

## ARMISTICE CENTENARY

### *Statement*

**HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural)** [5.23 pm]: One hundred years ago on 11 November 1918, the guns on the Western Front fell silent after four years of continuous war. With their armies close to collapse, German leaders signed an armistice to bring an end to the First World War. The agreement was signed at 5.10 am and came into effect at 11.00 am. In the post-war years, the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month has become associated with remembering those who died or suffered for Australia in all wars and armed conflicts with the observance of a minute's silence, which we conducted today.

The First World War remains the costliest of conflicts for Australians in terms of death and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, 416 809 men enlisted and, of those, more than 60 000 were killed and 156 000 wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. The war brought about the mobilisation of 70 million people and left between nine million and 13 million dead, perhaps with as many as one-third of those with no known grave. In 1993, the remains of an unknown Australian soldier exhumed from a First World War military cemetery in France was ceremonially entombed into the Australian War Memorial Hall of Memory. The unknown soldier represents all Australians who have been killed in a war. I take this opportunity to recognise the sacrifice and commitment of our service men and women who have served our nation and who are currently serving our nation. This morning, walking past the war memorial at Kings Park, I was taken by the sea of woollen crocheted poppies carefully placed around the eternal flame. I commend those who painstakingly placed each poppy in honour of Remembrance Day. I also take this opportunity to remember the families of those who have fallen. The Great War may seem to many a very long time ago and something that has gone by in the annals of history. However, I am sure that members here with a bit of vintage about them will remember people in their earlier lives who were either part of the Great War or closely connected to it, which can put a face to some of those events.

In my own family, two of my mother's great uncles were lost in the Great War. Percy Mervyn Hislop was 24 years old when he travelled from his home town of Bunbury and enlisted at Blackboy Hill on 29 February 1916. I must say that the National Archives of Australia is a fantastic resource for researching historic information, and digital copies of documents provide a fascinating and sometimes emotional insight into the events of the times. Anyway, Percy's service number was 4445, and his service records reveal that he was just five feet, three inches tall, fair-haired and weighed in at 140 pounds or 63.5 kilograms. Unfortunately, he was killed in action in Flers, France, on 3 November 1916. His younger brother, Donald Roy Hislop, was just 22 years old when he joined up on the same day as Percy, with a sequential service number of 4446. Donald's service records reveal that he was also five feet, three inches tall, with blonde hair and grey eyes, and with a very slight build of 118 pounds or 53.5 kilograms. Donald was captured by the Germans and died of sickness in a prisoner-of-war camp in Göttingen, Germany, on 18 October 1916, so neither of the boys saw the year out from the time they had enlisted. The year 1916 was a long time ago—over 100 years—but as I mentioned earlier, those members with a bit of vintage possibly have connections to people who were affected by that war.

In my case, my great-grandmother Laura was the sister of Percy and Donald. Laura passed away when I was five years old, but I do recall her vividly and remember family discussions over the years regarding the two boys lost in the Great War. Donald's twin brother, Hilton, passed away when I was aged 10, so my memory of him is very clear, although at that age, I never had an inclination to talk to him about what happened to his two brothers, particularly his twin brother.

As stated at the beginning of my remarks, this Sunday's Remembrance Day is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Armistice, giving the day added significance. I encourage all Western Australians to come together this Sunday at 11 o'clock to remember the service of our brave men and women on this special occasion.

Lest we forget.