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Thursday, November 1, 2018

The Honourable George J. Furey, Speaker

THE SENATE

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The Senate met at 1:30 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

Remembrance Day

Hon. Michael Duffy: Colleagues, we are 10 days away from Remembrance Day 2018, the one-hundredth anniversary of the armistice which ended the first great war.

As part of P.E.I.'s remembrance activities, tomorrow at the South Shore United Church in Tryon, Islanders will celebrate the Borden-Carleton Cenotaph Research Project.

This project, a remarkable labour of love, respect and thanks, was initiated by Daria and Pieter Valkenburg of North Tryon.

When one visits the battlefields of northwest Europe, one cannot but be impressed by the way in which the people of those liberated countries remember the sacrifice made by those they still call "the Canadian boys," so far from home.

I can think of no one who has done more to remember the sacrifice of Islanders than Daria and Pieter Valkenburg.

In his professional career, Pieter Valkenburg was a Dutch diplomat who was posted to Canada.

He and his wife, Daria, retired to the rolling hills of North Tryon, P.E.I. Since then, they have brought their energy and unbridled enthusiasm for the Canadians who liberated Holland, Pieter's home country, to the Borden-Carleton branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

On the lovely granite memorial outside the Borden Legion are inscribed the names of 44 young Islanders from that area of the Island who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Who were these young men? And those on the memorial are all young men. Who were these young Islanders? What did they dream for their future, their Island and their country before they gave their lives for people they had never met in a land far away?

The Valkenburgs set out to answer those questions. They call it the Borden-Carleton Cenotaph Research Project, and slowly, soldier by soldier, they have put together photographs and historical notes, their touching tribute to the war dead.

Now the Valkenburgs have taken on a new history project. They are helping researchers in the Netherlands gather photos and biographical information on the 7,400 Canadian soldiers who lie buried in The Netherlands.

At a time when, to many, yesterday seems like ancient history, the Valkenburgs and the legionnaires of Borden-Carleton deserve our thanks for keeping alive the memory of those young Islanders who gave their lives in the defence of freedom 100 years ago.

Thank you.