

## Preparing for a different Remembrance Day ceremony on November 11th

**Legion branches across the country are scrambling to plan scaled-down versions of the annual Remembrance ceremonies on November 11 as local governments restrict large-scale gatherings due to the rising number of new COVID-19 cases. This includes Richmond, where Branch 625 has finalized its plans for the Richmond Remembrance Day ceremony.**

The Royal Canadian Legion is taking the unprecedented step of discouraging Canadians from attending Remembrance Day ceremonies this year as COVID-19 upends the traditional ways of honouring those who sacrificed their lives for Canada.



According to Branch 625 Past-President and current Chairperson of the Poppy Committee for the Richmond Legion, Jane Louks, the public will not be invited to attend the ceremony, large contingents of military, police and first responders will not be present and there will be no wreath-laying by the general public.

Instead, the official ceremony will be held by invitation only, with only a maximum of 5-10 people attending and only 7 wreaths laid. The Legion has to try and minimize what they are actually doing at the site so as to not attract attention and get people gathering. The normal post-ceremony socializing at the Legion hall will not happen this year. The hall will be closed. Jane Louks said, "it is very sad that we have to restrict the number of people attending and that the hall will be closed on November 11 for the first time that I can recall".

Royal Canadian Legion National Director of Communications, Nujma Bond has said that despite the restrictions across Canada, the ceremonies will remain unchanged in their reverence paid to Canada's veterans. "And we are very hopeful and invite people to participate in other ways," she added. "It's such a key moment for the Legion every year. It's a key moment for veterans and for many Canadians."

Ways to participate include not only watching on TV or online but wearing poppies once they become available at the end of this month and recognizing two minutes of silence at 11 a.m. on November 11 no matter where they are.