

# The Remembrance Day Amnesia Racket

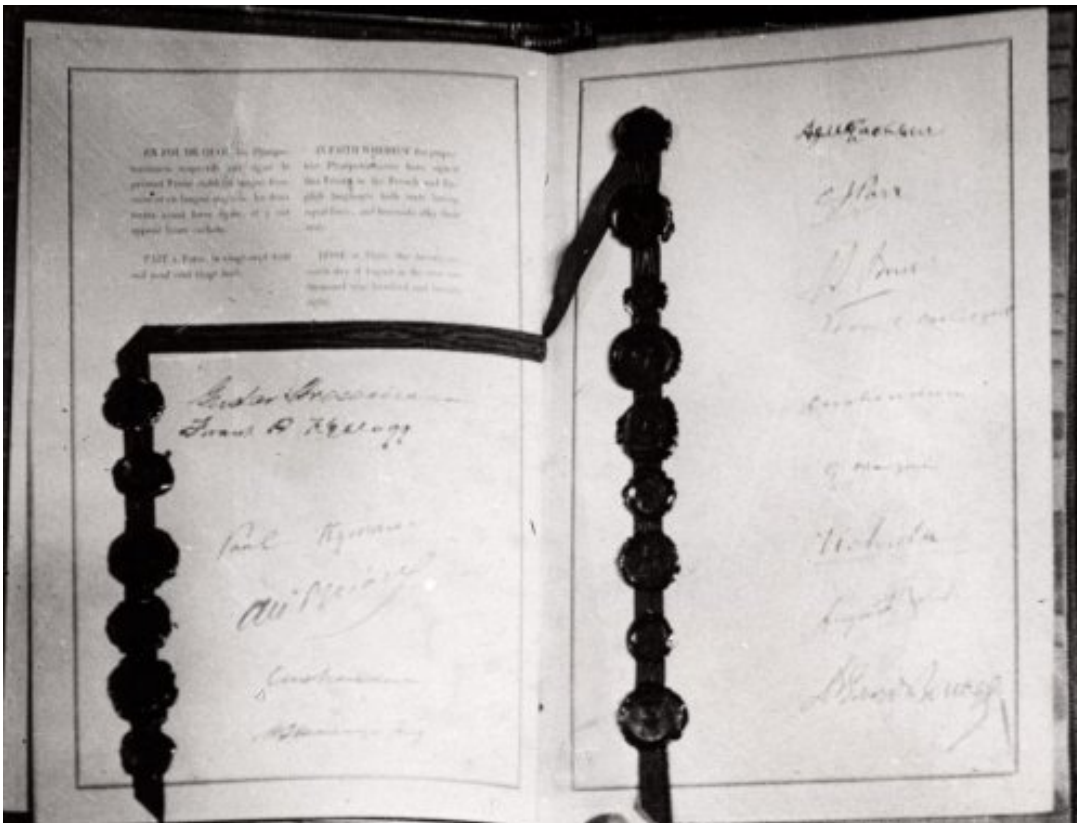
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Theme: [History](#), [Militarization and WMD](#)

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*It was catastrophic, cataclysmic and all destructive. It wiped out empires and aristocracies and tore through the middle class. The First World War was a conflict that should never have happened, was pursued foolishly and incestuously by the royal families of Europe and fertilised the ground for an even greater war two decades later. It produced an atmospheric solemnity of grief and loss, and a lingering, collective neurosis.*

On November 11, 1918, when the guns fell silent in Europe, some 16 million had been left dead. A ceremonial ritual grew up around commemorating the fallen. So horrific were those events that a convention known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact was born, an instrument that initially began as a bilateral agreement between the United States and France to abandon war as an instrument of foreign policy. Eventually, virtually all the established states of the day signed it, heralding a most fabulous illusion, pursued even as countries began rearming.



Briand-Kellogg Treaty, with signatures of Gustav Stresemann, Paul Kellogg, Paul Hymans, Aristide Briand, Lord Cushendun, William Lyon Mackenzie King, John McLachlan, Sir Christopher James Parr, Jacobus Stephanus Smit, William Thomas Cosgrave, Count Gaetano Manzoni, Count Uchida, A. Zaleski,

The commemorators that tend to make an appearance on Remembrance Day often prove to be the war makers of tomorrow. The demand that we all wear red poppies and contribute to the causes of veterans would be all the more poignant and significant were it to discourage killing, foster peace and encourage the brighter instincts of human progress. Instead, these occasions are used by the military minded to ready the populace for the next conflict, a form of vulgar conditioning. Before his death in 2009 at the ripe age of 111 years, Harry Patch, a veteran of the Great War's trench warfare, [proposed](#) that war was "a license to go out and murder. Why should the British government call me up and take me out to a battlefield to shoot a man I never knew, whose language I couldn't speak?" That logic is hard to better.

The statement here is not "lest we forget" but "what should be remembered?" Corpses are only memorable if they are useful. The fallen serve as bricks and masonry for the next slaughter, engineered by war criminals, the negligent and the incompetent. They died so that you could live and prosper, or so we are told. The commemorative classes repeatedly refer to "democracy", "freedom" and "our way of life", a seedy way of suggesting value in sending the young to an early grave. Accordingly, so that your children should be able to live in a way befitting their standing, you must participate in the next murderous, maiming conflict.

If these commemorations served as lessons, then they should be revered, repeated and rerun with mighty fortitude. Unfortunately, those lessons are never observed. Were that to be the case, such quixotic, costly provocations as the AUKUS pact, which incites nuclear proliferation and arming for future conflict against phantom threats, would be matters of the past.

As things are, these commemorative days mark human idiocy and venality, anticipating the next bloodbath that will enlist the docile for war, leaving the planners untouched by accountability, be it in any legal or ethical sense. To this day, **former Australian Prime Minister John Howard, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and former US President George W. Bush**, remain at large for illegally invading Iraq in March 2003. It was an invasion based on a monstrous lie on Iraq's capabilities, notably in the Weapons of Mass Destruction department, one that dismembered a state and unleashed an Islamic fundamentalist whirlwind in the Middle East.

Those in the Remembrance Day promotions business are keen to remind younger converts that the occasion is not just for previous generations. Bianca Wheeler, the new Director of Veterans SA, [offers](#) some unconvincing waffle to any unsuspecting newcomers to the creed: "Remember Day is about linking the past to the present, and then taking that and considering what it means for the future." Wheeler, herself a former naval officer, is keen to change the conventional view of what a veteran is: not necessarily one festooned in medals from the great conflicts, but one dedicated to service. How eye-piping in sweetness.

With each November 11, there is a growing concern. The young seem increasingly estranged and disassociated from these occasions, worry those in the Remembrance Day amnesia racket. "For many young people," [ponders](#) the *Hawkesbury Post*, a New South

Wales paper, “Remembrance Day may seem like an event disconnected from their daily lives. After all, the wars it commemorates feel like ancient history.”

If history is but a record of agreed upon facts, then this occasion is one about agreed upon mythology. Wheeler would have you believe that a historical exercise is at play, hence the following platitude: “You can’t know where to go in the future without knowing where you come from.”

The onus should be on the warmaker, the arms manufacturer and merchants of death, to explain why their nasty handiwork needs to be remembered. By focusing on the dead, we can ignore the reasons for their deployment, the circumstances they found themselves in countries they barely knew existed, falling for causes they could hardly articulate. The statues, monuments and honour boards always mention the heroically fallen; never do they mention those who signed their death warrants to guarantee the Grim Reaper his fill.

As things stand, the armaments complex has far better things to do than turning up at war memorials. Killing fellow human beings is a frightfully pressing business, and there is always ruddy cash to be made from the quarry of the eternally gullible.

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*Featured image: A remembrance poppy distributed by the Royal Canadian Legion worn on a lapel (Licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0)*

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