

SPEAKING NOTES
The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella
Speaker of the Senate

Veterans Week and Remembrance Day Ceremony

Ottawa
November 4, 2013

Speaker Scheer,
Minister Fantino,
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Senators and Members of the House of Commons,
Colonel the Venerable Nigel Shaw,
Veterans and Families of Veterans,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome all of you to the Parliament of Canada and to the Senate Chamber, where we are gathered this morning to mark the beginning of Veterans Week and to remember the sacrifices of those who have made the world a safer place.

This building was destroyed by fire in 1916 in the middle of the First World War and was rebuilt at a time when the courage and sacrifice of Canadians during war was uppermost in mind. The Peace Tower, completed in 1927, is the most prominent feature. Prime Minister Robert Borden said that it stands as “a memorial to the debt of our forefathers and to the valour of those Canadians who, in the Great War, fought for the liberties of Canada, of the Empire, and of humanity.”

Above us adorning the walls of the Senate Chamber are eight magnificent paintings depicting scenes from the First World War. These works of art range from the destruction shown in “Arras, the Dead City” to the hope for a new future in Sir George Clausen’s painting entitled “Returning to the Reconquered Land”.

These paintings have been in this Chamber for 92 years and have provided a constant reminder of the sacrifices of our armed forces in bringing about peace.

The Senate Chamber is a place where traditions are honoured and where the past is well remembered. It is also the place where the three elements which together constitute the Parliament of Canada, namely the Crown, the Senate and the House of Commons, come together when the presence of all three is required. These occasions include the Speech from the Throne, formal Royal Assent to bills which have been passed by both Chambers, and the installation of a new Governor General.

It is thus a special place in Canada, an appropriate place for a gathering such as this, as we begin a week of remembrance of the valour and sacrifices made by our veterans and their families.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice and has been named the Year of the Korean War Veteran. More than 26,000 Canadian men and women served in that conflict, with 1,558 suffering injury and 516 making the supreme sacrifice. They have not been forgotten.

Our Canadian military personnel answered the call of duty both then and now, with an unbroken tradition of service around the world. Wherever they may be found and whatever the tasks undertaken, they have proven to be fine ambassadors of Canada's values. They represent the best of what we are as a country and we appreciate all that they do for us.

Canadians remember our troops and their families, past and present, and we remember their sacrifices. We remember them now, and always.