

Remembrance Day Ceremony

Wednesday November 11, 2015 11:00 A.M. Essar Centre

[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]

Good morning. It is an honour and a privilege to be here with you. I'd like to thank everyone who has taken the time or made the time to join with us in this ceremony today. I'd also like to acknowledge the other dignitaries who are present with us.

To the veterans who are here today, thank you for your service on behalf of our country. Having the opportunity to address you on this solemn occasion is very special. I can think of no greater work, in my capacity as a city official, as Mayor of our community, than to be here with you on this day. To come together, to share thoughts, to pay respect.

Today is about remembrance, and the act of remembering, and its importance.

Today we remember the men and women from our community, our region and our country who have served our nation.

In many respects, 2015 is a significant milestone. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

It marks the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain and also the beginning of the Battle of the Atlantic.

The famous poem by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, "In Flanders Fields," turns one hundred years old **this year**.

As the great conflicts of the past recede into history, doing what we are doing today, coming together, sharing in ceremony, paying respect, remembering...becomes even more important.

With each passing year, there are fewer veterans left whom we can draw upon and learn from.

With each passing year, our connection to our past becomes less physical and more mental.

And with each passing year, maintaining that connection becomes the responsibility of the younger generations.

So to those of you who are younger in this audience today, let me say that this work now falls to us. It is up to us to carry forward the past, its stories and its lessons. It is up to us to preserve these memories.

Of course, memory is a living thing; it grows as we add to it. And on this day, it isn't confined to just the more distant past. The service of the men and women of Canada's armed forces is on-going and our remembrance encompasses and recognizes the Canadian peacekeepers who have served in trouble spots around the world. It extends to the veterans of more recent conflicts, such as Kosovo and of course Afghanistan.

So today we remember. We remember the service of the men and women of our armed forces. We remember those who fought so that we could be free and those who fought to free others. We remember those who stepped forward to keep the peace in volatile situations and put themselves in harm's way to protect innocents from harm.

We remember the valour and sacrifice of our soldiers, sailors and airmen. We remember those who came home physically wounded and those who returned mentally scarred. And we remember those—too often in the prime of life—who made the ultimate sacrifice in service of this country.

Of the fallen, we remember their loss and the loss that was felt by those close to them. We remember the parents who lost children and the children who lost parents. We remember the husbands and wives who lost companions. We remember the extended families and friends who lost someone dear to them.

As a community and as a country, we remember them and we mourn for them, and we promise to keep their memories alight.

As I close, I would like to say this: to all our veterans, past and present, yours is the thanks of a grateful community and a grateful nation. On behalf of City Council and the residents of Sault Ste. Marie, thank you for your dedication, commitment and sacrifice.

And finally, I would ask this of all assembled here today: On this day, the eleventh of November 2015, let us look within ourselves.

Let us reflect, and choose to renew our commitments—as individuals, as a community, and as a society – to ending war and to seeking peace. Let us commit again to using the freedoms and privileges afforded to us as Canadians to help build a better world. Let us commit again to keeping this day—Remembrance Day—a sacred one, and in doing so, let this be our pledge:

We will remember.

Thank you.