

Past President's Report



In 1926 when the various clubs that represented our veterans from the Great War decided to join forces and become what we now know as the Royal Canadian Legion they had two main ideals that became entrenched in our charter.

First of all they believed that by amalgamating they could better lobby for the services that those who had served our country were promised and so richly deserved. They have been proved right. For over eighty years the Legion has fought for our Veterans and today for the most part we have been very successful in meeting their needs as a country. For our part in this commitment we have as one of the many branches just completed the annual Poppy Campaign to raise funds at the local level. This is the time of year when the Royal Canadian Legion is the most visible to the public eye. A time when we all pledge to support the Poppy Campaign.

You must remember the night you were inducted into the Legion. We all took the same oath. Or did we? Judging by the number of members that responded to the Poppy Chairman's appeal for assistance we didn't. The second ideal that our founders had in mind for our organization was to do with Trust. Trust in the members through the years that we would never forget the sacrifices that had been made for our freedom, sacrifices that have been made ever since and continue to be made. REMEMBRANCE is the backbone of the Legion.

Today Remembrance comes home to us all too often. Canada is once again placing its Armed Forces in harms way. It has been a painful time for many families across this land and we as Legion members should be setting an example in Remembrance.

Knowing all this, one would have cause to believe that this years Church Parade and Service would be the biggest ever seen in Ajax. After all we do have almost 1300 members. Oh I know, some of us have trouble walking and are maybe not feeling that good. Guess what? We had a low floor bus to accommodate you. Even allowing for those that were too ill or infirmed to attend there were many who chose to ignore the significance of the day. We had about thirty members on parade; thank goodness for the Navy League the Pipe Band and the Colour Guard, otherwise it would have been a disaster.

I would like to think that the empty pews in the church are not a sign of things to come and that maybe some of us just need a gentle prod to remember our oath. This year, thanks to the lowlife that stole the poppy boxes we received a lot of publicity and this resulted in CTV covering our parade for their newscast. Comrades it didn't take much video, there were more people at the Legion than were on parade. That is sad. I hope I have made you think why you weren't there. All we can do is appeal to you to commit to what you promised when you joined. Be a proud member of a great organization and take time to REMEMBER. To those of you who were on parade well done.

Yours in Comradeship
Cyril Best

Sports

It is my pleasure as sports officer to announce the sports room will be hosting a variety of games this year. Our new season has begun and all members are invited to join any of the games offered in the sports room, which include darts, shuffleboard, snooker, eight ball, euchre, and cribbage.

Anyone who is still interested in participating in any of games can contact the following comrades for each sport/game.

Lisa Robertson	Darts
Dave Wylie	Shuffleboard
Sue MacKenzie	Cribbage & Euchre
Rich Washburn	Snooker
Francis Gilnet	8 Ball
Bert Hudson	Horseshoe
Tom Blanchard	Golf

I would also like to remind the above individuals that Zones Sports commence at the beginning of the year and that I am required to submit the players names who are competing in each event at least two weeks ahead to the Zones Sports Chairman.

To find out more about what the legion sports room has to offer, check out the bulletin board in the sports room for more information on upcoming events.

Kent Bradley
Sports Chairman

Ladies Auxiliary



The Senior's luncheons were a great success last year. They've been getting quite big in the last few months. The Ladies Auxiliary volunteers, as usual are doing a terrific job taking turns planning the meals, going shopping and preparing the food.

The ladies in the kitchen have also been busy with birthdays, anniversaries and unfortunately too many funerals.

We hosted the District Euchre on October 28th for approximately 160 to 180 people and served a lunch and dinner. We also prepared a light lunch for the Poppy dance held November 4th.

We were presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Easter Seals Telethon which will be framed and hung in the club room.

We always enjoy working with Russel Gregg, our caterer and his staff and were honoured to work with him serving at the Veteran's dinner.

I would like to thank everyone for their support with the purchase of our raffle tickets for our Easter and Christmas baskets. The winner of the Christmas basket was Janet Pullins.

I'm happy to say that we were able to donate \$1,500 to the Branch as a result of our efforts in 2006. Let's hope that 2007 is a busy year for us so we can continue donating to the Branch.

On behalf of myself and all the members of the Ladies Auxiliary, I'd like to wish everyone a healthy and happy 2007.

Yours in Comradeship
Dorothy Buchanan
President Ladies Auxiliary



The Battle of Vimy Ridge

The Battle of Vimy Ridge created the first true sense of Canadian unity. Forces from each of the provinces joined together and did what other Allied forces during the First World War had failed to do, storming the ridge and conquering a long-held German stronghold.

Controlling Vimy Ridge gave the Germans control of much of Northern France, and they made this strategic point one of the most heavily defended points on World War I's Western Front. An almost impenetrable combination of tunnels, trenches, barbed wire, massive artillery, and machine guns took the lives of 150,000 French soldiers in 1915 alone.

In 1917, the Allies decided to launch another attack. Canadian forces, still largely unproven in war, were called in for the assault. For the first time, all four divisions of the Canadian Corps would fight together.

The Canadian commanders showed unparalleled creativity in designing the assault. Rather than relying on top-down management, as the French and British had done, with generals issuing broad commands that left the troops in the dark, the Canadians gave each platoon detailed, specific instructions and tasks. Infantry had specialized roles as machine gunners, riflemen, and grenade throwers and were trained to use highly detailed maps to guide them on the battlefield rather relying on officers for direction. For months, the soldiers trained on replicas of the ridge.

On April 2, 1917, the Battle of Vimy Ridge began. The Canadian Corps shelled the German forces for a full week, using over one million shells in the largest artillery barrage in history to that point; the explosions were said to be heard all the way in London.

Attacking together for the first time, the four Canadian divisions stormed the ridge at 5:30am on April 9, 1917. The Canadians used a tight creeping barrage, continuing the shelling in advance of the soldiers. Within two hours, three of the four divisions had taken their objective. The fourth division was caught on Hill 145, where the Vimy Ridge Memorial now stands. Many Canadian soldiers forced their way through machine gun fire armed only with bayonets to force German surrender, and they finally succeeded in taking the hill.

The battle continued for three intense days before the Allies could claim victory. During the entire battle, 3598 Canadians were killed and another 7000 were wounded.

The capture of Vimy was more than just an important battlefield victory for the Allies. For the first time all four Canadian divisions had attacked together; soldiers from all regions of Canada had fought. Brigadier-General A.E. Ross declared after the war, "In those few minutes I witnessed the birth of a nation."

Upon hearing that Vimy Ridge, the most fortified point on the Western Front, had been captured, a French soldier exclaimed "*C'est impossible!*" When he learned the Canadian forces had accomplished it, he replied "*Ah! les canadiens! C'est possible!*"

The determination, creativity, and heroism displayed by Canada's combined forces during this epic World War I battle cemented the Canadians' reputation as the finest troops on the Western Front, and secured the country a place at the table during the Armistice negotiations.