

SPEAKING NOTES

**THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

**SENATE CHAMBER
JUNE 2, 2009**

Mr. Speaker Milliken,
Minister Thompson,
Honoured veterans and family members,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Welcome to the Senate Chamber. We are gathered here today to mark the 65th anniversary of D-Day and the beginning of the Battle of Normandy. That landing of Canadian and allied troops marked the beginning of the end of the Second World War in Europe.

It is right and fitting that we meet here in Parliament Building in which we are gathered is a place that brings to mind Canada's involvement in past conflicts in this building and in this Chamber. As you know, the original Centre Block was destroyed by fire in 1916, during the darkest days of the First World War. Construction to rebuild our Parliament began almost immediately. This reconstruction mirrored Canada's determined effort to bring defeat to the enemy, although at tremendous cost. Sadly, within a generation, as you veterans know too well, Canada had to pay that high price again in order to ensure our freedom and democracy.

Many features of this building were deliberately designed as a memorial to the conflict of the First World War. Foremost, of course, is the Peace Tower, with its Memorial Chamber and the books of remembrance in which are inscribed the names of all service personnel who

died fighting for Canada throughout our history, including those your comrades who died at Normandy.

We have in this Senate Chamber itself, where we are assembled, eight large paintings which also commemorates Canada's participation in the First World War. From its walls hang eight paintings that depict our soldiers and the horror of modern warfare. There are three paintings that I particularly wish, in particular, wish to draw to your attention. Two of them are scenes of large scale destruction: the "Cloth Hall at Ypres" and "Arras, the Dead City." Both depict were the result of destroyed by bombardment. The ravages depicted in these scenes, though devastating, hardly match the massive scale of destruction that you veterans would have witnessed in the Second World War.

The third painting is Another painting that is worthy of note depicts entitled the "Landing of the First Canadian Division at Saint-Nazaire." As you can see, it does not depict a battle; rather it shows disembarking troops being welcomed by local citizens.

This was not, of course, the scene that our veterans you here today will remember from D-Day, on the coast of Normandy, not so far from St. Nazaire. The landing then was difficult. The fighting was hard and the number of casualties, high. Yet your perseverance established the beachhead essential to the allied victory. This is the achievement that we honour today. We are here to salute you as the survivors of that band of heroes who fought against tyranny to preserve our freedom. Your victory sustained a way of life that we all value, even though it may sometimes seem to be taken for granted. They were welcomed with barbed wire, mines, bullets, grenades and artillery shells. It was not a walk on the beach.

The losses were terrible. The Army suffered 1074 casualties, including 369 who were killed or died of their wounds. The Air Force had

another 43 dead and the Navy had 7 wounded. And that was just the beginning. The cost for the Battle for Normandy which followed includes an estimate of total Allied casualties numbering 209,000.

There were many who never came home, and many who never fully recovered. We remember those who lost their lives. We remember those who were injured in body and spirit. We honour those here today who were a part of this great undertaking. We owe them a debt which can never be repaid and we thank all who sacrificed so much so that our future would be secure.

As we mark the 65 anniversary of D-Day today, what better place to pay homage to the valour of our veterans your valour and to express our gratitude for their your service than here, in this Parliament, the centre of our democracy? As Speaker of the Senate, it is my great honour and privilege to welcome you all and to the Senate Chamber and to this open this ceremony.
