



Speech by

Mr D. BRISKEY

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard 11 November 1998

ARMISTICE DAY

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (10.20 a.m.): I wish to say a few words to mark this day, the 80th anniversary of Armistice Day. I also wish that the House was not sitting today so that I could spend time in the company of the returned servicemen and women who live in the Redlands Shire. Each year I look forward to meeting with them at the Redlands RSL where we talk of past friends and past glories. Remembrance Day is a day upon which we renew our pledge—a pledge made to those who made the ultimate sacrifice: those who gave their lives in war—and to give thanks for their service in the defence of freedom. Thankfully, today the vast majority of Australians have no first-hand experience of war, its hardships and its horrors. However, Remembrance Day ensures that the sacrifices that have been made by our forebears will never be forgotten or taken for granted.

Today, we honour Australians who have unselfishly served their nation in war so that this great nation and its citizens may enjoy the freedom bestowed upon them by their deeds. It is incumbent upon us, the beneficiaries of their efforts, to remember them continually. I believe that the strong emotions that are rekindled on this day are a testament to our continued commitment to a promise made by our forebears to not forget.

The symbolic action of standing and pausing for two minutes was first suggested by a Melbourne journalist, Edward George Honey, as a moving tribute to the war dead. The idea was picked up by King George V, who requested that "all locomotion should cease, so that, in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead." In Australia, we have been honouring the glorious dead since 11 a.m. on 11 November 1919, when our collective thoughts were first united in silence.

Although the servicemen and women of Redlands rarely talk of their experiences of the war, the horrors are not forgotten or devalued. Through our annual one-minute silent tribute and strong feeling of patriotism that it engenders, we give thanks to the courage that was shown on the battlefield. Australians have died in battlefields throughout the world. Some are buried in Australia; most rest in other lands. Over 100,000 Australian soldiers, sailors, airmen and servicewomen remain where they died on every continent and in every ocean of the world. This is their day and we, young and old, remember and honour them.
