

Poppy Report



First of all comrades let me take opportunity to thank everyone who generously volunteered their time, and or donations, to make our Poppy Drive a great success. "Thank you for all your help."

As of December 30, 2004 our Poppy Campaign has raised \$48,064.00 for our veterans. This was a huge success and a tremendous "team effort."

Also on behalf of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 322 Ajax, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to all of the schools and individuals in our area who took part in our Remembrance Day ceremony on Hunt Street on November 11th.

I would like to acknowledge the bugler from J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate, the readers from Dennis O'Conner and all of the letters from the students from St. Francis de Sales. All of your contributions were well received and you have shown the veterans the obvious deep respect that you have for them.

I would also like to thank all of the citizens of Ajax and the surrounding areas, for their participation in supporting our annual Poppy Campaign.

Upon closing let me wish all of the members of our Branch, and all of our volunteers and your families, a very happy and prosperous New Year.

A Toast To Our Fallen Comrades

We've holidays and happy days,
and memory days galore
And when we've toasted every one,
I offer just one more
So let us lift our glasses high,
and drink a silent toast
For today deep buried in our hearts

Jim Moore
2nd Vice President
Poppy Chairman



Editorial



Comrades, let me take his opportunity to wish all of the members of the Branch as well as your families, a very happy and prosperous New Year.

I have decided that I will start this year by getting something off my chest, that has been a concern of mine for sometime.

As a Canadian I have become deeply disturbed by the anti-Canadian statements and sentiment supposedly coming from the United States last year. I personally have many American family members all over their great nation, as well as friends in Ohio, and they have the utmost respect for our country. None the less it is a case of a few American politicians not knowing our past in times of war, or having short memories. Whatever the case, I think it is time for a refresher course on some Canadian history.

In 1914 Canada joined the fight in World War I. Thousands of Canadians gave their lives fighting on foreign shores before the U.S. even became involved in three years later in 1917. That same year, Canadian troops won the decisive battle at Vimy Ridge, Belgium, which helped turn the tide of the war. This victory came with a cost of more than 10,000 Canadian casualties.

In all, Canada sent approximately 650,000 men and women to defend freedom. More than ten percent of them gave their lives. In 1939 Canada mobilized and had forces fighting Hitler and Mussolini two years before the Americans declared war.

A fact on which I have written about previously is that, despite what we saw in the Academy Award winning film "Saving Private Ryan," American troops did not fight alone on D-Day. It was Canadian troops who stormed Juno beach, while the British took the beaches of Sword and Gold. More than 45,000 Canadians died fighting in W.W.II. Beginning in 1950 more than 25,000 Canadians served in the Korean War.

While that number may seem small, it was a larger portion of the population than most U.N. member countries sent. While the Canadian government stayed out of the Vietnam War, more than 40,000 Canadians went to Vietnam as members of the U.S. military.

In 1979, the Canadian Ambassador to Iran, Kenneth Taylor risked his life to save Americans. He managed to smuggle six Americans out of Iran during the hostage crisis using fake Canadian passports. In the 1990's Canadians served in the first Gulf War, Somalia, and Yugoslavia. On September 11, 2001 Canada accepted more than 200 flights that were scheduled to land in the U.S.

The people of Canada opened their hearts and homes to feed and house the thousands of stranded travelers. Blood donation centers across Canada were forced to tell people to come back later when the volume of Canadians who turned out to donate blood to help the victims of the attacks overwhelmed them. It was initially reported in the days and weeks following the attacks, that the terrorists had come through Canada.

The FBI and other government agencies later reported that none of the hijackers came through Canada. It was later confirmed that they had trained at flight schools throughout the United States. All of the terrorists entered the country legally.

Twenty-four Canadians died in the terrorist attacks. When coalition forces deployed to Afghanistan, Canadian troops were included. In April 2002 four Canadian soldiers were killed and eight more wounded when an American pilot dropped a bomb on them. Bogus reports of terrorists coming from Canada in December 2002 resulted in Senator Hillary Clinton blaming Canada for lax security.

Americans reported seeing the exact same man coming into the country from Canada, at the exact same time, on both coasts. It was later revealed that it was all a hoax and the man was actually in Pakistan. Senator Clinton refused to apologize. But in response to pressure from the United States, Canada has implemented several new policies designed to prevent terrorists from operating in Canada.

Currently Canada is not engaged in the war in Iraq. The government is holding to its position that it would not send troops without UN support of the war. Canadian troops remain in Afghanistan.

This is a history Canadians are proud of and those few American politicians should show respect, and appreciation, for their neighbors who have served along side them and aided the U.S., at so many points in history.

Many members of our Legion here in Ajax have family members and friends living all over the United States as well as myself. We have the utmost admiration for our respective countries and political views, but still and as many of them would agree, it is a few American politicians that need a wake up call.

American Comrades, Canada has a proud tradition on being there when it counts, and while we are not involved in Iraq, my prayers and wishes for peace, and the safety of American and Coalition troops are in my thoughts, and I know on the minds, and in the hearts, of Canadians from coast to coast.

Bruce Sharpe
Public Relations Officer



Membership



Comrades, as of December 30th 2004, we have 1,348 members that have paid their 2004 membership dues. Still outstanding membership dues for 2004 total 100. As of December 20th 2004, we have 914 members that have paid their 2005 membership dues.

The final total of "Early Bird" from September 1st to November 30th, 2004 has not been received from Dominion Command as of December 20th 2004, but I believe it exceeds the fifty percent in the year 2004.

At this time I would like to thank all of the members of the Membership Committee for the time and effort they put in to the "Early Bird Drive," and all of our members for your renewals and participation.

On behalf of myself and the Membership Committee, let me wish all of the members of Branch 322 and their families a prosperous and happy New Year.

Brian "Dusty" Pollard
Membership Chairman



Building



Well it took a while, but a whole lot of persistence finally paid off in getting the old Clubroom exhaust fan out. We had to buy a special tool to remove the impeller from the motor. With help from Comrade Malmquist we finally found a motor to replace the old one.

It took a few days of cross-referencing, but on Saturday December 11th, with the professional expertise and assistance from our Sgt. At Arms Butch Andrews, we were able to re-wire the fan and install an accessible control switch. Even with the snow and freezing rain it was operating in time for the Meat-Draw and everything seems to be operating fine.

Also as Co-Chair of the Membership Committee, I would like to report that the "Memorial Board" has been updated from January 2000 to the present and the "Membership Board" has been updated with all tags at my disposal.

I would like to conclude my report by wishing every one involved with my work here at the Branch and all of our members a happy and healthy "2005."

Thanks Comrades
Jim Weisflock
Building Chairman

