



# Public Relations Officer Update

December 2023

# In the news

## Remembrance Period thank you

An example of a nice thank you message from a community after a good Poppy campaign.

Sarnia Legion branch says thanks; Letters to the editor  
Sarnia Observer  
December 14, 2023

On behalf of the members and the executive of Sarnia Legion Br. 62 of the Royal Canadian Legion, we would like to thank the citizens of the City of Sarnia for your continued support of our events held during our 2023 poppy campaign. Again, this year, with your financial support of our poppy campaign, your participation in our candlelight vigil, and your participation and attendance in our Remembrance Day parade and service held at Veterans' Park, you showed that the remembrance of our fallen heroes is just as important to you as it is to us here at the Legion.

The poppy campaign and Remembrance Day is vital to our Branch and the Royal Canadian Legion, to ensure our fallen veterans are never forgotten. We also wish to thank the departments of City Hall for their assistance and support of Remembrance Day, Bluewater Power for their continued support of our veterans' banner program and all our members and volunteers who participated in our poppy campaign events. Without your support and participation, these events would not be possible, and we would struggle to ensure our traditions continue.

Again, a very sincere thank you and we look forward to the 2024 poppy campaign and the events. Ron Realesmith President, Sarnia Br. 62 The Royal Canadian Legion

*Thank you/ merry wishes, a nice radio example from branches:*

*From Summit 107 radio Cranbrook, BC:*

Instant Play Link:

<http://my.tvey.es/b6MNC>

(Note: Available until Jan. 17, cannot be shared widely due to monitoring agreement.)

*(French) From CFIM 92.7 in Les Îles de la Madeleine, QC:*

Instant Play Link:

<http://my.tvey.es/p7BTg>

(Note: Available until Jan. 19, cannot be shared widely due to monitoring agreement.)

[Beyond brunch: Weyburn Legion applauds outstanding team - DiscoverWeyburn.com - Local news, Weather, Sports, Free Classifieds and Job Listings for the Weyburn, Saskatchewan](#)

## Remembrance period stories

Several stories appeared after the Remembrance period, talking about ceremonies and the Legion's work.

[Seasons Wetaskiwin Pennies for Poppies pays tribute to veterans | Wetaskiwin Times](#)

## Branch promotions: worth the while

Some examples of branches speaking to the community via radio spots.

*Talking about how people give in general, and if it's possible to track:*

*Excerpt from CTV News Channel:*

Instant Play Link:

<http://my.tvey.es/Xc6s7>

(*Note: Available until Jan. 15, cannot be shared widely due to monitoring agreement.*)

*Great spot from a Branch in MB talking about their branch and offering season's greetings:*

*From CKDM radio in Dauphin, MB*

Instant Play Link:

<http://my.tvey.es/z6GZq>

(*Note: Available until Jan. 15, cannot be shared widely due to monitoring agreement.*)

## Stories mentioning the Legion's work

Stories appear regularly that speak of the Legion but are not necessarily about current Legion work.

*The reporter asked the Legion for comment on this, but didn't use our Veterans Services thoughts (while we can't speak about specific cases, we can speak about process in general):*

[Veterans Affairs won't pay for truck cover for retired navy reservist's wheelchair | CityNews Toronto](#)

## Housing proposal story neglects to ask Legion

The writer of this piece outlining one Legion member's idea for a national housing program neglected to ask anyone from the Legion as to whether it is onboard and if it's even a feasible project nationally. The Legion has **not** endorsed this idea at a national level.

[Will Trudeau Government Act on Innovative National Affordable Housing Program Proposed by Former Liberal MP Dennis Mills in 2016 - Ottawa Life Magazine](#)

## Branch or regional challenges

Branches can face challenging times but seek out solutions wherever possible. Here were some of the circulating issues during the October-November period.

[Without a home, Vernon Legion could close forever - Vernon News - Castanet.net](#)

*A misunderstanding was at the centre of this memorial banner situation:*

[Remembrance symbol causes issue for Tay veteran banner project | Spare News | pentictonherald.ca](#)

[Trustees Assist Gravenhurst Legion After Executive Resignations \(muskoka411.com\)](#)

*Nova Scotia is seeing an uptick in veteran homelessness, particularly in the Halifax region which is also putting strain on the Legion's ability to assist, among other organizations:*

(From Saltwire network)

**Nova Scotia sees spike in military personnel living in tents, couchsurfing amid housing crisis**

Active-duty military personnel in Nova Scotia are experiencing an "epidemic" of homelessness and housing vulnerability while others are turning down postings in the province because housing is either unaffordable or unavailable, provincial MLAs heard Tuesday. Several groups that provide community-level supports and services to members of the Canadian Armed Forces and to

veterans were invited to a legislative standing committee Tuesday to provide insight into how the province's cost-of-living crisis is affecting Forces members and veterans. They painted a dire picture.

Craig Hood, executive director of the Royal Canadian Legion Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command, said he has heard "startling" stories of actively serving members posted to the province who are "living rough" in tents, living in their vehicles, couch surfing and even entering into relationships to secure housing that have put them at risk of domestic violence. "This is quite a serious incident or epidemic, if you want to call it (that), and it needs to be tackled," Hood said.

Hood, a 33-year military veteran, noted that demand for assistance from the Nova Scotia Legion's benevolent funds, raised through the annual poppy campaign and other donations, have been increasing exponentially. It's to the point where the legion is having to look for additional ways to raise money.

Erica Fleck, director of emergency management for the Halifax Regional Municipality, said she too has identified an increase in the number of active-duty members who are unhoused or who have only precarious housing. "We have active serving regular force members who are still couch surfing, that were posted here in the summer, (because) they cannot find a place to live. They're regularly now going to food banks," Fleck said. "People cannot afford to live here. They cannot secure housing, they cannot secure a rental."

Fleck, who also previously served in the military, says she also has been told some members are turning down postings to Nova Scotia and even leaving the Armed Forces. It's not only housing that's keeping them away, but also the province's strained health-care system. "They know that they can't get a doctor and they can't find a place to live."

She told the committee city outreach workers have identified at least 40 unhoused people in HRM who are military, but she said she believes there may be "hundreds" more who do not have proper housing, due to a growing reliance on couch surfing, apartment sharing among large numbers of people and Forces members entering into or staying in dangerous relationships solely to secure housing.

Shelley Hopkins, executive director of the Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre, said her organization has been seeing an increase in demand for help from struggling military families. She noted that military members face unique challenges when it comes to housing due to the prevalence of mandatory transfers from base to base. Often military families must relocate to a new province with limited notice, due to personnel needs in an area. That makes it hard, sometimes impossible, for spouses to secure meaningful work in their field that could help with their family's financial stability. "It is not unusual for a spouse to expect their employment in Nova Scotia will be a similar pay in salary, only to discover that it may be actually \$20,000 less," Hopkins added. This makes finding affordable housing even more challenging and stressful for military families, she said.

Hood added that for those fortunate enough to secure a place to live, the costs are so high, so his and other military service organizations are being called upon to help members more often with basics like electricity, heating fuel bills and groceries. "It is extremely challenging for them, and people are making very difficult choices right now," he said. He echoed Fleck's observations, saying he too has heard from friends and acquaintances turning down postings to Nova Scotia because of the cost of living and housing realities here.

All three witnesses spoke of the need for more recognition of these challenges for military members and veterans and their families and for better access to supports that can help them secure affordable housing. "It's heartbreaking that these are the people (whose) primary job is to defend our country, and they can't afford to live here," Fleck said.

*Related NS radio report:  
From CKOA The Coast, Halifax  
Instant Play Link:*

<http://my.tvey.es/s8QNd>

*(Note: Available until Jan. 20, cannot be shared widely due to monitoring agreement.)*

*Related radio reports on homelessness with Dave Gordon, national Veterans homelessness representative:*

[Halifax struggles with military retention amid cost of living crisis | True North \(tnc.news\)](#)

*From City News 660 Ottawa, ON*

*Version 1 – note the whole report was not captured.*

Instant Play Link:

<http://my.tvey.es/d9NPx>

*Version 2 – short clip*

Instant Play Link:

<http://my.tvey.es/z8CEp>

*(Note: Reports available until Jan. 21, cannot be shared widely due to monitoring agreement.)*

### **Remembrance projects throughout the year**

Remembrance projects are always front and centre, but especially at this time of the year.

[Legion Confident War Memorial Tomb Won't Be Delayed by Dispute | VOCM](#)

[Ecole Poirier Elementary wins Sooke Legion trophy - Sooke News Mirror](#)

### **Branch programs and events**

A sampling of creative programs and significant community events...ideas that may work elsewhere in the country.

[Brightonians can 'Adopt-An-Angel', \(northumberlandnews.com\)](#)

[PHOTOS: Canmore Legion's first holiday market kicks off: Photo Gallery - RMOutlook.com](#)

*New year's dance:*

*From CJFX Pictou, ON*

Instant Play Link:

<http://my.tvey.es/Xs69H>

*(Note: Available until Jan. 17, cannot be shared widely due to monitoring agreement.)*

[Wiikwemkoong High School holds 25th Annual Christmas Gala and Awards ceremony - News \(manitoulin.com\)](#)

### **Branch milestones**

Branches across the country are regularly featured in media reports when they have interesting updates to share.

[Castlegar-Robson Legion branch marks 80 years - My Kootenay Now](#)

### **The community supports the Legion**

Some of the frequent examples of support by appreciative communities and governments.

[Orangeville Legion lands \\$150K Ontario Trillium grant](#)

[Strathmore Legion presented with \\$10,000 through Chase the Ace program | Spare News | pentictonherald.ca](#)

[United Steelworkers give to local charities feeding the hungry - Sault Ste. Marie News \(sootoday.com\)](#)

[Shorelines Casino presents funds to Royal Canadian Legion Branch 92 | Gananoque Reporter](#)

[Island Owl Mazda donates \\$4,459 to Campbell River branch of the Legion - Campbell River Mirror](#)

[Rodney Cemetery board donates \\$312K to local groups | The West Elgin Chronicle \(thechronicle-online.com\)](#)

[Community Infrastructure Grant Programs Open - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada](#)

[Morden Area Foundation gives back over \\$100,000 to the community in 2023 - PembinaValleyOnline.com - Local news, Weather, Sports, Free Classifieds and Business Listings for the Pembina Valley, Manitoba](#)

### **The “community” in the Legion’s work**

A handful of the positive stories showcasing how the Legion helps with community activities and needs.

[Legion backs hospital fundraiser for oncology department - Elliot Lake News \(elliottlaketoday.com\)](#)

[Caledonia Legion gives \\$10K to Caledonia's food bank \(thespec.com\)](#)

[Legion Branch 78 helps fund x-ray machine : Prince Edward County News countylive.ca](#)  
[Wingham Legion's Poppy Campaign raises \\$5,728 to support local veterans \(windsornewstoday.ca\)](#)

[Hartland Legion supports local lunch program \(thespec.com\)](#)

[Warm hearted community and Legion donates hampers to families - North Thompson Star/Journal \(barrierestarjournal.com\)](#)

[Free skating this weekend! | Wallaceburg News | Local news in Wallaceburg, Dresden and surrounding areas. \(sydenhamcurrent.ca\)](#)

[Iroquois Legion Branch 370 raises \\$33,000 for community organizations | Brockville Recorder & Times](#)

[Legion donates \\$2,500 to CT scanner campaign \(insideottawavalley.com\)](#)

[Campbell River Royal Legion Branch 137 donates \\$3,000 - Campbell River Mirror](#)

[Callander legion replenishes shelves | North Bay Nugget](#)

[Alberta-N.W.T. Command The Royal Canadian Legion Bursary - MacEwan University](#)

[Iroquois Legion donates \\$34K to local groups – Morrisburg Leader](#)

### **On a lighter note!**

Stories involving the Legion in some lighthearted way.

[Redvers Winterfest created lots of fun for residents - SaskToday.ca](#)

[Chatsworth welcomes Santa to town for 48th annual parade | The Shoreline Beacon](#)

# National Headquarters

## **New Legion Dominion Treasurer**

Donna McRury was recently named the new Treasurer at Dominion Command. Please read more about her background below.

[Dominion Treasurer \(legion.ca\)](http://legion.ca)

[Our executive - The Royal Canadian Legion](#)

## **Legion First Vice-President resignation**

The Legion recently accepted the resignation of Owen Parkhouse, First Vice-President of the Legion's Dominion Command. In a statement issued in response to a question from media, Bruce Julian shared the following sentiment:

*"The Legion is not in a position to speak about a confidential matter, but I can confirm that I did accept Mr. Parkhouse's resignation. We will always remain appreciative of his work with the Legion and his dedication to Veterans."*

## **Legion headquarters partnering with Calgary Grey Cup Committee**

The committee is helping honour Veterans as they travel to different cities in Canada.

[Legion partners with Calgary Grey Cup Committee to honour Canada's Veterans](#)

## **Follow Legion national social media**

Check out all the chatter and feedback when you can!

[Legion.ca](http://legion.ca)

[Facebook.com/CanadianLegion](https://facebook.com/CanadianLegion)

[Twitter.com/RoyalCdnLegion](https://twitter.com/RoyalCdnLegion)

[Instagram.com/royalcanadianlegion](https://instagram.com/royalcanadianlegion)

[youtube.com/user/RCLDominionCommand](https://youtube.com/user/RCLDominionCommand)

[vimeo.com/royalcanadianlegion](https://vimeo.com/royalcanadianlegion)

[Linkedin.com/company/royalcanadianlegion](https://linkedin.com/company/royalcanadianlegion)



The background of the top section is a photograph showing the hands and arms of several people sitting at a table. One person is wearing a red shirt with a white ribbon and a Legion logo. The word "Feedback" is overlaid in large white text.

# Feedback

## **Ottawa chapter of CARP shares benefits of joining the Legion**

The Canadian Association of Retired People reached out for information about how people can join the Legion and what they can do as members – they wanted to include a blurb in their newsletter which was great. See below.

[CARP-ChapterENews-JULY-ALL-CHAPTERS \(cmail20.com\)](mailto:CARP-ChapterENews-JULY-ALL-CHAPTERS@mail20.com)





## Events of note (January-February)

- **December 25 – January 1 inclusive** – National Headquarters closed for holiday period
- **Wednesday, January 24, 2024** – Bell Let's Talk Day (mental health). Some National Headquarters PR support likely.