

Children's Chorus share thoughts on Remembrance trip

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It was the day of the Apeldoorn parade and we went to eat at a little restaurant near by. It just so happened that the veterans who were in the parade with us chose to eat there too. I began talking to a veteran from Toronto. He explained to me that he was only 17 when he joined the war. He told me of his many different emotions, he was proud to be fighting for our freedom, scared of the unknown, sad to have left so many friends and family and to have lost many along the way. He was concerned that this very important day would someday be forgotten by our younger generation. I learned so much, that could never had been taught to me through a text book. I know that I will never forget what he and others have done for us. To all veterans there is a special place in my heart for you, especially the veteran that took the time to teach me. Before we left the restaurant I said to him "Thank you" for risking your life for mine, "Thank you" for my freedom, and "Thank you" for my life.

Chelsea McGowan, 13

The weather was miserable and no one was exactly thrilled to be there in the pouring rain just waiting around. But as the parade started, we all changed. The parade was full of army tanks, trucks and other vehicles filled with Canadian veterans. Not one of them looked unhappy or disappointed in the weather. But as the trucks passed I noticed veterans walking in the parade. Walking in the freezing cold rain and all with big smiles across their faces. These men and women older than my grandparents walking with a pride for our country I never understood until that day. I was in awe. Here we were, healthy, young and energetic teenagers standing in the cold, whining about being wet and tired and these veterans

marched along as though it was a sunny beautiful day. I realized to them it was. This day was a good day, one free of gunshots, fallen friends and from all the hardships of war.

Suzanne Thibodeau, 16

The most remarkable moment of the trip was when the veterans said thank you to me, when I felt like I should be the one saying thank you for my freedom!

Alisa Hadskis, 19

I noticed a sign and I will never forget what it said. It really touched me. It was a Canadian flag with the words "You wrote history. Thank you" written underneath it.

Rachel Woolley, 14

At Holten Cemetery the thing I remember best is when the plane came and dropped the poppies. All I could think of was all the soldiers who gave their lives for another country and for some of the soldiers that were 17 when they died in the war. I also felt sad thinking that my grandpa could have died there, because he's a veteran.

Charlotte Robson, 11

At the ceremony in Holten, it was devastating to see all the graves of the young soldiers who fought for freedom. It was very emotional. My grandparents came with me on the trip. My grandmother is from Holland and she lived through those days. It was a very emotional trip for her but she was honoured to be back in her home land. I will never forget those two weeks in Holland.

Tara Bishop, 13

I remember walking in the parade in Apeldoorn when we passed a house that had a sign hanging out the window. This sign read, "You wrote History!" under a Canadian maple leaf. This trip taught me so much more than I



Georgetown Children's Chorus members (from left) Carly Bravo, Sarah Wilkinson, Erin Farrar, Ali Radomsky, Kevin Wilson and (with flag) Marc Wilson ride in a military vehicle during Liberation celebrations in Holland in May.

Photo courtesy Lois Fraser



The Georgetown Children's Chorus assumed their place of honour as they performed from the base of the Cross of Sacrifice during The Netherlands' official Remembrance Day service, May 4 at Holten Canadian War Cemetery.

Photo by Ted Brown

expected and was truly the trip of a lifetime.

Krista Gruenwald, 16

Our soldiers, in both countries, will be remembered for a very long time because they gave us the most important gift of all: freedom.

Shannon McMullin, 11

We were all there together to thank them for all that they did, though words could never describe the story. I somehow knew that it wasn't truly going to remain as only a memory. For, a memory is something that exists entirely within one's mind, but my Holland experience was one which will reside forever within my heart.

Colleen Connolly, 14

The appreciation and gratitude shown by so many people in this small country was awe-inspiring and one that I will never forget. For a moment every person forgot about material things, jobs, and just dropped everything in their lives to remember, that without the brutal effort of the veterans that we see around us, we would have nothing, be nothing.

Joanna Fraser, 17

I remember after the ceremony had concluded, my friends and I and my mom stood freezing on a dirt road as we waited for our bus. Suddenly one of the veterans came up to us. He spoke to us so kindly and then pulled out from his regal uniform, collector coins with the poppy on the face of each one. A hero had given me a gift and a memory I shall never forget. Holland is beautiful and the people were so respectful of our culture. We are not even the soldiers but they acted as if we were the ones who freed

their country.

Avery Hamelin, 13

At Holten, I felt tremendous sadness as I walked among the thousands of graves of the soldiers. There were men of all ages and my heart truly ached when I read "Sleep Peacefully Dear Daddy" on one of the headstones of a 25-year-old man. And yet in all the sadness, I also felt a sense of accomplishment for Canada.

Jen Grierson, 17

During the Liberation parade in Nijkerk, an old woman came up to my military vehicle with the brightest, biggest smile on her face. She told us it was her 80th birthday. We all started to sing Happy Birthday to her and the look on her face almost brought me to tears. She told us how she had been there in


the war and what she had gone through and how grateful she was to our country. The biggest memory of all was something that will never leave me. Just as we were about to leave I said "here take these pins" and each person gave her a pin. She looked at me with tears in her eyes, gratitude and a smile that said I'll never forget and she kissed me on the cheek. That said enough for all of Holland. At that moment a feeling filled my body that I could never explain. As I waved good-bye as the vehicle took off she blew a kiss and looked up to heaven. I just sat there waving back with tears running down my face with a thought in my mind, that woman was blessed and had now blessed me too. When that woman came into my life, she changed it forever and I'm certain that I changed hers too.

Meghan Connolly, 13




Chorus members, from left, Jeremy Burns, Alisa Hadskis, Caley Power, Rebecca McDougall, Krista Gruenwald, Heather Ellis, Kaitlyn Enman and Justin Bravo show Canadian pride in Holland.

Photo courtesy Lois Fraser



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