



The Royal Canadian Legion
89 Industrial Parkway North
Aurora ON L4G 4C4

1-888-207-0939
Tel: 905-841-7999
Fax: 905-841-9992
Email: rclontariocommand@on.legion.ca
Website: www.on.legion.ca

To: All Officers, Legion Branches, Secretary/Treasurer
Ladies Auxiliaries, Ontario Command and Public Relations Committee

From: Carolyn McCaul

Date: September 3, 2020

SUBJECT: LEGION WEEK 2020 SEPTEMBER 20th to 26th INCLUSIVE

Comrades:

It's that time of year when our Branches in Ontario Command plan events for our annual Legion Week. This year Legion Week is going forward during September 20-26, 2020. Some of the Branches are slowly opening up, but with restrictions. I know that you will not be able to celebrate this yearly event in ways that are familiar to you; but we ask that our members "think outside the box" for ways to continue to show the public what the Legion is about. Yearly we took this time to "blow our own horns", Comrades, let's continue to show the public how we support our Veterans and Communities. I wish everyone success with Legion Week and also with business on a daily basis during these troubling times.

Please find included messages for a successful Legion Week from the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the Dominion Command President Tom Irvine and our Provincial President of Ontario Command Garry Pond. You will also find useful information for Legion Week 2020.

Please keep in mind that Legion Week is Provincial in scope and the responsibility for the promotion of this program rests with the Provincial Public Relations Committee at all levels of Command.

Comrades, stay safe, stay healthy.

Yours in Comradeship,

Carolyn McCaul
Provincial Public Relations Chairman
Ontario Provincial Command
P.O. Box 202
3243 Lake Dore Road
Golden Lake, Ontario
K0J 1X0

"They served till death! Why not we?"



***The Royal Canadian Legion
Ontario Provincial Command
Proclamation of Legion Week***

*Ontario Provincial Command of The Royal Canadian Legion
represents nine Districts which includes 395 Branches;
within these Branches we have almost 100,000 members .*

*We are a non-profit organization assuming the responsibility of maintaining the
tradition of Remembrance of those who paid the supreme sacrifice
by defending our great nation in past and present conflicts,
so that we as Canadians can live in the freedom that we enjoy today!*

*We continue to support and represent our Veterans of past and present with many
benefits as a result of the determination of our thousands of
dedicated members at all levels of the organization.*

*Legion Branches across the province work together with their affiliated organization,
the Ladies Auxiliary, to raise funds in support of the many programs within
Ontario Command of the Royal Canadian Legion.*

*With millions of dollars being raised from Branch and Ladies Auxiliary projects,
the Legion supports numerous programs benefiting our
Veterans, seniors and youth within our communities.*

*Therefore, let it be known throughout the Province of Ontario
that September 20-26, 2020 be proclaimed Legion Week
within Ontario Command of The Royal Canadian Legion.*



THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO
LA LIEUTENANTE-GOUVERNEURE DE L'ONTARIO

September 2020

More than anything, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how deeply we depend on the many relationships, connections, and places that sustain us.

For nearly a century, the Royal Canadian Legion has played a key role making sure such things are not taken for granted. While in-person gatherings are necessarily limited for the time being, local Legions are, fortunately, finding new ways to foster civic engagement while not wavering from the vital mission of supporting veterans and military families.

To mark Legion Week 2020, I encourage all Ontarians to learn more about their local branch and the important role veterans have and continue to play in their communities.

This comes with my best wishes for good health.

Elizabeth Dowdeswell



**Dominion Command
Direction Nationale**

86 place Aird Place, Ottawa, ON
Canada K2L 0A1

1-888-556-6222

Tel.: (613) 591-3335

Fax: (613) 591-9335

legion.ca

3 September 2020

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Legion Week 2020 – Sept. 20-26

A province-wide celebration of community service

Our Ontario Legion members are caring people, dedicated to their communities. Even though Branches had to shut down earlier this year, our resilient members continued to serve others. Volunteers picked up and delivered groceries and prescriptions to their most vulnerable members, and completed regular wellness checks on those who were elderly or ill.

This generous spirit is not reserved for times of trouble. Branches are regular and reliable supporters of local charities such as food banks, hospitals and homeless shelters.

Our nearly 100,000 Ontario Branch members have a lot to be proud of, and Legion Week is a great time to let communities know about their accomplishments. This includes the millions of dollars raised through Branch and Ladies Auxiliary projects that help numerous programs for Veterans, seniors and youth.

Supporting and representing Veterans past and present

While our Poppy Campaign will not officially begin until Oct. 30 this year, now is a great time to share how funds help local Veterans - directly and through partners. For example, I know many Branches join Ontario Command to support important programs like Operation Leave the Streets Behind, and Wounded Warriors Canada's PTSD Service Dog program.

Ontario districts, zones and Branches are also dedicated to maintaining the tradition of Remembrance, and this year we are commemorating two milestones: the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain - where Canadian pilots and ground crew fought in an international coalition for the first time.

Engaging the community

All Ontario Branches have great stories to tell and share with neighbours, local opinion leaders and media. Through words and visuals, in person or on social media, I look forward to hearing about Legion Week events in the province. With a fun golf tournament and an Honours & Awards ceremony already planned, I will be with you in spirit, as donors are celebrated for their support.

Although some restrictions to combat the spread of COVID-19 are still in place, popular activities held in a space that allows for proper physical distancing, will also help welcome friends and neighbours back to our Branches.

However you celebrate, I wish all participants a successful and safe Legion Week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Irvine', written in a cursive style.

Thomas D. Irvine, CD
Dominion President





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LEGION WEEK

SEPTEMBER 20th -26th, 2020



COVID-19 has changed the way we think, the way we do business, the way we help others, the way we have fun - and really so much more! Comrades, Legion Week will continue and may it become a symbol of our will to defeat this Pandemic!

Your Branch may not be able to host galas or large in-person events as in years past. However, they say 'Necessity is the Mother of Invention'. Branches can still thrive - even if it means we scale back or continue with online events and projects.

In most communities, "the Legion Hall" has always been the main hub and meeting place for everyone. My memories are full of fun Saturday Nights at the Legion - as most of us have. It is the place to go to dance, to eat, to play your guitar or piano, and to laugh and sometimes cry, but always with Comrades and friends. "The Branch" will again be that place!

The Legion exists so that our Veterans are supported, the community keeps a face-to-face connection, and Canada never forgets!

In this time of Covid, many of us wish we had something more meaningful to do. Why not become a Legion volunteer? We have small projects, big projects, leadership opportunities, and a vast array of volunteer options. Your Legion Branch has a job for you. All this while surrounded by new friends and satisfying relationships.

Come and find out how to get involved during Legion Week, September 20 to the 26th, 2020

In comradeship,

Garry Pond
President, Ontario Command, Royal Canadian Legion



GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL “LEGIONWEEK”

There is no better time than during “Legion Week” to let the public, and all veterans whether members or not, know how important the Legion branches are to their communities, and how they can help. That is why we are committed to observe “Legion Week” each year during the third week of September as per the mandate given by the delegates to the biennial provincial convention at Sudbury, Ontario in May, 1979.

Also, the promotion of this annual “Legion Week” is the responsibility of the Provincial Public Relations Committee, as well as all P.R. Committees at all other levels.

Interest in “Legion Week” observances is increasing steadily from year to year, and it is therefore appropriate at this time to issue a list of ideas which could be suitable and of assistance to all branches in planning their programs.

First, however, branches should be made aware of what “Legion Week” is all about:

1. It’s a perfect means of expressing our appreciation to our fellow citizens who work to shape a better future.
2. It’s a good time to initiate plans for an ever-widening role in our many communities.
3. It’s a means of making our communities aware of the contribution the Legion has made over the years and in continuing to make, not only to our veterans, but also to our province and the rest of Canada.
4. “Legion Week” also gives us an opportunity to present a most favourable image to the general public across our nation, and in particular throughout our great province of Ontario.

The onus for the success or failure of “Legion Week” in Ontario is the responsibility of all legion members from branches, through zone, district and provincial levels. We must all do our part toward achieving success.

If “Legion Week” is to be a success, we must all be aware of the basics:

- a) What Legion means to us as members: and
- b) What Legion means to our ex-service personnel; and
- c) What Legion means to our communities across Ontario.

Bearing all of the above in mind, the following suggestions and ideas can assist branches towards organizing a successful “Legion Week” in their communities:

- Decoration Day Services;
- Drumhead Services and Parades:
- Flag-raising ceremonies;
- Various branch activities (such as open houses, dances, church parades, community programming, etc), luncheons, dinners for veterans and their wives or widows of veterans and Silver Cross women, presentation of various awards at special Honours and Awards functions;
- Participation in youth programs (such as Sports, Track & Field, Fishing derbies for the young, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Sea Cadets, Youth Band Concerts, special visits to veterans in hospitals, etc.);
- Associate Membership night with associate members doing their own organizing and providing entertainment, past presidents' dance, past zone commanders' function, members dinner and dance, Ladies' Auxiliary Night at branch levels, District and Zone functions, and anything else that will bring the Legion to the forefront during this particular week. If branch finances are a drawback, a joint effort by some of the smaller branches would help in some localities, particularly those that are within close proximity of each other.

More Suggestions

Branches may wish to include in their "Legion Week" programs, interviews on radio or TV, but here it is suggested the branches purchase some time from the media in response to free time that may be allotted to them. Interviews can be arranged on "Hot Line" programs, etc. Legion booths with all available information can be set up in prominent places in communities with knowledgeable legionnaires in attendance and membership forms to recruit members. Legion literature should also be made available. A Service Club Night to which all other organizations may be invited is very practical, as is a Fun Night with good entertainment to which the public could be invited. All "Legion Week" programs should begin with the Act of Remembrance.

Among their events, the branches could include a Service Bureau Night with the branch service officer/veterans service chairman to speak on how the service bureau works. This could take the form of a question and answer period for veterans, widows and dependants.

Sunset services could also be arranged and will attract many people within the branch and surrounding areas. Get your local municipalities to officially declare "Legion Week" with the declaration appearing in the local media and aired on television and radio. Plaques could also be presented to your mayors, and municipal offices on behalf of the branches, with the hope they are mounted at city or town halls for all to see, as means of saying "Thank You" to the community for interest in "Legion Week" activities.

A tabloid published in the area newspapers, prior to the start of "Legion Week" can be very effective in the promotion of branch programs. This tabloid may be financed, either by the sale of ads by the newspapers involved, or paid entirely by the branch or the zone, as the case may be. Branches close together could collaborate on the tabloid and split the costs.

Available from Ontario Command each year are appropriate LOGOS and messages with pictures from the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Premier of Ontario, The Provincial Command President, as well as a message and photo from the Dominion Command President.

These can be used in tabloids or newspaper ads or articles, or in other forms where applicable. These messages usually focus on Legion achievements in the various communities on youth and senior sports programs the Legion's educational programs, public speaking, poetry and essay contests, as well as bursary programs.

The Ladies' Auxiliaries at all branches can also take part in "Legion Week" activities and promote their own functions. The Poppy Campaign can also be publicized by decorating the branch entrances with back or purple cloth and some 1,000 poppies and assorted wreaths on display. This would indicate how important Poppy Campaigns are to the Legion and their purpose.

We would like to warn branches that when holding Open Houses during "Legion Week" that they make sure to conform to the AGCO regulations.

There are a lot of other things that the branches should be looking at, particularly those events that are most suitable to the branches and their areas. Also, it is recommended that as many members as possible wear Legion dress during "Legion Week" observances.

It is important for branches to observe "Legion Week" on or as close as possible to the dates set down by the Provincial Command each year in the month of September – if for no other reason than to create a greater province-wide impact on the communities and the province, by showing off our Legion achievements and further promoting the aims and ideals of our Legion in general. It will be the efforts put forth by the branches that will determine the success or failure of "Legion Week" in our great Command.

"LEGION WEEK ONTARIO" is a great opportunity to promote the Legion, its achievements past, present and future – **BE SURE TO PARTICIPATE!**



A Short History: Legion Week In Ontario

In 1953, a group of comrades from the Hon. Ray Lawson Branch #28, Kent, Ontario, and the Cpl. Harry Miner, VC, Branch #185 Blenheim, Ontario, got together to discuss how they may possibly spread the word of exactly what the Legion is all about within their respective communities. In that same year, the first “Legion Week” was hosted by Branch #113, Dresden, Ontario, with an “Open House”, inviting the general public to come in and learn for themselves exactly what goes on within a branch, and what the branch in turn does for the community.

In 1975, the whole District 'A' commenced a “Legion Week”.

In 1980, after considerable debate and consideration Ontario Command Provincial Executive Committee unanimously decided that this would be an ideal annual event and that it be included under the mandate of the Ontario Provincial Command Public Relations Committee. By Convention Statute, “Legion Week in Ontario” was declared to be the third week in the month of September of each year, commencing on the Sunday and ending on the Saturday.

“Legion Week” is to have priority over any other event that may have mistakenly been scheduled during that period, unless that event can be utilized as part of the “Legion Week” program. There is no automatic flexibility in the alteration of dates for “Legion Week”.

If a branch, for valid reasons, feels it cannot hold a week of activities, or at least an “Open House” for one day, they should ensure that the community is aware of what the Legion has done, is doing and will do, and always, to encourage membership for eligible candidates.

Research by:

Alan R.P. Golding, SBStJ CD CVA
District “F” Public Relations Chairman
Ontario Provincial Command, R.C.L.

Passed as per minute given by delegates to the Biennial Provincial Convention at Sudbury in May 1979.