

NOTL REMEMBERS



Top: Hundreds of people gathered in the rain to observe the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Old Town cenotaph. Below: Cadet Emily Abt leads her group. Bottom below: Flight Sgt. Mia Redeye guards the cenotaph during the ceremony, unmoving as rain pours down relentlessly. RICHARD HARLEY PHOTOS



Old Town ceremony draws hundreds of people in rain

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century ago might have been laid to rest in Flanders Fields.

Cadets, Mounties, firefighters and police officers were among the many who stood in uniform for Remembrance Day in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

By the end of the first ceremony downtown on Queen Street, most of them were soaked to the bone.

Later, glancing around Queenston through fogged-up glasses, Abt reflected on the soldiers who fought in two world wars.

They would have been through “much worse,” she said.

“Remembrance Day is one of the things that you can’t postpone and you can’t skip,” she added.

After spending hours on silent guard in rain-soaked garb at the town’s two cenotaphs, back at the Legion she and the other cadets were ready for a warm bowl of chili to chase out the cold.

Abt was joined by fellow

cadet Shay Vidal, who shared her sense of honour.

The two young people saw themselves as lucky because they never had to go through what their ancestors did.

“War is war and hell is hell,” Vidal said, paraphrasing a line from “M.A.S.H.” – once his father’s favourite TV show.

Vidal thinks war is probably a lot worse than hell.

Standing guard, he said, is “the least we can do.”

He knows his grandfather was a pilot. It’s one of the reasons he joined cadets. He doesn’t know if his granddad went to war.

Many of the people who came out for Remembrance Day were honouring family who could not or would not speak of the things they had seen in war.

Allison McCaughey showed up for the ceremony in Old Town late with her sick daughter in hand.

After seeing so many people in uniform saluting the cenotaph from home on TV, four-year-old Wilamina wanted to come out

and meet one.

Al Howse, the president of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Legion branch, wore a wet smile when he met the little girl in rain boots downtown between the ceremonies.

McCaughey remembers her grandfather and great-grandfather at this time of year.

Her grandfather, Sgt. Earl Alexander McCaughey, didn’t share much with her, but she remembers seeing him at Remembrance Day parades when she was little.

“I think he was proud. I think it was emotional for him, though,” she said.

“But he always showed up.”

Her grandfather was 17 when he enlisted with the Toronto Scottish Regiment.

He served in France, Holland, Belgium and Germany throughout the Second World War.

McCaughey said her grandfather almost served in the Battle of Normandy, but lucked out at the last minute.

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