



Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day, 11 November, is an opportunity for every Australian to reflect on those who have died in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations, and to acknowledge the service and sacrifice of our defence personnel.

Australians who served First World War 1914–18

- More than 416,000 Australians enlisted, with more than 331,000 serving overseas.
- Australians on the Western Front — some 295,000.
- Australians in the Middle East — more than 20,000.
- Australians at Gallipoli — more than 50,000.
- Many of those served in more than one theatre of operation during the war.

Deaths

- Total Australian deaths in the First World War — more than 60,000.
- Australians on the Western Front — more than 45,000.
- Australians in the middle East — more than 1500.
- Australians at Gallipoli — some 8200.

Medals

- 63 Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australians in the First World War
- 53 of these were awarded between June 1916 and October 1918 on the Western Front in France and Belgium.
- nine were awarded to Australians who fought at Gallipoli.
- one was awarded to an Australian who fought in Palestine.

[More information about Remembrance Day](#)

In Australia

Remembrance Day was originally called Armistice Day, and commemorates the signing of the Armistice on 11 November 1918, bringing the First World War to an end. The Armistice was signed at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

On the first anniversary of the Armistice, in 1919, commemorations were conducted to encourage public remembrance of the loss of life to the Allies over the course of the war. A period of silence was introduced into the main commemorative ceremony, in remembrance of the fallen, especially those soldiers with no known grave.

At the end of World War II in 1945, the Australian and British governments changed the name to Remembrance Day to commemorate the fallen of all wars and conflicts.

In October 1997 Governor-General Sir William Deane broadened the scope of the official commemorative nature of Remembrance day by urging all Australians to remember the sacrifices not only of those who had died but also those who had otherwise suffered in Australia's cause in wars and war-like conflicts.

Remembrance Day services are held at 11am at war memorials in suburbs and towns across the country, at which the "Last Post" is played by a bugler (if possible) and a one-minute silence is observed.

Red poppies are worn on Remembrance Day as a symbol of remembrance of those who died during war. Poppies are emblematic of the poppies grown in the fields of Belgium and France and hence are a connection between the battles of the Western Front and the sacrifices made on those fields. The 'blood red' colour is also linked to soldier's folklore, which had it that the poppies were vivid red from having been nurtured in ground drenched with the blood of their comrades. The sale of artificial poppies to support the families of veterans is also a tradition of Remembrance Day.

Remembrance Day is not a public holiday in Australia.

In the Compiègne Forest where the Armistice was signed in 1918, a memorial slab marks the exact location of the original railcar that was used for the Armistice meeting. A commemorative plaque reads, in French:

"Here on the eleventh of November 1918 succumbed the criminal pride of the German Reich ... vanquished by the free peoples which it tried to enslave."