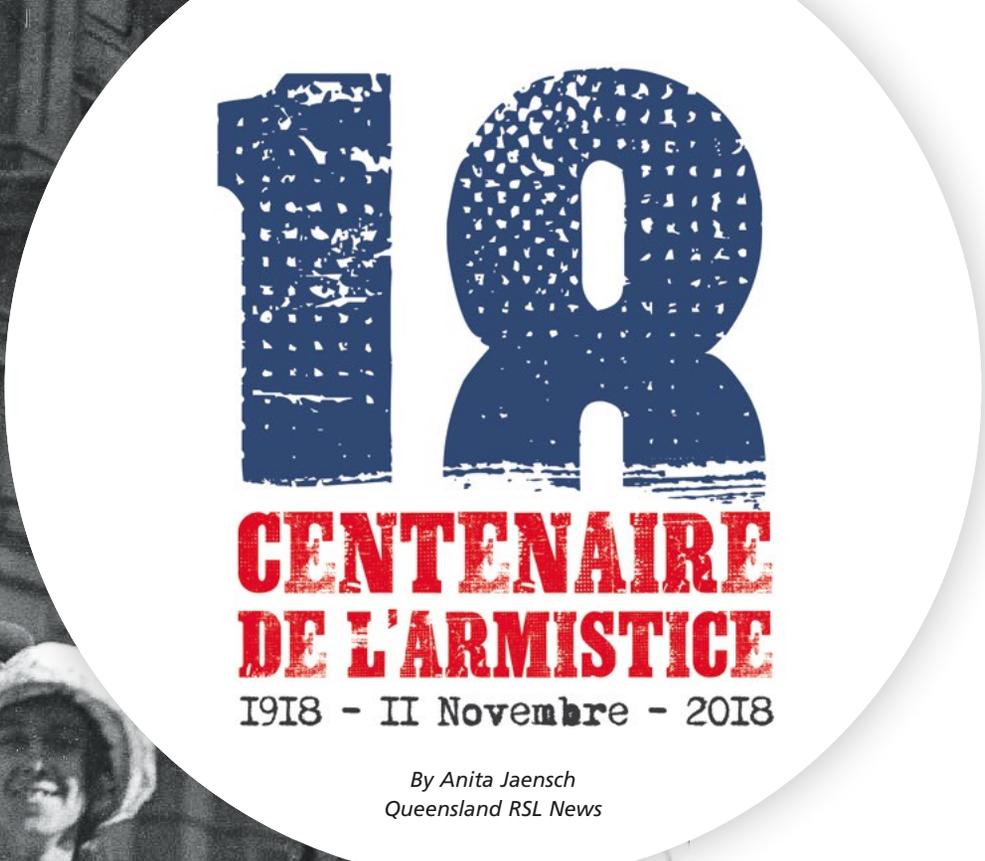




Women and children rejoice on the streets of Sydney at the signing of the Armistice. (AWM: A03281)

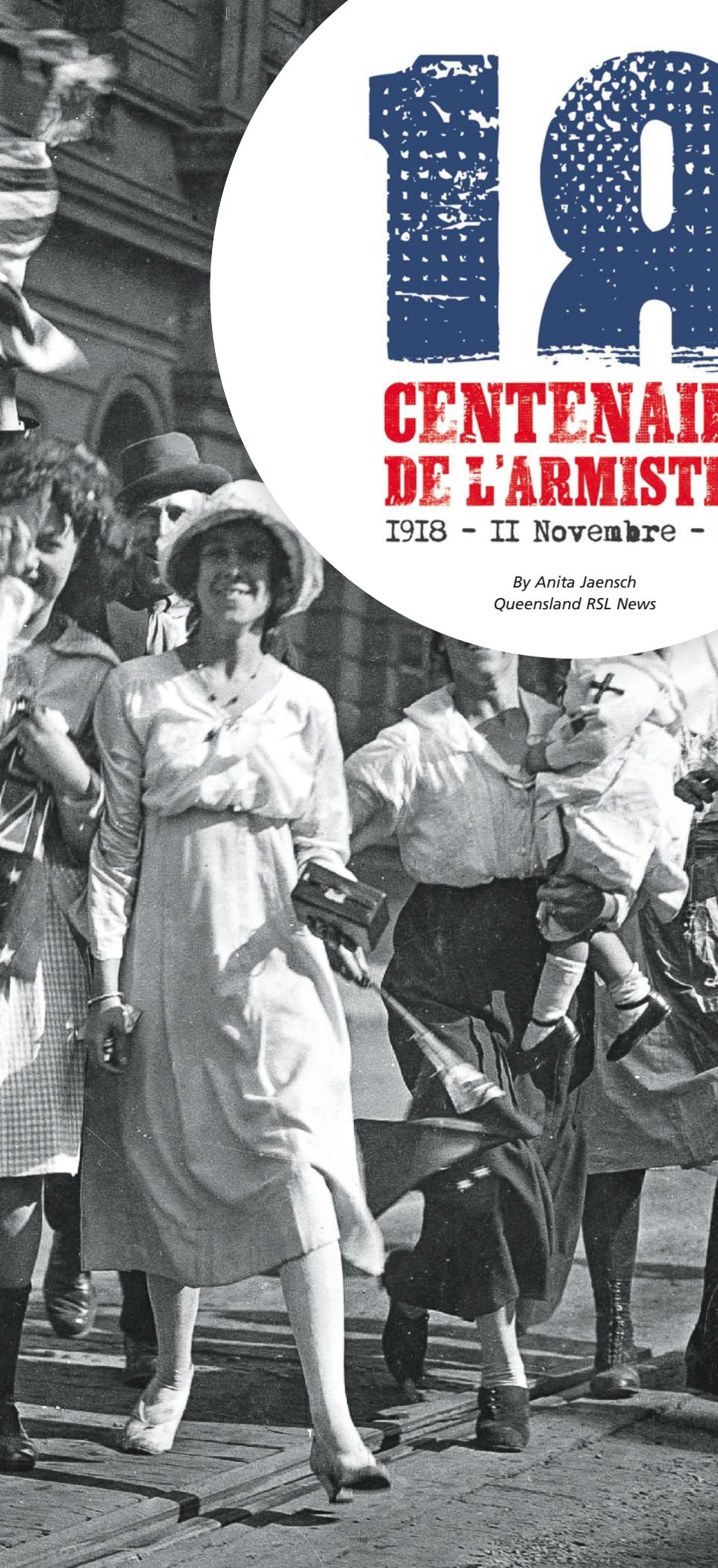


100

CENTENAIRE DE L'ARMISTICE

1918 - 11 Novembre - 2018

*By Anita Jaensch
Queensland RSL News*



On November 11, 2018, Australia will commemorate the Centenary of the Armistice – the moment the guns finally fell silent on the Western Front.

It was 5am on November 11, 1918. In a railway carriage in a snowy forest in France, representatives of France, Britain and Germany signed the document that would end four years of bloody conflict. The Armistice would come into effect six hours later – at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

News of the Armistice reached Britain by 10.20am and was telegraphed to the Australian Governor-General: "Most urgent armistice signed 5AM this morning."

Despite the late hour, the news was greeted with jubilation. The scene in Barcardine – captured by the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* – was echoed across the country: "the

ringing of school, fire and church bells brought out hundreds of people from their beds in all sorts of attire. The gratifying news soon circulated, and the jubilation increased... at 9am, the streets were quite crowded with

people who were worked up to a great pitch of excitement."

The joy and relief, though, were tinged with pain and loss. In a nation of less than five million people, hardly a single family was left untouched; more than 60,000 soldiers had been killed and a further 156,000 had been wounded or taken prisoner. Some 23,000 soldiers were missing, and their families would never learn what had happened to their loved ones.

On the battlefield

At the Front, the mood was subdued. Word of the imminent ceasefire had reached the troops, but the fighting continued right to the last moment. On that final day of conflict, there were almost 11,000 casualties, and 2738 men died.

"It was hard to believe the war was over," Colonel Percy

FACT FILE

Australia's youngest casualty was Private James Martin, who was just 14 when he died of typhoid fever contracted in the trenches of Gallipoli.

Dobson wrote. "Everything was just the same; tired troops everywhere and cold, drizzly winter weather – just the same as if the war were still on."

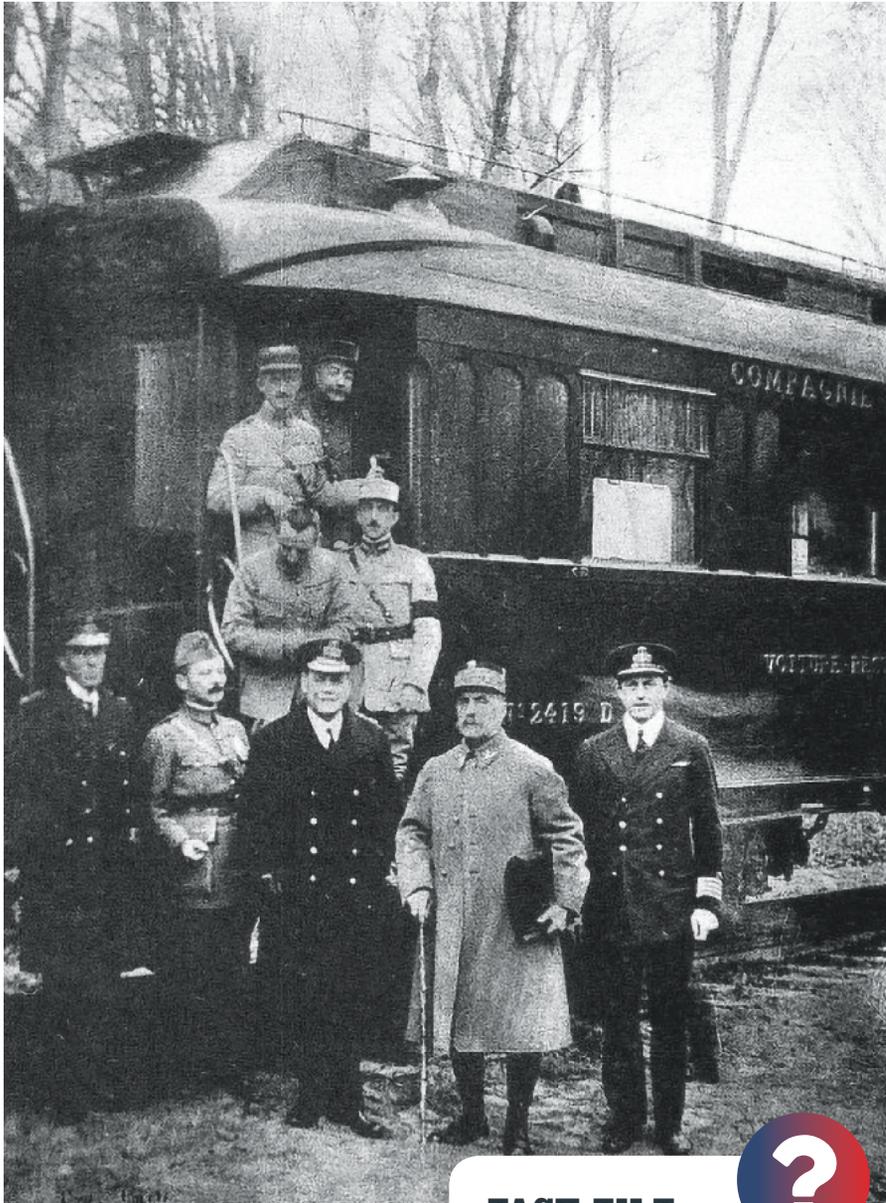
It would take time for the exhausted troops to realise that they had survived and would be returning home. But for many Australian soldiers, it would be many months before they saw familiar shores. And many would find that, although they had left the battlefields behind, they had brought the horrors of what they had lived through home.

FACT FILE

Although the private railway carriage in which the Armistice was signed returned to ordinary traffic, it was returned to the Clairière d'Armistice – a specially designed building in the Forest of Compiègne – in November 1927. It remained there until 1940, when it was transported to Berlin by German forces. However, it was set ablaze by SS troops in the final days of WWII.



ABOVE: A crowd of civilians and Australian soldiers gather in the Vignacourt town square on Armistice Day, 1918. (AWM: P10550.089) INSET: Returned soldiers and supporters march along Hunter Street, Sydney, to celebrate Armistice Day, 1918. (Photo: Herbert Fishwick / Fairfax Syndication)



The Treaty of Versailles

Although the Armistice ended the fighting, it would take six months of negotiation before the Treaty of Versailles was signed in June 1919.

Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes had fought for Australia to represent its own interests at the peace conference, arguing that the nation had won this right by its disproportional sacrifice during the war. As a result, he and Deputy Prime Minister Joseph Cook both added their signatures to the document – the first time that Australia had signed an international treaty.

FACT FILE

The last soldier to be killed in action in WWI was American Private Henry Gunther. He was killed while charging a German entrenchment, just 60 seconds before the ceasefire.

ABOVE: Taken in the forest of Compiègne after reaching an agreement for the Armistice that ended the fighting of WWI. It would take six months of negotiation before the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, officially ending five years of conflict.



RSL Queensland Events

Freedom Sounds concert

Echoing the scenes of jubilation that took place following the signing of the Armistice, Brisbane will mark 100 years since the end of WWI with a joyous free concert on November 11. The afternoon of homegrown music at the Riverstage will feature Pete Murray, Kate Ceberano and Ash Grunwald, together with food and drink stalls and kids activities. Reserve your tickets at www.freedomsounds.com.au

Remembrance Day Brisbane

At 11am on November 11, people around Australia will pause to remember the lives lost during WWI and the other conflicts of the past century. RSL Queensland will host a Remembrance Day ceremony at 11:15am at the Shrine of Remembrance, ANZAC Square, Brisbane.

Remembrance Day around Queensland

There will also be more than 200 Remembrance Day services and special Armistice Centenary events organised by Sub Branches around Queensland. Find your closest service at www.rslqld.org/remembrance-day

Remembering the fallen

In towns and cities all over Australia, memorials and rolls of honour spoke of the terrible toll that 'the war to end all wars' had taken on families and communities.

The moment of the ceasefire gradually became associated with the remembrance of those who lost their lives during the war. On the first anniversary of the Armistice, King George V asked all the people of the British Empire to stop and observe two minutes' silence at 11am—a moment of respect and remembrance that is now a central feature of commemorative services on Remembrance Day.

FACT FILE

The pen used to sign the Armistice is displayed at the Musée de l'Armée in Paris. It was rescued by a French officer before German troops reached the Clairière d'Armistice. The museum also holds an ashtray souvenired by one of the people present at the signing.



ABOVE: On the first anniversary of the armistice in 1919, two minutes' silence was instituted as part of the main commemorative ceremony at the new Cenotaph in London, UK. The silence was proposed by Australian journalist Edward Honey, who was working in Fleet Street. This photograph, taken by an unknown artist, conveys the collective grief of a people. INSET: Now known as Remembrance Day, ceremonies are held at war memorials and other public spaces throughout Commonwealth of Nations member states to mark the end of WWI and remember all members of their armed forces who have died in the line of duty. (Photo: Department of Defence)

SIR JOHN MONASH: 'ONE OF THE GREATEST AUSTRALIANS EVER'

A founding member of Australia's first Rotary club, Sir John Monash is widely acknowledged as one of our greatest Australians. A pre-eminent scholar, engineer and soldier, he is noted for his brilliant command of the Australian Army Corps in France, which proved instrumental in turning the tide of the Great War.

FEW HAVE HAD the same propensity for battle as General Sir John Monash, yet the man regarded as one of Australia's greatest ever military commanders hated war.

At the end of WWI Sir John wrote: "From the far-off days of 1914, when the first call came, until the last shot was fired, every day was filled with loathing, horror and distress. I deplored all the time the loss of precious life, and the waste of human effort. Nothing could have been more repugnant to me than the realisation of the dreadful inefficiency of, and the misspent energy of war."

He knew, however, that in the end that there are truths by which we live that are worth fighting to defend.

"Yet it had to be," he continued, "and the thought always uppermost was the earnest prayer that Australia

might forever be spared such a horror on her own soil. There is, in my belief, only one way to realise such a prayer. The nation that wishes to defend its land and its honour must spare no effort, refuse no sacrifice to make itself so formidable that no enemy will dare to assail it."

While he is best remembered as a military commander, Sir John's accomplishments are not limited to his time in uniform.

Born in Melbourne on June 27, 1865, into a Prussian-Jewish family, he was educated at Scotch College and Melbourne University. By 1895 he had degrees in arts, engineering and law and had qualified as a municipal surveyor, an engineer of water supply and a patent attorney. As an engineer, Monash's early career was in bridge construction, working



NSW Centenary Events

Remembrance Day Sydney

Historically, NSW's Remembrance Day Service, hosted by the Premier, has taken place at the Cenotaph in Sydney's Martin Place. However, to mark the 100th anniversary of the ending of WWI and the completion of the Anzac Memorial Centenary Project, the 2018 Remembrance Day Service will be held at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park. At the conclusion of the service, all attendees are invited to explore the expanded Memorial.

Remembrance Day around NSW

Remembrance Day services and Armistice Centenary events will be held throughout NSW. For more information, visit rslnsw.org.au/events/RemembranceDay2018

An Australian War Requiem at Sydney Town Hall

This special concert on the day of the centenary of WWI's Armistice presents Christopher Bowen's *An Australian War Requiem*, a critically acclaimed meditation on conflict and loss, with a uniquely Australian perspective. Set to a deeply moving libretto created by Pamela Traynor, based on letters between Australian soldiers at the front and their mothers, the work transcends the national context to portray the grief and loss as a truly universal experience. Tickets can be purchased via www.eventbrite.com.au

RIGHT: His Majesty King George V, knighting Lieutenant General Sir John Monash, Australian Corps Commander, at the Corps Headquarters in the Chateau, when General Monash was invested as a Knight Commander of the Bath. (AWM: E02964) **INSET:** A portrait of Brigadier General John Monash in Cairo, Egypt, in 1915. (AWM: A01241)

for a time with the Melbourne Harbour Trust before becoming a partner in a bridge building firm. By the turn of the century, his focus had changed to building construction.

Monash's military career began in 1884 with his membership of the Melbourne University company of the 4th Battalion, Victoria Militia, and then moving to the North Melbourne Battery of the Metropolitan Brigade of the Militia Garrison Artillery. He was commissioned in 1887. By 1913, Monash had the rank of Colonel and was appointed to command the 13th Infantry Brigade. With the outbreak of WWI in 1914, Monash was transferred from the militia to active service. In 1915, he served as chief censor until taking command of the 4th Infantry Brigade (AIF). In this command, he served at Gallipoli.

Promoted to Major-General, he commanded the 3rd Division, AIF, in France in 1916. Monash succeeded General Birdwood as Australian Corps commander in 1918 and, in the same year, was knighted by King George V in recognition of his role in the Battle of Hamel Hill.

During the 93-minute battle (just three minutes longer than he had estimated) that cemented his reputation as a visionary, Sir John led the victorious Allied troops against the Germans.

He meticulously planned every detail, using a combined arms approach that brought together artillery, infantry, tanks and aircraft in what has been described as the first modern battle.

To mark the centenary of the Battle of Hamel on July 4, a commemorative sculpture of Sir John was unveiled at the Australian War Memorial's sculpture garden. He is one of only three to be honoured with a sculpture at the war memorial, joining stretcher bearer



John Simpson Kirkpatrick and soldier-surgeon Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop.

"Hamel is an outstanding example of Monash's military acumen, planning ability and leadership," Lieutenant General Angus Campbell said during his commemorative address.

"Under Monash's leadership, the Australian Corps proved it was the equal of any other formation in the British expeditionary force, successfully fighting a sophisticated enemy in the main theatre of the war."

With the conclusion of the war, Monash became Director-General of Repatriation and Demobilisation with responsibility for arranging the return of Australian troops from Europe.

Back in Australia, Monash resumed his engineering career, firstly as General Manager and later as Chairman of the State Electricity Commission (SEC) of Victoria. Under his leadership, the SEC became an important body in developing Victoria's brown coal reserves as an electricity source and, by 1930, extending the power grid across the whole of the state.

During his address at the unveiling of Sir John's commemorative monument, director of the Australian War Memorial, Dr Brendan Nelson, said Sir John is among a very small number of people and deserved to be remembered as "one of the greatest



Australians ever" for his efforts to unite the young, fractured country and uphold democracy when he returned after WWI.

"He was a man whose intellect was never, perhaps, fully tested; resourceful, a man who focused on detail. A man who was fiercely independent, but consulted widely and made those with whom he worked and those whom he led feel a reverence for themselves.

"He was a man who was devoted to every cause to which he committed his life and devoted to those with whom he served and those he led.

"Some people lead from position – generals, chairman of the board, captain of the team. Others eschew position and instead lead from principle. But, occasionally, we get someone who leads from both. And John Monash was such a man."

Monash's Masterpiece: The Battle of Le Hamel and the 93 minutes that Changed the World

Peter FitzSimons

Hachette Australia

RRP: \$35.00

In his new book, Peter FitzSimons brings to life the story of the battle of Le Hamel – the Allied triumph masterminded by Australian commander Sir John Monash, whose strategies became the blueprint for modern warfare. This is an edited extract.

21 June 1918

It is a dark and stormy night...

And yet, into the wee hours, one dim light continues to shine on the third floor of the Bertangles Chateau, HQ of the Australian Corps. It is, of course, in the study of General John Monash who – ever and always a man for the midnight oil, and beyond – continues to form up his plans for the battle ahead, which he estimates he should be able to unleash in around a fortnight.

Through the plumes of smoke coming from his ever-puffing pipe, the engineer's pen flies over page after page – making notes just as he did when building bridges – and again he does his best to ensure that the fog of war will dissipate.

It will later be noted that Monash "was trying to evolve a science of war which would be as exact as the science of engineering. He wanted to be able to rely on a battle in the same way he could rely on a bridge."

Perhaps more to the point, Monash brings to building a battle plan exactly the same methodology as he once did to building those bridges. As ever, he seeks to apply science to the problems before him, first collecting, and then analysing, a mass of data, then gathering a variety of specialists to consult on particularly thorny issues, and then working out the best way to proceed. The proposed solution is checked and checked again, discussed, refined, and slowly re-refined, ideally with every specialist on every part of the problem working closely together.

And just as the plans for bridges are specific to the sites where they are built, so too does Monash instinctively, minutely examine the contours of the landscape where his battle is to occur, looking to place the plan on the land in a manner that fits, perfectly.



Victorian Centenary Events

Victorian State Remembrance Day Service

Starting at 10:15am on November 11, the state of Victoria will commemorate the Armistice centenary with the Victorian State Remembrance Day Service. One minute of silence will be observed and The Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria, will lay a wreath on behalf of all Victorians.

- 11am: Remembrance Service
- 11.50am – 12.10pm: On this one day of the year, see the natural ray of sunlight passing across the Stone of Remembrance, illuminating the word 'LOVE' at midday in the Sanctuary.

A series of special events are also planned across the day:

- 6am: Reflect as pipers from across the world join at dawn to mark this period in history.
- Choral performance: Listen to a poignant vocal tribute following the official service.
- 11.30am: Presentation to the 2018 Shrine of Remembrance Medal recipient.
- 11.45am: Presentation to the finalists of the 2018 Remembrance Day Poster Competition for Primary School children.
- 5pm: Flag Lowering – Witness the Shrine Guard lower the flags as the Last Post sounds.

Remembrance Day around Victoria

There will be a number of Remembrance Day services commemorating the Armistice centenary throughout the state.

Visit anzaccentenary.vic.gov.au and www.rslvic.com.au for further details.

And so it continues into the night, as the famed engineer from Melbourne puts together the bare bones of what he hopes will be the first serious Allied attack on German lines for over seven months.

The first, and most important thing, for him, beyond winning the battle, is to be able to do so without the "inefficiency" of the war to date, which had seen most "victories", such as they were, built on horrific casualty levels and overwhelming numbers of shells.

No, by relying on the tanks to do the heavy work of crushing the German wire and taking the trenches, it means the Australians could go over the top without first unleashing the usual heavy bombardment lasting several days, a tactic which was not always successful in the first place. Before the opening of the Battle of the Somme, for example, the bombardment of the Germans had gone for an entire week, only for the British to have 20,000 soldiers killed on just the first day. In fact, Monash is such a believer in the power of the tanks, he decides the troops could even advance without a rolling barrage preceding them, moving forward behind an exploding wall of protective artillery fire that would leap forward by 100 yards every three minutes.

The second thing General Monash wants is surprise: to make the attack with a massive force assembled close to German lines, without Fritz knowing they are there.

Thirdly, he wants speed. When the Allies had taken the windmill above Pozieres – the highest point above the Somme – it had taken them six weeks to advance three miles.

The two factors Monash now pursues are surprise and speed. Hit the enemy not with a succession of blows, but many blows at once coming from so many different and surprising angles, he must cede, and retreat!

4 July 1918

A beautiful night for a battle?

Yes. But also just a beautiful summer's night, with bursts of soft moonlight illuminating the barest wisps of mist floating up from the Somme, and the slight rustle of a breeze wafting those wisps away – even as the odd cloud passes across the face of the moon.

Precisely as Monash and his senior officers had counted on and expected – because the fact that it is like this nine nights out of ten at this time of year has been carefully researched – the light breeze is blowing from west to east, coming from behind the attacking forces. This means that whatever clouds of dust are generated by the shell explosions to come on the dry soil of summer, mixed with the smoke screens, will inevitably drift towards the Germans, making it difficult for Fritz to see the men and tanks who will soon be charging towards them through that genuine "fog of war".

But, all up, right now, it is very pleasant, if just a little darker than expected because of the drifting cloud cover.

For the grizzled veterans among the Australians – the Americans, of course, have no one answering that description – it is an extraordinary contrast to the way it had been in battles past.

Back at Pozieres, for example, the Germans had known the Australians were there and sent out such scything blasts of machinegun fire that, as one Digger would recall, "We could see [them] cutting off the poppies almost against our heads."

But this is not like that at all. For the 6000 men lying out behind the Starting Line in No Man's Land, due

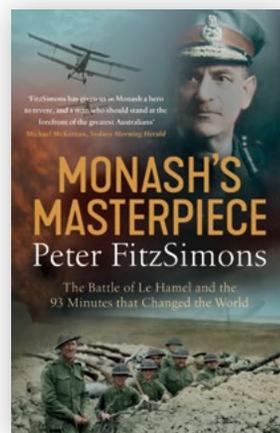
to attack in the first wave, all is calm and quiet, apart from the odd plane overhead, and the odd explosion of a bomb dropping somewhere over German lines.

The main thing is the Germans do not yet know their enemy is here, meaning that the soldiers on the tape actually have time and space to contemplate what lies ahead. It seems extraordinary to think that just ten minutes from now, all hell is going to break loose 100 to 200 yards up ahead, and that they will then be in for the fight of their lives, but there it is. And some blokes will get knocked, but, as Lieutenant Lance Horniman blithely notes, "That's all in the game".

At Bertangles Chateau, glancing out of the window, indeed, 'twixt the ancient gracious pulled-back curtains of the chateau, General Walter Coxen can suddenly see in the dim moonlight, the outlines of a man slowly pacing up and down the gravel drive that lies in front of the chateau. Coxen instantly recognises him: the powerful shoulders, the aquiline nose, the steady, methodical way he paces ...

"The figure was that of [General Monash]," he would recount. "The stage was set, he was awaiting the rise of the curtain. Every now and again he would pause and look at his watch, awaiting zero hour."

Yes, the rising of the curtain is now just minutes away, and the conductor readies to unleash his orchestra.





Portrait of
Lieutenant
General Sir John
Monash taken
in London, 1918.
(AWM: A02697)



Australian War Memorial ACT

Remembrance Day National Ceremony

On November 11, the Australian War Memorial will host the nation's key commemoration. The ceremony includes a formal wreath laying and will be attended by many high-level dignitaries, diplomats and school students, as well as thousands of members of the general public. Australia's Federation Guard and the Band of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, will be on parade, and there will be a special commemorative address. Tickets are limited and can be booked online via TryBooking.

Remembrance Day breakfast

A breakfast event will be held in the Memorial's Anzac Hall at 8am. This sit-down plated breakfast includes a presentation from Memorial Head of Military History, Ashley Ekins.

WA Centenary Events

62,000 Poppy Project

The 62,000 Poppy Project will be exhibited from November 9-12 in the gardens of Kings Park, Perth. The 62,000 poppies represent the Australians killed in WWI and will be displayed on Aspect Lawn.

Remembrance Day Perth

At 9am, 3 Battery, 9th Regiment, Royal Australian Regiment will conduct a Military Gun Salute in Kings Park. The guns will then be fired every half an hour until seconds before the 11th hour to symbolise when the guns fell silent.

At 11am, the annual Commemorative Service will take place at the State War Memorial in Kings Park. This service will be attended by dignitaries, representatives from Ex-Service Organisations, Cadets and schoolchildren, with music provided by Churchland Senior High School.

Also at 11am, 100 Buglers will be positioned throughout the Perth CBD to sound *The Last Post* as one.

At 1pm, RSLWA will be holding a Centenary of Armistice Community Picnic in the gardens of Government House. This event is free to veterans, their families and the general public. The picnic will be supported by community organisations such as Foodbank WA and Rotary.

For more information, visit www.rslwa.org.au

Remembrance Day around WA

Remembrance Day services and Armistice Centenary events will be held throughout WA. For more information, visit www.rslwa.org.au

WALK OF REMEMBRANCE COMMEMORATES TASMANIA'S TIES TO WWI

On September 13, 2018, past Rotary International president Ian Riseley planted a Lone Pine at Claremont Golf Course, Tas, to commemorate both the Armistice centenary and the completion of the Rotary Club of Claremont's Walk of Remembrance project. The tree, which was grown and nurtured by a group of Vietnam Veterans, sits on the site of what was once a significant WWI training camp.



The beginning of the Walk of Remembrance on the old road formation into Tasmania's Claremont Camp.

THE WALK of Remembrance was Stage 1 of a long-term strategic plan for the Claremont area by the Rotary Club of Claremont.

When thousands of troops enlisted in WWI, a camp was immediately established at Brighton in southern Tasmania, but lack of water proved a problem. After the first contingent of troops left in October 1914, the main training camp was moved to Triffetts Point, Claremont, on what is now substantially the Cadbury Estate,

Cadbury Factory and Claremont Golf Club.

Logistically, Claremont was a good location for a training camp. It was close to the railway, near — but not too near — the city of Hobart, and a port of embarkation.

Trenches and dugouts provided realistic training conditions and the camp housed up to 2200 men.

Military historian and Centenary of ANZAC Steering Committee member, Reg A Watson, wrote in *The City of*

Glenorchy's Military Heritage that the Claremont Camp was very large.

"The 'tent' city, as it was termed, was a self-sufficient entity, with laundry, dental surgery, hairdressing salon, fruit shop, washing place and Post Office, beside other administration centres."

After training at Claremont, the Tasmanian troops fought in all major battle fronts, including Gallipoli, France, Belgium and Palestine, and served with the Tasmanian 12th, 40th and 15th Battalions and the 26th Battalion, a joint Tasmanian and Queensland Battalion.

Once war was declared against Germany in August 1914, the Australian Government offered 23 Light Horse Regiments from the Militia Volunteers. The Light Horse was seen as the national arm of Australian Defence and young men, mostly from the country, flocked to join. Of this Brigade, the 3rd Regiment was recruited from Tasmania.

The Walk of Remembrance project provides visual displays in the general area of the previous camp, starting at the Claremont War Memorial and concluding at Claremont Golf Club.

The project was funded from grants received from the Commonwealth Centenary of ANZAC Fund and a Rotary District Grant. Financial support was also provided by Claremont RSL, the Rotary Club of Claremont and other donations in kind.

The second stage of the strategic plan is the Windermere Bay Playground Shelter, which was completed in August 2018. Continuing the historical subject matter of the area, the shelters display double-sided art works depicting military themes of both conflict and Australia's endeavours in world peace.



New Zealand Centenary Events

Armistice Centenary National Ceremony – Wellington

On November 11, Aotearoa New Zealand will acknowledge the Armistice centenary with a number of events at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

A 100-Gun Salute on the Wellington waterfront in front of Te Papa will begin the Armistice Centenary National Ceremony; its firing symbolically timed to finish at 11am when the guns fell silent 100 years ago. A two-minute silence will then be observed, which will be broken by a fanfare of bells, sirens and horns across the city and harbour, echoing the joyous sounds heard across Aotearoa when news of the Armistice reached New Zealand's shores.

The ceremony will culminate in a creative performance, He Wawā Waraki: Roaring Chorus 2018, which weaves historic text, contemporary poetry, waiata, dance and music to evoke the energy, noise and complex emotion of the moment when war finally gave way to peace.

Wellington City Council is also organising a program of music performances at Pukeahu on the afternoon of November 11 to acknowledge the centenary.

Later in the day, New Zealand Defence Force will conduct a Sunset Ceremony, which will include the final *Last Post* of the centenary.

For more information, visit events.ww100.govt.nz

Fields of Remembrance – Auckland

To commemorate the centenary of Armistice Day, the Fields of Remembrance Trust has laid out a field, called the Memorial Field, with 18,277 white crosses, each bearing the name of a New Zealander who lost their life in the conflict.

A separate field, called the Brothers Field, will remember those families who lost more than one family member – nearly 700 mothers lost more than one son. This field will be positioned by the lone Gallipoli Pine, surrounded by poppies.

The crosses and informative light boxes telling stories of war and sacrifice will be on display at Auckland Domain in front of Auckland War Memorial Museum.

On November 11, the Navy Band will lead a cacophony of joyous sound (you are invited to bring instruments, bells, your voices) to recapture the joy and relief expressed 100 years ago. Once silence has fallen, the Commemoration Ceremony will proceed, after which you are invited to walk among the crosses.

- From November 15-17, crosses from the Memorial Field may be uplifted by family/ descendants or friends.
- From November 18-20, crosses from the Memorial Field may be uplifted by schools and community groups.
- For more information, visit www.fieldsofremembrance.org.nz.

Commemorative events at the War Memorial – Auckland

On November 11, join the Auckland War Memorial Museum to commemorate the Armistice centenary with a day of performances and remembrance services. At 11am, a commemorative service will be held in partnership with Fields of Remembrance Trust, NZ Defence Force, Ngāti Whātua Orākei and Auckland Council.

Following the service, the Museum will be open with a rich program of performances and will stay open until 8.15pm. After the *Last Post* on the front steps of the museum at 8.25pm, the Museum's Armistice Illuminate Projection program will begin.

For more information, visit www.aucklandmuseum.com

BENDIGO YOUTH CHOIR: PEACE AND MATESHIP IN FRANCE

After nine months of fundraising and planning, a group of young Bendigo, Vic, singers embarked on the musical trip of a lifetime following an invitation to perform in Amiens, France, as part of centenary celebrations marking the end of WWI.

THE INVITATION followed the Bendigo Youth Choir's participation in More Than Opera's premiere of *Peace – A Cantata for John Monash*, by Dr David Kram, of the Rotary Club of Melbourne, Vic, and Kevin O'Flaherty, performed at Melbourne's Hamer Hall last year.

While the Melbourne performance was sung primarily in English, the Amiens massed choral performance was sung completely in French.

"The choir's associate director and conductor Gail Godber worked so patiently with the children to master the French translation," Bendigo

Youth Choir (BYC) Founder and Artistic Director Valerie Broad OAM, of the Rotary Club of Bendigo, said.

"There was a lot to learn, but the diligence demonstrated by our wonderful young singers and volunteer staff alike saw it all come together beautifully."

Certainly, language proved no barrier to friendship when the Bendigo children met their fellow French performers at College Amiral Le Jeune for rehearsals.

"The children clicked immediately and somehow were communicating and exchanging gifts and email



addresses," BYC manager Rosalie Rogers said. "It was fascinating to watch and be part of the experience. We were all very moved."

Outside of rehearsals, the 10-day tour included visits to many WWI sites of significance, including the 12th century Basilica Notre Dame, where they learned about the role Australian soldiers played in France and in saving the cathedral.

The Somme Museum, located in 250m-long tunnels dug out in the 13th century, offered a glimpse into the daily lives of soldiers in the trenches and proved confronting for some of the group.

So, too, did a guided tour of the Battlefields. The tour was adapted to suit the young audience and the children had been pre-prepared for what lay ahead, when a historian from the Bendigo District RSL Sub Branch visited a choir rehearsal back home.

"The talk about Bendigo's links to



Members of the Bendigo Youth Choir with special guest PDG Keith Ryall, of the Rotary Club of Carlton, Vic.



The group of 16 choristers, plus parents and family, visited the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery and (right) the Australian National Memorial & Sir John Monash Centre, Villers-Bretonneux, as part of the 10-day tour.



The choir performing in St Martin's Church, Amiens.



Villers-Bretonneux and WWI really helped the children grasp the historical significance of the journey," Valerie said.

The group visited Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, the Franco Australian Museum and the Victorian School at Villers-Bretonneux, where they met the current students and sang for each other. They also visited Lochnager Crater, the 1st Australian Division Memorial and Cemetery at Pozieres and Thiepval memorial.

"Being onsite was confronting and one could visualise the absurdity and futility of the war and the hell on earth the Australian Diggers and Allied Forces experienced," Rosalie said. "I doubt that day will ever be forgotten by any who attended."

At 3pm on Sunday, September 30, the group presented *Peace – A Cantata for John Monash* to a near capacity audience in St Martin's Church, Amiens. A standing ovation was a fitting

response and a wonderful thrill for all who performed. The feedback from the audience and other adult choristers was incredibly glowing of the children's performance.

The second half of the performance saw the Australian choirs, including the Bendigo Youth Choir, sing the *Faure Requiem*. The children sang *In Paradisim* in Latin, again to an overwhelming response.

"The trip was incredibly successful in many aspects," Rosalie said. "The developing and nurturing of relationships within the choir and the ability to experience small reunions with long lost family and friends. The opportunity to meet and sing with the French children, as well as develop individual relationships and a connection with the school with a view to starting discussions for another adventure.

"Gaining an insight into the history of WWI and the battles our troops experienced was an important learning for all on tour. The participation in this amazing performance celebrating peace and the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI led to a more in-depth understanding of what our ANZACs did to save France and the part we played in the lead-up to the end of the war.

"The Bendigo Youth Choir has been incredibly fortunate to be supported and sponsored by a few organisations, in particular the Rotary Club of Bendigo, The Rotary Foundation and the Ryall Family Trust, without who we could not have undertaken this unforgettable journey."

ROTARY AND THE LAST POST IN YPRES

Every evening at 8pm precisely, the *Last Post* has been sounded since 1928 under the imposing arches of the Menin Gate, Ypres, in the Belgian province of West Flanders. The memorial, shaped like a Roman triumphal arch, displays the names of 54,896 soldiers of the then British empire who went missing in action.

FOLLOWING WWI, grateful citizens set up the *Last Post* Association (LPA). The idea of the daily sounding of the *Last Post* – the traditional salute to the fallen warrior – was that of the Superintendent of the Ypres Police, Mr P Vandenbraambussche. The Menin Gate Memorial on the east side of Ypres was thought to be the most appropriate location for the ceremony. Originally, this was the location of the old city gate leading to the Ypres Salient battlefields and The Menin Road, through which so many British and Commonwealth troops

had passed on their way to the Allied front line.

The privilege of playing the *Last Post* was given to buglers of the local volunteer Fire Brigade. From November 11, 1929 the *Last Post* has been sounded at the Menin Gate Memorial every night and in all weathers. The only exception to this was during the four years of the German occupation of Ypres from May 20, 1940 to September 6, 1944. The daily ceremony was instead continued in England at Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey. On the very evening



Tributes to the fallen laid at Menin Gate. (Photo: In Flanders Fields Museum)

that Polish forces liberated Ypres, the ceremony was resumed at the Menin Gate, in spite of the heavy fighting still going on in other parts of the town. Bullet marks can still be seen on the memorial from that time.

Throughout its history, Rotarians have played a key role in the Board of the *Last Post* Association. Current Rotarians Guy Gruwez and Charles Vermeulen joined the Board in 1953 – before there was a Rotary Club in Ypres. They both joined Rotary in 1969. Guy (born in 1928) became president of the LPA in 1966 and held that position for four decades. In 1996 he became Honorary President. Other Rotarians are or were responsible for the Association's finances and press relations.



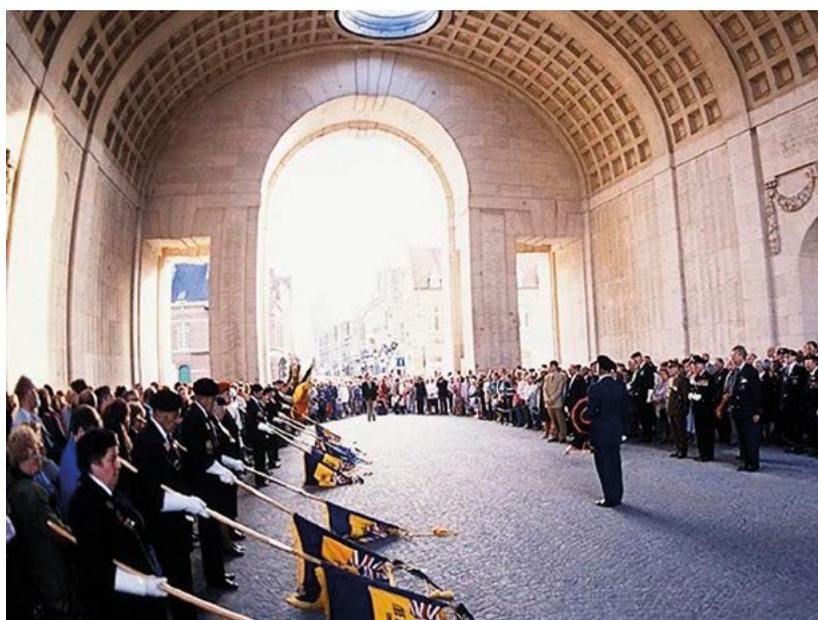
Honorary President of the *Last Post* Association Rotarian Guy Gruwez under the Menin Gate.



"In and around Ypres, about 250,000 soldiers from the British Empire and 80,000 French soldiers lost their lives for our freedom," Guy said. "We owe them this kind of respect. I am glad that a lot of – mainly British – school children keep visiting the Menin Gate. In my view, witnessing the *Last Post* is an ideal way to reflect upon war and peace."

Guy received a great many personalities under the Menin Gate, including Pope John-Paul II, George Bush Sr, Mother Teresa, Bob Geldof and several members of the British and Belgian Royal Family. For his timeless efforts with the LPA, he received an OBE (Order of the British Empire) and the Order of Australia. Needless to say, that on tours with Rotary Exchange Students in Belgium, the *Last Post* ceremony is a must-see – mostly leaving a lasting impression.

For more information, visit www.lastpost.be or contact Rotarian Carl Denys via press@lastpost.be



**Rotary Down Under offers its sincere thanks to Rotary Contact for sharing this edited version of their article with us.*

The *Last Post* Ceremony at Menin Gate.

FRANCE AND GERMANY: FROM WAR TO PEACE

In marking 100 years since the end of WWI, peace is more than ever on the agenda of events organised around centenary celebrations. Across the globe, as in France, Rotarians are calling for understanding among people, contributing to the duty of remembrance.

*By Christophe Courjon
and Régis Allard
Rotary Mag (France)*

In 1918, the collective community remained affected by the ravages of WWI.

While Rotary had been developing in the United States since 1905, at the end of the conflict there was still not a single club in continental Europe. Yet these men, marked by the war, would contribute to the birth of the first Rotary clubs in the region.

If pacifism is not the prerogative of political institutions, trade unions or others, the associative community want for the initiative of Rotary was illustrated by the creation of the first clubs in Europe, in Madrid in 1920 and in Paris in 1921.

History will also give reason to Rotary when, on the initiative of German and French Rotarians, the first inter-country committee, between France and Germany, was created in 1931, at a rally in The Hague (Netherlands). Entitled The Small Committee, it was the expression of the anxiety of those who, after the tremors of the war, saw

in the Great Depression the sign of new threats.

Rotary is anchored in the work of peace and tirelessly pursues its desire to make understanding between people its essential cause. Thus, in 2018, beyond the commemoration of the end of the conflict, those clubs that have committed to centenary commemorations are especially interested in carrying the same message, in order to invite the community to gather around a shared awareness.

Meetings to promote peace

In Lorraine, last September, the Rotary Club of Pont-à-Mousson, France, welcomed 22 friends of the Rotary Club of Soest-Lippstadt, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, to stay with Rotarian families. The stay was a sign of peace and a celebration of the strong friendship that has linked the two clubs over their 60 years of existence.

Jean Magnin, a member of the Rotary Club of Pont-à-Mousson since 1955, participated in the founding of the event.

"In 1958, 13 years after the end of WWII, to achieve a relationship between a German club and a French club could not be a coincidence, but rather the result of a desire for peace between France and Germany," Jean said. "At that time, even though the French people were saying 'never again', the resentment towards Germany was still very strong. If the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community had already given a political framework for cooperation, it was necessary for a French majority to create a climate of trust. Rotary, international and peaceful by nature, was a well-adapted framework for recreating a climate of trust closest to a certain elite of the population."

Members of Rotary recommended and organised the formation of a relationship between French and German clubs and thus favoured the meeting between the cities of Pont-à-Mousson and Soest. At the Rotary Club of Pont-à-Mousson, there was reluctance, but a strong majority for reconciliation won.

In Alsace, the Rotary Club of Mulhouse-Vosges, France, called on General Neuville to present at a conference about Hartmannswillerkopf (also known as the Vieil Armand); a pyramidal rocky spur in the Vosges mountains, where the French and Germans fought for control of the peak throughout 1915. Thirty thousand men died near Hartmannswillerkopf during the war, with the majority of deaths suffered by the French.

The Hartmannswillerkopf Franco-German Historical of the Great War was opened on the site in August 2017. It is a multifaceted tool, having both historical and tourist elements, as well as being a memorial, and above all an educational resource.

An on-site visit by all members of the club, accompanying young Alsatians, is planned, guided by General Neuville.

The Great Veille of November 11 in Arras

A commemoration has been organised



by the Arras Pays d'Artois Tourist Office that will highlight 270 cemeteries on the evening of November 10 to raise public awareness of recollection and recognition for veterans.

The Rotary Club of Lens Liévin, France, will take part in this initiative by participating in the illumination of the graves and inviting 50 German friends from the Rotary Club of Bottrop-Wittringen. The German Rotarians will plant a memorial tree in the French cemetery of Mont-Saint-Eloi, while members of the Rotary Club of Lens-Liévin will plant a tree in the German cemetery of Neuville-Saint-Vaast.

Concerts on both sides of the Rhine

The Rotary Club of Saint-Louis/Huningue, France, like the Rotary Club of Mulhouse Europe, France, has joined the project of bringing two large choirs together. One is German (Vocal-Ensemble Breisach VEB), and the other French (Ensemble Vocal de Saint-Louis Vocalys). The 70 German choristers and 50 French choristers have decided to sing together Verdi's *Requiem* to offer both sides of the

Rhine an exceptional memorial event and to launch a message of peace. The 120 singers will be accompanied by 60 musicians from Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, and four professional soloists. Two concerts will be given in France, the first in Saint-Louis on November 10, the second as part of the Great Memorial Mass in Saint-Etienne Church in Mulhouse on November 11. Two other concerts will be given in Germany.

A choir from Australia

Australia is still very much affected by WWI, as evidenced by the arrival of then Rotary International President Ian Riseley on April 25 during the commemoration of ANZAC Day in Villers-Bretonneux.

In early October, 15 young singers from the Bendigo Youth Choir, Vic, joined a choir of 100 young French. Together, they sang *Cantata for Peace*, in Amiens, in memory of General Sir John Monash, who was the leader of the expeditionary force in France and founding member of the first Rotary club in Australia, the Rotary Club of Melbourne, Vic.

All these events, among others, are testimony to the closeness of French and German Rotarians and their relationship with Australians, 100 years after the Armistice in 1918. Today, there are 313 contact clubs between France and Germany, which is by far the highest number of relationships between two countries. There are also cross-border clubs, which have the distinction of being bilingual and meeting in turn in one of the two countries.

The current governor of District 1790 (Lorraine and Haute-Marne, France) is German; this district remains the most marked by the first world conflict, especially in Verdun, which remains a meeting place of international and privileged reflection.

May all these testimonies be an invitation to all to believe and to make sure that the human community is one in its unity, while leaving to each the particularity of its identity.

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