

Generations converge to Remember and mark milestones



(Veteran Albert Arcand leaves his poppy on the Aurora Cenotaph following Tuesday's Remembrance Day service. Auroran photo by Brock Weir)

By Brock Weir

Generations came together at the Aurora Cenotaph on Tuesday morning to pause and remember as Aurora, the nation, and the world commemorated the 100th anniversary of the First World War and the 75th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War.



The Royal Canadian Legion Colour Guard led veterans, troops, cadets and dignitaries down Yonge Street to the Cenotaph.



Veteran Frank Young attended Tuesday's service with his great-grandchildren.



101-year-old veteran Allen Griffiths came to the ceremony with his grandson, Alex.



Cadets relaxed at the Royal Canadian Legion following the service.

Over 1,000 men, women, and children, many of whom saw active service for Canada, descended on the sunny morning to pay tribute to those who fell serving their country, following larger services held on Sunday.

There, the 100th anniversary of what was to be ?the war to end all wars? was brought close to home with the presence of troops on horseback, wearing uniforms of the day.

Following the deaths of two servicemen serving within Canada last month, police presence was heightened, but these circumstances made people even more determined to make the effort to be there for a commemoration.

Frank Young, 90, was joined at the Cenotaph on Tuesday by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who were very proud to share the day with him. He says recent events have really driven home the importance of Remembrance Day to younger generations.

?I think what happened and the Afghan war did a heck of a lot to our guys because it brought back memories of three generations ago,? said Young, who served in Normandy, The Netherlands, Belgium, and throughout Europe, driving supply trucks in the Second World War, noting he has returned to Europe several times where he has noticed a trend.

?I have been back to Holland three or four times and they get bigger crowds than this and the kids understand. Nowadays the kids here are getting a lot better, they are teaching more in schools, and it is very nice. It feels great [that my family] has been able to come here for years. I feel a sense of pride and a sense of sorrow too. I was a very lucky man to get back and have a big family and enjoy life.?

Another lucky man was 101-year-old Allen Griffiths, who served in the British Navy during the Spanish Civil War, and in submarines during the Phoney War and the Second World War, positions which had very high mortality rates.

?I served on two destroyers, one cruiser, two battleships, I went into submarines and finished up a prisoner of war in Italy and Germany,? he recalled, before joking with a grin: ?If there's anyone here with a better record than that, just tell me!?

Griffiths was joined at the service by his grandson, Alex Broughton. He too said recent events have led to a heightened awareness

not just of what Canadian troops have sacrificed in the line of duty, but also what they go through every day.

?It reminds us how lucky we are to live in a country like this,? said Alex. ?It is important to remember we are all a part of this planet and we have sacrificed and continue to sacrifice. I think that is the remembrance of today ? to remember some things are worth fighting for and progress is definitely one of them.

?I think we have to be extremely diligent in the future as to know what the best way to find a path we can all walk together. You see all these people come out and you wonder if things are going to continue down that same path. Are we going to see reminiscences of the past, or are we going to be together, as Canadians, and be a people united by progress to make a world we can all live in? I think that was the idea of the war and we hope these memories can pass down to generations beyond us that there is a good part of the world worth fighting for.?