

The Meaning Of Remembrance

I stood in cold, wet grass, the wind whipping through my jacket. Many others surrounded us. There was barely any space to stand. The weather was horrid. It was raining and my shoes were slowly starting to soak through. I was cold and wet and yet still standing here. I noticed my poppy slipping off my coat and fixed it. "Why?" I thought to myself. "Why do we have to be here?" Then I remembered why. They didn't have a choice. They went off to war and endured much worse than I ever had. A voice came on the loudspeaker "We will now ask you to partake in two minutes of silence." No one spoke. It was the loudest silence I had ever heard. It was like every emotion that anyone had ever felt in that moment was hovering just over our heads, about to crash down all at once. It was like there was too much to be said, so no one said anything at all. Afterwards wreaths were laid in honor of our veterans and fallen soldiers. Everybody looked so sad waiting for their family member's name to be called. I looked over to my right. There stood the cadets. They all had expressionless faces. I wondered if any of them would join the Army when they grow up. I wondered if eventually their wreaths would be laid as well. I turned my eyes back to the ceremony. I watched as two young soldiers escorted an elderly lady to the cenotaph. She knelt down and placed her wreath alongside the others. I saw a trace of a tear trickle down her wrinkled face and fall onto the ground. I wondered what her story was, and who she was. I let my eyes trail over the many names engraved into the golden plates on the cenotaph. There were so many. A lump formed in my throat. I looked up into the rain pouring down from the clouds. How many of them didn't make it home? I pictured a bloodstrown battlefield, a thick blanket of smoke coating the horizon. Bombers loomed overhead bringing the promise of bloodshed. Soldiers fell on the field. How many died without reason, simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time? I thought about their families that never saw their loved ones again. Ones that were just sent a letter to say that they were gone forever, as if it would suffice. I felt a wave of remorse wash over me. I had never experienced these things before, and I hoped I never would, but I felt upset even so. Something clicked in my heart that day. Remembrance is not something that can be forced into somebody. It is not something that is easy for people to reach sometimes. Real remembrance has to be felt in the heart. Truly felt.