

A Moment of Silence

At eleven o'clock in the morning the final shot was fired and for the first time in over four years the battlefield went silent. It happened on November 11th 1918 when the leaders of the allied forces signed a ceasefire with Germany in Compiegne, France. The First World War was over! In Canada, on November the eleventh at eleven o'clock in the morning, that historic event is observed at cenotaphs, schools and even malls around the country. Canadians of all ages, cultures and religions pause in a moment of silence to reflect and remember. What thoughts might be going through their minds?

Is the elderly war veteran with tears in his eyes remembering: the blistering sound of gunshots and explosions, watching his comrades around him being killed or injured while fighting for their country or is it the sound of mud splashing from the soldiers running across the battlefield and at the end of the day having to deal with wet, sore feet? Is he remembering that the cold, dark nights were the worst. How could one forget having to spend them in dirty, mice and rat filled trenches hiding from the enemy never knowing when an attack might happen. He will never forget the sights, sounds and smells of war, always wondering why he survived but so many of his friends and comrades had to die.

There is the young soldier dressed in his military uniform. Is he waiting to be deployed on his first mission possibly far from home? He knows that when that time arrives saying goodbye to his friends and family will be extremely hard. There is always the chance that he may never see them again. He feels excited for the adventure ahead yet scared for the dangers he might encounter.

The family gathered together at the cenotaph, holding the picture of a young man in full military uniform, caught the attention of many. Were they remembering all the wonderful times and celebrations they had shared together or were they still questioning why their son or father had to die.

What are the young teenagers thinking about? Are they concerned about their future and the future of the world or do they not care? Will there ever be a time when they have to experience war and fight for their freedom?

A lot of people I know don't really understand why we stand for two minutes of silence. It doesn't occur to them all of the tragedies that have happened to people and their families during the war. Canadians are very fortunate that we are not experiencing the horrors of war that are happening in countries like Ukraine. We must however never forget those who are. The moment of silence on Remembrance Day is a time for all Canadians to remember and honour the brave men and women around the world who served and continue to serve fighting for freedom and democracy.