Some thoughts on Remembrance Sunday

It is always right to reflect on the reasons for observing Remembrance Sunday and Day. This becomes a sharper question with the younger generation who find some aspects of the "tradition" unhelpful to say the least!
For some "Remembrance Tide" brings back poignant memories of family members or friends and comrades who died in war. But for many of us, those like myself who were born in the 1940s or later, we do not remember a "World War" or a situation where our country has had to face the threat of invasion and the violation of our land, homes and families However, in many areas world wide, war and the threat of war is a present reality. In their role as peacekeepers and anti- terrorist agents, our armed forces often find themselves in danger and some have died in their effort to succour others.

It seems to me that there are at least three ways to cope with the fact of war.

1) One way is to glorify it! I remember the "Battle Action" comics where war was seen as good because it brings out the best in men and women. Loyalty and companionship were held up as the height of achievement and awards for bravery were exalted.

2) Another way is to pretend as far as possible that it doesn't exist! Bad men are not all that bad – we can reason with them and then they will stop being bad and become good! Or "it's nothing to do with us! Keep quiet and it will go away!". I have some sympathy with this view being something of a pacifist at heart, along with many of a younger generation who have not had to face a personal threat to their peace.

3) The third way I would suggest in coping with the fact of war is to bring the whole package:-
The hurt: the pain: the loss: the bitterness and anger to God for forgiveness and healing.

In the "now" of this moment we stand at a point in time between the past – with its "memories" and its "might have been" and the future with all its possibilities, hopes and fears.

To try to link the "past", "present" and "future", an old story that you may have come across before.

A Salvation Army girl and a bishop found themselves seated opposite one another on a rail journey. As time went on the girl became more and more agitated. Finally she could contain herself no longer and burst out with "Sir, are you saved!"
The bishop replied "my dear, what do you mean by that? Do you mean 'Have I been saved?'; 'Am I being saved?'; or 'Will I be saved?'. Surely she meant all three!

We need to apply the same kind of thinking to war itself.

Yes! The world <u>has been saved</u> through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary. The world has been redeemed, - "bought back" by God. At the very hour of Christ's death, history changed and war, as part of the fallen world, was redeemed.
But! We do not see everything in subjection to mankind. (Hebrews 2, verse 8). Life goes on and there is still wrong-doing, sin and aggression to be faced. There is still greed to be overcome. Not just in the "world out there" but in our own hearts and lives.
However, we <u>are being saved</u> – even war itself is being redeemed. By our action today in bringing our memories, our loss, our fears, our bitterness and <u>our love</u> to God our Heavenly Father we are involving ourselves in His work. We make ourselves part of His salvation – of His redeeming (winning back) the world, including war, for Himself.
And the future? Will I be saved? Yes! All things will be brought back to God. *". . . . according to His promise we wait for New Heavens and a New Earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3, verse 13)*
And so we come, to remember loved ones, friends and comrades. To pray for peace. To give thanks for the past and to pledge ourselves anew to serve God and our fellow men, as we face the future together.