



## REMEMBRANCE DAY

November 11 is known as Remembrance Day in Canada. The peace called the Armistice after WW1 was declared on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month at 11 am in 1918.

Thousands of Canadian soldiers lost their lives in WW1 1914-1918 referred to as “The Great War”. It was in May of 1915 that exhausted Canadian surgeon Major John McCrea was moved by the bloody carnage surrounding him to compose the iconic poem, “In Flanders Fields”. Observing the wild red poppies blossoming in the nearby cemetery and ditches, blowing in the wind, he was reminded of the colour of the soldiers’ blood on whom he had operated for 17 days straight.

WW11 lasted from 1939 – 1945 and 45,400 of our soldiers were killed in this war. They deserve our respect and gratitude not just on November 11 but every day. Canadians fought in several other wars. The Korean War from 1950-1953 has often been referred to as the “Forgotten War” even though 25,000 Canadian troops served in that war. Of these, 516 died. They also must be commemorated.

Our soldiers were involved in other wars e.g. Bosnia, Kosovo, Persian Gulf War, and of course Afghanistan. 157 men and one woman died in this far-off land. Because of this war 70 military suicides have occurred – most when the soldiers had returned home. We learned about the devastating after-effects referred to as PTSD – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which caused traumatic flashbacks so realistic that the affected person felt he/she was reliving those terrifying



episodes. Many sought isolation, did not want to discuss it even with loved ones. PTSD is treatable but it is a long process of therapy, medications and finding a person whom they trust implicitly. For many they could not go through this process. Let us recognize their efforts on our behalf on Remembrance Day as well.

We know now that soldiers after WW1 suffered what was called shell shock and was referred to after WW11 as combat fatigue. These were all manifestations of PTSD as we know it today.

There are numerous reasons to celebrate Remembrance Day on November 11. It is essential that we remember all military personnel who gave all for the freedom we enjoy today. Wear a poppy with pride and acknowledgement during all of November.



LINK

(394 words)