

OPINION & COMMENTARY

Remembrance Day - Lest We Forget



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Reporter

I'm a pretty easy-going gal. Not much pisses me off. But when I encounter a person who outright refuses to wear a poppy or doesn't bother to observe Remembrance Day in their own little way - well, I get a little upset.

No matter what differing views we have about war, we should all be united in the debt owed to those soldiers who fought in wars for our freedom, and peacekeepers who enlist to do the things for our country that the

rest of us don't really want to think about.

Those people who refuse to observe Remembrance Day should, at the very least, realize their freedom not to do so was paid for with the blood of those brave souls who at the end of their lives may or may not have believed in the cause. They may not have known what a profound effect their service would have on the future of our nation for generations to come - but they did it anyway.

I'm not sure if Canadians can fully understand the complete freedom we have here. It's a freedom we take for granted everyday. We can say what we want to say without getting gunned down in the street, we can buy what we want to buy and live how we want to live. How many other people are given so many choices? How many people in other countries would die to give what we have to their own children? How many people in other nations do not truly know what freedom is?

I think people who refuse to observe Remembrance Day have their own ideas about what the observations stand for. It's a day to pay tribute to Canadian veterans and peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in protecting our country or assisting other countries in their attempts to gain the kinds of freedom we have here.

Remembrance Day doesn't glorify war. It "gorifies" it. Since our first assembly in elementary school, we have

been told of the horrific tragedies of war - how much was lost by the soldiers but gained by a nation.

Teary-eyed veterans illustrated the reasons why peace should be sought and war should not. They told us stories of seeing friends blown to bits and losing the use of their limbs in a matter of seconds. They told us how it felt to choke on mustard gas - battling for every breath; seeing hospital carts passing in the distance - not knowing where one man ended and another began.

As painful as it is to picture all of this, imagine what it must be like to have these thoughts and images so deeply etched in your memory long after the wars ended. Having to see, smell and feel the horror, over and over every time you closed your eyes.

So if you don't want to wear a poppy - don't. At least be grateful to the people who have given up so many nights of restful sleep so you can lie comfortably in a cosy bed in a beautiful nation, having the freedom to deny those who have done so much for you.



In Flanders Fields



John McRae

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*