

Maintaining a healthy respect

We all know what we're observing this weekend, and cenotaphs all over the world will be lined with veterans and their families paying respect to those who have died in the world wars.

Over the years, I've heard people ask if Remembrance Day is really necessary. Do we need to assemble at the cenotaphs and read the names of the war dead?

I think we do.

Being an adult in my mid 40s, I've never had anything to do with my country being at war. It is something completely foreign to me and I couldn't for a moment fathom what it would be like to see friends, family members and acquaintances head off to fight in some distant country, and in some cases, to die a horrible death.

My parents' generation experienced it.

They saw friends leave home, never to return. They knew mothers and fathers, and sisters and brothers of those who died in some out of the way place, many without so much as a proper burial.

So they remember war from the home front.

When my grandfather was alive, he faithfully attended Remembrance Day services, since he was a veteran of the First World War.

He rarely talked of his time overseas, but every November 11, he made the effort to remember those that weren't as lucky as he.

So, like today's veterans, he remembered, in a very private way, from his own personal war experiences.

My own generation was raised observing the ritual, travelling to the cenotaph every November, to stand in the cold, damp air and listen to the familiar names of the war dead as they're read through the quiet of the assembly.

When I was younger, we were even given the day off school, to make sure we faithfully attended the services.

So we remembered for our parents' sake. But what of today's youth?

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Ted Brown

I often wonder what people in my kids' generation really think about Remembrance Day, and the significance of observing it.

Like any parent, I worry that the traditional values of remembrance will become watered down over the years, and the longer we live without world wars, the faster the tradition will fade. But I had a little glimmer of hope earlier this week.

While taking the photo that graces today's front page, I met Rachael Miller and her dad Phil.

As we chatted, they asked me if I would be covering Remembrance Day services at the Glen Williams and Georgetown cenotaphs.

I replied no, I wouldn't be covering them.

But I would certainly be there, just like I am every year.

Rachael grinned.

"I'll be playing the trumpet during the service, Sunday," she proudly proclaimed.

You see Rachael is 14 and a member of the local Royal Canadian Air Cadets squadron band. She was asked to play for the service.

And she was just bursting with pride. Being asked to play for that service was obviously a great honor for her.

It occurred to me at that moment, that enthusiastic kids like Rachael may indeed be the one thing that keeps our society maintaining a healthy respect for the sacrifice of our war dead.

And more importantly, a healthy respect for the horror of war.

MAY WE RECOMMEND ...

I have recently returned from an exciting new destination called Veracruz, Mexico. New in the fact that this is the first year Signature Vacations is flying into the city. Veracruz is actually an old port town on the Gulf of Mexico, with roots dating back to the year 1519 when it was the main port for New Spain. The city offers a rich history with lots to offer every taste. Los Portales is a covered arcade in the main square, which is a great location to listen to strolling musicians or people watch. Veracruz is perfect for the experienced traveller who's looking for a new destination with an authentic Mexican flavour. The people of Veracruz are very genuine and hospitable, like the city they are not changed by tourism.



NANCY GOLTZ

Veracruz offers Eco tours into the rainforest with a boat ride to see Monkey Island and to Eyipantlea Waterfall (you can see the site where Medicine Man was filmed). You can go whitewater rafting or visit the ruins. This year Signature Vacations is offering non stop flights from Toronto with prices from \$759.00 for a one week stay; it's an incredible value! Now's the time to come in and book.



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