

OPINION

Lest we forget

Why should we remember on November 11?

We remember because between 1899 and 1902 approximately 7,000 of our nation's soldiers served in the South Africa War; 267 gave their lives in battle.

We remember because in the First World War (1914-18) — by far the bloodiest conflict in which our country has ever been involved — about 650,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders crossed the Atlantic Ocean.

Nearly one out of every nine — a total of 69,000 — didn't survive.

We remember because in the Second World War (1939-45), one million troops from Canada's armed forces waged war on the sea, in the air and on land to strike down the systematic genocide of the Holocaust. More than 47,000 of these soldiers never saw their loved ones again.

We remember because during the Korean War (1950-53) nearly 28,000 Canadians served in the Canadian Army Special Force with 516 paying the ultimate sacrifice.

We also remember because in 59 years of Canadian peace-keeping missions, more than 150,000 Canadians have served abroad, with 155 losing their lives — including 42 alone in Canada's four-year mission in Afghanistan.

All told, our nation has sacrificed more than 117,200 of its sons and daughters in the name of freedom and peace.

We should remember because in the last 107 years more than 1.8-million Canadians have voluntarily put their lives in jeopardy in an attempt to bring peaceful conclusions to global conflicts.

We remember those who died on the field of battle; we remember those wounded in action; we remember those scarred psychologically by having witnessed the carnage, the inhumanity and the horror.

We remember their bravery. We remember their sacrifice. We remember that it is because of them that we enjoy one of the best standards of living in the world and live in a nation free from war in our own backyard.

On Remembrance Day we should also remember the countless families of soldiers killed in action for peace's sake.

With all but a handful of Canada's First World War veterans gone and more than 200,000 living Second World War veterans unlikely to be with us a generation from now, few children born today are likely to have an opportunity to meet a living veteran from the two largest conflicts Canadians have fought in.

While it would be naive to expect a conflict-free world, it's essential we remember these past battles so we never lose sight of war's toll on humankind. It's our duty to honour our ancestors' sacrifice by promising that we will never forget.



ReadersWrite

Send your letters to miltone@haltonsearch.com or drop them off at 875 Main St. E.

Let's show support for our veterans

DEAR EDITOR:

On behalf of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 136 Milton, I invite all Milton and area residents to join in our Remembrance Day parades and services this weekend — tomorrow at 11 a.m. at Evergreen Cemetery and Sunday at 1:45 p.m. at Victoria Park.

This continued show of thanks to those men and women who fought for our freedom so very long ago is now extended to our Milton and area young soldiers presently serving in

Afghanistan.

The Milton branch is very appreciative of the generous support to our poppy campaign, of which proceeds are used to help all veterans — both members and non-members of the Legion. No contribution is too small. We just want to see a poppy on everyone's lapel in support of these fine and brave men and women.

**Laurie MacNab, President
Royal Canadian Legion,
Branch 136**

The view from here

Thank you to our hometown heroes, both young and old

Tomorrow, local residents will look to more than just the past when they mark Remembrance Day.

For many, the day will bring a flood of emotions about their children, their siblings or even their friends who are overseas right now defending our country.

Two particular young men come to mind — Miltonians Matt Osborne and Adrian Burton, who are currently in Afghanistan, thousands of kilometres away from the comforts of home.

The Champion recently ran stories on both, describing Burton's venture fighting for peace in Kandahar and Osborne's position on the front lines working to stop the Taliban.

While it can often be difficult for young people like myself to relate to war, I think Burton's and Osborne's tales drive home the importance and relevance of what they're

doing and what so many local residents have done in the past, like Frank Sonoski.

As you'll see elsewhere in today's Champion, Sonoski served in the Second World War as a wireless operator and an air gunner. The 83-year-old tells the heart-wrenching tale of how his son followed in his footsteps and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, but died after his helicopter had a mechanical failure.

He also paints a clear picture of what it was like to be in the midst of a war, and gave me and hopefully our readers a greater appreciation and understanding of just what our men and women went through.

So, I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Sonoski and all the local veter-

ans for defending our country and making it what it is today. You played such an important role and did it selflessly, and for that I commend you.

And to Osborne, Burton and any other Miltonians who are overseas right now, I extend my gratitude and hope you return home soon safely.

I encourage everyone to take part in the Remembrance Day services planned for tomorrow (see details in above letter).

And remember when you head to the polls on Monday to cast your vote in the municipal election, you're not just deciding Milton's future — you're also paying homage to the past.

After all, if it wasn't for our veterans, we wouldn't have the freedom to do so.



Melanie Hennessey

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