



Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command
The Royal Canadian Legion

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All Branch Mail Out #63a - 2018

Date: November 2, 2018

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

From: Valerie Mitchell-Veinotte
Executive Director
NS/NU Command, RCL

Subject: Remembrance

Message: Comrades: Please find attached general speaking notes provided by Dominion Command.



General Speaking Notes

Remembrance Period 2018

October 26 – November 11

INTRO:

Good morning/afternoon. *(Add any acknowledgments)*

I am pleased to speak to you today on behalf of the Legion and (BRANCH)

At this time of the year, millions of Canadians like you pay their deep respects to the Veterans who have fallen in the service of our nation.

They also honour those still serving in the Canadian Forces and RCMP, whether they're in areas of conflict, taking part in operations to maintain peace, or serving on humanitarian missions.

We remember them individually – by wearing a poppy close to our hearts.

We remember them collectively on November 11 – a solemn and sacred time of Remembrance. On that day, tens of thousands of Canadians come together at the National War Memorial in Ottawa for a televised service and wreath-laying ceremony.

Many thousands also gather at cenotaphs and other locations across the nation for services and commemorations organized by local Legion branches.

(Optional: Add your local event)

But wherever we are, we will think about the incredible sacrifices made to ensure the freedoms we enjoy today.

And although every Remembrance Day is important, this year's ceremony has added significance as we mark the 100th anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended the First World War.

On the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month...we will be united in silence. For two minutes, a profound and serene quiet will fall over our communities as we pause and remember.

POPPY CAMPAIGN

The bright red poppy is our visual pledge to never forget ... and it is steeped in symbolism.

But the poppy goes beyond the symbolic, because all donations made during our Poppy Campaign have a very tangible outcome – they go towards helping Veterans and their families.

At this time of the year, Legion volunteers accept your generous donations in poppy boxes at local branches and other sites in our community.

Local Army, Navy and Sea Cadet corps often are involved in our poppy campaign across the country, and we thank them.

We also thank the Canadian public for their generosity. In 2016 alone, close to 17-million dollars went back into communities across the country for targeted programs and services to help our Veterans. This includes financial assistance for those in need, educational bursaries for children, and programs to help Veterans transition to civilian life.

This year, the Legion complements the traditional lapel poppy with a new digital version available at MyPoppy.ca. Through this online fundraising campaign – the first of its kind – Canadians can personalize their poppy, dedicate it, and share it on social media.

All donations made through our campaign go into a poppy trust fund, and all dollars raised locally are used locally. Let me tell you about some of the good work that goes on here in _____ and how we support our Veterans in this community.

(Elaborate with specific examples)

- XXXX
- XXXX
- XXXX

VIRTUAL POPPY DROP

Dominion Command organizes and conducts the National Remembrance Day service in Ottawa on November 11 on behalf of the people of Canada.

But our Remembrance period has already begun. We kicked off our third Virtual Poppy Drop on Parliament Hill at the end of October. Each evening, beautiful virtual poppies are cascading down the front of the Centre Block on Parliament Hill.

We also are honouring deceased Veterans with a Virtual Wall of Honour on two large screens near the flame on the Hill. Their photos, sent in by Canadians, are displayed in a silent video projected on screens.

On Remembrance Day itself, virtual poppies also will tumble down the National Arts Centre in Ottawa from 7 a.m. until midnight.

At both sites, countless people will stop to pay their respects to those who endured unspeakable hardship and terror. Some of them lived to tell their harrowing stories ... others did not.

In fact, the 117-thousand virtual poppies dropped represent the number of Canadians who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

It is our duty to remember them.

We thank Heritage Canada and the National Arts Centre for their support of these two initiatives.

As you may know, our 1,400 Legion branches across country often collaborate with community members and partners to build and maintain local cenotaphs and memorials to honour the Fallen during the Remembrance period and throughout the year.

Here in _____ we also _____.

(Share any special local initiatives if appropriate).

BELLS OF PEACE

On November 11th, 1918 when news broke of an Armistice to end the First World War ... churches across the land responded by spontaneously ringing their bells.

With this news came joy and a sense of hope that eased a nation's fears and sorrow. As we commemorate Armistice 100, we – in partnership with Veterans Affairs Canada – will emulate this moment through Bells of Peace ceremonies in communities across this country.

Here in XXX *(outline what you will be doing if taking part)*.

As the setting of the sun on Remembrance Day, bells will toll 100 times at locations across the country. With each peal, we will remember the close to 61-thousand Canadians and Newfoundlanders killed.

We will honour the 172-thousand wounded as well as the countless others who suffered invisible yet painful wounds.

At these public ceremonies, we will honour all who served in the Great War. And we will promise never to forget their sacrifices.

As part of this initiative, we have also coordinated efforts with Veterans Affairs Canada to honour First World War veterans who rest – sometimes unnoticed – in ordinary cemeteries across the land. Young volunteers have worked very hard to seek out their graves and place small flags on them so they too can be recognized on Remembrance Day. *(Add in what you may have done locally)*

YOUTH & REMEMBRANCE

The Legion is very committed to ensuring the tradition of Remembrance remains relevant to younger generations.

One of the ways we do this is through our national creative art and writing contest. Every year, more than 100,000 students honour Canada's Veterans with their incredible submissions.

Senior winners of the National Youth Poster and Literary Contest join our National Remembrance Day ceremony in Ottawa to represent the nation's youth.

They, along with selected Sea, Army and Air Cadets place a wreath at the national Remembrance Day ceremony on behalf of the youth of Canada.

NATIONAL SILVER CROSS MOTHER

I'd also like to tell you about our National Silver Cross Mother and the very important role she plays during the Remembrance period and beyond. It is a tradition that dates back to December 1919.

Each year, the Legion selects the mother of a soldier to represent all mothers of children who have fallen in the line of duty.

On behalf of those mothers, she places a wreath at the national Remembrance Day ceremony. She also goes on to represent them at other ceremonies and events over the course of the year.

This year's National Silver Cross Mother is Ms. Anita Cenerini (*pronounced sen-uh-ree-nee*) of Winnipeg.

Ms. Cenerini's son Private Thomas Welch was an infantryman and member of 3rd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, based in Petawawa, ON. Born on October 25, 1981 in Thunder Bay, ON, Thomas joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 2001 and went on to serve in Afghanistan in 2003, as a C9 Gunner.

Less than three months after returning from Afghanistan, Thomas died by suicide in Petawawa, ON. His death on May 8, 2004, is marked as the first death by suicide of a Canadian Soldier after returning home from the Afghanistan mission. His death was later deemed attributable to military service.

As the National Silver Cross Mother, Ms. Cenerini will place a wreath at the National War Memorial in Ottawa on November 11, 2018. She will do so on behalf of all Canadian mothers who have lost a son or daughter in the military either in action, or over the course of normal duty.

(Insert more information if you wish from her or her son's biography, found on Legion.ca)

PILGRIMAGE OF REMEMBRANCE

Every two years, Canadians have an opportunity to make a Pilgrimage of Remembrance through parts of Europe where Canadians fought and died. The first one took place in 1936, and the next is scheduled for next summer.

These Pilgrims retrace the steps of soldiers who fought the battles we've come to know as "Vimy" and "Passchendaele" among others ... battles that are top of mind as we commemorate Armistice 100.

Before they leave for Europe, pilgrims have a chance to research the backgrounds of soldiers who died abroad ... then visit their final resting places. There they experience a wide range of emotions – from grief to pride to gratitude.

Whether they are Veterans or civilians – the pilgrims always are struck by the degree of thankfulness that residents of other nations have for Canadian soldiers who also brought *them* freedom.

When they return to Canada, the pilgrims share their stories with others. Helping to ensure that these memories – and these soldiers – are never forgotten is a crucial part of what we do at the Legion.

THE LEGION AS A PLACE OF HEALING

The Legion and its branches will always remain places of support and friendship for Veterans, families and others.

We want people to know the Legion is a place where Veterans can go to help deal with mental and physical hardships and to help navigate a sometimes complex system to receive their benefits.

Across the country, our Service Bureau helps thousands of Veterans every year. And because of our outreach activities, we're helping even more Veterans than ever before. For example, we're seeing an increase in the number of claims made by post-Korean Veterans including still-serving armed forces and RCMP members.

The Legion is also where Veterans can learn about other initiatives that can bring them a different kind of healing.

One such initiative is the annual Invictus Games – an annual competition that harnesses the power of sport to help ill and injured servicemen and servicewomen on their road to recovery.

This summer, during our Dominion Convention in Ottawa, the Legion gave His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex an award for his role in founding these Games.

True to the spirit of the Founders Award, Prince Harry's extraordinary achievement both exemplifies and advances the Legion's purposes and objectives. We congratulate all the Veteran athletes who competed in October at the fourth annual games in Sydney, Australia.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I'd like to share some final thoughts.

The Legion is Canada's largest Veteran support and community service organization. We have 275-thousand members ... many of them volunteers ... at more than 1400 branches here and abroad. We welcome anyone who would like to join us - with or without a military background.

Helping veterans is our mission. The Legion has made a year-round commitment to making a difference in the lives of Veterans and their families.

Honouring veterans is our duty. Join us in saluting all the men and women who served ... from the First World War to Korea to Afghanistan ... and in troubled spots around the world.

Remembering the Fallen is our sacred obligation. Wear one of our poppies in their memory. And on November 11, join us in paying a solemn tribute to those who gave their all to keep Canada glorious and free.