



Mayor Frank Champion's statement for Remembrance Day 2021

On Remembrance Day, as with years past and years ahead, a service member will play the notes of the Last Post at ceremonies around the world. You may not be aware that's what the piece of music is titled, but you would recognize it instantly. And at the sound of the lone bugler, exerting his breath on behalf of those who lost theirs, you can feel the weight of the day increase, its importance intensified.

Each year, each day for that matter, we move further away from the great wars that shaped our country, our freedom. We move away from having first-hand accounts of what it was like to make the ultimate sacrifice in a time we will never know or understand. We have an essential job, passed the baton, to tell these stories and make sure they never disappear from the country's history. We didn't write stories, so we'll never recite them with the same raw emotion or connection to a place and time. But we tell them anyway because our kids and grandkids deserve to know who came before them and what they did to give them the life they have today.

There is a City staff member whose grandfather is 101 years old and a second world war veteran. The staff member has kids of his own now, and four generations, remarkably, can gather each Remembrance Day in a way many no longer can. Of course, the great-grandkids don't understand what their great-grandpa did; they're too young. But I'm told they know something is special about their great-grandpa. As the staff member tells it, his kids will say, "great-grandpa has a red flower he always wears today" and "look at great grandpa's medals; he must have won something important". Kids say the darndest things, but they also say some of the most truthful, even if they don't realize it.

We often talk about veterans becoming a smaller community each day; as the years pass by, so do service members. And while we give our utmost appreciation for these soldiers, we mustn't forget those who serve today and those who will raise their hand when asked to serve tomorrow. The glory of war does not exist, despite what we see in television and movies. But I assure you, there is no glory in war. Not in 1914. Not in 1939. Not in 1950. Not in 1960. And certainly not today.

I will leave you with this. If you have the chance to speak with a veteran, especially on Remembrance Day, please take the time to do so. We cannot begin to fathom what they've gone through, what they carry with them, and how, likely, they would sign up to do it again.

The honour, patriotism, and commitment to their country are unparalleled, and on November 8 (Indigenous Veteran's Day) and November 11, we celebrate all the men and women who said: "I will go".

To that, I say, humbly, thank you.

Mayor Frank Champion

