettering and reliefs – one shows a Tommy, carrying Christ's cross. Committees were set up and funding appeals launched. Masons and sculptors had never been so busy as in the years after the Armistice.

Some memorials had been set up during the war: that at Rawtenstall, just outside Burnley in Lancashire, is generally regarded as the earliest, having been erected in 1915. In 1916, at St George's church, Deal (Kent), the vicar raised a granite cross to his two fallen sons, Arthur and John Tisdall; Arthur had been awarded the Victoria Cross for his courage at Gallipoli. This cross then became the parish war memorial, and more names were duly added. Most went up in the early 1920s – Liverpool's, unveiled in 1930, was one of the latest.

Larger towns and organisations could rally together, and could afford to commission bespoke memorials from leading designers. Loughborough commissioned a tall carillon, with locally-cast bells ringing out a composition by Sir Edward Elgar. Birmingham commissioned a "Hall of Memory", with sculpture inside and out – one of the reliefs inside shows the war-wounded, blind and legless, returning

Trumpington War Memorial (1921) by Eric Gill. © Roger Bowdler



home. Regimental memorials ranged from the deeply traditional to the boldly avant-garde. Adrian Jones's Cavalry Memorial (unveiled in Hyde Park in 1924) showed a St. George in bronze, his horse straddling

a dead dragon; nearby, Charles Sargeant Jagger's Royal Artillery Memorial of 1925 depicted a brutal howitzer above fine (but eroding) reliefs showing the realities of the front-line service. Jagger was also

War Memorial at St. George's Church, Deal (1916).
© Roger Bowdler



responsible for one of the finest railway company memorials: "The Letter" stands on platform one at Paddington Station, a reminder that some of the finest modern sculptures of all were to remember the war dead.

Memorials are spread right across the land. A century on, the names they bear remain very much in mind. We will remember them.

With thanks to Dr Roger Bowdler for this essay.

Dr Roger Bowdler is a historian of funerary culture, and a former Director of Listing at Historic England where he led the First World War centenary programme. A consultant, teacher and writer, he is also a trustee of War Memorials Trust.

Royal Artillery Memorial, Hyde Park Corner, London (1925) by Charles Sargeant Jagger.
© Roger Bowdler



Little Comberton war memorial in Worcestershire has been conserved following a grant from the First World War Memorials Programme administered by War Memorials Trust. The names painted in black are those who fought and returned from the war while the names of the fallen are gilded.
© Little Comberton Parish Council



NEVER SUCH INNOCENCE

Never Such Innocence (NSI) is a charity committed to engaging children and young people from around the world in the First World War commemorations through creative arts. The charity has run an annual international poetry, art, and song competition for 9-to-16-year olds for each year of the centenary. Over the past four years the children and young people who have taken part in the competitions have developed creative and engaging work in response to the events of the First World War. Since 2014, NSI has received almost 11,000 entries to their competition, from 47 different countries, territories and dependencies across five continents. To mark the centenary of the Armistice, NSI has collated all the winning works from the four centenary competitions and published them in an Anthology.

In 2018 NSI embarked on a project called *Together*, inviting young people from the UK and Germany to submit creative work inspired by the First World War on themes of hope and unity for the future. Some chose to work individually or as a group within their school, and some schools worked together across the two countries to submit joint entries.

Lia Taylor's poem *Carpe Diem* won First Place for ages 14–16 in the *Together* competition. A number of the young people who were successful in this competition, including Lia, are attending the Service to mark the Centenary of the Armistice at Westminster Abbey.

I have always been fascinated by history and, during my current A-level course, I have studied the First World War and found it so interesting that when I was asked to go on a battlefields trip to Belgium in June 2018, I jumped at the chance. My school organised the trip with two schools from Northern Ireland, where we participated in a service to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement at the Island of Ireland Peace Park.

The entire experience of seeing the battlefields, walking through the trenches where soldiers trod, and gasping at heart-wrenching monuments such as the Menin Gate, Thiepval, and countless cemeteries is what inspired my writing. This momentous awe is at the heart of this poem and it was in the Peace Village near the Island of Ireland Peace Park that it was written.

– Lia Taylor

Carpe Diem by Lia Taylor

In these times of peace
With all the triggers calm,
Since the fire has ceased
And the sky's seen our palms

They speak to us.

In the dead of night
And the hope of day,
Do we hear their plight?
Or ignore what they say?

But still, they speak to us.

We cannot neglect,
And we cannot shy away.
We cannot forget,
Lest we hear the bugles play.

Because still, they speak to us.

There are lessons to learn
On the torture of hate,
There is more love to earn,
And fear to eradicate.

And so, they speak to us.

We can't stop here,
We can't give up hope,
We must shape a new world,
One in which we can cope.
This was the beginning
Of a new life for us.

Can you hear them?
Can you hear what they say?

We must pass on their stories,
Let everyone know it,
We must live by their glories,
By the songs of dead poets.

You can hear them. Now,
Heed what they say:
Carpe diem.
Seize the day.



HM Government

To honour and remember the lives of those who served in and were affected by the war, the UK Government led a national centenary programme of ceremonial events, cultural activity and education.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, supported by 10 Downing Street, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Department for Education, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and other stakeholders, and working in partnership with key delivery partners, is the lead UK Government Department for the commemoration of the First World War. The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport was supported by an expert advisory panel to oversee the four-year programme, to build a commemoration fitting of this significant milestone in world history.

Back cover From the 'Imperial War Museum Book of 1918: Year of Victory' by Malcolm Brown. Reproduced with the kind permission of Pan Macmillan Books © 1999

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Publication design by Park Studio.

'Dickie,' said Captain Brown, 'the bloody war's over! It's over!' And it was. We had left France with a war on and arrived in Blighty with a peace on! And all those ships letting off those sirens for us, as if we were a lot of conquering heroes coming home, that was the first intimation we had of it.

While we were going through the formalities of disembarking, a strange and unreal thought was running through my mind. I had a future. It took some getting used to, this knowledge. There was a future ahead for me, something I had not imagined for some years. I said as much to Captain Brown. He smiled at me; he was a man of about forty. 'Yes,' he agreed. 'You've got a future now, Dickie. And so have I. I wonder what we'll do with it, and what it will be like. Because, you know, things are not going to be the same as they were.'

Lieutenant R.G. Dixon, 251 Siege Battery, 53rd Brigade
Royal Garrison Artillery, First Army, recalling the arrival of
his leave ship into Folkestone Harbour



HM Government

