

Thank you from the Royal Canadian Legion

Last Saturday, I was down at the Legion at around 8:30 a.m. getting ready for the start of the Remembrance Day Parade, getting things into order as usual with other members of the branch. The weather was not the greatest ? cold, damp and windy. Brought back many memories of when I first joined the military.

It would seem that every Remembrance Day was colder than the first. Lots of snow and ice greeted us each year. Many of a time I wished we had toques or earmuffs. But in recent years this has not been the case. The last few here have been quite comfortable and were easy to take. But Saturday's weather brought some doubts to my mind. How would the people of this area react to the cold, wind and snow? It was ?13°C first thing in the morning? How would the motivational factor of leaving a nice warm house to come down to the Legion or to the Cenotaph come into play?

With the 11th of November being on a Saturday, would the school kids treat this day differently than if it was held during the week? Well, I got my answers quickly enough. At the Legion, people started arriving first as a trickle but by 10:30 a.m., when we were ready to march off, the parade was formed up, stretching from the Legion all the way to Broadway.

What a sight, Pipes and Drums, Colour Party, Cadet Honour Guard, members of the Legion, Serving Military, Veterans, Police, Fire, EMS, 1849 Lorne Scot Cadet Corps, VIPs, Knights of Columbus, scouts, guides, cubs, etc. and for the first time, a group from the Sikh community were marching with us to pay honour to those who paid the ultimate price.

A true community spirit could not be better shown on that day. Marching down Broadway, we were greeted by many people standing off to the right and left of us. The applause and cheers were greatly appreciated. But the best sight that took my doubts away and answered my questions on how would the citizens of this town and local area of ours react, was the great number of people waiting for us at the Cenotaph. What a crowd! Even with the lousy weather, this had to be one of the largest gatherings (in my opinion) of people in recent time. The park was just filled with people.

The presence of the Orangeville Community Band and the Children's Choir could have only added to the spirit of the occasion. We came together, we this community, no matter what the conditions were like. We came to pay our respects to those who have gone before us in the Service of our Country.

This is how we ?REMEMBER?. This is how we teach our youth who may not know as much of the sacrifices that were given on our behalf. To those people who recently moved into our area, we demonstrated to them a strong pride in our history.

We ?REMEMBER? those who are named on that so sombre Cenotaph of ours. These are not just names, but people whom at one time, lived, laughed, loved and were loved. They belonged to our community.

We must never forget what they did for us. I was never more proud to be a citizen of Orangeville. The community spirit shown was beyond belief. As a Veteran, I salute you, I will pray for you and I thank you for all of the support that you have given to us. As is said: ?Lest We Forget?, ?We Will Remember Them?.

Chuck Simpson (Veteran)