

## **Remember - and put an end to war**

**T**he all-consuming conflicts that convulsed Europe and much of the world are now two generations away. Most of us have no first-hand knowledge of total war or of mass conscription. Being "against war" has no basis in our personal experience.

We must therefore listen to those who have gone through the morass and pity we can only guess at in the grainy and flickering black and white of those times.

David Stevens reports how Henry Allingham "stressed that he was against, indeed was revolted by war in all its forms".

In the comfort of our present lives we can theorise endlessly about the meaning of the "short twentieth century" - 1914-1989 – the era of the hot and cold wars.

But we have now reached a moment when ever more of us are learning from those voices of the past who know about the futility of war. A strong sign of this is the increasing opposition to the upgrading and renewal of Britain's nuclear weapons – surely the ultimate in wanton futility.

Even those who far outrank Henry know something of this. Field Marshal Lord Bramall, former Chief of the Defence Staff, General Lord Ramsbotham and General Sir Hugh Beach described the UK's nuclear arsenal as "virtually irrelevant".

The poppies of Remembrance are with us again. Let them remind us of all the victims of war, past and present, military and civilian.

We owe them a better future in which war, and certainly nuclear weapons, have no part to play.

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