

Times & Transcript (Moncton)

How will you remember our soldiers' sacrifices?

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Remembrance Day 2009 finds the Canadian Military still heavily involved in routing out Al-Quaeda and Taliban forces in Afghanistan. As the casualty count mounts we bare witness to the sacrifices modern soldiers and their families endure and it gives us a window into the ravages of armed conflict.

This, in turn, drives home the importance of attending services and taking time to reflect and appreciate the significance of this day.

I remember growing up on John Street across from Victoria Park and the cenotaph there. I spent many hours those days and through the years that followed walking up to the monument to pause and read the names carved in the large granite books.

Of course, Remembrance Day in those days saw the annual parade with hundreds of veterans marching from the former Legion on Botsford Street to the park passing directly in front of our flat. While my mother and grandparents observed through the living room window, my father and I would stand on our veranda and honour the vets before heading over and participate in the service.

It seems every year the question pops up asking how society is doing at 'remembering.' I want to thank Terance Brouse, a senior consultant at XposurePR for providing results of a recent VoxPop survey regarding that question and others. VoxPop is a campaign by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) to give voice to Canadians on issues they care about. The MRIA governs and represents Canada's survey research industry.

According to Brouse, "This survey provides fresh insights into how deeply Atlantic Canadians care about Remembrance Day observance and recognizing veterans and current members of the armed forces."

The details of the survey were printed in yesterday's Times & Transcript. In case you missed it, the four Major highlights show:

* Atlantic Canadians lead the country in believing Remembrance Day observance is an important way to support Canada's troops in Afghanistan (89 per cent versus 81 per cent nationally)

* 95 per cent of Atlantic Canadians believe educators should do more to teach Canada's military history in schools versus 87 per cent nationally

* Atlantic Canadians lead the country in believing that Canada owes its democratic freedoms to veterans and current members of the armed forces (93 per cent

versus 86 per cent nationally)

* Atlantic Canadians also lead in believing that the actions of veterans and current members of the armed forces have advanced the cause of peace and freedom in many parts of the world. (95 per cent versus 87 per cent nationally)

If you happened to notice how East Coast families seem more involved than those in other parts of the Country.

This poll provides the proof indicating, "Atlantic Canadians are almost twice as likely to have a friend or family member in the military as other Canadians. Of the Atlantic Canadians surveyed, 44 per cent reported having a friend or family member in the military. This compares to 26 per cent in Ontario; 25 per cent in Alberta; 24 per cent in Manitoba/Saskatchewan; 24 per cent in Quebec and 23 per cent in British Columbia."

The survey's other significant findings include how "Canadians see Remembrance Day observance as important way to support troops in Afghanistan."

Also how, "Nine-in-ten believe educators should do more to teach Canada's military history in schools." And how, "Canadian immigrants recognize the importance of observing Remembrance Day as strongly as those born in Canada."

I was curious to find out how some TPP contributors mark the day. So I asked them.

Ashlea is a convenience store clerk who is originally from out of town and answers the question by saying,

"Lately I work on that day, but I remember when I was younger growing up in Elgin and attending services at the Havelock cenotaph."

I spoke with Kim at a recent Wellness Fair and discussed how she marks the occasion. She says, "We gather and think of my grandfather. He had five brothers and they all served in World War Two. I also focus on sending positive energy into the universe (to encourage peace as I believe) we're all connected."

Diana says, "I look at the pictures that we are shown, from previous wars and today's, and I try to place myself in the shoes of these soldier's, their families, and their friends. I wonder what I would feel like, and how I would cope. And it is hard to imagine myself there. But when I think of the petty things, that I complain about, I feel great shame, that what they did, doesn't even compare to me."

It is then, that I thank every single one of those soldiers, their families, and their friends, for giving me liberty, and freedom, at their costs. I remember my family's contribution too..."

"...and at the going down of the sun...we shall remember them."

* Terry Parker's column appears daily. Terry can be heard on the CKO Drive Home Show at 107.3FM weekdays between 4 and 6 p.m. Want to contribute to Terry Parker's People with your questions and comments? Contact Terry at 859-2356 or terryp62@gmail.com.

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