

“Two Minutes of Silence”

Essay by Leah Dunham, Branch #257 Seaview Centennial

On November 11th, close your eyes and take a minute to remember. Have you ever tried to fully understand the concept of war? Have you ever taken a short moment to think about the soldiers on the frontlines, the families they had to leave? Or is war something you've never needed to understand, as it was always something far away, something that will never affect you?

This November, close your eyes and try to reflect on how a war has affected you. Maybe you have family members who have or are experiencing a war. Maybe you know what it's like to feel afraid, unsure. We cannot go back in time to experience the past; we cannot travel to the future; but we can close our eyes and pause in the present. Pause and take a moment or two to reflect, to remember, to honour. Honour the soldiers who put their life on the line for us, the future. Remember the doctors, nurses, factory workers, the ones who lost their lives, the Veterans and the poets, and the authors who recorded the stories. We honour the heroes beneath the graves, and the heroes who returned home to us.

As the eleventh hour draws closer, we gather our poppies and pin them over our hearts. The symbol of remembrance and hope. The symbol of eternal sleep. Why do we wear poppies? You ask. Poppies are worn in support of the Armed Forces community and soldiers who lost their lives. During the First World War, among thousands of graves, poppies began rising from the soil, in the centre of all the chaos and destruction. How something so beautiful could grow where so much heartbreak and grief lay was breathtaking. We wear poppies to show that even in our darkest hour, hope is always there. Just under the surface.

When our poppies rest over our hearts and the clock strikes eleven, it's time for our silence. We bow our heads and close our eyes, joining the thousands of Canadians in their silent reflection. Imagine what it must feel like to be so truly, so absolutely afraid, as they stand at the front, uncertain if they're ever going to see the family they love again. There are few things words alone cannot truly describe, and one of them is emotions. Emotions in their truest, most profound form. Like true fear, true uncertainty, true love. The fear that wracks their body as their hands shake when they load their gun. The uncertainty of ever being able to see your loved ones again. The love they hold for their country, risking their lives to protect it.

When we remember them, we shouldn't just mourn their deaths. We should celebrate their lives; their courage, love, and sacrifice. We should celebrate the lives of those brave people who protect their country at all costs. Those are the ones we remember.