



Photo by Sabah Rahman

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 110 organized putting candles out at the Trenton cenotaph on the eve of Remembrance Day. Families dropped by during the evening to light candles in remembrance of veterans and family members who fought as part of the Canadian Armed forces. Lexi Lemoire-Drouillard visited the cenotaph with family.

Guests return for Remembrance Day

In-person event with restrictions follows online service in 2020

By Sabah Rahman

Hundreds of people gathered during the pandemic's second year at the Trenton cenotaph to remember the service and sacrifice of members of the Canadian Armed Forces who served and are still serving Canada at home and abroad.

The cenotaph at Centennial Park in Trenton was constructed in 1968, and was originally dedicated to World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. In 1988, the cenotaph was re-dedicated in memory of the fallen from all conflicts.

After televising the Remembrance Day services online in 2020 due to the pandemic, the in-person event at the

Trenton cenotaph this year had to be adjusted significantly to adhere to social-distancing protocols.

The services began the night before on Nov. 10 when members of the public were invited by the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 110 to put out candles at the cenotaph. In accordance with tradition, the candles remained lit throughout the night.

Families of veterans trickled in late into the evening as they helped volunteers from the legion arrange the red candle holders with shiny golden lids in neatly spaced rows along the descending steps of the cenotaph. The candles had personal messages written on them by families, including some with taped, printed black-and-white, pixelated pictures of veterans from the First and Second World Wars.

Long before the official services began the next morning on Nov. 11, volunteers and young cadets were seen wiping the

remnants of the early morning November rain off the folding metal chairs.

Due to COVID, a small, seated section adjoining the cenotaph was separated from the public and reserved for masked special guests and veterans attending the ceremony.

The sun peeked from behind an overcast sky just in time as the Legion colour party lined along the cenotaph and stood on guard.

Several local dignitaries and political figures attended the laying of wreaths, including local veterans. Recently elected Bay of Quinte MP Ryan Williams was one of the first to lay down the wreath on behalf of the Government of Canada.

This year also marked the 100th year of the Remembrance Poppy in Canada. Al Plume, president of the 110 Branch, kicked off the day's services with remarks and reminded the public that the Royal Canadian Legion produced the poppy pin this year in likeness of the first

poppies distributed after World War I.

Rev. Lynn Mitchell's voice over the speaker system was carried by the gusty winds off the Trent River on the chilly morning. Rev. Mitchell acknowledged the role of 12,000 Indigenous soldiers, and the contribution of countless members of the armed forces who have lost their lives during training and rescue missions as well as those who were lost in battlefields.

"We hold in our hearts the men and women of our armed forces who are presently serving overseas, and those who serve the common good of the people of this great country of Canada in times of danger and natural disasters," said Rev. Mitchell.

Outside of battlefields, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief during domestic emergencies, including the recent COVID-19 response and natural disasters, have led to an increased participation of the armed forces in aid of

Canadians across the country.

Around 11 a.m., everyone's eyes were drawn skyward as a CC-130H Hercules aircraft along with two CH-146 Griffon helicopters from the 424 Transport and Rescue Squadron at 8 Wing CFB Trenton did a low flyover as part of the official ceremony.

Rev. Mitchell reminded the sombre crowd of hundreds that seasonal remembrance is not enough. Her message of creating a culture of peace and reconciliation was not lost for the multi-generational public in attendance, who have grown up in the geopolitical aftermath of 9/11 and rise of terrorism worldwide.

Remembrance of the true cost of war was ever more evident as members of the public as well as uniformed armed forces personnel quietly lined up to lay down the poppies from their jacket lapel at the cenotaph's feet as the official services wrapped up for the day.

Remembrance Day: past, present and future

By Ethan Cairns

"Remembrance Day is commemorating the sacrifices of all our troops in the past, present and future that lay their lives on the line for Canada," said Lt.-Col. Terry Wong.

Wong is a tactical helicopter pilot for the Canadian Armed Forces and is currently posted to the branch head position for doctrine development and lessons learned at the Canadian Armed Forces' air warfare centre in Trenton.

"You can see in the past all these people who have dealt with the horror of warfare or the anguish of loss and grief. You can understand why today they would feel strongly about the commemoration of Remembrance Day, remembering the people they have lost at those times."

Lt.-Col. Wong served in the Canadian Armed Forces for 26 years, including all over Canada and international missions such as Afghanistan. He started off his journey with an aeronautical engineering degree from McGill University, became an astronaut with the Canadian Space Agency and continued to find his way into a pilot's seat of a tactical helicopter and other planes.

"I knew I wanted to be a pilot from Grade 7," said Wong. "I would have joined the air force regardless of the outcome of the astronaut thing. It was the most difficult thing to not only be



Photo by Ethan Cairns

Lt.-Col. Terry Wong stands in front of the Royal Canadian Air Force museum.

in command but be in command of people that are going through life and with all of life's hurdles, whether it be operational, traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, cancer and it's awful and its heart-wrenching," Wong said. "There is a real bond that develops when you've been overseas on deployment, you develop that friendship that last forever."

"Having been the commanding officer of the Canadian Armed Forces transition unit, I have seen a lot of people that came back from Afghanistan coming back with PTSD or mental health issues as a result of combat missions. You really understand the sacrifices these people have made to protect our way of life," said Wong.

Lt.-Col. Wong is a part of the national veteran's week speaker program and spoke about Remembrance Day: past, present, and future, at the Belleville Public Library to help people understand and to pay tribute to Canadian veterans that have served and continue to serve today.

"Remembering the people who they have lost, and loved ones remembering those who they've lost in those times," said Wong. "Bravery, sacrifice, integrity, young men and women who give up their lives to protect the lives of people they don't even know, to give their life to serve Canada. That is what we remember for the two minutes of every year."



Members of the public attend the first in-person annual Remembrance Day services at the Trenton cenotaph since the beginning of the pandemic. Families and Canadian Armed Forces personnel are pictured during an emotional moment of silence.

Photo by Sabah Rahman



(Above) Vic Sahai, a public health scientist and Kingston NDP candidate, adds his poppy to the People's Wreath during the city's Remembrance Day civic ceremony.

Photo by Luke Best



(Above) Cpl. Burnett and other Canadian Air Force members are pictured during the presentation of arms at the Belleville Cenotaph ceremonies for Remembrance Day.

Photo by Ron Lavoie

(Below) Mayor Brian Paterson, escorted by a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, participated in the wreath-laying ceremony on behalf of the City of Kingston.

Photo by Felix Chagnon

(Below) Const. Elise Boisclair of the RCMP walks away from the Cross of Sacrifice, located in Macdonald Park in Kingston, Ont., after laying down a wreath during a Remembrance Day ceremony.

Photo by Alex Lupul



M.Cpl. Windy Lafreniere, 40, kneels next to a group of medicinal plants in the Aboriginal Garden at 8 Wing in the Canadian Forces Base Trenton. Lafreniere, a mobile support equipment operator, is a survivor of the Sixties Scoop and has connected to her Indigenous roots through the Defence Aboriginal Advisory Group. Through this committee, Lafreniere said she provides supports to other Indigenous serving members. In October, she moved from Borden to Trenton and said she was immediately drawn to the gardens, describing the space as "serenity."

Photo by Kayla Isomura