



# Remembrance Day Memories

By Dr. Linda Hancock

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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My mother was born in 1921 and therefore was a young adult when World War II began. She often shared memories of her experiences with me.

I still have her many photos of young fellows in uniform with their arms around her who were smiling at the camera. She explained that these were friends who had enlisted in the army and were ready to go overseas on what they thought would be an exciting adventure.

Many of them never returned home.

Mom talked about how devastating this was not only for family members but also for friends and communities. In fact, a large portion of the male youth in communities disappeared.

Until her own death, my mother talked about the important role that the Red Cross had in the war efforts. In fact, she had her grade two students collect metal tabs from pop cans and take on projects to raise money which would be used to buy wheelchairs which would be distributed by the Red Cross.

Although those who were left in Canada made sacrifices because of the war, they were all very aware that their sacrifices were minimal compared to those who gave up all the familiarity they had known to fight for freedom. Death roles that grew in hearts and minds were later engraved on our town's cenotaph which became a focus every November 11th thereafter. But the deaths were not the only tragedies. Some who did return alive brought their physical and mental trauma home with them.

As children, our school had us write essays about the importance of honouring those who fought. We memorized the poem "In Flanders Fields" and wore red poppies to the community service. Men and women, dressed in their uniforms, marched into the hall and a bugler played while everyone stood at attention. It was the only time that I had ever seen people dressed this way with medals on their chests that offered silent messages.

And now, as a psychologist, I have an even deeper perspective about the damages that war has on families. Men cry when they tell me of the horrors that they have witnessed and the injuries that still pain them. The wives talk about how lonely it can be to single-parent children who only see their father between tours of duty that take them from one country to another, one war to another.

One of the most gut-wrenching situations caused by war is when a couple realizes that the nightmares, pain and separations have made them strangers and the relationship that they once entered with hope and expectation disintegrates.

There are many things in society that we ignore or push away because they are just too ugly or uncomfortable. Sometimes we refuse to talk about situations that have been difficult or minimize the consequences that occurred because of them.

I thank God that in Canada we continue to observe Remembrance Day every single year and hope that we never get to a point where we might be tempted not to do so.

You see, November 11th is not just about World War I or World War II. It is about all those who wore and continue to wear uniforms - those who put their own personal comfort aside so that we can live in a country that is free.

It is important that we think about how much we truly owe and how our lives would be different if they hadn't made the commitments that they have made,

What might have started out for these young, smiling men in uniform as an exciting adventure, actually changed the world - their lives and our lives, and the lives of those we love!

We must remember - lest we forget!