

## **2022 Convention Report**

The 2022 convention was held in the Robert Surtees Athletic Centre at the Nipissing University in North Bay. The theme of the convention was “Working Together”. “If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself”! (Henry Ford)

The registration was 387 accredited delegates, carrying 727 proxy votes for a total voting strength of 1114 compared to 1267 votes in 2019. An additional 27 observers and 15 guests were in attendance.

The Parade and wreath laying ceremony were combined and conducted on Sunday morning with wreaths laid by Mrs. Jane Byers, Silver Cross Mother, escorted by Brian Harris, Vice-President, Anthony Rota, MP, Federal Government, escorted by Terry Jacobs, Treasurer, Andre Paquette, Past Provincial President, Province of Ontario, escorted by Lynn McClellan, Vice-President, Colonel R.A. J. Jollette, CD, Base Commander 22 Wing North Bay, Canadian Armed Forces, escorted by MWO Martens, Colonel (Ret'd) Nishika Jardine, Veterans Ombud, escorted by Pam Davidson, Vice-President, Owen Parkhouse, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Dominion Command, Dominion Command, escorted by Sharon McKeown, Immediate Past President, Garry Pond, Provincial President, Ontario Command, escorted by Ron Goebel, Chair, Debbie Olmstead, President, Ontario Command Ladies Auxiliary, escorted by Flora Wilson-Chartrand, District H, Deputy Commander, Ken Faubert, District H Commander placed the wreath representing Indigenous Veterans.

The parade moved off after the wreath laying at the cenotaph and continued to march to the Discovery North Bay Museum.

Following the parade members were encouraged to enter the Surtees Athletic Centre. Comrade Sherry Culling, LAC Chair introduced Comrade Ron Goebel who called the convention to order for the opening ceremonies. Comrade Owen Parkhouse, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Dominion Command declared the convention officially opened. Mrs. Jane Byers, escorted by Provincial President, Garry Pond laid a wreath on behalf of the Wearers of the Silver Cross during the ceremony. Colonel R.A.J. Jollette, CD, Base Commander 22 Wing North Bay was the guest speaker. Followed by a presentation to Colonel Jollette, presentation to Mrs. Byers, L.A. President, Debbie Olmstead and the Provincial President's wife, Linda Pond. Chair Ron Crown read the Resolution of Loyalty and Padres Goode & MacPherson gave the benediction.

### **CONVENTION BUSINESS**

Business sessions were called to order Sunday at 1:45 p.m. by Comrade Ron Goebel, Provincial Chair.

Delegates heard presentations over the two days from 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Dominion Command, Owen Parkhouse, Veterans' Ombud, Colonel (Ret'd) Nishika Jardine, Provincial President Ladies Auxiliary Debbie Olmstead and BSO/OSI Vice-President, Ontario Command Representative, Darren Reid.

The reports of the Provincial President, Provincial Standing Committee Chairs and the Treasurer, were passed with the following highlights, exceptions and additions:

The Constitution and Laws report had all By-Laws were moved seconded and carried with the exception of Section 1005 regarding Branch Clubhouse Rules/Branch Policy and Procedure Manuals in By-Law No. 4 of The General By-Laws of the Ontario Provincial Command which was moved and seconded and defeated.

The Ladies Auxiliary Ontario Command spoke of the outstanding amount of funds they provide branches, the Homeless Veterans Program, Charitable Foundation, Bursary, Track & Field etc. etc.

L.A. Donations for Ontario Command Programs were as follows:

Charitable Foundation	\$ 40,011.00
Provincial Bursary	\$ 60,020.00
Other Bursaries	\$ 23,200.00
Donations to Branches	\$570,783.45
Donations to Veterans	\$ 60,859.43
Other Donations	\$129242.69

Wounded Warriors Canada show cased Veterans and their Service Dogs as part of the Operation Service Dog Partnership we are engaged in. President, Garry Pond presented a cheque for \$400,000.00 to ensure our continued support from Branches in assisting Veterans being paired with Service Dogs through the WWC partnership.

A bucket was passed and \$3,094.55 was collected in cash from the floor. Another \$6.05 was added to that total from the “election” buckets for total of \$3,100.60. The following is an overview of the generosity of Ontario Command Branches for the following programs – collected on the floor of the Convention.

Poppy	\$ 21,000.00
Op Service Dog	\$ 96,500.60
Homeless Veterans	\$274,814.75
RCEL	\$ 33,753.70
Track & Field	\$ 10,000.00
Youth Education	\$ 3,000.00
Camp Maple Leaf	\$ 4,425.00
Parkwood	\$ 2,500.00
Multifaith	\$ 6,500.00
Sunnybrook	\$ 3,000.00
Veterans Transition Network	\$ 2,000.00
Veterans Adaptive Sports	\$ 4,000.00
Heroes Mending on the Fly	\$ 2,000.00

Ruck 2 Remember	\$ 19,000.00
Bursary	\$ 20,550.00
Charitable Foundation	\$ 95,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$598,044.05</b>

The election of officers for Ontario Command took place on Sunday and Monday of the convention under the direction of Immediate Past President, Comrade Sharon McKeown and Chief Scrutineer Andre Paquette. Comrade Derek Moore was acclaimed to President and Comrade Lynn McClellan was elected 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President. The three Vice Presidents elected were Comrades Diane Condon, Crystal Cook and Mark Rogers. Comrade Ed Pigeau was elected to the position of Treasurer, Comrade Ron Goebel was acclaimed as Chair and Comrade Ron Crown was elected to the position of Vice-Chair.

Those in attendance at the Convention on Monday, May 16, 2022 were requested to stand when their membership category was announced including Ladies Auxiliary. The eldest Legionnaire in attendance was recognized at 96 years young, WWII Veteran, Mrs. Una Golding of Peterborough Branch 52 and the youngest member being Kiryn Crook, 26 years of age from Branch 82.

Resolutions concurred by the convention are listed by number at the end of this report.

### **New Business**

There were several motions that were presented to the floor:

*I move that Ontario Command and its committees no longer request proof of delivery for Notice of Motion distributed to all members but instead request that the President certify that it has been distributed to all members.*

Moved/Seconded/Withdrawn

After much discussion, Comrade Pond assured the member that Provincial Administration Committee would discuss this at the next PAC meeting in August, including various parties that may be used as reference or resource for recommendation to PEC.

*I move that Zone Poppy Chairs are eligible to claim mileage at Ontario Command expenses (sic) when they visit branches during the Poppy Trust Fund inspections.*

Moved/Seconded/Withdrawn

After much discussion, Comrade Pond suggested the Finance Committee and PAC would discuss the ramifications to the Poppy Budget at the next PAC meeting in August for recommendation to PEC.

***I move that Ontario Command and its committees immediately stop identifying grammatical errors in documents submitted to Ontario Command.***

M/S/Defeated

After much discussion and the motion defeated, Comrade Pond suggested that if punctuation was not corrected the intent of a By-Law could be completely misconstrued. However, the intent of the motion, warranted another look at possibly simplifying some processes.

Provincial President Garry Pond invited all the District Commanders up to the Convention Stage where they were presented with Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pins for each named delegate that had registered and were attending at the Convention.

The BSO/OSI Special Section Vice-President, Darren Reid provided a great overview of what the Section does and how it saves lives. The presentation opened many eyes and many Veterans from the floor retired and still serving thanked Darren and the Special Section for introducing Buddy Check Coffee, Op Vet Build and finding ways to connect with Veterans whether vulnerable or not.

BSO/OSI Vice-President and Ontario Representative Comrade Darren Reid along with BSO/OSI Chair, Crystal Cook presented Provincial President Garry Pond, Executive Director, Pamela Sweeny and VSS/Homeless Chair, Dave Gordon (in absentia) with a certificate:

***In appreciation of your outstanding efforts in support of Veterans and the Operational Stress Injury Special Section of the Royal Canadian Legion.***

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."  
(Helen Keller)*

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***T. L. Jenvenne  
President BSO/OSI***

After all reports were provided Sherry Culling, LAC Chair provided a few comments and Provincial President Garry Pond thanked Sherry and her many, many volunteers for such a successful Convention and presented her with a lovely bouquet of flowers.

## **Installations**

The installation of officers took place Tuesday morning. Comrade Derek Moore gave his first address to the delegates as the incoming President via Video as he was being released from hospital. A version of his speech is contained in this report.

A motion for adjournment was moved and seconded at 12:00 a.m. and Vice-Chair Comrade Crown did closing ceremonies and the convention delegates sang both versus of God Save the Queen.

There was an addendum to the Sports Report by Comrade Walter Stevens (below):

## **Provincial Sports Report (Addendum) May 2022**

At a zoom Dominion Sports meeting in February with regards to cancelling the 2022 Dominion Sports year because of the current Covid issues across the country, it was decided to wait and have another zoom meeting in March to see if things changed for the better and make a decision then.

Also during this meeting there was discussion on how we could increase participation in sports and it was suggested more promotion about Legion Sports be undertaken by Dominion in their advertising campaigns and new sports be added to the Dominion Sports Program.

Ontario put forward a suggestion of Mixed Darts & Senior Darts, the point being that for Mixed Darts it guarantees a 50/50 split of men & women participating at Dominion level.

Another Province proposed Corn Hole as it is played and is popular in their area and I have heard there is some interest in areas around our Province as well.

This will be discussed further at an upcoming Dominion Sports meeting in the fall of 2022.

At the zoom Dominion Sports meeting in March it was finally decided to cancel the 2022 Dominion Sports year as we had run out of time for Provinces to be able to hold qualifying events so would not be sending players to Dominion. All current hosts would move to hosting in 2023.

A Provincial Sports Committee zoom meeting was held on March 29th 2022 and a motion was carried to play the last three (3) 2022 Provincial Sports (Horseshoes, Washer Toss & Golf) that were not yet cancelled. Districts A,B,C,E & G have all elected to play them at their District. District F has opted not to play. Districts D,H & K do not play these events so players from these Districts may enter directly thru their District Sports Chair for the sport they wish to play in. Their entry will then be sent to the District Sports Chair Convening the Provincial Sport event they would be entering.

Finally, a concern I have is the number of times I hear from members they did not know they could play events that were not played in their Branch, Zone or District. Also, branches don't post sports events for members to see because they say nobody plays them. If they don't know about the event then how can you say they don't want to play. A member may enter any event through their branch to play even if it means paying their own expenses to attend. All a branch is required to do is submit the proper signed sports entry form on their behalf.

This is my report with addendum and I so move.

*Walter Stevens  
Sports Chair*

There was an addendum to the MSRB report by Comrade Ron Goebel:

Comrade Chair, President Garry, Head Table Guests, Members of our Ladies Auxiliary, Comrades All.

My report is in the Convention Book on pages 96 and 97 and I am not about to read it as I am sure all of the delegates have already read it. However, Comrade Chair with your permission, I do have a short addendum.

Comrades since my report was actually submitted in February, I would like to give you updated information at this time.

As of the end of April, we had only received a total of 242 Veteran submissions for publication in our next book, Volume IX that will be published in late September or early October of this year. This is down considerably from previous years, and in fact is the lowest number of Veteran submissions that we have received by the end of April since we first started the program. However, with Branches basically closed throughout this past year, we fully understand the reasoning for it.

So hopefully, now that we are open for business again, Branches will actively promote our program and once again begin submitting large numbers of Veteran submissions to our two Provincial Coordinators. And with Branch elections now completed, I urge members of the Branch Executives to ensure that each Branch has an MSRB Coordinator to actively promote our program for Veteran submissions. And the Terms of Reference for a Branch Coordinator may be found on our Provincial website.

Comrades as you know, the cut-off date for Veteran submission each year is May 15<sup>th</sup>, which has now passed for this year. However, since the number of submissions are down this year, our two Provincial Co-ordinators will accept and process any submissions they receive for our Volume IX, right up until the end of this month. So, we would ask that all Branches put on a final effort for Veteran submissions and get them into Carolyn or Mary Ann by the end of this month. And remember, submission may not be sent electronically.

Regarding proceeds that we have received through this program, as of the end of April, we have received a total of \$187,173.81 for year #9 of our program which gives us a grand total of \$1,591,179.37 that we have received at Ontario Command over our nine years of being with this program.

It is our mandate to donate funds we receive through this program towards Veteran Transition Programs, and we will continue to do so. At the end of April, we had donated a total of \$204,910.00 towards 9 various Veteran Transition Programs. And through these various programs, we have assisted many of our Veterans in transitioning from their military life into a civilian life.

**(Those nine programs include: Ad Astra Stables; Project Trauma Support; Project Healing Waters; Operational Stress Injury Spouses Retreat; County of Grey Frontline**

**Family Wellness Day; Heroes Mending On The Fly; Warrior Adventures Canada; Veterans Transition Network and Writers Collective of Canada.)**

Each year, our MSRB Committee of 7 reviews the top three winning Black and White and Colour posters in our Provincial Youth Education Literary Competition. We do this to select a poster to be utilized for the front cover of our next MSRB and then the second choice is the Introductory Poster used in our Introductory Package to introduce each year of our program.

The winner this year for the image that will be on the front cover of our Volume IX is from a young girl who attends the West Carleton Secondary School in District G. Her entry was the 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner in the Intermediate Colour Poster Competition, and she originally competed in the Kanata Legion Branch #638 competitions.

**The winner this year for the image that will be on our Introductory Poster to introduce year #10 of our program is another young girl who attends the Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School in Scarborough in District D. Her entry was the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner in the Senior Black and White Poster Competition, and she originally competed in the Scarborough Centennial Legion Branch #614 competitions.**

And Comrades, just to make you aware, since the number of Veteran submissions for our Volume #9 is down this year, we will be publishing other student poems, posters and essays in this book. It was felt that since our Provincial Youth Education Literary Competition is centered around Veterans and Remembrance, we would showcase these amazing entries by our students by publishing the top three winners in our Provincial poems, posters and essay competitions.

Comrades, I thank you for all of your efforts to date in promoting our program and ask that you continue to do so. Our program would also not be the success that it is without the dedication and hard work of our two Provincial Coordinators Carolyn McCaul and Mary Ann Goheen who put in countless volunteer hours in the preparation of the submissions. So thank you Carolyn and Mary Ann for all that you do.

I would also like to thank the members of our committee who include our two Provincial Coordinators, President Garry, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Derek, Executive Director Pam and Assistant Executive Director Juanita for all of their assistance and guidance over these past three years.

I also want to thank a few other members of our Command staff, namely Jen, Hailey and Gord for all of their assistance, patience and support over these past three years. Many hands make light work and the assistance from everyone in making our program the success that it is, certainly has not gone unnoticed.

And last but certainly not the least, I would like to thank my wife Barb for all of her support and understanding. Over these past three years, as well as all of the nine years that we have been involved in this program, she has been my personal secretary, given me great support and has been an excellent listener. So thank you honey for all of your support in everything that I do within The Legion.

Comrades, a big thank you to everyone who has been involved in this very important Remembrance program over not only these past three years, but the past nine years as well. Our program would not be the success that it is without all of your assistance.

This is my report and I move its adoption.

*Ron Goebel  
Chair*

The following resolutions were concurred at Provincial Convention:

## **LADIES' AUXILIARY TO ONTARIO COMMAND**

### **#1. BRANCH 503 DISTRICT H (8)**

**WHEREAS** The General By-laws of Ontario Provincial Command – Section 929 (1) states “The real or personal property of any Branch upon the surrender or revocation of its charter shall be vested to the Command and shall be used to pay or otherwise satisfy the liabilities of the Branch” and;

**WHEREAS** The General By-laws of Ontario Provincial Command – Section 1211 states “When a Branch surrenders its charter, or such charter is suspended, cancelled or revoked, the charter of its Ladies’ Auxiliary shall be simultaneously surrendered or suspended, cancelled or revoked” and;

**WHEREAS** The Ladies’ Auxiliary Provincial Command relies on funds submitted by Ladies’ Auxiliary through Per Capita Tax, to help with expenses incurred by the Ladies’ Auxiliary Provincial Command and;

**WHEREAS** These funds are diminished through the forced closure of a Ladies’ Auxiliary due to the surrender or revocation of a Branch Charter and;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** That Section 1211 be revised as 1211 (a) When a Branch surrenders its charter, or such charter is suspended, cancelled or revoked, the charter of the Ladies’ Auxiliary shall be simultaneously surrendered or suspended, cancelled or revoked and;

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that Section 1211 (b) be added to state: When a Ladies’ Auxiliary to a Branch surrender their charter due to a Branch closing, that all surplus funds remaining of the Ladies’ Auxiliary, after all debts and liabilities have been satisfied, be vested to the Ladies’ Auxiliary Provincial Command.

**CONCURRED**

## **PROVINCIAL BURSARY**

### **#4. PROVINCIAL BURSARY COMMITTEE(12)**

**WHEREAS** The Poppy Manual Eligibility 401. Paragraph 3 states “the basic purpose and obligations of the Poppy Trust Fund are to assist a Veteran as defined in Subsection 101. d of The General By-Laws and their families. In this regards any use of Poppy Funds must focus on directly supporting veterans and their families – article 501 i.v.f. applies”.

**WHEREAS** The Poppy Manual states “Families” is defined as current spouse and dependant children including widows/widowers.

**WHEREAS** The Ontario Command Bursary Program Eligibility Criteria is open to Ex-Service personnel or Currently Serving members of the Canadian Forces (Regular, Reserve & Merchant Navy) and their children and grandchildren; Commonwealth War Veterans and their children and grandchildren.

**WHEREAS** Current living Ordinary and Life members of The Royal Canadian Legion and their children and grandchildren.

**WHEREAS** Current living Associate members of The Royal Canadian Legion and their children only.

**WHEREAS** Current living Ladies’ Auxiliary members and their children and grandchildren.

**WHEREAS** Step children and step grandchildren may be considered where applicable.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** That a spouse of a veteran be eligible for The Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Provincial Command Branches and Ladies’ Auxiliary Bursary Assistance Program.

**CONCURRED**

## **POPPY**

### **#5. BRANCH 340 DISTRICT C (2)**

**WHEREAS** branches are permitted to use Poppy Funds for Annual Veterans Visits (See Dominion Poppy Manual June 2018, Section 403, ii, as found on page 25, under special Use Expenditures (with Prior Approval) that permit up to \$25.00 per meal, once a year to provide an annual visit to Branches both for the Veterans and a spouse/caregiver who is accompanying a Veteran, or a Veteran’s widower/widow accompanied by a caregiver to offer a meal and camaraderie.

**WHEREAS** the amount authorized from Poppy Trust Funds to cover the cost of the meal only and must not include the cost of an alcoholic beverage or other services, such as entertainment. Details of the event and receipts must be submitted after the event.

**WHEREAS** most Branches would like to invite their Veterans, Spouses, Veteran’s widower/widow and Caregiver for special events more than once a year but do not have the resources to cover such costs.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that each Branch be permitted to spend up to \$25.00 per meal for a Veteran, Spouse, Veteran’s widower/widow and Caregiver up to two (2) times per year subject to the rules and regulations as noted in the Poppy Manual.

**CONCURRED**

The Executive Director, Pamela Sweeny provided the following report Tuesday morning:

Head table guests, comrades all,

What more can possibly be said about the last 3 years? Perhaps I should speak to the, behind the scenes work of the organization that Staff accomplished while juggling working from home and

alternating days in office. As most of you are aware, Provincial Headquarters, in Aurora, had to be closed to the public however, we remained an essential service. I see some quizzical looks out there.

March 17, 2020 was St. Patrick's Day to some, however there was no celebration for Legion Branches closing doors, losing revenue streams, social activities, sports and community gathering.

It's a little easier to speak about on this side of the pandemic however, everyone in this room was challenged in one way or another. Whether it was dealing with the fears of your children, your loved ones in Long Term Care, your immune compromised partner or your own mental health. Waiting to get your first jab, your 2<sup>nd</sup> jab, your booster, your 4<sup>th</sup> shot – see I never thought I would wish to be over 60 but I guess I'm preaching to the choir!!

I commend The Provincial President, Garry Pond, the Senior Elected Officers, Standing Committee Chairs, many members of The Royal Canadian Legion as well as Provincial Headquarters Staff which includes the Provincial Service Bureau offices in London, Kanata, Aurora and right here in North Bay for their professionalism and going the extra mile these last years

Although some programs were cancelled – others were created. When the pandemic was declared – Homeless Veterans no longer had a place to grab a coffee, wash their hands and face, go to the bathroom, have a prepared meal, recharge their cell phones or use wifi to stay connected or ask for assistance.

We set up a Veterans Hotline – which was pretty much manned by Juanita Kemp 24/7, evenings, weekends, etc. That was one of the only lifelines available to them. Even Veterans Affairs Canada offices were shut down – what a challenge that was trying to get service verification. Perhaps it took 3 or 4 extra phone calls and emails – but we worked together for the good of the Veteran.

Veterans still needed assistance with Poppy Funds, housing, benevolent funds, rent payments, furniture, groceries, etc. Veterans still needed advocacy for pensions, disability awards, VIP services. Provincial Service Officers continued to assist Veterans and branch service officers in a timely manner.

Students still needed Bursary funds even though their classes were happening on-line. Staff continued assisting. In fact, we made certain there were people in the office every day to open the mail, process the mail, Veterans plates, SUFS, cheques, and of course getting that correspondence/cheques and letters, out.

Hospitals, nursing homes, firefighters still needed Charitable Foundation GRANTS more than ever! Those continued to be vetted and processed.

Getting much needed funds to the Branches in Ontario was an achievement – not only with the return of the per capita – two years in a row thanks to the Provincial Treasurer, Terry Jacobs and

the Finance Committee but also the vetting of applications and subsequent distribution of \$14 million worth of Federal funding to 393 Branches in a really tight timeline. That involved a huge amount of extra hours by Staff.

It seems every week we were faced with new challenges, the drafting of a new declaration, another meeting of finance committee, SEO's, PAC, PEC involving staff. Constantly reading the daily protocols of the different health units and Provincial protocols. It seemed the moment we got something to print... the province or Theresa Tam changed the protocol.

And some of those declarations involved the executive of a branch. They were literally handcuffed to make decisions due to the by-laws requiring approval by the General Membership for expenditures over \$500 or \$1000. Branches didn't need to be in a holding pattern or crippled making financial decisions or the inability to do much needed renovations while they were shut down to the public. Hence a declaration was created by Constitution & Laws to work around that by seeking approval from the Provincial Property Committee.

I don't think any of the Provincial Property Committee Members or the Provincial Property Secretary (me) had any idea how resourceful branches would be in fundraising for new roofs, furnaces, applying for Trillium grants, small business grants, New Horizon Grants, renovations to Kitchens, Bathrooms, accessible doors and entrances. Congratulations to all that put in the effort to welcome back your members and creating spaces to accommodate new members.

And here we are – a huge thanks to Sherry Culling the LAC Chairman (who is an employee of Provincial Headquarters) and her committee for planning a Convention that was on again, off again, required a change of venue, a change of Convention Year, off again, another change of venue and quite frankly it wasn't until the end of February and beginning of March we had to put together an entire convention in 3-4 months instead of a full year.

And if life didn't have enough fun with us ... Your President Elect, Derek Moore got the call! We are so pleased he's doing exceptionally well and are looking forward to the next 3 years under his leadership!

Thank you to those that took a moment over the last couple of years to say a kind word to Staff that were doing everything in their power to accommodate or assist including evenings and weekends while we all navigated the waters.

Thank you to those that spent hours with Juanita Kemp, the Assistant Executive Director for undergoing training on "Zoom", "Teams" and various other platforms.

Thank you to those that spent hours working on a solution rather than exacerbating the "unknowns" and "problems" we were all faced with.

Thank you Garry Pond, for your hands on, at least 3x a day phone calls and the friendship you and Linda have shown me.

To the newly elected SEO's, members of PEC, the Staff looks forward to working with you all over the next 3 years.

Finally, a huge thank you to the incredible staff at Provincial Headquarters and satellite offices that are always willing to lend a hand – and to my partner, Greg...who's support and understanding remains paramount. THANK YOU!

*Pamela Sweeny*  
*Executive Director*

President Derek Moore after installation, had the following message to Convention Delegates via Video:

Comrade President Garry Pond, Comrade Chair Ron Goebel, Dominion Guest Comrade Owen Parkhouse, head table, Ladies Auxiliary, Comrades All.

It was a huge disappointment to my wife Trish, and I that we were unable to attend this very special Ontario Command Provincial Convention when I could have delivered this acceptance speech in person. Alas the Good Lord and St. Mary's Hospital in Kitchener unfortunately had other plans for me.

This has certainly been an incredible journey and I am only sorry that it has culminated into me being MIA at my own election and installation. About 5 years ago I was first diagnosed with this condition when applying for a "B" Drivers License so that I could drive a school bus, I knew then, especially when my name was put onto a waiting list, that this could be a very real possibility. Then I did receive the call just a few weeks ago, and talk about bad luck, who would have thought, certainly not me. Of course, the upside is, now that I have received this life saving surgery at the beginning of this term, and what will be, an incredible 3 year term as your Provincial President, it will now provide me with one less problem I will need to worry about.

Of course, the real journey began in earnest many years ago when I was elected President of Br. #134 Mount Forest in the year 2000, sitting for two terms in office. Then onto Zone and District and finally Provincial Command and 1<sup>st</sup>. Vice President. Not without a few hiccups along the way though, and because of a covid pandemic having to serve two successive 3 year terms. Talk about perseverance, but you know what, I would never have changed a thing. Over those years we have had the distinct pleasure of meeting, and for me, working closely with many dedicated Legionnaires, many of whom are probably at this convention in North Bay this weekend, my thanks for your lasting friendship you will be forever in our memories.

Yes, an unprecedented second three year term but this time around I see it as a blessing.

Unfortunately, the last three year term progress was very limited due to Branch lockdowns and our only means of getting together, the Zoom Meeting, which now has its place but cannot and will not replace those face-to-face in-person interactions. Most of those planned training seminars and workshops unfortunately went by the wayside. Now conditions are different and a return to normal is around the corner and we have some ground to make-up.

Comrades, again we have a three year term, we are going to maximize it to the fullest. My planned strategy is quite simple, a half year to Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> 2022 to plan our strategy, to find out what is needed for training at Branch, Zone and District level, bring current training packages up to date, Power Point etc. and add new. 2023 and 2024, we execute. I would like records kept of each individual member that receives the training, and in what category, so we can follow-up with those that weren't able to make the training the first time around. No more excuses comrade's, it's time to step-up to the plate and get the job done. It is my desire for this newly elected and appointed administration to complete what the prior administration were unable to do the last 3 years due to the covid pandemic.

Our theme for this convention is, "**WORKING TOGETHER**". I plan on encouraging its use throughout this term because without it comrades we will not be able to reach the goals that I am proposing.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank comrade Garry Pond for his friendship over the last three very difficult years. Your guidance and wisdom brought Ontario Command through the worst part of this pandemic without losing a single Branch to covid, you are to be commended my friend. Of course, I don't want to forget your better-half, Linda. Trish and I both wish we had had more opportunities to enjoy each other's company but alas covid had other ideas. You both know you are welcome in our home at anytime.

I would also like to thank the staff at the Ontario Command Office for their continued guidance and suggestions unfortunately for you though you are stuck with me for another fun filled three years.

I would also like to offer an extremely big thank you to all of those comrades and friends, who have been with me right from the very beginning without your help and support this would not be a reality today. Sorry I can't be there in-person to shake your hand or give you a big hug but you all know who you are. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, now that I know I have one even though it needed fixing.

A special thank you goes out to comrade Sherry Culling and the Arrangements Committee for all of their hard work in organizing this event for us this weekend. Until you have taken on such a task you do not realise just how difficult it can be. I thank you all for a job well done under these unusual circumstances.

Thank you to the comrades who let their names stand for election and congratulations to those who were elected, and I look forward to working with you all in the very near future.

I had planned that everyone here today would have had the opportunity to meet my family but alas we know how that ended up. It is my understanding an alternative date for my installation will be arranged sometime in the very near future and I hope to be able to re-invite my family to attend then, and I hope that many of you will be able to join us also.

Comrades in conclusion it truly is an honour and a privilege to be the next Provincial President of Ontario Command. Legion life will present us with many challenges, obstacles and hardships

but it is my full intention by “Working Together” that we will be able to overcome each and every one of those challenges and move forward in a positive and productive manner. I pledge that I will continue to work hard to make sure that Ontario Command remains #1.

Comrades All, thank you again for your support, stay safe and safe journey home.

***Derek Moore***  
***Provincial President***