



BRANCH 127 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



These are some of the items that have happened since last we wrote.

We now have new commercial equipment at our Legion: a quicker coffee maker and dishwasher, a new fridge

and glass beverage cooler. Both the dishwasher and coffee maker complete their cycle in 4 minutes.

The old hot water radiator system has been replaced by a new heating system which includes heat pumps. The air conditioning will be welcome in the summer because our fan just didn't do the job well enough.

Ironically, the Vancouver Island South Film and Media Commission moved in as tenants upstairs in the late summer and are proving to be very good neighbours.

This time of the year, Remembrance activities are first and foremost on our agenda. We completed our annual fun tradition of "poppy stuffing" in October to help the Victoria Poppy Fund prepare for its mailout of poppies. I would like to remind our members of the Rotunda Service at the Legislature which will take place on November 10. You are welcome to meet at our Branch and walk together to the Legislature at 10:30, or meet us there. If you wish to be part of the service, please get in touch with our Legion office at (250) 386-3325. If you have a Legion blazer and medals, please wear them. You are also welcome to come to a reception at our Legion after the service at the Cenotaph on November 11th.

The Executive welcomes new volunteers as this is how this Legion exists.

As you know, due to our Past President having moved up the ranks and my serving out the balance of his term only, we need a new President. It is our hope that the Nominating Committee will locate new people to serve on the 2016 executive for the Branch's survival. They do not have to be service personnel. Please phone Mel Smith at (250) 386- 6069 if you can assist us.

Our next General Meeting on Tuesday December 1 at 7:00 pm will include Executive elections. Please come to this meeting and have a say on who is representing you on the executive - no one will be "volunteered" to serve in any position but your vote is needed.

Hope to see you at the upcoming functions.

Len Anderson, Interim President

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MEMBERSHIP

- John Yankoski, Chair

General

At this time, our membership stands at approximately 120 but it is growing steadily.

We are pleased to welcome the following members who joined or transferred in the 2015 membership year — Kenneth Christie, Steve Fiddes, Alex Greer, Addie Hoskins, John Jensen, Catherine McCaffrey, Gloria Metzger, Earl Schmidt and Stan Thame.

New members may or may not know that membership is not official until an initiation has been completed. Ideally this would be done at a meeting but there is flexibility in doing this when it is convenient for the member, i.e., privately in the office when coming in for a Friday social or at another time which is mutually agreeable. If you haven't been initiated, please contact John to make arrangements for yours. When membership cards for new members arrive from Dominion Command, John will contact the member about setting up an initiation. In the meantime, your receipt will serve as your access to this and all other Legion branches.

Membership Dues

The good news is that even though the per capita increased slightly this year, the executive decided the dues would not be raised this year. The Early Bird rate for dues paid on or before November 30 is \$50.00; effective December 1, the dues will be the regular rate of \$55.00. So far, there have been 50+ Early Bird renewals.

The breakdown of the \$50.00 dues (the lowest on the South Island) is as follows:

BC/Yukon Command	\$17.00
Dominion Command	\$10.65
Legion Magazine	\$9.96
Branch 127	\$12.39

Change of Address

If you have had a change of address, you can report it online so that you don't miss copies of the Legion Magazine or let us know so that we can do it for you. The online address is: <http://www.legion.ca/members/change-of-address/>

It is very simple to do - make sure you have your membership number handy as it will be required. If you do it online, please let us know by email, phone or Canada Post card as well because Dominion Command does not forward your change of address information to us.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

These will be presented at the Annual General Meeting in January, date to be determined but on or before January 17. The following members are eligible to receive their membership pins:

- Curtis Belanger - 30 yrs
- Alison Collins - 25 yrs
- Richard Flesher - 65 yrs
- Kim Fortin - 35 yrs
- Vic Keating - 30 yrs
- Bob Salmond - 30 yrs

Joe Richards' 50 year pin was given posthumously at his Celebration of Life in September.

If it is not physically possible for you to come to receive your pin at the AGM, please let John know so that it can be mailed or delivered to you. You can leave a message on our phone as well of course - (250) 386-3325 or by email, rcl127@shaw.ca

For the past year, Starbucks in James Bay has taken care of our everyday coffee needs and delivered canisters for special occasions at no cost to us, nor asked for any acknowledgeable through advertising. We thank Starbucks for its generosity and kindness.



LAST POST



Charles Joseph "Victoria's Watchdog" Richards (April 16, 1925 - August 29, 2015)

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of a beloved father, brother and friend Joe Richards. He is survived by his daughter

Emily, son Joseph, and brother Jim. Joe was fortunate to be able to pass away peacefully at home surrounded by loved ones and where he always wanted to be. Born in Victoria BC he spent the majority of his life there, in the city he loved. At the young age of 18 he went to serve his country during [WWII](#). He spent most of his enlistment in Europe assisting the British and was appointed to the Regina Rifle Regiment where he spent the remainder of his military career. Upon returning to Victoria he worked in the parliament building as a stockman for the BC Forest Service where he worked until he retired early at age 53. Joe had many passions which kept him busy. He ran a small tourist company, Stop and Go with Joe, where he showed tourists the many sites he loved around Victoria. Butchart Gardens was one of Joe's favourites. The E&N railway was one of the most important parts of Joe's life and he did everything he could to try and keep it going. This last Christmas he even asked Santa for the train to run again. He had a few runs at city council vying for a seat beside the Mayor. Eventually he settled on reporting his views in a weekly column where he called himself "Victoria's Watchdog". He often used his column to give thanks to people he met throughout his day although sometimes he made a feature called "You Pissed Me Off". Joe was one of the longest running members of the Royal Canadian Legion branch #127(BC) of which this year marks his 50th. Unfortunately Joe's health deteriorated and he moved up island to Nanaimo to live with his daughter. Joe spent his last three years in the Harbour City. He was a extraordinary man who left fond memories in all

those he met. He will be forever greatly missed. Special thanks to Daniel, an exceptional friend whose help in caring for Joe was invaluable and his wonderful long time care-aid Tabitha.

There will be a celebration of life held at Branch #127 of the Royal Canadian Legion (514 Government St) on September 27th from 1-3pm. All those who knew Joe are welcome to come and share laughs and memories.

Published in The Times Colonist from Sept. 22 to Sept. 24, 2015

"We will remember them"

Phoning Committee

Len Anderson is co-ordinating our team of callers to keep members without email access in the loop regarding upcoming events and/or other matters of interest. If you would prefer not to be called or would like to be called more often, please let Len know at (250) 658-4749. If you now have email access and would rather just get email updates, you can also let Len know by email at andersonsl@shaw.ca

DUTIES OF A SERVICE OFFICER

- Bob Sears, Service Officer, (250) 479-0118

The duties are to assist veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces with disability and to help them fill out papers for disabilities relating to their time in the Canadian Forces.

Any veteran of the Canadian Forces, Merchant Navy or RCMP are now considered entitled to apply to Veterans Affairs. This may also apply POSTHUMOUSLY by spouse or dependent children.

First you must apply to Veterans Affairs in person or by telephone. This will require you to supply your service # and where you served. The Service Officer should be able to assist you; if there is any problem, Veterans Affairs will provide a counsellor.

If you are successful, there are many ways to be compensated for your disability. If you have any questions on assistance, please contact Bob.



FINANCE

- *Rudy Vermaning, Treasurer*

Another year as Treasurer comes to an end for myself and it has been interesting. The club itself is doing very well and I expect that this will continue in the coming year with your continuing support.

There is very little to report at this time but all required reports are in and up to date until the end of the year.

Friday Socials

As you may or may not know I have also been looking after the Friday socials and would like to thank: Bal Sekha, Bonny Smythe, Charlie Bates, Jack Thame, Jackson Myers, Len Reid, Steve Whittaker and Wayne Popplestone for their volunteer time as bartenders. Without these people we would be unable to continue.

I am looking to add a few more volunteers to take some of the load off these regulars. We need volunteers for Friday nights and for special events such as November 11 which will be here before we know it.

Liquor Licence

In June we applied for a liquor licence and we are half way through our City Council review. If all goes well, fingers crossed, our approval should come in early 2016. In the meantime, we have been getting Special Occasion licences for our Fridays and special events.

2015 Gaming Grant Distribution

The 2015 Gaming Committee consisted of Vic Marshall, Mel Smith, Rudy Vermaning and John Yankoski.

We were fortunate to receive a gaming grant of \$9500 to distribute to organizations that meet the Gaming Branch's eligibility criteria and who write to us for financial assistance.

At the October General Meeting, funds were approved for distribution to the following organizations:

- Broadmead Care Foundation
- Legion Foundation (Cockrell House)
- 89 Pacific Squadron RC Air Cadets (Support Association)
- #1 NLCC Admiral Rayner
- #207 Admiral Girouard) NLCC Corp, Sooke Branch
- 9-10 Club (St Andrew's Cathedral)
- ALS Society of BC, Victoria Chapter
- Beacon Hill Little League
- British Columbia Aviation Museum
- Garth Homer Foundation
- James Bay Community Project
- Mustard Seed Street Church (Christmas Fund)
- Our Place Society
- St Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Christmas Fund)
- Salvation Army (Christmas Fund)
- Victoria Ostomy Association, Victoria Chapter 29
- Victoria Women's Transition House

In addition, a bursary was presented to Sara Peterson at the November General Meeting; Sara is currently in her last year of nursing at UVIC. Sara expressed her thanks and gratitude to the Legion for its financial assistance. After Sara graduates and has her first nursing job, she will do an article for this newsletter on her journey to her career.



Interim President Len Anderson presenting Sara Peterson with Branch bursary



WHY GROWN MEN CRY

- *Comrade Richard Steele, Zone Commander, SVIZ*

This is November 11th, 2015. How far back do you remember?

Perhaps you are just a youth and your memory of any conflict would be very short. But perhaps you are a senior citizen and you remember as far back as the 2nd World War and all the conflicts in-between.

As a child I really didn't understand what the big deal was about November 11th. I didn't understand why my grandfather would cry on November 11th. On this date each year we would gather around the radio and listen to the CBC broadcast from Ottawa. This was as I came to understand a very special day in my grandfather's life.

It was not until I became an army cadet that I really got the message. It became for me a special date as I came to understand that my father gave his life for our freedom. From that time back in the 50's, I have remembered.

Back to my grandfather, he was on the front lines during the 1st World War. His job, along with those of many of his friends, was to take the ammo up to the front line. Back in those days they did not have the equipment that we are privileged to have in this day and age. The mode of transportation was mule teams and wagons. Tough work in peace time never mind the fact that they were at war and being shot at as they slugged their way through the mud to take the much needed supplies to where they were needed and it didn't matter how difficult it may have been, they had to push on.

With that in mind one can understand why he had such feelings when it came to November 11th. Most of his friends didn't make it home. Or they were gassed and suffered greatly. He was a lucky one.

As time passed and I became more aware of the tragedy of war, it became quite clear as to the reason for my grandfather's tears.

With each passing year we gather in places like this to remember those of family and friends who gave the ultimate sacrifice for King and/or Queen and for country. From the very first person to fall in WW I up to and including our brave men and women of today's military who are serving overseas and at home, we will remember them.

As I was considering this day and my role in it, it came to mind that for years now we have given tribute to those who fought in the two great wars. I feel that perhaps we are or have been guilty of forgetting those who fought in the Korean War, also those who have been on peacekeeping deployment. We may be guilty of forgetting those who have fought in Afghanistan. We have forgotten those RCMP personnel who every day go out and are in harm's way keeping us safe.

I think daily of those who have gone into foreign countries torn apart by earthquakes and disasters of all sorts .

Most recently we have been reminded of the price of war as we remember the military personnel that have been involved in the war of the Middle East. This brings to mind the Trevor Greene story. If you don't remember it, here is a very brief explanation.

Trevor was doing his job as a soldier when he was attacked by an axe wielding enemy. At the time of the incident it was thought that Trevor would not make it through this attack. Jumping forward a number of years, Trevor lives in Nanaimo and thanks to the work of the Royal Canadian Legion, Trevor has what is known as an exoskeleton. With the help of this machine he is now able to walk and I must say, that without this machine it would be impossible for him to do. You as citizens of this community had a part in making this possible. How you might ask? When you placed your donation in the poppy tray you played a very important part. The poppy is a very important part of Remembrance and I thank you for taking part.

In closing I would like to take the time to thank all military personnel past and present, RCMP, Ambulance operators, and any others that put their lives on the line on a daily basis in order that we who live in this wonderful country and in the Province of BC may continue to live safely because of their dedicated service.



BRANCH CONTACT INFORMATION

2015 EXECUTIVE

Interim President - Len Anderson - andersonsl@shaw.ca
 Vice President - Position Vacant
 Secretary - Bal Sekha - bsekha@shaw.ca
 Treasurer - Rudy Vermaning - Pentro@telus.net
 Past President - Richard Steele - rstee42@gmail.com
 Entertainment - Astrid Doidge - astridge8@shaw.ca
 Membership - John Yankoski - john_yankoski@telus.net
 Newsletter/Web Site - Bal Sekha - bsekha@shaw.ca
 Service Officer - Bob Sears - (250) 479-0118
 Sick and Visiting (Visits) - Bob Sears (250) 479-0118
 Sick and Visiting (Cards) - Maeva Gillespie - gillm42@hotmail.com
 Social - Rudy Vermaning - Pentro@telus.net
 Sports - Bert Soutar - bertg_myrynam@telus.net
 Zone - Mel Smith - Mel-Smith@shaw.ca

REGULAR RECURRING EVENTS

Executive Meetings Last Friday before General Meeting, 4:15 pm unless advised otherwise

General Meetings 1st Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm unless advised otherwise

Theme Dinners Usually one Saturday per month, date depends on the theme and availability of volunteers; check bulletin board, contact Astrid Doidge (astridge8@shaw.ca or 250 995-2128) or check the online Legion calendar (<http://www.br127.ca/webcal>)

Sports 5-Pin Bowling - 3rd Thursday of the month from October to April at Miracle Lanes, Sidney, at 3:30 pm; contact Bert Soutar for information or check the online calendar

Postal Address: Public Service Branch 127
 c/o Parliament Buildings
 Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Location Address: 514 Government St (Main Floor)

Tel: (250) 386-3325
 Email Address: rcl127@shaw.ca or admin@br127.ca
 Web Site: <http://www.br127.ca>
 Online Calendar: <http://www.br127.ca/webcal>



SPORTS

-Bert Soutar, Sports Chair

Sports activities for the year 2015 to date have been:

5-Pin Bowling at Miracle Lanes in Sidney at 3:30 PM on the 3rd Thursday each month from January to April; followed by a meal at a restaurant of choice between Sidney and Victoria.

From May to October, two groups of golfers have played Mount Douglas Golf Course (9-holes) on Tuesday and Friday mornings, with the 'Bright Sparks' teeing off at 9:00 am, and the "Sleepy Heads" at 10:00 am or later! Also, groups of 12 to 16 played once per month at either Cowichan Golf and Country Club; Mount Brenton Golf Course (Chemainus); or Olympic View Golf Course (all 18 holes); and Cordova Bay twice for Nine and Dine.

Golfing for the remainder of 2015 will be on a "weather permitting" basis at Mt. Douglas Golf Course on Tuesday and Friday.

Bowling has now resumed at Miracle Lanes for the winter season on the third Thursday each month at 3:30 pm. We could certainly accommodate more bowlers since only 6 played in our first games in October. No previous experience required! Please sign up on the Sports Bulletin Board or contact me at e-mail - bertg_myram@telus.net

SICK & VISITING

Again, we are fortunate to have Maeva Gillespie send cards to members on various occasions when we are aware of them. Maeva doesn't always feel well herself but she still finds time and energy to do this for others. Bob Sears, as well as being an extraordinary Service Officer, is constantly visiting many many veterans (Legion members or not) and anyone who needs a visit. Please let us know if you know of anyone who should be receiving a card or visit from our Sick & Visiting team.

CENOTAPH

Many thanks to Ray and Donna Brunette for looking after the Cenotaph during Claude & Kim's on-going absence related to health issues. This is done year round but of course extra attention is devoted this time of year to ensure the Cenotaph is in prime condition for the Remembrance Day Ceremony.

HELP WANTED

Volunteers

- to help serve beverages and snacks on Friday socials
- to clean up after Friday socials (load dishwasher, wipe tables, and chairs in main hall, clean kitchen counters and appliances (can be done on the weekend or any other day prior to the next social or event)
- to help with food preparation, decorating, set up or clean up for theme dinners - as and when required

Candidates are needed for the following upcoming vacancies in the executive:

- President,
- Treasurer

Possible candidates for the executive often cite reluctance to stand for table officer positions due to lack of a pool of volunteers to serve on some committees to alleviate some of their work. These committees also provide opportunities for cross training and limited areas of responsibility. If we can get a handful more of semi-regular volunteers, it would be so much easier to get table officers. Committees might meet a maximum of 3 or 4 times a year.

Please remember, if we cannot find candidates for President and Treasurer, the branch has to hand in its charter.

Please contact any member of the executive if you are interested in helping on one of our committees.

If you are interested in serving on the executive, please contact Mel Smith who is Chair of the Nominating Committee (250) 386-6069.



REMEMBRANCE EVENTS

We have our two traditional events for the upcoming Remembrance Week and the format is relatively unchanged.

- Rotunda Service - November 10, 10:45 am, in the Rotunda of the Parliament Buildings. This is a long tradition where members of our branch (expanded in the past few years to include members of other branches) march to the Rotunda for a brief but moving service. In the past, a very nice reception has been hosted by the Province following the service. After this reception, everyone comes back to our branch for socializing. We have requested a minor change that the program be amended to not have the marchers follow the piper down the stairs except those who wish to do so. Members will leave Branch 127 at 10:30 to go over together
- Remembrance Day Service at the Cenotaph, Parliament Buildings - November 11, 10:30 to 10:45 to march, gather at Government and Humboldt (north end of Fairmont Empress). Following the service, there will be refreshments served at Branch 127 (514 Government Street).

There are some members who come to our Legion only on one of these days and at no other time during the year. They pay their renewals at the same time and get reacquainted with people they haven't seen all year.

Parking for Remembrance Day

With our block being under redevelopment, parking lots on our block (extending to our former building) are either under construction or have disappeared as a result.

Last year Robbins said they would not be monitoring the parking lots around our building nor the one at Menzies and Kingston for up to about 2:00 pm due to participation by veterans at Remembrance Day events.

ENTERTAINMENT

Once again Astrid has more than met the challenge of providing varied theme dinners throughout the year, and barbecues in the summer months. They have all been successful although Astrid doesn't know until 2 days before the event, or even on the day of the event, how many will show. As always, Astrid had neat little goodies to share and used quizzes as a fair way to give them away. The really special goodies were made by Astrid's most faithful assistant, Janet Adams, who is the Queen of Desserts — some lucky guests actually leave with bags of homemade goodies.

The last theme dinner was in September with a fall theme and the next one is not until January and it will likely be Robbie Burns theme.

On October 18, Astrid arranged the annual Veterans' brunch at JJ Morgan's which was paid for by the Victoria Poppy Fund for those who have served in the military and their partners or caregivers.

The Branch's Christmas dinner will again be at Trafalgar/Pro Patria Branch 292 this year. It will be on Saturday, December 5, with the doors opening at 6:00 pm. Tickets will not be available until after Remembrance Day. Because we won't have enough attendees for the upstairs banquet room, it will be in the lounge downstairs with the benefit of a dance floor should you wish to trip the light fantastic afterwards. The cost of the plated dinner is \$25.00.

Theme Dinner Cost Update

Starting in 2016, the cost of theme dinners will be \$15.00, unless it is a very special menu or the exchange or costs for produce have skyrocketed.

To encourage volunteers, the price of the meal for those who help with meal preparation, serving or clean up, will be half the regular price. The sign-up sheets will have a limited area for volunteers to sign up for this rate. It is hoped there will be different volunteers each time.



IDES OF MARCH

For the past two years, March has proven to be an interesting month for Branch 127 because our branch was closed for most of the month in both years. In March 2014, we moved to 514 Government Street and it took over a month to get operational. In March 2015, we had the opportunity to let a location company use our main hall for filming a scene in a TV movie so we were closed for 3 weeks. It hasn't been released yet so we don't know its real name. The main room was converted into a kitchen. When you come in, ask to see pictures of what it will look like in the movie. The room is not recognizable at all except for the two arches in the alcoves. It was a fun experience for us and we were gifted with badly needed new drapes and a thorough cleaning and painting of the rooms they used.

BREAKFAST SEND-OFF

On April 13, President Richard and Janet Steele, with assistance from Astrid Doidge, Donna May, Rudy Vermaning, John and Barb Yankoski, hosted a breakfast for the riders of the Communities for Veterans Ride Across Canada to raise awareness of the physical and mental health challenges of Canadian Veterans. Paul and Terry Nichols were accompanied by riders John Gilmour and Mark Smith from Nanaimo and David Ristau from Sooke and headed for Stanley Park Vancouver as they started the first leg of a 200 day journey across Canada. They are in Newfoundland and Labrador at this time and hope to finish the trip by November 11.



John Gilmour, Mark Smith, Terry Nichols, David Ristau





LEGION WEEK OPEN HOUSE

In June, we had an Open House which was not as successful as we had hoped - it was mostly our Friday regulars who came. Our expectation was that members who had not seen our new building would come when the weather was nice. There were, however, some very positive aspects that those who attended enjoyed. We were very lucky to have the Greater Victoria Police Pipe Band play outside - they sounded wonderful and the neighbours and passersby hung around and loved it. We also presented a certificate to Amanda Chambers who won 1st place at the Zone level for her poem "The Fallen Angels" in the Poster & Literary Contest at the junior poetry level. She also read her poem as she meant it to be read.

We also presented cheques to Joyanne Plewes from ALS Society of BC, Victoria Chapter and to Susan Howard from Victoria Women's Transition Society, two of the local charities we assist through our Gaming grant. They provided interesting information on how the money would be spent and their organizations. It was definitely a lot nicer than sending the cheque in the mail.

More photos of the open house are on the Branch web site: http://www.br127.ca/Branch127/Photo_Gallery/Photo_Gallery.html



Greater Victoria Police Pipe Band



*Top Right: Rudy Vermaning, Joyanne Plewes
Middle Right: Rudy Vermaning, Susan Howard
Bottom Right: Amanda Chambers, Len Anderson*