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SOLEMN TRIBUTE: From the muddy trenches of France to the dusty plains of Afghanistan, Canadian soldiers past and present who fought for freedom were honoured by members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 197 and students from St. Joseph Catholic School at a Remembrance Day ceremony in the school gym on Friday.
— Frances Niblock photo

Acton students pay tribute

By Frances Niblock

Acton students honoured the courage and sacrifices of soldiers past and present – from the muddy trenches of France to the hot plains and mountains of Afghanistan – at Remembrance Day ceremonies on Friday morning.

In four school gyms, students, teachers and staff paused to pay tribute to the courage and bravery shown by Canadian soldiers in the fight for freedom.

At St. Joseph Catholic School, the halls echoed with the skirl of bagpipes from Piper Iris Irwin who led a Colour Party from the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 197 into the gym for its service.

Students, dressed in their Sparks, Brownies, Cubs and Cadet uniforms also marched into the gym

where one class sang the peace song *Where Have All the Flowers Gone* and another read *In Flander's Fields*.

Korean War veteran Dave Crook told the students that some veterans can't cope with the horrible memories of war, and like him, never talked about it with their families.

"You children can help. You can ask the questions that adults won't...and unlock the secrets," Crook said, adding asking questions would help take away some of the guilt that a lot of veterans feel for the lives they took.

"We need the kids to just ask those innocent questions and the veterans will tell it the way it was and it will bring back the memories, and hopefully those children will pass those

memories on," Crook said, adding that sometimes just a simple "thank you" to a veteran is enough.

At Robert Little School, the sacrifices still being made by Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan was underscored at its Remembrance Day ceremony when Grade two student Jessica Pond came to the microphone for a special show and tell – a postcard from a soldier, a friend of her father's who is serving in Afghanistan.

With help from her teacher, Jessica read the postcard from soldier Shawn Olton, who wrote that there was no glory in seeing his friends become casualties and that all he has seen "has strengthened my resolve for our mission."

The choir and several classes performed songs and dramatic readings, and

Acton High School band trumpet player Talyn McCarey ended the moment of silence at Robert Little School with Last Post and Reveille.

At Acton High School, the 43 Acton men killed in duty were featured in a video shown during an assembly. The video, filmed last year by students and Communications Technology teacher Wade Stark, featured interviews with some of Acton's veterans who stressed they weren't heroes, but just young men.

Forty-two Canadian soldiers have died in fighting in Afghanistan and over 200 have been injured. Principal Bert O'Hearn asked the students to remember the veterans of the past, but also those fighting in the Afghanistan today.

October coldest month ever? No way says Environment Canada

Perceptions in this neck of the Ontario woods that October must have been the coldest month on record have been punctured by Environment Canada (EC).

In their monthly weather review Environment Canada states, "Despite perceptions that October was a cold month, temperatures were generally near normal or slightly below-normal across the province. The month felt colder due to the fact that gusty winds often accompanied the below-normal temperatures."

The EC review acknowledges that "Old Man Winter struck hard and early" and "some Ontario communities are still reeling from the one-two punch they experienced" in October and that rainfall was "noteworthy."

Southern and eastern Ontario received so much rain that previous rainfall records set back in 1954, with Hurricane Hazel, and in 1955 with Hurricane Kate, were threatened. October 2006 was the second wettest October ever for Trenton, North Bay and Wiarton, the third wettest ever for London and the fourth wettest historically in Toronto.

Record snow

On October 12, snow started falling in Fort Erie and didn't stop until 30 centimetres had been dumped in that one day. Not only was this a single-day record for snowfall for October for Fort Erie, it was also a monthly record there for October.

The other noteworthy snowfall was in North Bay. Their snowfall

season also started on October 12, but it continued for two more days, resulting in a total accumulation of 38.3 centimetres. This was the earliest a snowfall of this magnitude had ever been recorded there but to top it off the snow continued to pummel North Bay. The last weekend of the month, another 33 centimetres was recorded.

The first snowfall alone almost broke the previous monthly record amount for North Bay, but with all the additional snow the records have been rewritten a few times over. As well, during the last two days of the month, a disturbance over Northwestern Ontario dumped enough snow on Red Lake to surpass its previous snowfall record for October set in 2001.