

Take time to remember those who have served over the coming days

Since 1919, Canadians have gathered Nov. 11 in remembrance of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in armed conflicts, fighting for our freedom.

Inscribed on cenotaphs, all across the country are the names of those who never came home from war. In the 95 years since the First World War, we have lost many of our loved ones who served during these wars and conflicts. It is vital that, as a community, we continue acts of remembrance, and to pay tribute to all veterans and current serving members of our military.

It was King George V who understood that the outcome of the First World War had significantly changed the lives of Britons and their allies (including 600,000 Canadians who enlisted) when he proclaimed that "the anniversary of the armistice (Nov. 11) marks the victory of right and freedom."

Today, Remembrance Day observances symbolize Canadians who are called upon to protect our freedoms during times of war, unrest and conflict. During the Second World War, nearly 1.1 million Canadians put their lives on the line for our freedom. Soon thereafter, 26,000 served in the Korean conflict, and 30,000 Canadians enlisted in the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. More recently, our Canadian Forces have fought in the Gulf War, and have served with distinction in Afghanistan. Today, there are more than 1,300 Canadian Forces members serving in task forces and operations all over the world.

As time marches on and the memories of these significant world events become stories told by our grandparents and great-grandparents, it is important to remember the hard lessons learned in war lest we forget. Local projects like the Dufferin County Museum and Archive's virtual war memorial now contains a list that has grown to more than 5,000 men and women who have called Dufferin County home and served Canada during times of both war and peace. Teachers, like Centre Dufferin District High School's Neil Orford, strive to bring history alive by partnering students with veterans and veterans' families to research stories that are captured in the virtual museum and bring further meaning to school trips that take students to tour European battlefields. I was pleased to recognize Neil's amazing contributions in the Legislature recently, upon his receiving the Ontario Lieutenant Governor's history award for excellence in teaching.

Many communities in Dufferin-Caledon hold Remembrance Day services and schools, churches and our long-term care residences will also participate in services on or during the week of Remembrance Day.

Our community services include two this Sunday (Nov. 10). There will be a service in Alton starting at 10:15 a.m. and in Bolton 12:45 p.m.

