



Every Remembrance Day, I make my pilgrimage to Edmonton's oldest Cenotaph - the Beverly Cenotaph - to pay my respects to those who served and who paid the ultimate price to ensure a strong and free Canada for future generations.

Remembering the services and sacrifices that our soldiers have made, and continue to make, is an important undertaking in our society. Memorials both new and old can be found from coast-to-coast as reminders of where we are as a nation, and what it has cost to get us here. The oldest cenotaph in Edmonton, the Beverly Cenotaph, provides us with perhaps the best example of a society banding together to remember in the face of tragedy.

In 1914, the coal mining community of Beverly was incorporated as a town, and it did not take long for this town – like many others across the country –

to be put to a great test. At the onset of the Great War, shortly after being officially recognized as a town, Beverly responded without hesitation to a call for men to fight for their country in the First World War. Beverly contributed 170 of its finest men to the war effort. After the war came to an end in 1919, 27 of those men did not return home, as they paid the ultimate sacrifice for their beloved country.

The surviving troops returned home to Beverly with a mindset and determination of building a better community. It is with this sentiment that a group of war veterans got together and founded an association based on the notion of assisting soldiers who had returned from war in re-adjusting themselves to civilian life. This act of kindness and solidarity gave birth to the Beverly Veterans' Association, which was registered under the Companies Act, April 9, 1920.



Residents gather at the Beverly Cenotaph on Remembrance Day in 1933. The Cenotaph has become a Remembrance Day staple in Beverly.



The Beverly Veterans' Association wasted very little time in giving their fallen brothers the proper thanks and remembrance they felt they deserved. Within the first months of the formation of this association, they had made plans to erect a Memorial to their comrades who had lost their lives in the Great War. A fund was immediately set up in order to raise the necessary money to make this Memorial a reality. The community answered the call swiftly, as not only was the money raised in a matter of months, but a local citizen and war veteran, Thomas Dando, also donated two plots of land for a Memorial Park on which to erect the Cenotaph.

On October 17, 1920, the marble and concrete monument to the fallen was erected on the land donated by Mr. Dando in what is now Beverly Heights, Edmonton. The grand ceremony was well attended, most notably by the Lieutenant Governor George Brett, Brigadier-General William Griesbach, Edmonton Mayor Joe Clarke, and Beverly Mayor Fred Humberstone.

The beautiful monument bears the names of the lost servicemen in World War I etched onto its surface. However, the cenotaph had a deeper connection to the town of Beverly than just the brave war efforts put forth by

their soldiers. The cenotaph also holds a sketch of a heavy artillery cannon. What many passers-by would assume was simply an appropriate decoration for the stone surface actually had a much more significant meaning for the townsfolk of Beverly. During the First World War, military gun barrels were cast in a local foundry in their town. As such, the memorial became not only the symbol of Beverly's sacrificed sons of the

First World War it became a symbol of the war effort put forth by the whole town. The Beverly Cenotaph represents the unity a small town showed in the face of a big threat, and the bonds that were forged in that time of uncertainty.

With time, the Cenotaph transformed appropriately to keep up with what was going on around the

world. After the conclusion of the Second World War, the town of Beverly doubled the size of the Memorial park with the addition of two adjoining lots. The Cenotaph was moved accordingly to a more central location in the park.

On October 5, 1958, more than 1,000 people turned out for the re-dedication ceremony of the Beverly Cenotaph. Sadly, but inevitably, the scope of the Cenotaph also grew in size that day. A plaque that was inscribed



Peter Goldring and his wife, Lorraine, pose for a photograph with recently deceased former Edmonton East MP and war veteran Bill Lesick in front of the Beverly Cenotaph.



with the names of five Beverly residents who had given their lives in the Second World War was unveiled by then-Mayor John Sehn. Since then, a plaque has also been added to the cenotaph in remembrance of the Canadians from the community who lost their lives in the Korean War.

In 1961, the city of Edmonton annexed the city of Beverly. Thus the Beverly Cenotaph currently residing in the city of Beverly Heights. Post-1961, the maintenance of both the park and the Cenotaph became the responsibility of the city's Parks and Recreation Department. The site continues to be well-maintained to this day, as annual flower beds are planted at the site, which is extensively landscaped with shrub beds and park benches.

Perhaps the most important function of the Beverly Cenotaph is that it continues to remain a revered site of thanks and remembrance to those who have served our country. There continues to be a Remembrance Day ceremony held at the cenotaph every year, which I am very proud to say I have attended every year over the past 15 years except for 1998, when I represented the Official Opposition party on Parliament Hill.

Being one of the country's older memorials, the impact and weight that the Beverly Cenotaph has in terms of its importance to Canadian history is felt very strongly when in its presence. Memorials such as this one in Beverly put into perspective the over two million Canadians who have served our country since Confederation, especially the over 115,000 who paid with their lives to ensure the freedom of our great nation.



As Member of Parliament for Edmonton East, Peter gets the honor of addressing the assembly of some 1,500 persons which included veterans currently serving military members, and cadets.

The Beverly Cenotaph helps us remember the sacrifices that have been made by Canadians both at home and abroad. It helps us to remember that wartime efforts do not stop and end with the soldiers going overseas, but that the constant help and support that our troops receive from back home is of great importance as well.

With every year that passes, it is another year removed that our society is from the Great War, as well as the Second World War. Monuments such as the Beverly Cenotaph cannot be praised enough for the importance they hold in maintaining Canada's past war efforts and preserving Canada's proud history.

The pen of John McRae spoke out from the

fields of war nearly 100 years ago. His words are carved in the walls of the House of Commons and are as enduring as our remembrance of war veterans-past.

"If ye break faith with us who die, we shall not sleep."

It is Canadian monuments exactly like the Beverly Cenotaph which ensure that we heed John McRae's words. Enduring memorials to Canadian war veterans who have served our country over our nearly 150 year existence are of the highest importance. It affirms the pride and thanks we have for our troops and all they have accomplished to en-

sure Canada is a land of freedom and equality.

The people and the city of Edmonton cannot be praised enough for the consistent respect and maintenance they afford to the city's oldest war memorial, the Beverly Cenotaph.

UPDATE: Mr. Goldring is looking forward to being in attendance at the Beverly Cenotaph on Remembrance Day 2012 to pay his respects to the Canadian military past and present. He looks forward to seeing many of the members of the Edmonton community there as well.

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This brochure series is intended to highlight special issues that Member of Parliament, Peter Goldring, has been involved in. If you wish to comment, please take a moment to fill out the survey below, write or call to the address above.

Your Opinion Matters...

Question #1 Have you ever visited the Beverly Cenotaph?

Yes No

Question #2 Do you agree that a plaque should be added to remember all who have fallen in the line of duty in Afghanistan?

Yes No

Comments: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
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