



QUT Inaugural Remembrance Day Commemoration
Parer Place, QUT Kelvin Grove Campus
Friday, 11 November 2011, 10.30am

The Hon Paul de Jersey AC
Chief Justice of Queensland

Professor Makeham, Mr Lewis, Mr McCosker, Mr Mellick, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am privileged to have the opportunity to deliver this address this morning. I at once congratulate the University for convening the commemoration in this place. As a school cadet and as a soldier in the Citizens' Military Forces, I have a vivid memory of GONA Barracks, as the area used to be known. Its purpose has moved from the defensive to the creative. But history informs the present and inspires the future, so that significant historical features should not be ignored.

We commemorate Remembrance Day primarily as an expression of gratitude for the sacrifice of those who gave their lives, during World War 1, to restore the freedom denied or curtailed between 1914 and 1918. Approximately 20 million people died in the so-called Great War. Our solemn acknowledgement this morning reflects both gratitude and respect. Because of the Armistice signed by the allies and Germany for the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front, the bloodshed substantially ceased from 11am on the 11th November 1918.

Our continuing to mark the signing of the Armistice as many as 93 years on reflects another important feature, and that is hope. The event in 1918 was met with outpourings of relief from a war-wearied public. Another world war commenced but 21 years later, with regional armed conflicts sporadic ever since.



QUT Inaugural Remembrance Day Commemoration
Parer Place, QUT Kelvin Grove Campus
Friday, 11 November 2011, 10.30am

We pause to acknowledge the tragic deaths of Australian soldiers in Afghanistan in particular, including 13 Queenslanders, especially Captain Bryce Duffy, whose funeral was held in Brisbane this morning.

We nevertheless, by this annual commemoration, raise hope that war and conflict should cease to characterize the world in which we live, the world in which our children and grandchildren will continue to live. History informs the present and inspires the future.

That more and more people are visiting the Western Front; that we show genuine interest in, for example, the discovery of war graves previously unknown; that some suggest Anzac Day should “double” as Australia Day; that the crowds at Anzac Cove on 25 April increase substantially from year to year: these denote not jingoism, but the respect, gratitude and hope which attended the signing of the Armistice in November 1918, and have been felt ever since. That our younger citizens particularly are participating in these events in markedly growing numbers, gives cause not only for hope, but optimism.

With today’s inaugural ceremony at this place, another petal is added to the Queensland Remembrance Day poppy. I say Queensland because QUT is a university of the State not just the metropolis. Its goals of human development and optimal performance were shared by the military units which previously occupied these lands, the Kelvin Grove Military Reserve, later the Military Training Area and still later GONA Barracks.

Those units were mostly reserve army units, prominent among them the 9th Battalion Royal Queensland Regiment. After service at Milne Bay, as part of the 7th Brigade, and demobilization, the Regiment was reformed in 1948 as The Moreton Regiment, as was the Brigade, and both then began their association with Kelvin Grove. In the context of events last month, I mention that six years later the 9th Battalion provided a royal guard for Queen Elizabeth II during her first royal visit to Queensland in 1954. In much more recent times, members of that Battalion have served in East Timor, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands.



QUT Inaugural Remembrance Day Commemoration
Parer Place, QUT Kelvin Grove Campus
Friday, 11 November 2011, 10.30am

Those distinguished former residents of GONA Barracks contributed valuably to the defence of this nation and other nations. As with all reservists, their military training also enhanced their capacity to make a worthwhile contribution to the civilian community.

My own experience of serving in the Queensland University Regiment from 1966 to 1971 was, in life terms, defining, and I expect my own experience was common among reservists. The overarching feature was public service – not mentioned platitudinously, but as an ideal readily embraced. More particularly, service in the Reserves fostered a disciplined orderly approach to the solving of problems; it mandated physical fitness; achieving promotion within a competitive environment enhanced one's self-esteem; and the forging of friendships, within a matrix delineated by responsibility, helped ensure a balanced existence.

The Reserve Forces have thus produced not only service men and women trained to supplement our nation's full-time military forces: they have also produced citizens better equipped to serve their brothers and sisters in civilian life. As mentioned, like the University, the units which resided here were focused on human development and optimal performance.

Thus we seek to preserve the values for which our forebears fought the Great War. Pausing in silence at 11 o'clock, we were joined by hundreds of thousands, possibly millions of our fellow Australians. At the Supreme Court here in Brisbane, a broadcast announcement invited those present to observe a minute's silence, including in courts otherwise in session. Our action here this morning has been or will be followed by millions world-wide.

The wide incidence of the commemoration provides a measure of its high significance, for its symbolizing the gratitude and respect we feel for those who gave their lives to secure



QUT Inaugural Remembrance Day Commemoration
Parer Place, QUT Kelvin Grove Campus
Friday, 11 November 2011, 10.30am

the freedom we now enjoy, and for its utility in fostering a more conciliatory approach to the resolution of conflict.

The ideal of peace, whether among individuals, states or nations, is frustratingly elusive. The struggle to secure that ideal is undoubtedly usefully informed by the reflection which accompanies this important annual worldwide commemoration.

“Lest we forget”.