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November 2018

ARTISTIC STATEMENT

ARMISTICE DAY & A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

War and peace, and the human propensity for violence and destruction have always stood in stark contrast to what we all can and should be.

Surely this is the most central and unresolved issue in human existence — and therefore very likely our *raison d'être*?

Very much a personal perspective especially after a professional career of surgery. The ultimate martial art! Where one is taught by 'experience' our great spiritual Teacher — that yes: human beings are fallible and mortal and that mistakes are there to be learned from. Only a fool repeats them.

For me. The central teaching of Quakerism is George Fox's "Walk cheerfully, answering that of God in everyone".

So I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to commemorate the Centenary of the signing of the Armistice here in New Plymouth with a larger than life sized bronze figure of a generic Taranaki soldier, standing at ground level, gazing across the Tasman toward Australia —the ANZAC connection. Very much a study of pensiveness A hundred years ago we thought we had fought the war to end all wars.

But have we? Far from it. As Marlene Dietrich sang "When will we ever learn?"

The red poppy is emblematic.

And we must learn!

That is why we are here. In so doingYes, I remember and revere the heroism, pain and sacrifice..... the suffering of this baptism of fire — so integral to the identity of all NZders.*

But I take great exception to the saying: "Ours is not to reason why, ours is but to do or die!" We have our ability to reason, so use it to live, not to kill and destroy. Thomas Jefferson inspired by George Fox via, William Penn, put it "... The purpose of civilisation and government is ... Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

It is not our person that needs changing, it is our BEHAVIOUR!

* Even though I am Australian born of refugee migrant parents – fleeing from the onset of World War II