

OPINION

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PM dishonours fallen soldiers

Last month when Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited Canadian troops serving in Afghanistan he declared, "I am behind you. Your government is behind you. And, most importantly, the Canadian people are behind you."

However, Harper's action this week to bar the media from covering the return of slain soldiers to Canadian soil flies in the face of the pledge he gave to the troops.

The PM's argument that the return of the soldiers' bodies is "a private family matter" is both unpersuasive and ludicrous. Transfers of this kind have long been a public military ceremony and the Canadian public has every right to share in the families' loss and to show their respect for the fallen soldiers.

Harper's decision— purportedly done without consulting military families— is only the latest in a string of decisions by the PM to somehow control the media. It is a slippery trail the PM is walking and one he best rethink.

While Harper was correct in restoring the tradition of keeping the flag at Parliament Hill at full staff and not lowering it each time a soldier is killed, he is sadly misguided in his move to bar the media from covering military funerals.

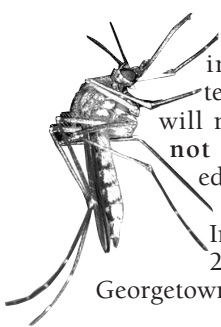
Soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice representing this country abroad deserve full public recognition when they return home. They have earned the gratitude of the nation and for Harper to try and hide behind a "right to privacy" argument—that military families have not said they support—is shameful.

Does Harper believe Canadians are unaware of the dangers our soldiers face abroad and that the Canadian public must be shielded from the horrible truth of war—the fact that sometimes soldiers die? If so, he has sadly misjudged the public and not given Canadians enough credit.

This is an issue of freedom of the press—a basic democratic right and one that our soldiers over the generations have fought valiantly for. The PM would do well to remember that.

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Student urges others to take part in Tribute

Dear editor,

Last year, around the beginning of May, I was fortunate enough to accompany the Georgetown's Children's Chorus on their trip to the Netherlands to take part in the remembrance of the fallen Canadian soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of the Dutch.

It was an unbelievably heartwarming and rewarding experience that I will never forget. There were many laughs that were shared among people that I'd gotten to know on a higher level. But more affectingly, tears were shed among veterans that will forever receive my utmost gratitude and respect.

We were all there together to thank them for what they did more than 56 years ago. Words could never describe the story behind that flicker of never-fading anguish and pride within their eyes. That flicker exists as well within the flames of each candle placed upon the 1,355 graves in the Holten Canadian War Cemetery every year on May 4, reminding us of those fallen heroes who gave their lives to free eastern and northern parts of the Netherlands from five years of oppression.

On May 4, the students of Halton Hills can take part in the remembrance and gratification of those fallen soldiers by placing a lit candle on the Georgetown cenotaph. I believe that this will be a wonderful opportunity to learn about our communi-

ty's local history and heritage as well as to recognize and show our respect for the many men and women who unselfishly gave and risked their lives for a blessing that we often take for granted: peace.

I look forward to participating in the Candlelight Tribute with my fel-

low students of St. Francis of Assisi school and hope to see many community members, veterans and other Halton Hills students there with us to take part in this very special event.

Colleen Connolly,
St. Francis of Assisi School
Georgetown

Kids on tracks are risking their lives

Dear editor,

It's about 8 a.m. Friday, April 7. I am on Mountainview Road bridge looking towards the station.

A westbound freight train is stopping on the north track. That means there's one coming the other way on the south track. In the distance I see three boys heading for school. They are going to cross the tracks behind the now stationary train. I hope they will look along the blind spot behind the train because I can see the other train heading towards them.

Oh, they are running with no intention of looking behind the sta-

tionary train first. It's raining. They are running, long strides on slippery wet ties, big strides over slippery wet rail, already committed on a collision course.

They made it. No split skull. No sliced torso— maybe next time, boys. Parents, do your kids cross the tracks?

Fences don't work— they get cut. Footbridges don't work— too much of a detour. Police patrols don't work— they cost too much. That only leaves education.

Peter Kent,
Georgetown

Crucifixion re-enactment 'an embarrassment'

Dear editor,

It is an affront to today's intellect and gained intelligence to view the primitive display put on by people publicly abusing themselves with dubious religious enactment, that frankly, is an embarrassment to mankind in general.

Obviously many, have not progressed beyond the ignorant mythical

early stages of mankind's development.

I am frankly disturbed that your paper would propagate such irrational nonsense as newsworthy.

Such exhibits are best kept hidden in the conjuring back rooms of the religious shrines that foster this tripe.

Wm. Pomeroy,
Norval