

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Thank you for your sacrifices

This week is Veterans' Week.

It's a time for all of us as Canadians to stop to remember, honour and thank our country's finest ? the outstanding men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) for their loyal, courageous service to Canada and for the immense sacrifices they've made and continue to make to protect and defend the peace and freedom we enjoy. This Veterans' Week also marks the anniversary of several significant battles of the First and Second World Wars. When stopping to reflect on the contributions and sacrifices made by these extraordinary Canadians, it reinforces our commitment as Canadians to always remember them and protect the values they've valiantly defended on our behalf.

This year, 2017, marks the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, which took place April 9, 1917 during the First World War. Canadian soldiers demonstrated exceptional valour in this battle. They emerged victorious, but it came at a terrible price ? more than 10,600 casualties with nearly 3,600 of which making the ultimate sacrifice of the some 100,000 Canadians who served their country.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge was also significant because for the first time, four divisions of the Canadian Corps, made up of soldiers from all regions of Canada, triumphantly fought side-by-side together to capture a strong German defensive position. This unified effort significantly contributed to our shared Canadian identity that we hold with great pride to this day.

This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele, where the Canadian offensive took place from Oct. 26 to Nov. 10, 1917. Canadian soldiers overcame insurmountable hardship to emerge victorious in this battle. The Canadians' success at Passchendaele came at an enormous price though ? more than 4,000 were killed in this battle and almost 12,000 were wounded.

This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the Dieppe Raid, which took place during the Second World War, Aug. 19, 1942. It is another example of the horrific cost of war and incredible sacrifice made by Canada's finest. It was the bloodiest single day of the Second World War experienced by Canada, which ended with more than 3,350 casualties; approximately 1,950 taken prisoner; and 916 Canadians making the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Much was learned from this important attack and many of those lessons would significantly contribute to the planning and preparations for D-Day that would follow almost two years later and save countless lives.

The honourable, courageous and loyal service shown by Canadian soldiers in the First and Second World Wars has been carried on by members of the CAF in subsequent conflicts; from the Korean War to Afghanistan; and to operations taking place here at home and abroad today. During Veterans' Week and every week, we owe it to our veterans, those serving in the CAF today, and those who've fallen, to remember them and say ?thank you? for the immense sacrifices they've made for us and for Canada.

The peace and freedom we enjoy in Canada is owed to the sacrifices of our country's finest. Let's join together during this Veterans' Week, as well as on Remembrance Day, to pause and reflect on the exceptional Canadians who've served Canada. In doing so, we demonstrate our sincere gratitude and appreciation for their tremendous efforts and that we will never, ever forget them or their valiant service to Canada.

We will remember.

