

Remembrance Day ceremony at Alton Legion was a time for reflection

By Rob Paul

With November being a month of remembering those who have been lost fighting for Canada's freedoms, the Alton Legion held its Remembrance Day ceremony on Sunday, November 7. The ceremony was attended by Legion members, Mayor Allan Thompson, MPP Sylvia Jones, MP Kyle Seeback, and representatives of Caledon Fire and Caledon OPP.

Legion President Larry Wertz, who leads the Poppy Campaign for the Caledon area each year emceed the event as dignitaries shared their thoughts on the importance of Remembrance Day and thanked those who risked everything so Canadians can have the privilege to live their lives to the fullest.

"Today is a day to pay our respects to all of our fallen, all the wounded, and all who served in conflicts," said Wertz. "Today we remember those who volunteered, sacrificed, served, fought, and died for our freedom. We will never forget that. We will remember them."

Thompson made a point to thank the heroes who have served in recent combat missions for their country's freedoms and are transitioning back into their lives.

"I want to reach out on behalf of Caledon and say thank you to everyone who has served in the past and are serving us today," said Thompson. "I think a lot of people take democracy for granted and I think this is something we have to remember on days like this as to why we are so grateful to have the country that we have."

"I want to say that I know we're here to remember those who have lost their lives, but also we are so grateful for the ones who have come back, especially from Afghanistan and are getting their lives back together after putting their lives on the line to keep our democracy and keep our world a safe place. We will remember them, and we will not forget them."

Given the 100th anniversary of the Poppy Campaign, Seeback took the time to highlight all of the major anniversaries in 2021 of wars and battles that have contributed to Canadian's freedom today.

"I thought this year it would be important to mark several missions that our finest have served spanning almost 100 years," Seeback said. "This is the 10th anniversary of the end of Canada's combat mission in Afghanistan, the 30th anniversary of the end of the Gulf War, the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Kapyong during the Korean War, the 80th anniversary of the Defense of Hong Kong during the Second World War, the 105th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. 2021 is also the 100th anniversary of the poppy, which has become our iconic symbol. Lest we forget."

With the veterans who had to leave their homes and didn't have the opportunity to return, Jones talked about the influence that had on the communities throughout Dufferin-Peel and why the region must never forget what has been lost.

"I can't read and hear those names without thinking what an impact those lives had on the communities where they grew up and lived their lives," said Jones. "Those small communities like Alton, Caledon East, Orangeville, Shelburne, Grand Valley. Where husbands, brothers, and uncles left to serve their country and did not have the opportunity to live the rest of their lives in the community. What that did to change those communities, to make people appreciate what happens in other countries around the world truly does have an impact right here at home. So, thank you for coming out and immortalizing today and thank you for understanding while some of these wars happened many years before our children were born, they did have an impact on our lives. Lest we forget."

There were several wreaths laid by Wertz prior to the ceremony representing the federal government, provincial government, Region of Peel, Ward 1 Councillors, the Silver Cross Mother, Armed Forces, Alton Legion, Alton Legion Ladies Auxiliary, World War 1,

World War 2, Korean Conflict, OPP, Caledon Fire, Alton Fire, Alton Village Association, Alton Public School, Alton Cubs and Scouts, and four wreaths for individual families.