

The power of the poppy

[NEWSREADER]

The Queen has led the nation in the official act of remembrance at the Cenotaph in London. Record numbers of war veterans joined politicians and representatives of the Commonwealth to pay tribute to the men and women who gave their lives in two world wars.

[REPORTER]

As a year marked by emotional memories of World War Two draws to a close with thousands gathered at the Cenotaph in central London to remember those killed in the service of their country. When the chimes of Big Ben reached eleven o'clock gunners of the Royal Horse Artillery fired a single shot to mark the start of the two minutes silence.

The Queen led the nation's tribute to its war dead followed by other members of the royal family, although once again the Queen Mother was absent from her traditional place on the balcony overlooking the Cenotaph. Wreaths were also laid on behalf of the three services. The Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine stood in for Prime Minister John Major who is attending the Commonwealth conference in New Zealand.

The proceedings in London were brought to a close by the traditional march past the Cenotaph involving more than ten thousand servicemen and women, the range of veterans on parade a reminder that the act of remembrance commemorates not just those who died in two world wars, but in seventy other conflicts as well. Gary Duffy, BBC News.