

Press release: PM to visit Belgium and France as part of Armistice commemorations

Prime Minister Theresa May will attend Armistice commemorations in Belgium and France next week as part of a series of events marking one hundred years since the end of the First World War.

Looking ahead to the commemorations, the Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Next week will mark one of the most significant moments in our nation's history. One hundred years after the guns fell silent on the Western Front, each and every one of us can pause to reflect on the immense sacrifices that were made by so many.

The killing fields of France and Belgium are scarred by the horrors of war, but the strength and closeness of our relationship today is a testament to the journey our countries have travelled together. I'm proud to represent the immense gratitude of our nation at these commemorations and share these moments of reflection with our friends and partners in Europe.

The Prime Minister's programme includes:

- Visiting the St Symphorien Military Cemetery in Mons in Belgium on Friday. The PM will lay a wreath at the graves of John Parr, the first UK soldier to be killed in 1914, and the last, George Ellison, who was killed on the Western Front at 9.30am before the Armistice became effective at 11am. By coincidence, they are buried opposite each other at the cemetery.
- The PM will then travel to France where she will meet President Macron in Albert, an historic town at the heart of the Somme region, which suffered significant bombardment during the First World War. The visit will give the two leaders the opportunity to reflect on the unique shared history between our two countries and the importance of the Centenary.
They will attend a working lunch before departing for a wreath laying ceremony at the Thiepval Memorial. The memorial is the site of a major annual commemorative event for the Missing of the Somme and bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and forces who died in the battle. A special wreath will be made for the occasion combining poppies and le bleuets, the two national emblems of remembrance for Britain and France.
- On Saturday evening, the Prime Minister will attend The Royal British Legion (RBL) Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. The event, attended by the Royal Family, will see the members of The RBL leading the nation in saying 'thank you' to all who served and

sacrificed.

- The Prime Minister will attend and lay a wreath at the Cenotaph ceremony on Remembrance Sunday. German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier will also attend, marking the first time a German leader will lay a wreath at the Cenotaph in an historic act of reconciliation. They will both also attend a special service at Westminster Abbey later that day.

At PMQs this week the Prime Minister said:

What Armistice gives us is an opportunity to come together to remember the immense sacrifices made in war, but also to join with our German friends to mark reconciliation and the peace that exists between our two nations today.