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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - 2020 NATIONAL POPPY CAMPAIGN**

With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic our lives have been impacted substantially for the past six months in ways that we could not imagine. The fear of this disease based upon its effects and easy transmission continues to permeate every facet of our every day existence. In regard to the Royal Canadian Legion it has shut down our branches, placed many in financial distress, restricted movement and association within our communities and threatened our collective health. These stresses continue to accumulate as the pandemic continues its path seemingly unabated.

As we enter the fall season and head into the Legion's Remembrance period concerns abound in regard to meeting our commitments to those that sacrificed so much. As Legion members some may be experiencing internal struggles between meeting their obligations to support Remembrance and the concern over the health of ourselves, our families and our communities. All understandable amongst the current backdrop. These factors are real and need to be addressed when we look to what can be done here and now to overcome the obstacles that have been placed in front of us.

This leads me to the 2020 Poppy Campaign, the importance of which cannot be overstated. The funds provided by this traditional annual event remains more important than ever as many head into an era of financial insecurity. The ones that are in need of our help require the support provided by the many Branch Poppy Funds throughout the country. Without it their lives would become much more difficult and in some cases untenable. Additionally the Poppy Campaign reminds Canadians of their need to remember, if even for a few weeks, those that gave so much. These two objectives must be maintained.

**We as Legionnaires have a duty to support the objectives of the Poppy Campaign and participate to our fullest ability while working within the constraints imposed by the pandemic.** What is asked of all Legion members is to plan and assist to the best of your ability while implementing the safeguards that will maintain the health of all our members and in turn our families and communities.

You know your communities. If required remove the traditional Legion solicitor with the Poppy tray and focus on box placement within your local establishments. Consult the list of Corporate Partners provided by Dominion Command and distribute boxes to these outlets as well. Solicit donations on the phone, reach out for non-Legion volunteers, volunteer to deliver, to count funds, to organize distribution within the branch, to follow-up with donors – all things that you have always done. Focus on safety and ensuring everyone is well prepared and protected.

**The commitment by the Legion to “never forget” is being tested and we all collectively need to rise to the occasion.** As with any good leadership example we must look after our people first and foremost and place them in roles that they are best suited to while we experience the strains of this pandemic. We may not achieve the expectations of a normal year but as Legionnaires in support of our Veterans we need to try.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas D. Irvine', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Thomas D. Irvine, CD  
Dominion President