

Richmond Legion Br 625, 50th Anniversary ...celebrated on June 3 2023

To mark our 50th anniversary a coffee table book was created to share the history of the Richmond Legion including the Cenotaph in the local Memorial Park, the cairn, fallen cross and metal sculpture on the front grass area, the murals etc. The following is taken from an article in that book.

Fifty years means so many memories, faces, names, changes, events, occasions, good times and great friends! How to sift through and decide what to include! What can we possibly leave out of this story, how can so many people be left out, how many memories can be left behind? There are more than 28 scrapbooks bursting with information while bringing back the best of times and the best of people page by page.

The major milestones of the Richmond Legion Br 625 are detailed under specific events such as finding the property, the cenotaph, the cairn etc. This is an attempt to include other events and occasions that make us what we are today – successful and striving to be the best we can be!

The official sod turning in May 1980 led to the official opening of the hall in May 1981 and it started out as a concrete block square with the north end of the building with the entrance flanked on the east with small kitchen and the washrooms on the east.

The kitchen started out with one small entry door and an opening for serving followed by lower cabinets and tables being set up outside the door for coffee and serving areas. In 1992 retractable wood doors were hung to close the kitchen area off from the hall and in 2000 new upper and lower cabinets, an island and a set of lower cabinets for a coffee station were added and the door & serving portal were removed to create one large kitchen area. A new gas stove was purchased in 2005 by the Ladies Auxiliary. 2011 the old section of the kitchen was renovated with new cupboards, new counters, new sink, new fancy tap, a dish washer and under cabinet lighting.



The west side of the interior houses the washrooms (men's, ladies and handicap) with the back wall undergoing many changes over the years and at one time housed a section of mail slots, the telephone & storage slots along with a panel for the Branch Honour Role to list the names of our deceased members and a display case for plaques and medals. Another change saw an Honour Role for the LA added to the same space as the Branch Honour Role. Once an office was established at the south end of the hall the mail slots were removed and the Branch Honour Role size was increased and the Ladies Auxiliary was moved to its own case on the far end of the wall.



The south end of the building had a “stage” that was just a raised platform with a bar and storage room created out of partitions marking off the areas. Eventually walls were erected and after an attic was added over the north end of the building above the washrooms, the storage room became the office. The bathrooms were upgraded several times and the latest edition around 2018-2019 saw new floors and new fixtures installed. New ceiling tiles were installed in 1998. 2012 all new chairs were purchased and they were all replaced once again in 2022. Both sets of old chairs were donated to the local Anglican church.

We paved in front of and along both sides of the hall in 2010 and a few years later the entire back parking area was paved. Gardens, outside storage containers and paving of the parking lot has been done over the years and the interior has seen new LED lights installed and regular updating of painting taking place. Regular maintenance and upgrades are ongoing.

The mortgage was paid off in 1991.

The Richmond Legion Br 625 has hosted many events and has been represented at many others over the years. Annual **Remembrance activities** include placing white crosses on the graves of veterans in our local cemeteries, the Poppy Campaign, the November 11th service followed by an open house at the hall (regrettably the evening open house was discontinued due to low attendance by members). The local elementary and high schools take part in the Remembrance Contests each year. For many years our Veterans visited our 3 local schools in November to their memories of their years of service. September 2006 was the first year that blue wooden crosses were placed on the graves of non-veteran Legion members during the Remembrance period. Unfortunately this practice ended in 2021.



The Richmond Legion has sponsored hockey teams, baseball teams and soccer teams for children of all ages and for adults. Bursaries are provided to our local students and donations continue to be made to the local food bank, services for seniors and veterans organizations as well as the local hospice. The ladies of the LA worked at the period blood donor clinics held in the village and supplied snacks, drinks and words of encouragement.



At one time we held annual New Year's Eve parties, January Robbie Burns dinner featuring a toast to the haggis and Scottish dancing, as well as a Valentines dinner & dance, a St Patrick's dinner and a Spring Fling with live music. For many years Richmond held an annual "Pee Pot Challenge" with the Stittsville Legion where they provided teams to compete in darts, cribbage and euchre with the winners holding the honourable fur lined old fashioned metal bed chamber pot for the next 12 months and the losers having to house the "old skunk" –a ratty old stuffed version not the real thing! Great fun for all involved! Fund raising was done through auctions, garage sales, trivia nights and hall rentals. Annual Pot Luck Dinners & joint meetings were held with the Branch, LA and Club 55 members taking part. Friday night barbeques continue to be a hit with the community every second Friday from May to September and Friday Night Darts runs every week from October to April. These 2 events are great fund raisers for our Branch. Our annual Seniors' Christmas lunch is still served every December with a full turkey dinner and door prizes. Friday night darts ran for many years then ended in the fall of 2009. They returned in the fall of 2011 and continue to be an important fund raiser.

Friday afternoon euchre continues on as well as morning exercise classes and coffee hour.

Thanks to the dedication of Club 55 and the Branch, annual scrapbooks holding the Branch history were produced from 1987 until 2015 and our once monthly Branch bulletin is now produced quarterly. Both the scrap books and the bulletins have received awards at Zone, District and Provincial levels over the years. The scrapbooks were discontinued in 2015 and replaced with coloured copied of the bulletin, pictures of various events and the articles in the local community newspaper being preserved in binders. Unfortunately the local paper shut down in 2017 so there was no more local coverage for the Legion.

In 1992 to mark the 175th Anniversary of the Village of Richmond , which started life as a military settlement, 2000 tulip bulbs were donated by Dutch-Canadians to be planted in the Memorial Park. These have spread to the local high school, the former Township Hall as well as the Legion.

The 50th anniversary of the War Brides arrival in Canada was celebrated in 1996 with an afternoon tea and celebration was held in June.

1997 saw our first 50 year service pin presented to Bob Brown. Our 25 year anniversary was celebrated in 1998 with a dinner & dance on May 30th and on May 31st there was a ceremony at the cenotaph at 2pm followed by an open house from 4:30 to 5:30 then a steak barbeque.

Richmond hosted the Dominion Senior Curling championships in 1999 at the Richmond Curling Club. It ran from March 27th until April 2, 1999 and involved providing breakfast, lunch and dinner for 10 teams of curlers and their “entourages” –most were at no cost to the curlers! Trips to local points of interest, evening entertainment and an awards banquet were all part of the package. Twenty five members of the Richmond Legion formed a committee to work with the curling club to make it all happen.



Colleen Jones named in 1999 to represent Ontario on the Royal Canadian Legion Pilgrimage of Remembrance tour to parts of Belgium, France, England and Holland visiting sites associated with both World Wars. George Murphy was named the Senior of the Year for Goulbourn Township for 1999. Korean War veterans, John Lewis, Bill Salter and Maurice Lavoie produced a scrapbook dedicated to this conflict in 2000

The Ladies Auxiliary was started in 1981 and was essential to the success of the Richmond Legion. Gwladys Reynolds and Joyce Clench received the LA Trillium Pin 2002 and in 2009 the LA awarded Life Memberships to Edna Monahan and Shirley Beardsell. 2010 was when Mavis Lewis received the LA Meritorious Service Medal. In 2003 Ladies Auxiliary Charter Member Plaque was presented and hung in their display case and Hilda Moore received a Life Membership to the LA.

We continue with our usual activities including leading the annual Richmond Fair Parade on its 1.5k march down the main street as well as taking part in the annual Santa Claus Parade in Richmond. Some of our dinners and events have been discontinued due to poor attendance and the 2020 pandemic closed our doors for 2 years .



We were able to reopen in 2022 with the morning exercise classes, coffee hour, the summer barbeques returned as well as the fall darts and the November Remembrance activities. We are fortunate to have no debt and steady support from our local residents

Many thanks goes to the hardy band of comrades who created the Richmond Legion Branch 625 out of nothing in 1973, most of whom continued to be part of everything until age or death took them away from us. The memories, hopes and dreams they created and fulfilled are not forgotten and their dedication is an inspiration... they leave very big shoes to fill!

Their accomplishments and accolades will never be equaled.

PHOTO GALLERY



Major Roger Bourgeois (ret.) poses with the new lawn sculpture marking our 50th Anniversary on June 3, 2023.



In 2013 the students at St Philip Elementary School made a giant Poppy mural using their hand prints.

Pictured right: Veteran Oscar Clench helps a Girl Guide lay a wreath November 11th, 2008.



Riding in the Richmond Fair Parade September 2004.



George & Heather Murphy share a moment at the Richmond Fair Grounds. (pictured left)



March 2011 Bill McCoy, Helen Cowick & Gwladys Reynolds celebrate St Patrick



September 2022 Oscar & Joyce Clench show his Quilt of Valour.

Riding in the Richmond Fair Parade
September 2010



The wonderful "Schmodkas" on one of the many occasions that they entertained us!



THE SCHMODKAS; Lynn Virtue,
Betty Brown, Claire Baker and
Lourienne Ford

50th Anniversary of WWII Victory



1995 sharing tulips from the Netherlands with South Carleton High School.

Our cenotaph on a November 11th

June 2023 Keith Thurrott (centre) received his Quilt of Valour with his wife Marylou and daughter Colleen.



Making a donation 2013



Richmond Legion Br 625
Fall 2023