

Students help mark November 11

Poignant songs and poems of peace recited by Acton school kids added to the solemn Service of Remembrance on Friday at the Acton Cenotaph. Their words of war and prayers for peace underscored the resurgence of interest countrywide in veterans as a national treasure – those of past wars and conflicts and the 158 Canadians who have died in Afghanistan since 2002.

With light flurries in the air, at least 150 people, many of them students from Acton's schools, ringed the Cenotaph for the service hosted by the Acton Legion Branch 197. Parade Marshall Tom Grant read from a poem written by the wife of a veteran titled *Thank A Soldier*. In the searing poem, the woman asks if anyone stopped to thank a veteran for the price of freedom they continue to pay. In part, it reads:

Have you stopped to thank a veteran today for the price of freedom they had to pay?

Did you gaze into those distant eyes, did you

see the ghosts he can't deny?

Do you think a soldier's heart is made of steel, because he was trained to kill he wouldn't feel?...

Legion member Mac MacKenzie read the names of the Glorious Dead, and Legion past-president Wes Kutasienski stepped in to read a poem by McKenzie-Smith Bennett School student Claire Vail, who was too shy to read it herself. The poem won first place in the Legion's annual Remembrance Day awareness contest, and reads:

"Freedom"

The world can be a cold dark place;

It leaves sadness on the face.

Those who fight and those who die; leave their families there to cry.

Guns in the air on war filled days; bodies thrown into the blaze.

But the results weren't all bad at land and sea, those who fought have made us free.

Most that fought, in the ground they lay; are remembered everyday.

The soldiers, the veterans, we celebrate; they claimed victory through the fate.

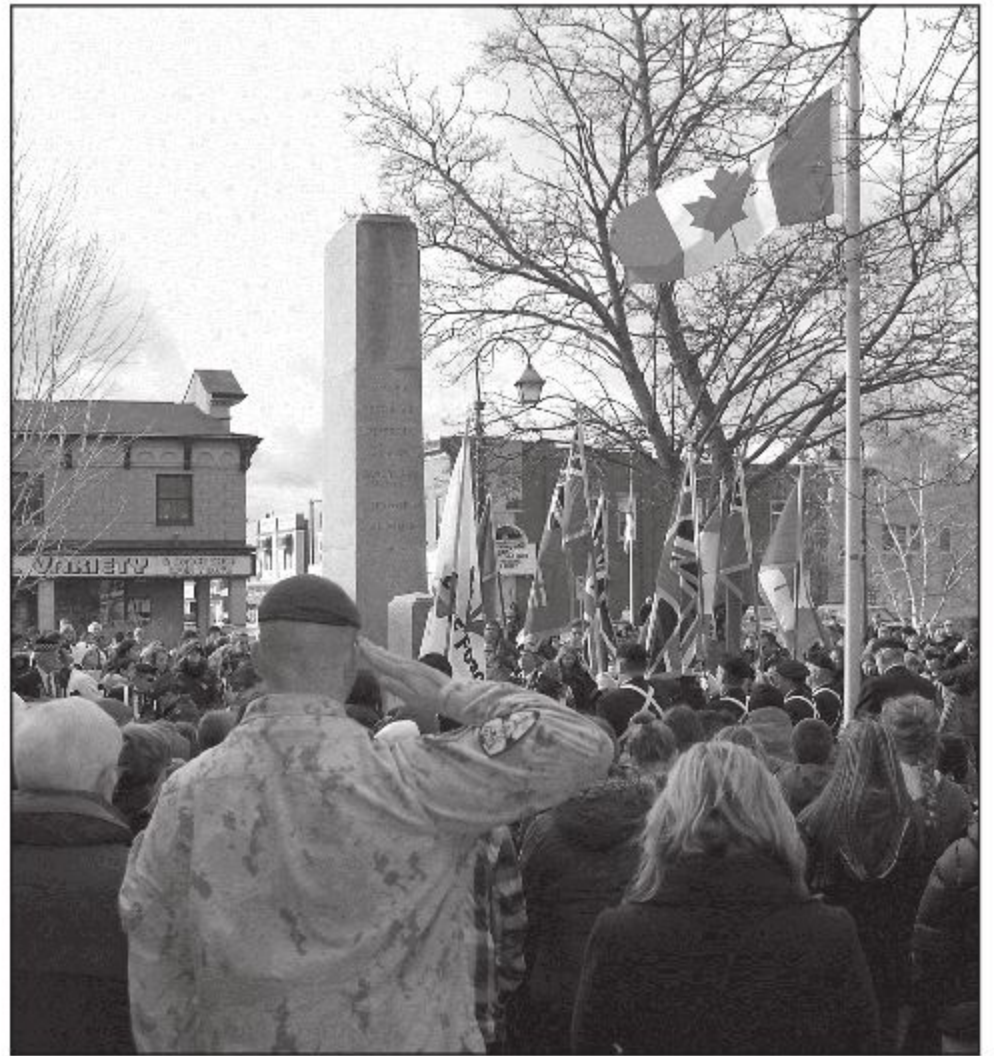
In the end it was all worth while; to make lands liveable mile to mile.

The day that's marked with double eleven; is the day we remember those in heaven.

Some were tall, others were thin; the ones who survived grew thicker skin.

With the scars that were left on their knees; we can remember that freedom sure isn't free.

The Grade three class at Robert Little School, led by teacher Jacqueline Angood, recited a poem about peace, and the choir from St. Joseph Catholic School sang *Let There Be Peace*. Acton Citizen Band bandmaster George Elliott played a mournful *Last Post* and hopeful *Reveille* and the service ended with the crowd, at least those who knew the words, singing *God Save the Queen*.



SOLEMN SALUTE: With a grateful heart and ramrod reverence, this soldier paid honour to those who fought for freedom during the November 11 Remembrance Day ceremony at the Acton cenotaph. – Iain Brennan photo

BRANCH
No. 197



LEGION NEWS
By Sharon Graham
P.R.O.

Comrades,

The Remembrance Day Service on Friday was beautiful. Every year it seems to get bigger. The Colour Party carrying the flags blowing in the wind made their way to the newly renovated Cenotaph. The Legion members paraded from behind Trinity United church and made their way to the Cenotaph. Our Cadets from Branch 197 were standing strong. This year was a bit cold, but it did not dampen the hearts of the students from McKenzie-Smith Bennett, Robert Little, St. Joseph's, and Acton High School. The choir from St. Jo-

seph's, the poem reading from Robert Little school and a poem read by MSB student Claire Vail added a great deal to the ceremony. The prayers from Branch 197 President George DeRabbie and local pastors were very fitting for the occasion.

The Branch would like to thank Angela Tyler for her excellent column last week about the Cenotaph. It was very true. The renovation was a lot of hard work. Everyone has said the new pad looks great. Plus we would like to thank the town for donating the benches at the cenotaph.

Our Acton Senior

Christmas dinner is on November 29, at 6 p.m., at the Branch. The tickets are available at the bar. There might even be a surprise visit from the North Pole.

This coming Friday evening we have live entertainment with the band *One Night Stand* from 7 to 11 p.m. All are welcome. Hope to see you all there. Our Legion web forum has posted all of the pictures from the Remembrance Day Parade. The web address is www.rclbr197.org. To view the pictures just click on the gallery. There is a lot of history about the branch for you to have a look at from the past to the present.

Town budget debate begins

The \$858,000 reconstruction of Commerce Crescent and the \$820,000 replacement of the Maria Street bridge are two items up for debate as the Town's budget committee – all councillors and the may-

or – began to review the capital budget yesterday (Wednesday). The proposed capital spending plan includes \$12.4-million in projects.

The long range capital forecast to 2031 includes just under \$101-million

in proposed projects, which in Acton include the expansion of the Acton Seniors Centre (\$2.4-million), design and construction of a new Acton Youth Centre (\$2.4-million) – both in 2013-14, and reconstruction of Glen Lawson Road

At press time, no one had registered with the Town to speak to the capital budget. Councillors will delve into the operating budget in the New Year.

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Robert Little School students



St. Joseph School Choir