

HE Governor Dr Philip Rushbrook Message of Remembrance

Remembrance Flag Ceremony

Plantation House

My welcome to Lord Bishop Bowers and members of the religious and faith communities, Honorary Consul of the Republic of France, men and women who have served in Her Majesty's armed forces, the merchant navy and reserves, Civilians who support our forces, representatives of the emergency and uniformed public services and our voluntary organisations and ladies and gentlemen.

It is a personal privilege to be here on St Helena with you today - the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month is a precious moment in time. A poignant moment known to all who have held the great responsibility of serving their country.

It is at that moment when we are called upon, personally, to be part of a worldwide collective act of remembrance. A remembrance for those who have fallen in conflicts and military operations past and recent.

We stand in honour of the courage and loyalty of many generations of service men and women. They have proved time and again they uphold the very best of Britain, the overseas territories and our collaborations with NATO and other allies.

It is truly impressive to see St Helena's veterans at this flag ceremony coming together to remember our debt of gratitude to lost friends. And, to keep alive the comradeship of those who remain.

Two essential characteristics are instilled in all who have served, be that in the navy, army and air force, in the many civilian roles that serve our forces and in the vital services we all rely upon - police, fire, health, sea rescue and border control.

Those two characteristics are 'sacrifice' and 'duty'.

Let us reflect first upon 'sacrifice'. The noble act of putting others before oneself and, when there is no alternative, to be prepared to make the supreme sacrifice.

To lay down one's life to protect others is the lifelong obligation upon us all to respect in our remembrances.

Then there is 'Duty'.

Every soldier, sailor and airman and woman in the military knows they are expected do their duty, without hesitation and with professional dedication.

In commemorating those who died in the service of their country, let us also remember the values they displayed in performing their military duty:

Courage, Discipline, Respect, Integrity, Loyalty, Selfless commitment.

In our commemoration today, let us praise the tremendous sense of duty we see in everyone who has served and everyone that still serves.

The 11th of the 11th of the 11th is symbolic of the ending of The Great War.

A war said to be the war that ended all wars.

Alas, that was wishful thinking. We are all aware of the terrible conflicts that have occurred in many places since then. Some of these touched the island of St Helena and our people.

The Second World War saw the tragic loss of the Darkdale and the sacrifices made by those in the St Helena Rifles.

The Falklands Conflict saw the RMS pressed into military support and some here today know very well the duty you felt, and the sacrifice you were prepared to make, to serve your country in a time of need.

Duty and sacrifice continue today. The British Military remains committed to deployments on active service and in response to desperate humanitarian needs. This includes in Mali, where they are supporting the French-led Operation Barkhane. A major operation to stop threats to the lives of millions in that region.

I can do no better than conclude with the moving words spoken at a remembrance service in the City of Brantford in Canada.

“Ladies and gentlemen, as we stand here in peace and safety, we pay our respects to all of the fallen, all of the wounded and all who served in conflicts over the last 100 years. Today, as we should every day, we remember those who volunteered, sacrificed, served, fought and died for our future. We thank you, we salute you as we salute those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. We will never forget. We will remember you.”

**HE Governor Dr Philip Rushbrook
11 November 2020**