**Article of the Week**

* Perform a close reading of the following article
* Write a one-page entry in your writer’s notebook

Legion at war over peace group's white poppies

* Vince McDermott, National Post · Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2010

The Royal Canadian Legion has entered a fresh battle with peace activists, who claim the Remembrance Day poppies sold annually by veterans romanticize war and are selling white poppies they say symbolize non-violent conflict resolution.

"The red Legion poppy, in my opinion, represents the nostalgia and romanticizing of war," said Ian Harvey, an activist in the Ottawa White Poppy Coalition. "We should remember that you don't have to go to war to get peace."

But Jim Ross, president of the Legion's P.E.I. provincial command and a former lieutenant-commander in the Canadian Navy, said the Legion owns the rights to the poppy symbol, and the national office will most likely ask many of the various activist groups to stop the white-poppy campaign.

"The red poppies are not political statements and the Legion doesn't have any political positions. The poppies are simply a symbol of remembrance. Nothing more," Mr. Ross said. "It seems to me that the people who usually distribute these [white] poppies and do these sort of things have never spent a day in their life in the service of their country."

Mr. Harvey and other activists plan to lay a wreath made of white poppies at the National War Memorial in Ottawa on Remembrance Day. His group has been doing this since 2008 without incident. He said the ceremony will take place at 12:30 p.m., after the official ceremony.

"We don't want to look like we're competing with them," he said.

The white poppy was first introduced in the United Kingdom by the Women's Co-operative Guild in 1933. The Peace Pledge Union distributes boxes of the poppies to peace groups outside the United Kingdom.

"I did some research on the poppies and I thought it would be a good idea to bring them to Canada," Mr. Harvey said, adding the white poppy more accurately reflects the nature of what Remembrance Day should be about.

"The white poppy views all losses of life in war as tragedies," Mr. Harvey said. "I think the traditional ceremonies don't do that, because it's a day where everyone puts the focus on the soldiers. The white poppy also remembers the civilians."

This is not the first time the Legion has complained about the white poppies. In 2008, an anti-war group and a health food store in Edmonton stopped distributing white poppies after the Legion claimed their distribution was illegal.

"These people are doing a great disservice to veterans everywhere," Mr. Ross said.

Possible Notebook Topics:

* Do you agree with the Legion or the white poppy supporters? Why?
* What does Remembrance Day mean to you?
* Would you wear a white poppy? What would you say to a Legion member who questioned you on it?