

# Royal Canadian Legion

## Ontario Command Newsletter

Winter



2021

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### Garry Pond, Provincial President

The annual Ruck2Remember consists of a 30-40 km trek through country and city, carrying 45 pounds in their rucksacks. The Legion branches along the route provide overnight sleeping space - the ruckers bring their own mattresses/cots - and sleep on the Legion floor. We ask the branch to also provide a hot breakfast to see them on their way in the morning and if possible, a box/bag lunch for noon hour on the road.



The Ruckers disembark from a comfortable night at the Bay Ridges Branch 606, Pickering. President Myrna Picotte, Dave (Blisters) Merriott, Lino (Lt) Di Julio, Sandra Norris, yours truly, Chris (Grumpy) Kivell, kneeling Jon Aldworth.

Supper is most often used as a fund raiser, where branch members and those in the community can dine with the ruckers and hear of their exploits.

This year, an amazing \$210,000 was collected by R2R 2021 in support of Operation Leave the Streets Behind! Thank you Comrades!

It was a busy day for Linda and me. After seeing the Ruckers off in Pickering, we travelled to Branch 110 Trenton. I was honoured to help present the Palm Leaf to the MSM to Past Provincial Vice President Ted Whan, MSM to past District F Commander, Greg Kobold, and a Life Membership award to Ontario Command's Executive Assistant, Juanita Kemp.



On Sept. 29th at Aurora Branch #385, I was pleased to present the MSM to Branch Past President Len Whines and to celebrate his 90th birthday! Congratulations on both milestones indeed!



There is a Legion tradition where the newly elected President of Dominion Command is piped throughout the convention centre, in honour of this achievement. Thanks to COVID-19, the 2021 Dominion Convention was held virtually. No ceremony for Bruce. So, on October 23rd, Hagersville Branch #164 hosted a special gathering to honour President Bruce Julian. A delightful evening of comradeship.



Hard to be Covid-subdued when we have waited so long to be together. Celebrating the President of Dominion Command, Bruce Julian, Hagersville, Oct 2021

First Poppy, Oct 28, 2021. It was a small, masked and intimate gathering with Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell, for the presentation of Ontario's First Poppy at Queens Park, Toronto.

The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell is the 29th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. As the representative of Her Majesty The Queen, Ms. Dowdeswell carries out constitutional and ceremonial duties and facilitates healthy citizen and community engagement.



Linda Pond, President Garry Pond, Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell, 1st Vice President Derek Moore, Trish Moore, Vice President Brian Harris, Executive Director Pamela Sweeny.



Linda and I were delighted to attend the Provincial Remembrance Day service at Queen's Park in Toronto. It was a very well done service and we were very happy to be able to attend this event in our Provincial Capital for the first time.



SEOs and Ladies Auxiliary Christmas Meeting and Celebration, Aurora, Dec 2021

I wish to thank all members in Ontario Command for the fantastic work you have done during this most difficult pandemic period! To our Provincial Command SEO's, our Command HQ and all our fantastic staff, our Districts, our Zones, our Branches and our Ladies' Auxiliaries a great big Bravo Zulu!

Merry Christmas Everyone! The challenges and changes of 2021 have been both stressful and hopeful. And most of our branches continue to cope—brilliantly. 2021 has been a year that has sparked gratitude. We are grateful for the TIME it has given us to reflect and count our blessings. What we have all faced has made us stronger for the efforts. 2022 makes Linda and I excited for what comes next. On behalf of all Senior Elected Officers and staff of the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command, we wish you the safest and happiest holiday ever. Stay safe and we hope to see you soon, face to face! Come on out to Convention in North Bay, in May 2022.



In comradeship

Garry Pond

**Sharon McKeown, Immediate Past Provincial President**

Comrades All,

Few people go through life, without a ‘year from Hell’, a time they would prefer to ‘forget’. I had two, 1973 and 1996, until 2020! For many others, 2021 may be that year. In 2020, the world was in chaos and crisis, we didn’t really know what had hit us, thankfully, there were a couple of months before being locked down for the seemingly endless months that followed!

Today, as I write this message, the numbers of the latest variant, are climbing. The scientific world continues to caution us. Everyone visiting our branches, for the sake of all, are to remain vigilant, respect, and adhere to the protocols imposed, as we hope to continue to socialize ‘indoors’ thru the coming months. Appreciate the ‘rules’ are there for our protection. We’ve come this far, hang in and it will be spring again before you know it, we’ll be back outside!



Though a difficult 22 months, it’s not been all bad. As mentioned before, our C&L Committee gave us the tools to handle financial situations, to carry on our business, though shutdown. Both Dominion and Provincial Commands found funds in reserves to help meet ongoing demands. Our government responded with financial programs to assist ailing branches.

The resiliency, resourcefulness, dedication, and creativity of our executives and members have been beyond impressive! You continued to fulfill the obligations we have assumed as members, and see to the needs of Veterans and community, while respecting protocols. Great job!!

In addition to maintaining a level of 'normal', you tackled unknown territory. Being the social group that Legionnaires are, we enjoy in person meetings. It was remarkable how quick and supportive was the response to alternative measures imposed due to the pandemic. I remember Tom Hywarren asking that we find a better time of year for our November PEC meeting. There just wasn't one. However, virtual meetings have proven to be a welcome and viable alternative to Tom's 'white knuckle' drive from the North. Cudos to Comrades Juanita, Pamela, John Crook, President Garry for hosting meetings like old hands and to Chair Ron for keeping us on track. Great job Folks!

Dominion went a step further proving, if necessary, we can hold virtual conventions! Chairman Bill was outstanding, keeping us involved and informed, as the meeting progressed, or as to why if it didn't. Our Senior Dominion Officers and Staff and the IT people did an amazing job of conducting the entire convention. Sure, there were glitches, that's expected, though minor in the grand scheme of things. Except, maybe, my not getting to address my own Command, and the sleepless nights thereafter!! At caucus, unfortunately, I had to leave for Nova Scotia, next to BC, came back a couple of times, there was a lineup, in the end, you were done and gone for a beer before I got back!

Now a few short months late, Comrades, **THANK YOU** for attending, for staying with it, and especially for the support you provided in my election to Dominion Vice-President. The downside of the virtual convention was missing hugs, handshakes, and chats over a coffee or a cocktail. Hope to make up for that at North Bay!

An exciting three year term has been promised by our Dominion President Comrade Bruce Julian. Having worked with Bruce from Zone Commanders and on up, I know he does his best to keep promises. Stay tuned.

As Public Relations Chair, I am pleased that Comrade Bruce decided to change the composition of the Dominion PR Committee, to include Reps from each Command. It is important that all Commands receive the same information, from the same perspective, getting the same message on everything relevant to our organization, from significant local to world events, and deliver it in a timely manner to their members. Comrades, if you have news, PLEASE, let us know!! I'll save more for another day.

In closing, Merry Christmas to all, and a Happy Healthy, Prosperous 2022.

Stay well, travel safe, and see you in North Bay!

Sharon

**Derek Moore, Provincial First Vice President, Provincial membership Chair, Provincial Cadet Liaison Officer**



Merry Christmas Comrades.

Sadly, still not as merry as we would like it to be with another Covid variant that we have to deal with and which might throw another wrench into our progress out of this pandemic.

It has been nice to see that some branches are starting to open their doors once again and allowing their members in to take part in meat draws and seasonal Turkey Draws, and a few hall rentals being allowed etc.

I have managed to get out and about a little bit, accepting donations to the Homeless Veterans Program, which I always like to do, and an invite to attend the Korean Veterans Luncheon in Hamilton a few weeks ago. Not forgetting the proud moment joining comrade Garry in presenting the First Poppy to the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell.

I still live in hope that we will be able to allow our branches to hold much needed elections in the Spring, 2022. We need to find a way as many are teetering on the brink of anarchy, their patience growing thin and changes to their leadership need to be made to enable them to move forward in a more positive and productive manner. As they say, “where there’s a will, there’s a way”, let’s hope so. In the meantime continue to hang in the best you can.

Membership overall is down about 15,000 members from last year at this time, not as bad as I would have thought under the circumstances. The goal is still to achieve 300,000 by our 100th. Anniversary in 2026 that task just been made a little bit harder to achieve but if we stay positive and work hard it is possible. Still hoping to introduce a digital Membership Card in early 2022 and the Dominion Membership Committee is tasked with finding ideas to attract some of those 170,000 veterans that exist in our country to become Legion Members. There are still a few minor problems on occasion with the use of the Member Portal but the Dominion Membership Staff are only too happy to help and are still only a phone call away, 1-855-339-3344.

Cadets were starting to hold in person training again but now with the recent increase in covid cases some are returning to the safer option, on-line training. Next year’s Annual Sponsor Appreciation Day held at Blackdown Camp, Camp Borden is also in jeopardy of not happening again if the situation doesn’t improve in the very early part of the New Year when the decision will be made.

I’d like to take this opportunity for Trish and I to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and a much brighter 2022 for everyone.

Take care and continue to stay safe.

Derek Moore

Nov. 3rd. North Bay. A partial view of the front of the brand new (2020) Nipissing University Student Union Building where hopefully the 2022 Ontario Command Provincial Convention will take place. Lots of windows for an excellent view.



Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>. Hamilton, ON. Derek Moore attended the Korean Veterans Assoc. Luncheon. Some of the light entertainment, in traditional costume, to entertain us after lunch.



Nov. 18th. Stratford, Br.#8, Derek Moore receiving donations of \$2,500 each for Service Dogs and Homeless Veterans from a representative. of Tradition Mutual Insurance Company, Sebringville.





Dec. 2nd Derek Moore accepting a cheque for \$7,000 Homeless Veterans from Dan Bailey CEO OnePromo/Veteran Banners, Hanover, ON.

### **Brian Harris, Provincial Vice President. Provincial Poppy Chair**

Comrades all, I bring you *Seasons Greetings* from our house to yours.

We most successfully have concluded another Poppy Campaign as well as Remembrance Day period. The numbers are not all in yet, but it appears the Ontario public were again most generous with donations to our Poppy campaign. We benefited from the many corporate relationships at both the Dominion and Provincial levels. Local branches have formed partnerships with area businesses that have proved to be most rewarding. We thank all businesses that have supported us over the years and especially those new ones who joined us over the past two years during our most challenging of times.



Even though we learned just days before Remembrance Day that most restrictions would be lifted, many branches reorganized to put on almost full ceremonies. Congratulations to all the branch committees that were able to arrange and organize with just a few days' notice, well done!

I want to share a story to magnify just one of the many programs and recipients of our Poppy Trust dollars in action. While visiting at the District E Convention I had the honour to meet two of our matches in the Operation Service Dog program. I learned firsthand the difference these amazing canines make in their human's life. They are trained not only to detect physical, but also emotional signs of anxiety and stress. The companionship and benefit of these dogs' presence are life changing. I witnessed this up close. I have been lucky enough to be around all kinds of animals all my life, but these two incredible dogs made me realize just how special the training is and how vital it is we support this program to the very most. I encourage we all support this and all provincial programs.

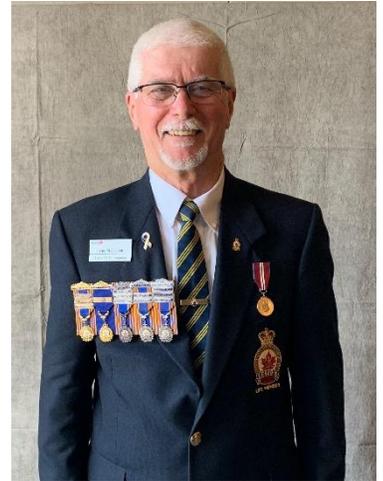
In closing I wish to thank Poppy Chairs at Branch, Zone and District levels. Thank you as well to the organizing committees of Remembrance Day ceremonies. Also, I would be remiss if I didn't thank all the staff at Ontario Command not only for all their hard work but for the many extra hours they commit to their positions. A very big thank you!

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year from Brenda and myself.

Brian Harris

### **Provincial Vice President Lynn McClellan, Provincial Youth Education Chair**

Comrades, it is hard to imagine that 2021 is coming to an end. It has been another stressful year for most of us and all I can say is thank you for all you have done for the success of our organization. Branches across the province are slowly reopening and activities have begun to resume, but in no way are we back to normal or expect to be in the near future. Although this pandemic has kicked the heck out of many branches and their Ladies Auxiliaries, I'm confident that with a bit of hard work and determination we will succeed in getting back to normal. We owe this to our veterans, and we owe this to our communities.



During the past two years Zoom meetings have become very popular. Admittedly, I am not very comfortable on Zoom, but I understand the importance of meeting virtually when Covid restrictions were in effect and we were still able to get the job done. Looking into the future I would predict that this type of communication will continue but will never replace the camaraderie that we all enjoy when meeting together in person.

Speaking as your Provincial Youth Education chair, I am excited that this year's poster, poem, and essay competitions are underway again and I look forward to receiving the district winners for judging very soon. As predicted, the number of entries were down for 2020 but I am confident that we will see an increase this year. My sincerest thanks to all of the Branch Youth Education chairs for their time and dedication to the schools and youth within their communities for without them, this program would not be possible. I am also excited to report that the Provincial Public Speaking competition will resume and take place at Branch 426 in Newmarket on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Finally, as we look ahead toward the end of this unprecedented three year term, may I say what a pleasure it has been to serve as one of your Vice Presidents. I have learned so much and have had the privilege of working with a great group of SEOs and an even greater group of staff members at Ontario Command headquarters, particularly Aida Kostuck, our Youth Education secretary. I look forward to seeing many of you next May at our Provincial convention in North Bay.

So, to all of you from my wife Darlene and I, and our family, may we wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a safe, prosperous, and healthy New Year.

Lynn McClellan

**Pam Davidson, Provincial Vice President, Provincial Bursary Chair**

Fellow Comrades, I wish to take this opportunity to thank District H Commander Ken Faubert, for his District H hospitality and fun. I enjoyed the District Council meeting great reports on what your district is doing and planning. Looking forward to North Bay hosting the Provincial Convention. Pictured is District H 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Commander Flora Wilson Chartrand with myself and District K Commander Roy Wilde.



I thank District D Commander Gerry Morgan and the district for their hospitality and friendship at their District's Fall Convention. It's remarkable how Zoom can be used with your 3 Zones at different Branches and still hold a convention, thank you for the opportunity to see it done.



Vice President Pam Davidson, District D Commander Gerry Morgan, District E Commander Crystal Cook and District D Deputy Commander John Dufort at the District D Convention

It was very nice to see old friends and meet new ones at both District Conventions.

My thanks to the District Commanders, Deputy District Commanders, Zone Commanders, Deputy Zone Commanders, Branch Presidents,

and their executive for all their hard work and dedication they give to support this great organization! The last couple of years has been incredibly challenging for our branches. Through these challenges branches still looked after our veterans, our seniors, and our communities with positive outlooks.

In Comradeship

Pam Davidson

### **Terry Jacobs, Provincial Treasurer**

Season's Greetings Comrades

The support that has been received from the Federal and Provincial governments along with Ontario and Dominion Commands has left most of our branches in a much better position than I would have thought possible after experiencing over a year and a half close-down of normal operations.

At the provincial command level, we have experienced the expected loss of revenue in some areas but we have had a less than expected reduction in membership and an increase in income from the Military Service Recognition Book. The reduction in expense which resulted from the reduction of our normal operations coupled with the gain in value of our investments has left us in a healthy financial position at the end of first six months operation of our current fiscal year.



I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a new year that will be considerably better than one we have just experienced.

In comradeship

Terry Jacobs



## Ron Goebel, Provincial Chair

Hello Comrades.

As we all know, there is that old saying of how time flies when you are having fun. Well, I guess I must be having fun because I just cannot believe how the time has flown by since our last Provincial Newsletter six months ago. I thought that with us still being faced with our COVID pandemic that the time would move very slowly. However, it has been just the opposite.

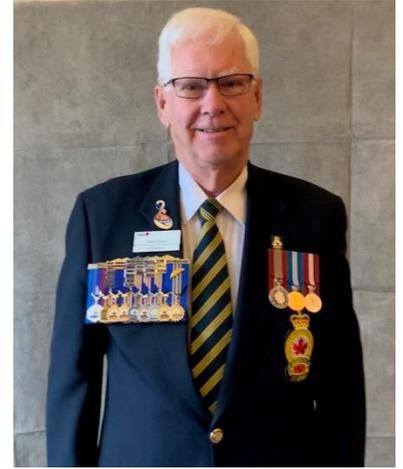
It is great to see that most branches are now functioning and open again and hopefully we can keep it that way and not run into anymore lockdowns or restrictions. Since our last Provincial Newsletter in June, I have managed to attend various functions and meetings in person rather than virtually, and it certainly was great to be able to do so again. Yes, various protocols had to be followed i.e. the wearing of masks and social distancing, but I for one have no problem with these procedures as a means of protecting ourselves and others.

We of course are also hopeful that we will be able to proceed to hold our Provincial Convention in North Bay as planned in May of 2022. The last thing I think all of us want is to have to hold it virtually similar to what we unfortunately had to do with our Dominion Convention in August. We did manage to get through the Dominion Convention okay but not without a few glitches. However, I felt that any hiccups that we did encounter were handled very professionally by our Dominion Chair Comrade Bill Chafe.

Congratulations to one of our Past Provincial Presidents, Bruce Julian in being elected as our Dominion President. Congratulations as well to Bill Chafe in being re-elected as our Dominion Chairman and to Brian Weaver and Sharon McKeown in being elected as Dominion Vice-Presidents. We are certainly well represented at Dominion Command now with four of the eight Senior Elected Officers of Dominion Command being from Ontario Command. I extend my personal congratulations to the other four Dominion Officers as well, Past President Tom Irvine, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Owen Parkhouse, Vice-President Berkley Lawrence and Treasurer Rick Bennett.

Since my last report in June, we at Ontario Provincial Command have continued to deal with various administrative matters through various meetings that were held virtually through Zoom as well as in person meetings.

Following our virtual Dominion Convention, we held our annual August Finance Committee meeting, and were fortunate enough to be able to meet in person in the boardroom at our Provincial Headquarters in Aurora. It was great to be able to meet in person once again after holding so many virtual Zoom meetings during the previous 18 months. The following day, on August 21<sup>st</sup>, we held our annual August P.A.C. meeting again in person, but due to various COVID health restrictions, we met at the Aurora Branch in their main hall where social distancing could take place to accommodate all of the members of our Provincial Administrative Committee.



On September 11<sup>th</sup>, Beachville Legion Branch 495 held a celebration to honour one of their members, Bruce Julian, for being elected as the new Dominion President. Both my wife Barb and I were honoured to have been invited to attend this celebration and the Branch is to be commended for hosting such a well-organized social event.

Then on September 19<sup>th</sup> I was honoured to be the Master of Ceremonies at a Dedication Ceremony held at the United Cemetery just outside of Carleton Place. This ceremony was organized by our local branch in Carleton Place to dedicate a new Memorial Garden in honour of all Veterans who are buried in this cemetery. Our branch donated a granite bench that has been placed in behind a Walkway of Remembrance that includes our Canadian flag.



In October, we were back to holding virtual Zoom meetings once again as we held two SEO Information sessions on October 6<sup>th</sup> and again on October 19<sup>th</sup>. October also brought in the planning stages for our annual Remembrance Day Ceremony and Poppy Campaign.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, we attended a District B celebration to honour the election of Bruce Julian to the position of President of Dominion Command. This celebration was hosted by the Hagersville Legion Branch 164 on behalf of District B. President Jack Esselment and his many branch volunteers are to be congratulated for hosting this event for Comrade Bruce. They certainly went above and beyond in being such great hosts. Our President Garry Pond and Executive Director Pamela Sweeny were also in attendance and both of them along with the wife of our President and my wife entertained us during karaoke. Our Executive Director also entertained us while being accompanied by a piper.

### **Ron Crown, Provincial Vice-Chair**



My Christmas wish for every branch in Ontario is that you are able to reopen, in some manner, under these “new normal” post Covid19 times.

Sharon and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best in 2022.

Sincerely,

Ron Crown



## **Pam Davidson, Provincial Vice President, Provincial Bursary Chair**

The 2020/2021 academic year for the Bursary program was down with only 283 applications awarded. The 2019/2020 academic year for the Bursary program received 467 applications. We were down by 184 applications. At the time writing this report we have 17 completed applications. We are hoping that these submissions pick up and we have 100 by Christmas, but currently it looks like a long shot. We're hoping that the drop in numbers was due to the students not being able to be on campus and not wanting to learn online. If the decline continues, we need to look at our program. It would be a shame to see this program not continue.



The Bursary academic year of 2021-2022 deadline is March 25, 2022. Bursary award for the 2021-2022 year is \$1000.00. Applications are slowly coming in so please get the word out that we are still giving out Bursaries.

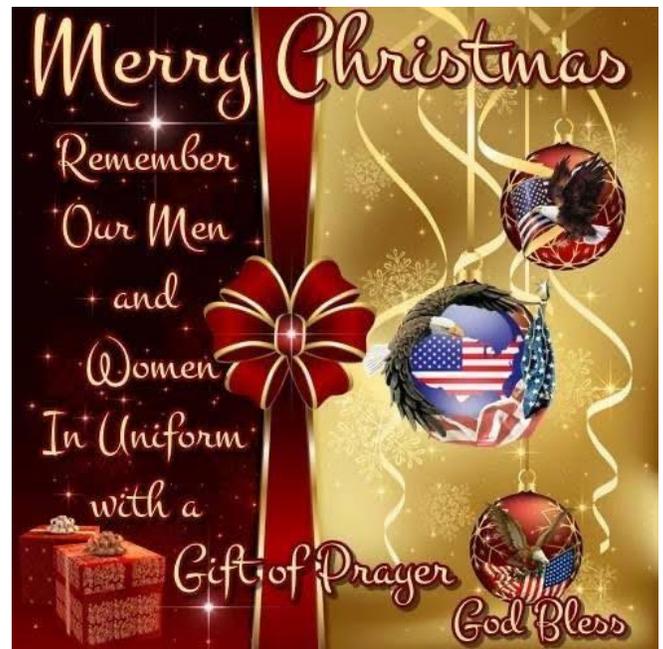
Please allow me to thank our dedicated Provincial Bursary team members: Charitable Foundation President Marg Emery, 3rd Vice President Ladies Auxiliary Kathey Putman

District A Cathy Lanman, District B Jackie Ralston, District C Don Young, District D John Dufort, District E Betty Smith, District F Sandra Beattie, District G Sharron Murray, District H Alex Lammle, District K Stephane Leveille

Finally, to the Provincial Headquarters staff, and the Bursary secretary Jen Leclair Thank You for the work you do on these programs.

Merry Christmas, Happy Year, Stay Safe, and Stay Healthy.

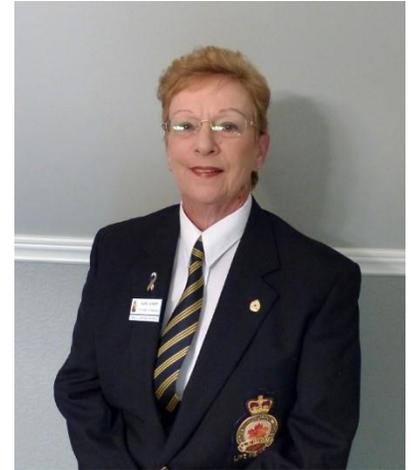
Pam Davidson



**Marg Emery, President, of The Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command Branches and Ladies' Auxiliaries Charitable Foundation**

My Comrades All,

I am happy to report that at our Ontario Provincial Command Branches and Ladies' Auxiliaries Charitable Foundation Board of Directors meeting (Committee of the Whole) on Friday, November 19, 2021 the Committee approved a total of \$470,141.90 in response 81 applications giving each recipient an average of \$6,000.00. It was great to see that District "B" was the busiest district this year with 22 applications. Congratulations for a stellar year in getting out there sharing the benefits of making applications to the Charitable Foundation. Well Done!



Now that the Legion Zone and District meetings and conventions have resumed as well as Ladies' Auxiliary meetings and convention to come in 2022, we are excited with the prospect of getting back to a more normal way of the work we do. On behalf of the Charitable Foundation, I am asking our Zone and District commanders and Ladies' Auxiliary Officers to encourage and promote continued donations to the Charitable Foundation. We need your help. Your donations are always recorded and Command sends annual letters in branch and Ladies' Auxiliary mailings to list the donations and show our appreciation. A reminder, we all know there are excess dollars in many Poppy funds and the Charitable Foundation could be using those funds to help hospitals, hospices, fire department and Nursing Homes buy equipment. Please help us out with a Poppy donation.

Just a reminder, the Charitable Foundtion gets its funds by adding all the monies donated in a year plus interest and dividends minus the expenses. This then is the amount we have for application approvals. We have criteria for applications which can be found on the Ontario Command website under Charitable Foundation then Terms of Reference. There you will also find a listing of the applications we have approved over the last five years.

Thanks to all our committee for their commitment and leadership to the Charitable Foundation. Thanks to the staff who are always there for us and always go above and beyond in their eagerness to help. And thank you to all of you for all you do to support the work of the Royal Canadian Legion, Ontario Provincial Command Branches and Ladies' Auxiliaries Charitable Foundation.

May you all be blessed with a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Sincere best wishes for an enjoyable and healthy holiday season filled with family, fun and faith and a wonderful year ahead. Please remember those less fortunate and help where and when you can to make their Christmas a little better. Take care and stay safe and please be kind to one another.

Marg Emery

## Jack Porter, Honours and Awards Chair

The COVID-19 virus is still affecting Honours and Awards submissions currently. As we go forward in the immediate future, we are looking for our Ontario branches who have very dedicated members to be recognised by their branch. There must be branch members that have worked over and above during this pandemic and deserve consideration for Honours and Awards.

The following are the results of the applications received so far this term.

Honours and Awards applications results by District.

A – 31, B – 33, C – 25, D – 9, E – 33, F – 29, G – 51, H – 17, K – 2.

Approved applications by categories.

Life – 137, MSM – 36, Palm Leaf – 5, MSA – 3, Palm Leaf to MSA 1, Media – 3, Friendship – 26.

Declined Applications.

Life – 35, MSM – 7, Palm Leaf – 3.

Our Branches are starting to reopen again, and the membership is starting to return. We look forward to our applications increasing for our dedicated members.

On behalf of your Honours and Awards committee, I want to wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Comrades, please stay safe and well.

Yours in Comradeship,

Jack Porter



**Canadian Armed Forces** ✓ @CanadianForces · 17h  
For many, the holiday season is an opportunity to connect with family and friends, and for others, it can amplify feelings of loneliness or social isolation. During this season, take time to care for yourself, and each other. [canada.ca/en/department-...](https://canada.ca/en/department-...)



## **Robyn Zettler, Provincial Leadership Development Chair**

On behalf of my husband, Ken, and myself we would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! May your holidays be safe, healthy and happy.

It has been very encouraging to see many of our branches recently “open for business” and the local stories being shared in newspapers and social media.

With the openings it brings up the possibility of conducting branch elections once again next year. While it has been a difficult time for the current executive, it is now the opportune time to reach out to your members for their interest in helping out on the incoming committees or perhaps even on the executive – Succession is key to our survival. There are a lot of resources available to guide/answer questions – available online [www.on.legion.ca](http://www.on.legion.ca) under “Forms and Manuals” as well as through your Branch and Zone Leadership Development Chairs.

As we close one year and prepare for the next year, it gives each of us time to reflect on this past year and give thanks to so many people who have been there for our branches – neighbours, families, friends and strangers who have reached out to give assistance in whatever way possible.

I give thanks to our Provincial Officers, our Command staff (for all their known and unknown assistance) and to you the members of this great organization for your patience, understanding and commitment.

Robyn Zettler

## **Ron Goebel, Military Service Recognition Book Program Chair**

Well Comrades, we have now published, and distributed Volume VIII of our Military Service Recognition Books and I believe that our books of Remembrance have been a tremendous success over these past eight years.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking each of you for all of your support and dedication that you have given to make our program the success that it has been to date. And even through our COVID-19 pandemic with branch closures and various health restrictions in place, we were still able to maintain a relatively steady stream of submissions during year #7 and #8 of our program.

We are now into year #9 of our program with an Introductory Package being sent out to all branches, members of P.E.C. and Ladies' Auxiliary members at the end of August.



I ask that all Branches put forth a full concentrated effort in promoting our program to the membership in recruiting Veteran submissions, **especially about the telephone sales campaign that is being conducted by our publisher, Fenety Marketing.**

I certainly am not about to paint any gloom or doom on year #9 of our program, but a real good effort is going to be required regarding the promotional efforts in securing Veteran submissions over the next few months. As of the end of November, we had only received 58 submissions for year #9 of the program. This is a far cry from the 250 submissions we had received for the same time period last year. So, I ask for everyone's full support and cooperation in this regard. We have managed to do it before, and I am sure that we can do it again.



Financially, our publishers' sales team did a fantastic job during year #8 despite our COVID-19 pandemic and for the first three months of year #9, the net income we have received is in the amount of \$137,868.29 compared to \$101,750.94 for the same period last year. The total net income we have received to date throughout this program is in the amount of \$1,541,527.60. This has assisted us tremendously in assisting our Veterans through eight various Veteran Transition programs that we have supported.

Comrades, the success of our program to date of course has not been accomplished without a lot of hard work. I want to thank all of you who have been involved in our program to make it the success that it has been to date. Your support and dedication is truly appreciated. And although we are still faced with our pandemic, I ask that you continue to promote the program through a concentrated effort during year #9 of our program.

You were just recently advised that electronic submissions and digitized photographs will now be accepted. Please be sure to follow all of the guidelines that are spelled out in our Fact Sheet that was sent to all Branches and can be found on our Provincial website. Hopefully, by adding this additional electronic step for submitting Veteran submissions, it will assist in the recruitment of additional Veteran submissions



Please remember that our submissions are on a first come, first served basis. This means that the sooner we receive submissions from Branches, the sooner they will be published in one of our books.

Comrades, on behalf of Barb and myself, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and hopefully 2022 will be a better year for all of us. May you continue to stay safe and healthy during these trying times and work in the best interests of our Veterans, their families and your Branches. Comrades, we will Remember them.

Ron Goebel

## Mary Ann Goheen, Ontario Correspondent

Comrades we have been able to maintain a strong presence of our branches in the Legion Magazine despite the Covid lockdown measures restricting our ability to operation and hold fundraising events.

With the retirement of news editor Tom Mac Gregor at the end of January, correspondents were taxed with a replacement who left within a three week span forcing the return of Comrade Mac Gregor to return temporarily until the current replacement Trevor Oattes was hired. The new staff member has a different system and as such does not advise any of the correspondents of approval of photos and only of 'rejections' which I continue to pass along to the branch.



We have seen more 100th birthday celebrations this past year and I have been keeping the IPP, President and 1st Vice informed with this info and addresses to acknowledge our special members and veterans and, since August, I have included our Dominion President Bruce Julian with this information which he appreciates. To our branches I thank you for your continued support and keep up the good work promoting your donations, those of the Ontario Provincial Charitable Foundation and our youth programs.

Mary Ann Goheen

## Sharon McKeown, Provincial Property Chair

2021 was a record year for the Provincial Property Committee, I'm sure, without even counting! An interesting one, with a variety of property projects, big to small, simple to complex. In addition, assistance provided with mortgages, loans, grant, and licensing applications, even information on legal and insurance concerns. We appreciate the diversified background of our PPC members.

Most projects are 'renovations', an all-encompassing category, from painting and patios to BBQs, dishwashers and electronic signage. Next, were various upgrades to comply with the Accessibility for Ontario with Disabilities Act, AODA, coming into effect in 2025. Are you familiar with Orwell's novel 1984? We became aware of a few branches receiving sizeable grants, through social media. Comrades, be sure, 'big brother is watching'. Here are a few of the major projects ongoing. Br. 25 Sault Ste Marie is proceeding with the rental housing project on their property, hoping for a September 2022 completion. Br 424, Bala is pursuing the Federal government for funding of a Seniors Housing Complex on their property. Br. 133, Cobourg Harbor Breeze condo development, approved in the first decade of this century, is finally occupied, the branch relocation



fundamentally complete. Br. 418, St Catharines Polish Branch is considering an offer on a large portion of their land. Br. 641, Barrhaven is fundraising through townhome sales. We wish success to each going forward! It's amazing to think branches worried about survival with COVID closures. Having changed the way of doing business, so far, most appear in a better position financially. Many are funding the work on the property without borrowing! Unfortunately, not property related, some branches were unable to reopen due to lack of staffing.

The 'pandemic' related declarations and greater awareness of the role of PPC as overseer/guardian/friend not foe, resulted in increased submissions. Cudos to our team, inclusive of staff, for prompt replies, an 8 hour turn around time on average! Being part of PPC is challenging and interesting. Each project is different. The LOM directions though not a one size fits all, provides a general guide to get branches on the right track. Submissions are dependent on the interpretation of the member preparing them. If you have questions, ask, but do the research first. To our District and Zone Commanders, thank you for your contribution to the learning experience of our Branches. Lastly, to the branches who did make submissions, THANK YOU for searching out proper procedures, making the effort to follow them and keeping us in business!



In closing, from Bill & I... virtual hugs... take care, stay well, wear your mask, wash hands, keep your distance, smile and hopefully see you in North Bay!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS,**

**& HAPPY, HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS 2022!!**

*Sharon McKeown*

**Carolyn McCaul, Provincial Public Relations Chair, Military Service Recognition Book Coordinator (Districts A,D,G,H,K)**

Hello Comrades

First off, I hope everyone is staying safe and well during these troubling times.

Although everyone and our branches are trying to go about their daily business, still, nothing is the same; all we can do is the best we can. Be strong so that we can survive.

We are continuing to collect "Good News Stories" so that we can share with the rest of Ontario Command and other Provinces. So, if you have some special news with your branch, especially with the



media, please pass it along so that we can share. Although we are not holding our usual pre-covid events just yet, The Royal Canadian Legion and branches are still here supporting our Veterans and local communities.

One Provincial event that has been taking place yearly has come to a close. After researching entries submitted to the Scrapbook/Bulletin Contest several years prior to Covid-19; entries have been slowly declining. After discussion with the Provincial Public Relations Committee, it was agreed by all to cancel the Provincial Scrapbook and Bulletin Competition. We thank all editors who took the time and patience to share their Branches/Ladies Auxiliaries annual history with us through news and photos.

In closing, during this special season please take time to remember what Christmas is about. It's a time of caring and sharing and spending special moments with your families and friends. John and I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

Comrades, please have safe travels wherever your paths may lead. Until we meet again in person, please stay safe and stay healthy!

Yours in Comradeship,

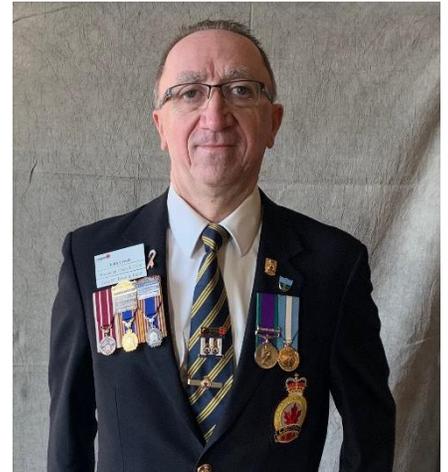
Carolyn McCaul

### **John Crook, Provincial Track and Field Chair**

Comrades, I hope all of you and your families are well and safe. This will be a very short report because of our current situation.

The T&F Summer Meet for 2021 and the National Champions for 2021 were both cancelled. Future meets are still uncertain. We are still trying to get a venue for the Provincial meet in July 2022. We are looking at St Catharines or Hamilton as no other offers have emerged. If permitted, the Provincial Summer Track will take place July 15/16th hosted by the Hamilton Olympic Club or the Niagara Olympic Club.

The National Championships 2022 are scheduled for Sherbrook, QC from August 2 to 9. I wonder how this can be called a Nationals seeing that NFL/Lab have already withdrawn from the event?



In closing, the Track & Field committee and I would like to thank Comrades Juanita and Pam for their background support and guidance. Finally, I must also say a BIG THANK YOU to the Ladies Auxiliary for their continued support with the donation again this year for \$7,500.00. To the members of PEC, Districts, Zones and Branches that have been doing a tremendous job under these challenging times I congratulate you all.

Comrades from my family to you and yours we hope you stay safe and comfortable, and we wish you a Merry Christmas and Prosperous safe new year.

John Crook

## Dave Gordon, Chair Veterans Services and Seniors/Homeless Veterans

COVID-19 has put a stop to many things throughout the province, but it hasn't stopped the branches and Ladies Auxiliaries from continuing the great work they do to assist our veterans and their families and the fantastic work in the communities.

Through the hardships, the staff have continued to assist Homeless Veterans, with rent, food gift cards and the list goes on. As of the end of November 2021, we have assisted 980 Homeless or near Homeless Veterans of which 104 are female and have been identified in 182 towns and cities, To date we have disbursed over \$2.8 million. The Association of Chiefs of Police and the OPP have committed to partner in the Homeless program. Preparations are underway for a launch of this new partnership with Law Enforcement in March 2022, and we have requested endorsement from the RCMP, stay tuned. Multifaith Housing, in Ottawa has 36 of the 40 units occupied at Veterans House.



The annual Ruck March took place earlier in the fall in the summer and you can check the Ontario Command website for further details. This year saw over \$ 200,000.00 donated to the Homeless Veterans program. Many thanks to those who participated.

We continue to monitor the VAC programs to ensure our Veterans receive the benefits they so rightly deserve. Special THANK YOU to our Provincial Service Officers for their great work. Also, a big thank you to the Provincial VSS Committee for their great work at the district level.

Finally, a big thank you to the Command staff for the outstanding work they do for our Veterans especially with the Homeless program.

A sign at our local Giant Tiger says "**SUPER HEROES WEAR MASKS**". Be a Super Hero and wear a mask! Please get a vaccination

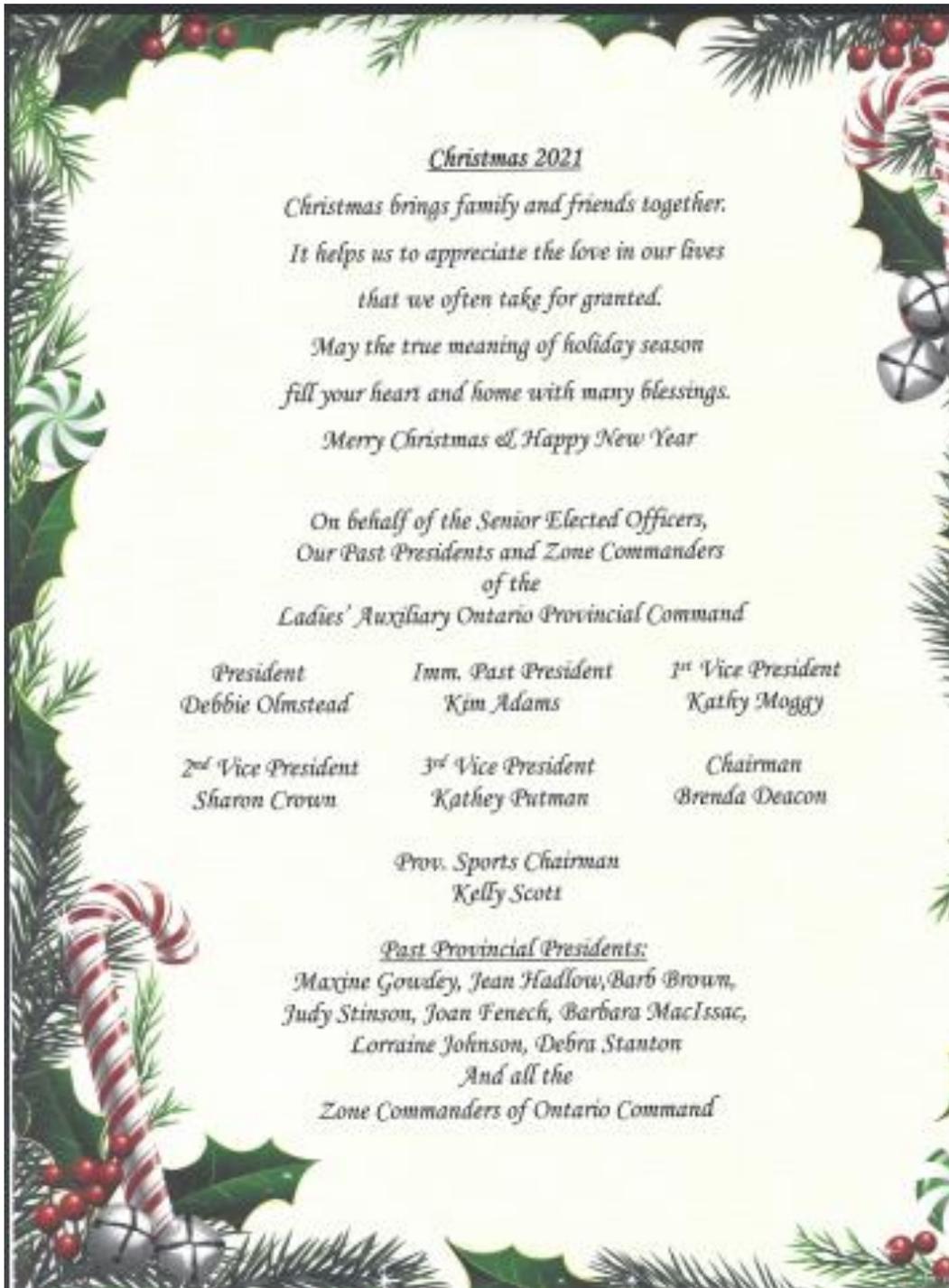
Dawn and I send our sincere Best Wishes to all for a very Merry Christmas and Safe, Healthy and Happy New Year.

In comradeship

Dave Gordon



## Ontario Command Ladies Auxiliary



## District A Commander Mark Rogers

On behalf of myself, Deputy Commander Caroline Mayo and the branches of District A, I would like to wish everyone a Happy Holiday Season. The end of 2021 unfortunately looks similar to the end of 2020 in District A. Many health units are implementing covid restrictions that are having an adverse effect upon some of the branches, especially in Zone A-1 and Zone A-2.

Branches have endured closures and restrictions now for almost 2 years and the financial implications are still affecting branches. Most Covid assistance grants are used up and branches struggle to bring back their members and generate revenue to cover their day to day operations.

2022 will be an important year for many branches in District A with lots of changes coming. Br. 525 should finish their process of surrendering their charter and the amalgamation between Br. 12 and Br. 143 in Windsor will hopefully come to a conclusion. Sadly, there are members upset with Dominion Command regarding the inability to use their numbers because of the way the membership portal is set up. Unfortunately, some members will not renew their dues because they feel that their history is being ignored and disrespected by Dominion Command.

Branches in District A have continued to support their veterans and the programs that are offered to veterans and their dependents. Over \$144,000 was donated to Ontario Command and District A programs, as well as Parkwood Institute and Sunnybrook Hospital at our Fall Convention held at Br. 399 Belle River. Additionally, over \$100,000 has been donated from branches throughout the rest of the year. Many thanks to the branches who have supported all of our programs.

I wish all the branches and officers of all levels of the Ontario Command a safe, healthy and prosperous 2022 and that we all can return to normalcy and be able to put our best efforts into taking care of our veterans, their dependents and our communities.

Yours In Comradeship,

*Mark Rogers*



## **District B Commander Diane Condon.**

It's hard to believe that another year is almost gone. And what a year it's been!

The ups and downs of the Covid pandemic played havoc with all our schedules, and planning went out the window. One day you can meet in person and the next day you couldn't. Branches were open one day and closed the next. We wondered if it would ever end. But, with resilience and strength, most of the branches were able to keep it together and move forward.

Provincial Command and Dominion Command sent everyone some funding, and then the province kicked in with much needed cash infusions. The branches could survive and pay their bills. Many of them found themselves in a cash position they had never had – excess funds to do some work. And work they did! Painting, cleaning, upgrading, when and where necessary, and still keeping an eye on the bottom line. They were prepared for reopening.



When patios were finally open for business, many were extended to accommodate the members and guests. That has proven to be a move that kept the doors open and, in some cases, increased the membership. People found they didn't have too many places to go to socialize, and the Legion was always there for them.

During all of this, they did not forget the members, our veterans and our seniors. Takeout food was the order of the day and, when necessary, delivery was implemented for those in need. Bottle drives and BBQ's kept them busy and kept the cash flowing. Hard work and "thinking outside the box" was the norm. It all proves that Legionnaires are a fighting group, and it takes a lot to put them down.

Despite all the hardships visited on us by the pandemic, we have a lot to be grateful for, our health, our families and our friends.

To each and every member of this great organization, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year from District B. Till we meet again;

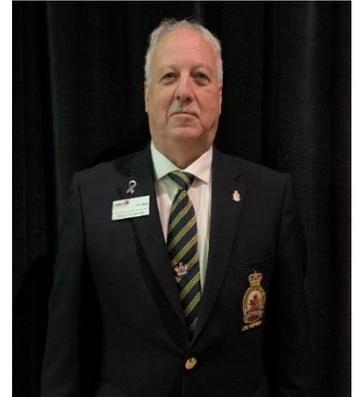
Diane Condon

## District C Commander Eric Ross

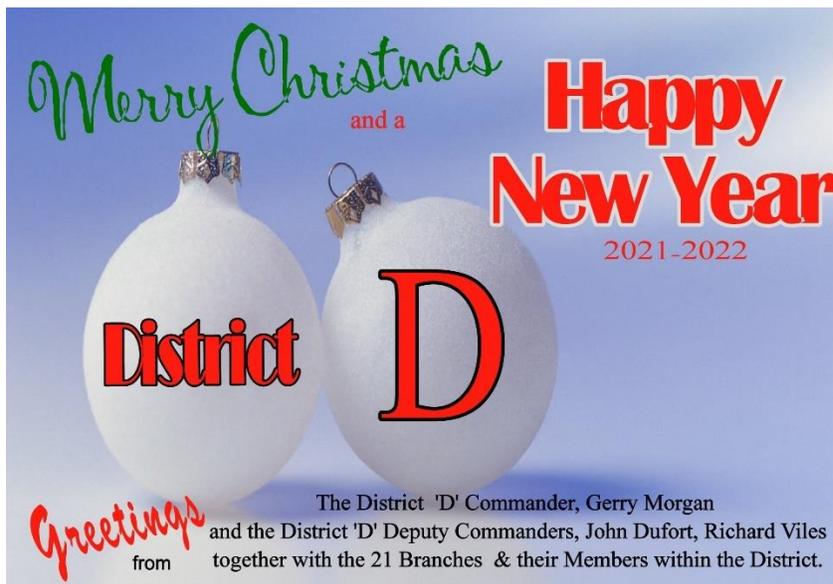
On behalf of the 50 branches and our District C council, we wish to extend a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to our fellow Comrades of Ontario. Best wishes are also extended to our service personal throughout Canada and abroad. Hoping you get to spend family time together in person or via Zoom and a healthy and prosperous 2022.

In comradeship

Eric Ross



## District D Commander Gerry Morgan



## District E Commander Crystal Cook

Comrades

Happy Holidays on behalf of the 39 branches in District E

It was the hope that 2021 would have seen better days but as we are all aware that was not to be. As 2021 draws to a close we need to focus on the positives that have occurred in the past year.



We were able to hold a in person convention the beginning of October and what a wonderful feeling that was. The convention was well received with members happy that they were once again able to connect in person.

Considering what we have went through the branches have managed to weather the COVID storm, This is all thanks to the dedication and out of the box thinking to bring in the funds necessary to keep our branches open. COVID-19 made us change our approach and it resulted in bottle drives, take away meals, virtual garage sales just to name a few and I think most can say these all came with some laughs along the way. I offer my sincere thanks to the branches for all they have done, when they thought they had nothing left to give they dug deep and found the will and drive to continue on. They are an amazing group who deserve all the praise for getting through this far.

We had the extreme pleasure of welcoming the Ruck to Remember team into 2 branches in District E. What these individuals are doing for our Homeless Veterans is so humbling and it was my pleasure to be able to walk a few Km's with them on their journey.

On Oct 19 District E suffered the loss of a Past District E Commander and an active member of our Council Rose Marie Elsdon. Comrade Rose will not be forgotten, her humour, love of life, her friendship and her comradeship and most importantly her love for our Veterans was paramount.

As the Province and the branches are starting to open up and some normalcy is returning, I am looking forward to the last few months of my term and the chance to re-connect and meet with friends both old and new. It is my hope that the days of Zoom are in the rear-view mirror and we can once again gather and share some comradeship.

A very big Thank You to my Deputy Rick Preston and the rest of the District Council for all that you do to assist the branches and make my job easier.

The job of District Commander, although frustrating at times, has had more highs than lows. It has been a pleasure to represent my District and I look forward to the months ahead.

On behalf of my husband Junior and our family I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year may 2022 see better days ahead.

Comrades, if nominated at the Provincial Convention for the position of Vice President of Ontario Command I will be letting my name stand

*Crystal Cook*



## District F Lynn Deering

Comrades:

As this year draws to an end it has been one of challenges and successes within the District F and I am pleased that for the most part many branches are doing well.

District F has acknowledged our Senior Veterans honouring them on major birthday milestones. Our Veterans have not been forgotten with branches reaching out to them and providing whatever assistance they needed. One of the biggest highlights within the district was the branches coming together to raise \$113,000.00 for the Ruck to Recovery. Contributions to our Legion Programs have been maintained. Branches were able to hold Remembrance Day Services within their communities this year. Communities were supported through many branch donations as well as through the Hospital Trust and Charitable Foundations. Seminars were held with fairly good representation. Inspections are nearing completion and are an improvement over last year. Branches are slowly opening up, a few have had some major repairs to do and are working on them. Branches that are having difficulties are being assisted and hopefully they will be resolved in the upcoming year.



With a new year quickly on the horizon, branches are looking forward to returning to “normal” routines and elections. I commend those executive members for remaining on and working hard to keep their branches financially viable while continuing to uphold our mandates. Membership is slowly creeping up.

Thanks to all District, Zone Councils, Ontario Command Senior Elected Officers, Ontario Command Staff, Ladies Auxiliary for all the assistance and guidance provided to me and our branches this past year.

On behalf of District F members and myself, we wish all a very Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy, New Year.

Yours in Comradeship

Lynn Deering



## Ken Heagle, District G Commander

Greetings comrades from District G. Branches are starting to open slowly, some branches have partial opening and are starting to rebuild. We still have branches that are waiting until the new year before opening their doors. Membership is slowly starting to return, but without branch activities some are still reluctant to pay dues.

We been through a lot with this pandemic, and now we have to try and move ahead. Hopefully we will be able to hold our District Convention in April 2022.

A thank you to District G zone commanders, for the help given me. A thank you to District G deputy commanders for the hard work they are doing in trying to keep things going. A big thank you to the office staff, and the elected officers of Ontario Command.



On behalf of District "G" wishing all a **MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY AND PROPEROUS NEW YEAR.**

Yours in comradeship  
Ken Heagle

## District H Commander Ken Faubert

District H is doing well with some of the branches open and some that are still closed. Most of the branches got by Covid through the grants provided. Sadly there are a couple branches with in-fighting problems. As well, one branch is still looking for a home. A large number of branches are having General Membership meetings while following health unit protocols.

Branch Inspection is still ongoing but there are few branches still not ready for inspection teams. The Zone Commanders and their teams are trying to get them done as quickly as possible. At the Service Officers seminar, branches attended received a lot of valuable information. I wish to thank Sherry Culling for a job well done



Our District officers are all new at running this District and we all communicate together and are all on the same page when it comes to solving problems for our District and for veteran needs. I wish to thank Flora Wilson Chartrand and John Lewis for all their help.

I wish to thank our three Zone Commander H-2 Ron Holotuk H-3 Sharleen Sessions and H-4 Debbie Magee for a job well done.

In closing I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Stay well and stay safe

Ken Faubert

## District K Commander Roy Wilde

Good day all, from District K. As everyone up North knows the roads get very bad up here and a lot of accidents happen, i will tell you about what happened when one happened south of Temagami on Hwy 11 a few days ago and what Branch 408 did as a legion.

When the accident happened, the road was closed and no one could move. The Legion jumped into action by opening their doors as a warming center once again as they have in the past. They made sure travelers knew about this and were able to get warmth and a place to be in comfort while they waited. Meanwhile townspeople were able to go up and down the line to make sure those in vehicles were comfortable or wanted a ride back to the Legion until the highway was reopened. That's what we call community involvement.



In comradeship

Roy R. Wilde

## Ojibway veteran Scott Norton laid a wreath at the cenotaph on Nov. 11, 26 years after Indigenous people were first allowed to do so

On Nov. 11 this year, Scott Norton became the first Indigenous veteran to take part in Br. 532, New Hamburg's Remembrance Day ceremony by laying a wreath at the cenotaph.

His seven-year military career began at the age of 17 when he enlisted with the reserves of the Royal Highland Fusiliers in Kitchener, before going on to train with Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

Norton joined the military for the same reason as countless other veterans.



A wreath to honour Indigenous veterans was decorated by local Indigenous schoolchildren. (Photo Nigel Gordijk)

“As many young men do, I followed family footsteps,” he said. “My father had served in the armed forces, my great-uncle had served in the Navy, and a lot of people within my family were in the armed forces or associated with them somehow.”

It was also a way for him to stay out of trouble, he said. “I went through foster care as an Indigenous child, and it wasn't looking like the best outcome for me.”

48-year-old Norton is Ojibway (Aniishnabe) from the Wolf Clan. His spirit name is Chimisquadis, or Great Red Turtle.

He recalled that back in the early Nineties, Indigenous new recruits weren't given the option of taking part in culturally appropriate ceremonies when they joined.

"We didn't have the eagle feathers to hold and get ourselves sworn in by. I had to pledge allegiance to the Queen and to the country with my hand on the Bible. My son is in the military now, and he got to swear in through eagle feather, so (there's) a different way of doing it."

Norton acknowledged the internal struggle when people from First Nations, which are sovereign states, enlisted in the Canadian armed forces.

"We had our own fights here. Our nations were being dissolved. Yet, we still were in that uniform and went to fight for another country. I think those people should be acknowledged to the highest."

He described his service as "a very good experience, for discipline, for learning something new."

At first, he was proud to be following a path he'd chosen for himself. However, after a few years he endured a period that still causes him pain, decades later.

"When I enlisted, I didn't acknowledge that I was Indigenous. That's just not something that I did," he said. "After some time, I had guidance through community people here, and then I started acknowledging who I was. I saw a shift with how I was treated as an Indigenous person. Same rank, higher rank, it didn't matter."

This is the first year that the Remembrance Day ceremony at the New Hamburg cenotaph included Indigenous cultural traditions – drumming and songs – alongside the Christian sermon, Last Post, and the Act of Remembrance.

Norton was joined by his son, Cruz Calma, to lay a wreath that was decorated by local Indigenous schoolchildren who had added feathers and four coloured ribbons: orange, sacred purple, yellow, to represent the bravery of Indigenous soldiers who were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice, and white.

"The white ribbon is for women. It represents all of the mothers and sisters," explained one of the students. "Feathers represent our connection to the Creator."

Norton thinks the time is right for a Remembrance Day ceremony that is inclusive and represents Indigenous cultural practices.

"For so long, Indigenous peoples haven't actually been acknowledged as being in the armed forces and having a large number killed in action or missing. We had a huge population of Indigenous peoples in the armed forces, then and now."

Until 1951, the Indian Act blocked Indigenous veterans from joining the Royal Canadian Legion because Status Indians were prohibited from being anywhere that alcohol was served. That meant they were unable to toast the fallen alongside the comrades with whom they had served.

Indigenous veterans weren't authorized to lay wreaths on Remembrance Day until 1995, fifty years after the end of World War II.

For seven years, Norton asked Legion branches in Kitchener-Waterloo if he could honour Indigenous veterans at their Remembrance Day services in a way that was culturally relevant, but was always rejected, he said. This year, he and other Indigenous veterans were approached to participate in New Hamburg. He felt honoured to receive the request.

"We're there because I was in the armed forces, my son is in the armed forces, my father, my great-uncle, my uncle, grandfathers. I'm there to pay my respects to those that I served with that are no longer here."

Norton said it's difficult to talk about some of his experiences as an Indigenous person.

"There's a lot that I survived. I survived during that time in the armed forces, I survived foster care. Being an Indigenous child to almost a 50-year-old man, I've survived that amount of time. Not without addictions, not without a lot of traumas that I've caused, that other people have caused. Does that make me a veteran? Maybe. Does it make me a survivor? Absolutely."

"For me, being in ceremonies is important because there's lots that didn't survive. A lot of our people got blown up as soon as they put their toe on the ground. They didn't survive; I did. I want to acknowledge them, and I want them, when I sound that drum, to hear our call to them, to let them know that we do respect you, we do miss you. And we will always."



Indigenous veteran Scott Norton laid a wreath at the New Hamburg cenotaph on Nov. 11, witnessed by his wife, Anita Jacinto Norton.

Article and photos by Nigel Gordijk published in the Wilmot Tavistock Gazette

## Ontario Command Staff Helping Santa

This year has been a difficult year for many however our staff have done a great job of helping Santa this year. Today we do as our staff have done for many years now, given presents for children and families in our area. Today the Holiday Heroes picked up the “loot” under our tree. Please find below a copy of the “Elves and the Heroes”.

*Merry Christmas to all*

*Juanita Kemp*

