

Armistice Day Service

Mr Stewart Holmes President of Waimate Returned Services Association,
Returned Servicemen, Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

Good morning and thank you for attending this short commemorative service.

Today at this time at this hour on the 11th November 1918 the Armistice was signed between the Allies and Germany, and today as well we remember those who died in World War I.

The Great War of 1914 - 1918 was one of the most disastrous events in human history.

New Zealand with a population of 1.1 million people in 1914, sent 100,000 men and women overseas.

16,700 died and over 40,000 were wounded – a higher per capita casualty rate than any other country involved.

There were very few families in New Zealand at this time who were not touched by this War. My grandfather was one of the lucky ones to return home – for which I am thankful.

As if New Zealand had not suffered enough, the relief at the end of the war was some what dampened through the ongoing impact of the influenza pandemic ravaging our country, an influenza pandemic that claimed in Waimate the life of Dr Margaret Cruickshank, as she worked amongst those who were ill .

This year commemorates the 90th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice and will be marked by many ceremonies throughout New Zealand and overseas.

Armistice Day is sometimes referred to as “Remembrance Day” – so thank you for joining together to share this time of remembrance as ‘we will remember them.’