

# Honor One and All

## Ottawa Sun Editorial

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Every so often, along comes an idea so perfect, so timely, so inspired that we wish we could claim it as our own.

So it was with a proposal put forward over the weekend by the Dominion Institute, a group of young Canadians dedicated to ensuring that we don't forget our country's history.

The Institute, established less than a decade ago, suggested that Canada's last World War I veteran be given a state funeral when he dies, as a tribute to the hundreds of thousands of men and women who served our country in the Great War and in other conflicts since.

Canada has only three surviving World War I vets — 105-year-old Percy Wilson and Lloyd Clemett and John Babcock, both 106 — and they are our last living link to the sacrifices and triumphs of World War I, notes Rudyard Griffiths, executive director of the institute.

Ottawa's Paul Metivier died in January, 2005 at age 104.

A state funeral would ensure Canadians pause to honour all those who fought, says Griffiths.

The suggestion is a magnificent one, and the timing couldn't be better as we count down the last few days before Remembrance Day.

Too often we take for granted the way of life we enjoy today thanks to the bravery of more than 600,000 Canadians who shipped overseas so many years ago. And we overlook the supreme sacrifice made by the 66,655 of them who never returned home.

Oh sure, we pay lip service to our veterans. Maybe even buy a poppy and attend a Cenotaph service. But the horrors of war experienced by these brave men and women are foreign to us. We can't imagine the brutal and primitive conditions that they faced and too often we don't even try.

A state funeral would ensure Canadians pause to honour all those who fought, says Griffiths.

“People will say state funerals are only for prime ministers or former governor generals. Well I think if there ever was a time to cast off our Canadian understatement when it comes to celebrating history, this is that moment.”

Absolutely. Let’s shrug off our collective apathy towards things patriotic and demand that our government start putting plans in motion for a fitting tribute when the last of our World War I vets leaves us.

The Dominion Institute has started an online petition at: [dominion.ca/ state funeral](http://dominion.ca/statefuneral)

Add your voice to ensure that the bravery and the contributions of all those who fought are never forgotten.