

Remembrance Sunday We Will Remember Them

by Capt Tom Scott

On the Sunday nearest the 11 November at 1100hrs each year, a Remembrance Service is held to commemorate the British and Commonwealth servicemen and women who died in the two World Wars and later conflicts. The relevance of "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" is that this was the date and time that the fighting officially stopped between Germany and the allies in 1918, the Armistice Treaty itself having been signed at 0500hrs that morning in Compiègne in northern France.

The service itself has changed little since its introduction in 1921. Traditional hymns are sung, prayers are said and a two-minute silence observed. Official wreaths are then laid at the foot of the war memorial. In the UK the National commemoration is held at the Cenotaph, in London. The Monarch, religious leaders, politicians, representatives of states and the armed forces gather there to pay their respects and lead the nation in remembrance. Thousands of other services also take place at local churches and war memorials across the UK and the world. No matter what the circumstances, UK armed forces always hold a service to remember their forebears and fallen comrades. This year was no different and deployed units held their own private services in numerous locations spanning all operational theatres. 2008 is a particularly notable year as it marks

both the 90th anniversary of the end of the Great War and also the 90th anniversary of the Royal Air Force. It is also the centenary of the establishment of the Territorial Army (TA). The TA is an integral part of the modern British Army who deploy in significant numbers in support of operations with 15000 Reservists having been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan alone. The UK Contingent of NRDC Italy traditionally holds their service of commemoration at the All Saints Church and Commonwealth War Cemetery in Milan. This year some 40 British personnel and their families attended the service to pay their respects to the fallen. They were joined by representatives from the British and Commonwealth Consulates in Milan as well as an impressive amount of expatriates and Italian



nationals of all ages. The cosmopolitan nature of the congregation underlined the resonance the commemoration has to this day. Indeed, whilst many people associate the event with the World Wars of the last century, it is important to remember that some 16000 UK Service personnel have lost their lives in conflicts since 1945, 298 of which have been killed during the two concurrent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Whilst society has evolved, and the world changed, Remembrance Sunday has and will remain a constant where the qualities of selflessness, courage, honour and loyalty are recognised and personal sacrifice commemorated.

We Will Remember Them.

