

# RAAF tribute to fallen airmen

RAAF Wing Commander Andrew Layton, Commanding Officer 29 Squadron / Senior Air Force Officer-Tasmania was on King Island last week to take part in Remembrance Day and to pay tribute to fallen airmen. Here is his speech.

This morning we are here at this solemn ceremony to remember with gratitude and pride, the sacrifices made by those civilian, Navy, Army and Air Force

members, who have served and died in wars.

At 11am, on the 11th of November 1918, the guns of the Western Front fell silent, after more than four years of

continuous warfare.

The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month has attained a special significance in the postwar years for Australia, the United Kingdom, the USA and New Zealand. The moment when hostilities ceased on the Western Front became associated with the remembrance of those who fought and died in WWI.

On the very first anniversary of Remembrance Day at the new cenotaph in London, a minutes silence was observed, a tradition we follow today.

WWI was the first modern world conflict, which caused the mobilisation of over 70million people and left between nine and 13 million people dead, there are an estimated 30% with no known grave.

416,000 Australians countered for service in WWI, of these 324,000 served overseas and almost 62,000 Australians were killed.

Decade later in WWII, Australians deaths exceeded 40,000. O Australia's war dead from the Great Wars, about 32,000 have no identified grave, they are instead commemorated with memorials to the missing.

I visited one of these monuments at Varanasi in Singapore, where 400 Commonwealth servicemen and civilians are buried.

In 1997, the Governor General of Australia issued a proclamation, formally declaring Remembrance Day and urged all Australians to observe one minutes si-



The RAAF Number One Operational Training Unit were in a Beaufort aeroplane like this one



Observing a minute's silence for the fallen airmen: (L to R) Mavis Burgess, RAAF Wing Commander Andrew Layton, RSL president Bernard Hodgman AO, Councillor Vernon Philbey, Mayor Greg Barratt, Noel McKay and Reverend Rod Oldfield.

Below: The RAAF airmen's headstones, these photos have been given to the RAAF to provide to the airmen's relatives who WGCMD Layton intends to search for, and may not have had the opportunity to visit the Currie Cemetery



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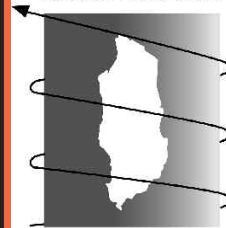
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