

Senior Essay 2nd Place

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Remembrance Day In Canada

Silence. With all students gathered in my high school gym there is nothing but silence. It is 11:00am, on November 11th, and today is not an everyday assembly. There is no laughter, there is no noise and not much chatter amongst the students and staff. After the school concert band finishes the final notes of O'Canada we all rise to our feet. With bowed heads and red poppies pinned ever so gently to our clothing above our hearts we can only think and feel for the people who have sacrificed their lives so that we can be here living in Canada today.

In my small town there is nothing but a cool fall breeze as everyone pauses in dedication of the lives lost hundreds of years ago and the lives still fighting and being lost today. It is still a crisp autumn day as stores, radios and offices all take a break from their work for a small moment of silence to remember and give thanks. People on the street, at their homes or at church's, stand and are quiet.

In Canada, it is silent, as we think of the thousands of brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, grandparents and friends that have lost their lives, suffered and fought for us. People of all races, sizes and ages, from all provinces and territories across the country take the time to be thankful for their friends and family who fought for them to be where they are today in this beautiful country we get to call home. It is silent as our souls fill with thanks and our eyes may shed a tear.

Silence, which we experience on this day for our military soldiers is very different than what our army experienced and is still experiencing for us to this day. The non stop aggressive sounds of exploding bombs, shooting guns and powerful tanks driving over the muddy ground filling their ears with deafening sounds for what must feel like forever. Having to feel the pain of wounds and knowing you may never see your family again. This is what thousands of Canadians have had to face, some lucky and others, not as much.

When Canada joined World War One in the August of 1914, I doubt they would have thought that when the war ended they would be returning home with a saddening 66, 573 left behind in the trenches and along the fields and 138, 166 wounded. It was terribly hard for the close families and friends of the soldiers and for every Canadian then and now, and it is still hard for our country today as others still have to say final goodbyes.

As a proud Canadian myself, I can truly say I am very inspired by our soldiers to be brave enough to go and fight for a whole country and their extreme love and dedication. I'm inspired by their ability to face the fear of war and being able to leave home not knowing when they will be back. I am not only inspired on this day, but everyday. I know I may never be able to do the same but I can do simple things to help out and give thanks to the people of our country.

Some of the activities I gladly participate in on Remembrance Day each year include playing the remembrance songs and O'Canada in honor of the soldiers in my school band performance at our assembly. I also join my youth choir in singing at our town's annual Remembrance Day gathering in town square. But, I am only one of many Canadians who gets the opportunity to give back, show my appreciation and proudly wear a poppy upon my heart.

As Canada goes silent on this day of remembering the war we feel proud, we feel loved and we feel thankful. Thankful for the soldiers that faced the harsh battles, the difficult times, and the hardest goodbyes that had to be made for us to be where we are now. We are thankful for good times that we were lucky enough to have but that did not last forever, and thankful for the amazing and inspiring people we unfortunately had to say goodbye to, way too early in this life. Together we are a strong, powerful nation and together on this November day we will stand still as one. On Remembrance Day, at 11:00am, my gym is silent, my house is silent, my town is silent and my country, Canada, is silent.