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Ottawa Journal: Remembrance Day 2015

Remembrance Day is an especially important occasion for all Canadians to stop and reflect on the immense sacrifices and tremendous courage demonstrated by our country's finest. Their loyal and dedicated service to Canada has ensured we may continue to live in peace and freedom. We owe them more than we could ever express in words; however, by taking time to stop and remember them on Remembrance Day, it is one small, yet meaningful way we can let them know our appreciation of that service to our country.

Canada has a long history of standing up for the principles of peace, freedom, and the rule of law around the world. In 1914, when Canada was still a young country and searching for its identity, it entered World War I without reservation. By the time the War ended in 1918, over 650,000 men and women from Canada and Newfoundland had valiantly served their country with more than 66,000 making the ultimate sacrifice and more than 172,000 being wounded. The end of the War came at a tremendous cost for Canada. However, Canada's immense contributions resulted in our own signature on the Peace Treaty and we emerged as our own nation with our own national identity because of the courage and unity demonstrated by the hundreds of thousands of brave young men and women who served in the War.

This year, 2015, marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of World War II. Canada entered this War in 1939 without hesitation to fight tyranny in Europe. This War also saw Canadians serving in South-East Asia from 1941 to 1945. By the time the War had ended in 1945, more than one million Canadians and Newfoundlanders had served their country. Sadly, over 45,000 made the ultimate sacrifice and 55,000 were wounded. Our country was still young and growing at that time, yet Canada's contributions to the war effort were immense and as a result, our country assumed its rightful place as a key player on the international stage.

Since the two World Wars, Canadian women and men have continued to proudly defend the values of peace, freedom, the rule of law, and democracy around the world, whether it be serving in the Korean War; peacekeeping in Cambodia, Egypt, the Congo, and Cyprus; or serving in the Balkans, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, East Timor, Ethiopia, and Eritrea; and most recently in Afghanistan. The outstanding men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces are our heroes and bring great pride to our country through the courage they consistently demonstrate and the tremendous sacrifices they've made and continue to make on our behalf. We must commit to always remembering their exceptional service to Canada and their incredible efforts to bring stability and peace to areas of conflict around the world.

On November 11th, Remembrance Day, let's join together to remember our veterans, those currently serving Canada, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for Canada. We all have a responsibility to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to them. We also have an obligation to see that the act of remembrance is passed down from generation to generation to ensure their legacy lives on in our memories and hearts forever.

By David Tilson, MP