



Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command
The Royal Canadian Legion

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All Branch Mail Out #26

Date: April 16, 2021

TO: NS/NU Branches
NS/NU Executive Council
NS/NU Zone Commanders
NS/NU Past Presidents
NS/NU Command Staff

From: Comrade Marion Fryday-Cook
President
NS/NU Command, RCL

Subject: Commemorative March

Message: Comrades: Please find attached/enclosed information regarding a planned commemorative march in honour of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders. This information is forwarded to you in the hopes that NS Branches, especially those along the march route, will support the initiative. Kindly give this information widest distribution.

69 Seth Aaron Drive
Hammonds Plains, NS
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April 13, 2021

President
Royal Canadian Legion
Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command
6 Gloria McCluskey Ave.
Dartmouth, NS B3B 2Z3

RE: AMHERST TO DEBERT 80th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE MARCH

Good day Comrade Marion Fryday-Cook:

My name is Kevin Byrne and I am a sixty-five year old retired Canadian Armed Forces Captain and the son of a Cape Breton Highlander/North Nova Scotia Highlanders (CBH, NNSH) veteran. I am also a leader in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Program and a member of Branch 95 Bedford Royal Canadian Legion. I am in the final stages of planning a commemorative march from Amherst to Debert in May, 2021.

By way of background, in 1941 the NNSH were headquartered in Amherst, NS. Early in May of that year, the regiment was scheduled to move to Debert, NS where they would join up with the 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade (CIB), also known as the Highland Brigade, and the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division (CID) in preparation for their departure to England. On May 13th, 1941, over a thousand NNSH troops started the move by marching in formation from Amherst to Debert, along with support vehicles and equipment. No other Canadian military formation has carried out such an impressive move on foot, before or since. The NNSH marched from Amherst to Springhill, to Lynn Road and on to Five Islands where they camped overnight. On the second day, they marched to Masstown where they met up with a pipe band, which piped them into Debert.

The NNSH departed for England July 18th, 1941, where they continued with their training. In April of 1944, my father who was an instructor at a battle school, gave up his rank and position and transferred to the NNSH. On D-Day, June 6th, 1944, the 9th CIB landed in the second wave on Juno Beach, with the NNSH leading the way. Despite landing on the beach later in the day than other troops, the NNSH made it the farthest inland of any allied unit. Among that group of North Novas was my father, now Private John (Jack) Byrne, a 19-year-old from Cape Breton. He was wounded twice during his time with the NNSH, once on June 9th in Normandy, and again on Sept 19th during the battle for Boulogne. Fortunately, my father is still with us, and at the age of ninety-six, proudly recalls his service with the North Novas.

My plan for the commemorative march is twofold. First, 13th May, 2021 marks the 80th anniversary of the NNSH march from Amherst to Debert. While the NNSH did the march

in two to three days, to meet the requirements of the Duke of Edinburgh Program, I am planning a four-day march that follows the original route. This march is to honour my father and his fellow North Novas who participated in 1941. Secondly, I intend to involve Duke of Edinburgh participants who will use this march as their Gold Level expedition.

The intent of my letter to you is to request that you pass this information onto any Royal Canadian Legion and legion members that may be located along our route. We plan to stop and pay our respects at any of the War Memorials along the route, starting with Amherst and would welcome the presence of veterans to cheer us along. Hopefully it would also allow the Duke of Edinburgh Program participants, both whom are members of the Royal Canadian Air Cadet program, to interact with veterans. All COVID-19 protocols will be followed.

Should you have any questions and require additional information, please feel free to contact me at 902-835-5388, or by email at **byrnekevin1@bellaliant.net**.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Kevin Byrne

NORTH NOVA SCOTIA HIGHLANDERS
COMMEMORATIVE MARCH
13 - 16 May 2021

13 May

We will be departing the NNSH Memorial located in front of the Amherst Armouries at approx. 0730 and proceed to the Amherst War Memorial to pay our respects. We will then proceed along Highway 2 to Springhill. We will stop in Springhill to pay our respects at the War Memorial and for a long lunch break. We will then proceed along Highway 2 to Lynn Road and our overnight camping site at the Harington River Bridge

14 May

We depart our overnight camp site at approx. 0800 and proceed along Lynn Road. We are planning on stopping at the Harington River Falls for a break. Upon leave the falls we will continue along Lynn Road and hook up again with Highway 2. We will continue along Highway 2 to Five Island Prov. Park where we will camp overnight.

15 May

We will depart our overnight camp site at approx. 0800 and continue along Highway 2. We plan on stopping at the Peacekeeper Park to pay our respects. We will continue along Highway 2 to the Down By The Bay campground where we will camp overnight.

16 May

We will depart our camp site at approx. 0800 and proceed along Highway 2 and Highway 4 to Masstown where we take a break before our final push to Masstown Road and onto the Village of Debert and finally to the Debert Military Museum, our end point.

With an endeavour of this nature, all times are approximate but the route will remain the same.