



# Public Relations Officer Update April 2019

# In the news

## **How service dogs can change lives**

A story out of Regina describes how the Legion's support of service dogs, can improve lives.

<https://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/tails-of-strength-how-service-dogs-can-save-and-change-lives-for-first-responders>

## **Legion member recognized locally**

Read the story of a Legion member in Napanee, ON, being recognized for his work. It's an important example of showing gratitude for volunteer work.

<http://www.napaneebeaver.ca/2019/04/03/napanee-legion-recognizes-volunteers-for-valued-contributions/>

## **New Veterans plate in Quebec**

Quebec has unveiled its new Veterans license plate, designed in consultation with Quebec Command.

<http://www.iheartradio.ca/cjad/news/new-quebec-license-plate-for-veterans-1.9085750>

## **Disturbing graffiti**

After the discovery of some disturbing graffiti on a war memorial at a Legion in an Alberta town, local politicians are pushing for stronger penalties.

<https://edmontonsun.com/news/local-news/vandalized-war-memorial-in-airdrie-prompts-call-for-stricter-graffiti-fines/wcm/895342e0-8a1b-44a9-b588-a9277cb177cd>

Related to this story, the local Legion branch became involved in starting a petition, however the Legion's usual method of pushing for change is via the resolution process.

<https://www.airdrietoday.com/local-news/legion-launches-petition-with-rally-at-lav-iii-1422195>

## **Stolen plaque**

A Regina Branch representative spoke with media after a plaque was stolen from the cenotaph there, helping to educate the wider public about the damage done when this sort of vandalism happens.

<https://www.cjme.com/2019/04/12/legion-disturbed-over-disappearance-of-cenotaph-plaque/>

### **Troubles at Legion branch in Manitoba**

Manitoba Command stepped in to handle matters after an unexpected situation arose at a branch in that province. This story reflected the Command's views in a timely way. While this may seem like an issue that would not interest the general public, when something unusual happens operationally, media will sometimes pick up on it. It's always best to be prepared.

<https://www.brandonsun.com/local/turmoil-at-the-killarney-legion-508474132.html>

### **Mefloquine lawsuit planned**

The following story outlines how those pushing for recognition and compensation related to the use of mefloquine in the Canadian Armed Forces, plan to take action. The Legion supports research into this drug in the Veteran population.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5148743/mefloquine-lawsuits-set-to-be-filed-by-veterans-in-the-next-week/>

### **New Brunswick Branch speaks about flooding**

This podcast highlights an NB Branch in Kingston Peninsula, speaking about flooding issues and relief efforts in that area. Interview is closer to 30 seconds in.

<https://podcast-a.akamaihd.net/mp3/podcasts/shiftnb-x9yoYASN-20190429.mp3>

### **Calgary Stampede volunteers help Legion**

Here's a case of the community reaching out to support the Legion, in this case, an historic branch in Calgary.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5153107/stampede-volunteers-calgary-legion/>

### **Legion national poster contest winner**

A student in Richmond BC was a Legion poster contest in her category – local news media always like these sorts of stories, so pitch away!

<https://www.richmond-news.com/community/richmond-student-wins-royal-canadian-legion-national-poster-contest-1.23806153>

### **New home for Whalley Legion in British Columbia**

With plans for a new "veterans village" underway, a branch in BC is getting a new home. Read more here.

<https://www.surreynowleader.com/news/whalley-legion-finds-new-temporary-home-as-veterans-village-built-in-surrey/>

### **New BC Branch location opens**

It's hoped a fresh new location will help attract new members to a Branch in Penticton, BC.

[http://www.pentictonherald.ca/news/article\\_af8285aa-6552-11e9-a753-af6e6bb78bae.html](http://www.pentictonherald.ca/news/article_af8285aa-6552-11e9-a753-af6e6bb78bae.html)

### **BC branch celebrates 100 years**

It's always good to share interesting local news such with media – in this case, a 100-year milestone in BC.

<https://www.terracestandard.com/community/terrace-legion-branch-13-celebrates-100-years/>

# National Headquarters

## **Dominion President: Thoughts on video ...**

National Headquarters recently released a short video with Tom Irvine; in it, he shares a few thoughts about goals, membership, and volunteers. Short videos like these will be produced on an ongoing basis to help share information and get to know some of the Legion's leadership figures, share the work of our Service Officers, our volunteers, and learn more about the veterans we serve. Feel free to use these videos in presentations, or as part of your onboarding efforts with new staff and volunteers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4O1eyGZEtFA>

## **Legion advocacy positions for 2019**

The Legion has released highlights of its 2019 advocacy positions, developed primarily for government leaders to better understand the needs of our veterans and the work the Legion is doing to move the agenda forward. The advocacy paper was sent to all MPs. Read the Legion.ca version here:

<https://www.legion.ca/news/articles/2019/05/06/17-ways-the-government-can-better-care-for-canada-s-veterans>

## **Operation VetBuild**

The Legion is throwing its support behind a new program spearheaded by BSO Legion OSI Special Projects, that will eventually expand nationally. Operation VetBuild gives Veterans the opportunity to create models of tanks, planes, or other items, all in a social atmosphere. This is a good media story. Stay tuned for more. Interested Branches or colleagues can contact:

Craig Hood, Chair, BSO Legion OSI Special Projects at [craig.hood@bsovetvosi.com](mailto:craig.hood@bsovetvosi.com).

## **D-Day 75 commemorations**

Legion National Headquarters will not be planning any larger scale national commemorations related to D-Day 75 this year. There will be some acknowledgment at our Remembrance Day ceremony. For any questions you might receive related to D-Day 75 and Canada's commemoration plans, please forward people to Veterans Affairs Canada, or to:

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance>

## **Passing of a noted NB comrade**

New Brunswick Command shared news of the passing of Comrade James A. Stewart, as follows. He was Past Provincial President of New Brunswick Command. Comrade Jim served as President from 1988 – 1989. He was a member of the Order of New Brunswick and had the

Distinguished Flying Cross as well as other awards. James was a WWII Veteran having served in the Air Force. He was also a POW during WWII. The full obituary is found in The Telegraph Journal.

### **Canadian Tulip Festival & Liberation 75**

The 2019 Canadian Tulip Festival will include a special commemorative activity related to the liberation of the Netherlands. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary is next year and in preparation, the Legion is partnering to help support the sale of orange Liberation 75 tulip bulbs. Branches will have a chance to participate, more information will follow in the coming weeks.

<https://tulipfestival.ca/>

### **New partner benefit**

The Legion has partnered with HomeEquity Bank to offer members the option of a reverse mortgage which may be suitable for some people. Read more here:

<https://www.legion.ca/who-we-are/affiliated-organizations/member-benefit-partners>

# Feedback

## **Negative Facebook post surfaces again**

A Legion colleague in Newfoundland shared a comment from the public, who had written in with concern over a derogatory message related to immigration and attributing false statements to the Legion. The message had previously circulated by both email and Facebook. Facebook declined our request to take it down. If asked about this negative message, the following responses can be used:

### **Online:**

*We are aware of this message circulating and posted a statement on our Facebook page. This message did not originate from the Legion, nor does it reflect our values. Please see our statement and share widely, including with those who are perpetuating the message: <https://www.facebook.com/147392072004980/posts/1975589709185198/>*

### **By email:**

*We are aware of this message. Over the last few years, this message has been circulating by email, and is most recently appearing on Facebook. The message claims to come from The Royal Canadian Legion and spreads misinformation on the Legion's position on immigration. This message did not originate from the Legion. The Royal Canadian Legion does not support nor endorse the message's position on immigration and the message does not reflect the values of this organization.*

## **If in doubt, check it out... making the right call when booking space**

An individual posted a comment directed to National Headquarters on social media, questioning a group's apparent booking at a Branch in Alberta. With only a quick search online, you can see this particular group is characterized as being a negative one. Remember the line: **"If in doubt, check it out."**

Due diligence is always necessary when booking groups, and in this example it includes checking the veracity of the posting and the background of the group – that means with authorities too if required. It's always better to do this sort of verification up front rather than after the fact when you then risk running into PR/reputation problems.

## **Cenotaph aftermath**

An upset member of the public contacted us after noticing snow had melted around a local cenotaph in New Brunswick and items from the Remembrance Day ceremony were strewn about the area. NB Command took swift action once alerted but this case serves as a reminder that organizers of local ceremonies need to consider timely clean-up plans when organizing their events. The individual in this case, posted video he had taken online, and this sort of publicity is obviously not good. As a clean-up plan example, after the national ceremony in Ottawa, wreaths, poppies and any other items are all retrieved by the following day.



# Events of note

## Events of note (May-June)

- **May** – Provincial Conventions get underway
- **May 10-20** – National Tulip Festival begins; **May 2019-May 2020** The Festival's "Liberation75" initiative begins
- **June 2** – National Memorial Ride in Ottawa, National Silver Cross Mother to attend
- **June 6** – D-Day 75 Anniversary
- **June 8** – Navy Bike Ride, Legion National Headquarters booth on site in Ottawa