



THE JOHN MCKAY REPORT

Member of Parliament
Scarborough-Guildwood



Volume 1 Issue 20

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2009 - WE WILL REMEMBER

There are men and women living today whose fathers fought in Passchendaele, at Vimy Ridge, at Ypres and in the bloody Battle of the Somme, during the First World War. Their fathers never wanted to talk about those terrible experiences, the mud and the death in no-man's-land, the chlorine gas, the long months spent in the trenches by young, unprepared and exhausted soldiers. When everyone else had fled, Canadians held the line at the Somme. More than a million (Allies and Germans) died in that carnage. It took three months for the Allied Forces to advance 12 kilometres, and within a few weeks, those pitiful 12 kilometres were recaptured by the enemy.

Similar stories can be told about World War Two and Korea. Army, Navy and Air Force veterans of those wars are also unwilling to tell about their time in Europe, in Africa and in Asia. They say, "If you were not there, you cannot know what it was like".

And now a new generation is carrying our flag and our nation's valour into another war. We are there to support a people's right to live in freedom, even though they are a people many of us do not know, in a country we can hardly point out on a map. The headlines tell us confusing information about the situation, and we are tempted to feel that we should just leave and let the country struggle to find its own way.

We see the cost to the parents, relatives and friends of those who make the ultimate sacrifice. Every time another family meets a

coffin at Trenton; every time another sad procession travels down the Highway of Heroes; every time the people line the overpasses with flags and signs and tears, we are reminded that our sons and daughters are still fighting the same conflict as their forbears did in ages past. They too can say, "If you are not there, you cannot know what it is like."

On November 11 we will stand in silence, wherever we are, to honour the dead. Then we will go on with our lives, secure in this nation where we have never had to cower under bombs and where we have never been occupied by foreigners. Those whom we honour have paid for our security with their lives.

We cannot know what it was like, but we must never forget them.



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