

My Remembrance Day Reflection

Remembrance Sunday November 09, 2025

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be always acceptable to you O God our Rock and our Strength

Tuesday people in cities, towns, and villages across our nation will gather at Cenotaphs and other public places to remember the sacrifices of the many who have served and yes continue to serve in not only the Canadian Armed forces, but also other vocations where personal sacrifice (physical, emotional, spiritual) is part of their professions – first responders, police, fire, wild fire responders, & front line workers not only here at home but in some of the most troubled places in our world.

There is a particular order to the Service of Remembrance which serves to focus those who have gathered on the reality of wars past & yes present and the devastation that accompanies war and other mass casualty events.

At the 11th hour, on the 11th day, of the 11th month we mark the 107th anniversary of the Armistices of the “War to end all wars.”

What are we remembering?

- The lives lost in previous wars and more recent military actions.
- Our peacekeepers who have serve around the globe with only their blue helmets for protection.

- The on-going sacrifices of our Armed Services & other first responders
- Those who have suffered with and continue to deal with life-changing injuries or mental health problems – having to find a way to adapt and cope. Some successfully and some not.
- All who gave unselfishly, to assure each of us would have to opportunity to live lives where freedom & safety is a right and a privilege.
- All those who have yet to be found and given a permanent resting place.
- Are we remembering all who have been and continue to be displaced by ongoing unrest and wars in so many parts of the world particularly Ukraine and Palestine?
- With our remembering are we feeling a lack of hope for a Prolonged PEACE in a world that seems intent on using whatever means possible to inflict suffering on so many innocents.

War is defined as an active conflict that has claimed more than 1,000 lives.

- Of the past 3,400 plus years of recorded history, humans have been entirely at peace for just 268 of them, or just 8 percent of its history.
- At least 108 million people were killed in wars in the twentieth century. Now, we are in the 21st Century and the numbers continue to climb. Estimates for the total number killed in wars throughout all human history range from 150 million to 1 billion.
- War has many negative effects on populations, including a decrease in birthrates by taking those who serve away from their partners. The reduced birthrate during World War II is estimated to have caused a population deficit of more than 20 million people.

- The effects of war on and in our world, and its people, have always been huge and continues to be even in this 21st century. While some proclaim War is great for the economy – that is only relevant if it is your economy that is supplying the armaments to those involved in Military conflicts.

All of us are called to remember.

We are called to remember not only those who paid the ultimate sacrifice but to remember those who continue to work towards a lasting peace for the whole world.

107 years ago millions upon millions of troops & civilians were caught up in the “war to end all wars” and yet even as the Armistice was signed on the 11th day of the 11th month at the 11th hour – another war was brewing in the background.

The brave members of our armed forces, 1st responders, peace keepers, and all those who have supported and continue to support them do so with one hope in mind – that what they do is for the betterment of humanity.

We remember war has always been about power and control! How do you retain power and control – by deliberately eliminating by any means possible those who are considered “enemies.” There has been too much war!

I will never forget standing at the Canadian War Cemetery @ Beny Sur Mer France. I wasn't prepared for the influx of emotion that poured over me as I walked among that lovingly attended piece of Holy Ground. How young so many of them were. Many were still teenagers. I have grandsons & nephews who are now older than some of those who fought and died. I can't imagine any of them going off to war at such a tender age.

I remember the picture of my uncle that had a prominent place in our home. He was standing proudly by his motorcycle all decked out in his gear – he was one of the casualties of war. He was my father's best friend and my father couldn't bring himself to talk about Uncle Jimmy.

We ask why we pause to remember. We pause to remember the sacrifices that wars and military action demands of our young people! This pausing - this intentional setting aside of a moment in time is a profound communal acknowledgement of our respect for Veterans past and present. This setting aside of a moment in time stands as a testimony that we have not yet forgotten and will not forget!

Aside from attending formal ceremonies of Remembrance how do we honor those we see no more, those who remain, and those personnel who will be our veterans of the future?

We honor them by learning about them and their causes and by remembering the sacrifices they've made and are still making. We honor them with our time and our sincere interest in whom and what they are. We honor them by teaching succeeding generations why we continue to have

Remembrance Day Ceremonies.

A quotation about sacrifice by Albert Pine states, “What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world remains and is immortal.” “They are immortal, those who have sacrificed so much in the defense of values that Canadians hold dear.”

In John McRae’s poem “In Flanders Fields” the newly dead speak directly to us, “We are the dead,” they say. “Short days ago we lived.” In the second stanza they exhort us to take the torch that signifies the values for which they fought. If we do not hold their values high we are told; “We shall not sleep,” We should not disappoint those who made the ultimate sacrifice, but, instead we should take up their torch. Let them sleep!

That theme of taking up the torch from those who have gone before and continuing the defense of human rights, justice, peace, and dignity is heard in many poems and reflections. One such poem is titled;

Sunset Vigil

Written in 2008 by a soldier in Afghanistan

*The news is spread far and wide
Another comrade has sadly died*

*A sunset vigil upon the sand
As a soldier leaves this foreign land*

We stand alone, and yet as one

In the fading light of a setting sun

*We've all gathered to say goodbye
To our fallen comrade who's set to fly*

The padre calls us all to pray

*The bugler has Last Post to play
We will recall, with pride, their name*

A minute's silence stood in place

*As tears roll down the hardest face
Deafening silence fills the air
With each of us in personal prayer*

Reveille sounds and the parade is done

*The hero remembered, forgotten by none
They leave to start the journey back
In their flag draped coffin
Carried by comrades gently so as not to disturb their rest.*

Those we honor today and will continue to honor in the future heard and answered the call for justice and peace. Those who answered the call chose to speak out for those who could not speak for themselves. Those we honor today heard and answered the call without hesitation and with no thought to their own safety. Those we honor today heard and answered the call so that this Great Nation could continue to live with and in peace.

We pause to Remember, to hope, and to trust that 'Never Again' will the world Devolve into the madness that is War.

That is our prayer today, tomorrow, and into our future.