

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 2020/2021

Submitted by Comrade Frank Mezzatesta

It goes without saying that the past two years have been difficult for everyone. However, I can't say enough about the valiant contributions of your Executive during this period. As we all know, Branch 257 is a completely "volunteer" Legion and would not have survived this period without a lot of hard work and dedication. The following report is an in depth account of the many achievements your Executive has achieved in 2020/2021.

During this period, the Office had always been open on Tuesdays and Fridays. As the protocols of COVID were published, changed and morphed, it would be up to your administration staff to translate and publish the finished product. During the Pandemic there were no less than 8 different plans that had to be displayed. Plexiglass was a new part of the decor as well as masks sanitizers, signs and door persons. Tables and chairs had to be moved to the Hall as occupancy was drastically lowered. Take-out meals became the new normal and we thank those of you who were brave enough to leave the safe cocoon of your home to drop into the Lounge. Your Membership Chair, Cindy Pleasance spent many hours creating e-mail contact groups to ensure members were informed and had a line to Dominion to ensure all membership renewals were kept up to date. Thanks to your Treasurer, Kathy Stanton, Face Book became a go to for Branch happenings. Kathy also spent many hours researching grants – resulting in having to spend many hours filling out the correct forms and as you'll see by the Treasurers Report at the end of this, much had been going on in the Branch's finance department.

Yes, your Legion has survived this period due to the super efforts of your Executive and the other Volunteers who generously gave of their ideas and talents. Now it could be your turn to step up and join a very dedicated Executive by letting your name stand for a position. Nominations are currently being accepted for your 2022 Executive. Share your expertise – get involved.

Maintenance report 2020/2021

Submitted by Comrade Earl Pleasance

While the branch has been closed for a good portion of the last 2 years, several projects have been completed. While the closing had a significant negative impact on our members, it was a bit of a mixed blessing, in that it gave us an opportunity to complete a couple of projects that would not have been possible without the building being vacant, such as a major reorganization of the maintenance room, and the complete repainting of our upstairs hall.

In addition to the above, as well as regular running maintenance, some of the larger projects over the last two years include:

- Pathway of Honour at Huddlestone Park was regouted, as old grout was deteriorating
- New shelving for in walk in cooler

- Rear courtyard overhaul; new grass, plants, horseshoe throwing lines, rotted fence posts replaced, fence panels repainted, improved gate lock/access, sprinkler head repairs
- Flag pole repainted and also hinged at the bottom to allow lowering, for easier future maintenance
- Elevator upgrades completed
- Major washroom cleaning and redecoration of ladies washroom.
- As the closure also significantly reduced branch income, we also undertook steps to reduce our costs. Our waste disposal contract was a fixed cost of \$395 per month. We have changed our service, so the monthly cost fluctuates based on actual service, and we have reduced our costs by at least half to under \$200 per month. This may rise again as branch hours increase but will still be a saving over previous costs.

Additionally, our cable, telephone and internet package was renegotiated at an almost 40% discount; previous cost was \$315 plus tax per month. We just signed a 5 year plan at a cost of \$192 plus tax per month. As a result, over the course of 5 years our branch will save over \$8000.

I wish to express my deep thanks and gratitude to all the members, spouses and friends who have assisted with the maintenance projects listed above, particularly those who assisted in the cleaning/weeding/replanting of both the front and rear yards, and the repainting of the upstairs hall, the two largest projects.

I will not mention names at risk of forgetting and offending someone but you know who you are. I look forward to your continuing support; every member of the branch benefits from your efforts.

Membership Review

Submitted by Comrade Cindy Pleasance

Before commencing cleaning out the membership filing system, I contacted Dominion Command to find out how long we needed to keep membership files; five years.

Went through membership records and reduced records to the last five years. When I recognized family member's names, I put the files together. Old files were shredded as per instructed by Dominion Command.

Went through the Legion Member management system and removed member files that were inactive up to the five years that we are required to keep.

Kept the membership emails flowing with current branch information, photos, membership promotions.

Made wellness phone calls and emails to members to check in and let them know that Branch 257 would be willing to help them if required.

Through out the past year and a half membership renewal continues to be close to the 90% renewal rate.

In 2020 we had 12 members reinstate or join the branch; in 2021 we had 28 members reinstate or join the branch.

According to the Legion Member Management System we have 473 members of which 414 have renewed: or 87.53 %. The Dominion Command Portal System has us at 89.86%. Which is within the 2% margin that has been the average since the inception of the portal system.

At one point I had sent out an email asking if any members had paid and had not received a renewal sticker. There were several and I was able to discover that their online payment with Dominion Command had not been completed for reasons such as; it was an auto renewal and the members credit card information had changed and the payment was not completed or there had been a glitch in the system and the transaction did not complete. If you are paying your membership, on-line be sure to get confirmation and a receipt number; and if you do not receive your renewal sticker in a reasonable amount of time, call the branch.

Overall, our member ship renewal rate is above the two other local branches.

When able I could be found painting the upper hall, assisting Wendy in the kitchen, delivering meals and groceries to our members, and assisting the President as required in the position of Vice President.

It has been a great privilege to work with this Pandemic Executive; there was a great deal of reading, interpreting and organization work done to keep Branch 257 at its best operational position.

There are several members who deserve a big round of applaud for their work, cleaning the bar, men's' and woman's' washrooms, painting, organizing the Loaves and Fishes Food Drive, and all the hours that went into the patio.

To one and all, my most heartfelt thank you!!!!

Poppy Chairman Report 2020/2021

Submitted by Comrade Barry French

The poppy campaign for 2020 was a tremendous success due to the hard work by our members and an extremely generous public. We raised almost \$70,000 in a year where we weren't quite sure how it would turn out. The business community was very cooperative and they appreciated the safety steps we took to protect our members and the public. If you look at the financial statement provided by our treasurer, you will see we were able to assist our Veterans in need and we made generous donations to numerous groups who provide support for our Veterans. Preparations are underway for the 2021 poppy campaign and we will need your support to ensure a successful campaign. Last year, the casino was closed down due to COVID and we had a crew rolling coin and counting bills. The casino is not available again this year so we will be looking for volunteers to assist us.

Although we were not allowed into the schools, we were able to do the essay, poster and poetry contest where a number of students made it to the BC/Yukon level of the contest. Thank you to those schools who participated in such worthwhile activity. I was honored to make a speech to the student body at Dover Bay School as they did a virtual assembly for the students. The elementary schools broadcasted ceremonies and distributed poppys the students. It will probably be the same format this year due to COVID.

Our branch gave out one bursary this year and five the year before. If you are the child, grandchild, or greatgrandchild of a Veteran you may be eligible for a Legion bursary. This year, Dominion passed a motion so the spouse of a Veteran is also eligible.

As mentioned, preparations are underway for the 2021 poppy campaign. Supplies have been ordered and the business community has been notified. Penny Gordon will be calling members mid-september to fill in the poppy schedules. We need the whole membership to assist us to make the poppy campaign a success. Our Veterans rely on us to help them when needed. Lest We Forget. Barry French, Poppy Campaign Chairperson, Branch 257 Legion.

WAYS AND MEANS

Submitted by Comrade Wendy Forsyth

- Cleaned and re-organized kitchen cupboards, storage room, decoration closet.
- a new room was built for our freezers & another freezer was donated.
- a new larger microwave was donated
- 11 November – did a roast beef take out dinner for the members
- Sold turkey Christmas Dinner & dessert – all take out
- Plus stocked the freezer with dinners including, Lasagna, Roast Beef, Spaghetti & Meat Balls, Chinese Chow Mein, Cookies available for members at a low cost.
- Had an elephant sale table set up for most of the duration of closure by donation to raise funds to keep the lights on
- hosted the Loaves & Fishes Food Bank for two food drives – the first netting the Food Bank \$28k and the second netting the Food Bank \$18 in buying power.
- Ways & Means profited the Legion: \$5,139 in 2020; and \$6,131 in 2021.

Sports and Youth 2020/2021

Submitted by Comrade Barry Ostrand

Branch sports activities were halted in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic as per the directives from BC/Yukon Command. Since I assumed the position of branch sports chair this July, following prescribed protocols, casual snooker games have resumed with the aim of resuming league play later this month. All other branch sports activities are on hold until directives and related protocols are received from command. A similar situation applies to zone inter-branch sports.

Service Officer Report 2020/2021.

Submitted by Comrade Anne Marie Smith

As most of my job is highly confidential I will give you an outline of the types of things I have accomplished over the past 2 years.

I have met with veterans and helped put their claims in order and made sure they were submitted,
I have helped with members who have been injured by taking them to the hospital for treatment,
I delivered meals to member who were unable to get out,
I arranged a moving support group to help one of our members who moved,
I helped an elderly veteran gain monetary help that he was not aware of being eligible for,
I arranged for a veteran to be visited as he needed someone to talk to and have coffee with.
I distributed gas and grocery cards to veterans in need,
I assisted a single mom veteran with funds from the Poppy Fund,
I made arrangements for veteran's widows to have Life Lines,
I helped a widow get housekeeping aid.

You will notice I have not named any veteran or member as I will repeat that my position is highly confidential and details are not known to the general membership.

BAR REPORT 2020/2021

Submitted by Comrade Christine Devlin

I would like to open my report with a big 'thank you' to all the volunteers who worked so hard to make the opening of our Legion possible. From my point I want to thank the volunteer bartenders who made the effort to mask and glove up and come to work even before the vaccinations were available. Without them the Legion would be a very dry place indeed.

As you can imagine, during the early opening stages of the pandemic there was very little going on with the bar. Unfortunately, there was some wastage from kegs of beer and boxes of wine that were open at the time the pandemic started and we had to close the Legion. When we were able to open on weekends, measures were put in place to protect both the bartenders and the patrons. There were plastic protective barriers installed and masks and gloves provided to the volunteers. Measures put in place by the Provincial Health Authority have been adhered to and followed by our patrons with no difficulty or major inconvenience.

You may recall that it took quite a while for us to obtain our new license that would allow us to have alcohol on the outside patio. Unfortunately, the license approval came just before the onset of Covid-19 and we were not able to make use of the patio. With the help of many volunteers, however, the back patio was finished and garden areas were made to look beautiful. We were able to use this patio when the Health Authority closed indoor dining and bars. Fortunately for all the weather cooperated and we were able to enjoy some lovely Friday and Saturday evenings outdoors.

We are still looking for volunteers to join the Legion bartending team. Over the past 1 ½ years we have only had 1 person join us, so if anyone is interested in becoming a Legion bartender, please contact the office.

HONOURS & AWARDS

Submitted by Anne Marie Smith

No Honours & Awards ceremonies were held during the period March 2020 to August 2021. We shall attempt an Awards Ceremony at the end of 2021. In the mean time, members with under 20 years service to the Legion will have their pins available when they pay their dues.

PUBLICITY

Submitted by Comrade Joan Mezzatesta, Secretary

Photos were taken of special events, including Remembrance Day 2020, most donation events, Canada Day 2021 to name a few. These were posted on Face Book as the events happened.

At present we do not have a Publicity Chair. Anyone with a knowledge of MS Office and in particular Publisher, is welcome to apply for this position. This position usually creates programs for events like Remembrance Day, Awards Ceremonies and works with Ways & Means to print up tickets for Legion events.

CADET LIAISON

No Cadet Units were in session during the period March 2020 to August 2021

SICK AND VISITING

Submitted by Comrade Doug McCaskill

Throughout the past two years your volunteers for Sick and Visiting have been phoning members to check on their wellness. When we heard there were members under the weather or in hospital, cards, calls and well wishes were sent out.

However, there were a few times when we weren't notified about a member's health status.

LAST POST

During this past two years we have received word that the following members have left us:

Harry ADCOCK	Ron JONES	Morris PARSONS
Larry BABCOCK	Walter LAWRENCE	John RICHARDSON
Kenneth BOCK	Ron LONG	William SIMPSON
Clara COSCO	Hugh MacNAUGHTON	Joseph SPROULE
Shane DeMARCE	Penny MATHENY	Geraldo VIGNEUX
Elizabeth DOUMONT	Kenneth McNICOL	Stanley WATTS

J. DUNSMORE	Myron MISHIO	Gordon WEBB
Doreen GATES	Michael MOORE	Robert WHITE
Gardo GURR	J.B. NASO	E. Joseph WILLIAMS
Kenneth HARRISON		

FINANCIAL REPORT 2020/2021

Submitted by Comrade Kathy Stanton, Treasurer

2020-21 General Account Summary September 2021 Balance \$18,419

It has been a trying year and a half, but Branch 257 has been surviving financially.

Thanks to Covid Grants, generous donations, & our Ways & Means we had a profit of \$3,695 in 2020 before depreciation.

For 2021 we currently have a loss of \$1,352, but we should be in the black by the end of the year.

Contact treasurer257@shaw.ca with questions or for the complete financial reports.

Of note:	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021 thru Sept</u>
Cash Donations	4,474	2,548
Covid Grants-	14,692	6,596
Bar Sales	27,692	19,749
Ways & Means Profit	5,139	6,500

We were able to complete three grants during 2020-2021

<u>New Horizon Grant - Patio & yard</u>	<u>25,000</u>
Expense- Patio	15,900
Fence	2,404
Gazebos	4,816
Chairs for patio	224
Landscaping	<u>1,269</u>
Total Expense	24,613
<u>New Horizon Grant - Elevator</u>	16,800
Expense- Thyssen Krupp	16,800
Extra electrical work that was paid by Poppy Fund	1,382
<u>Accessibility Grant</u>	<u>29,250</u>
Expense-Front sidewalk & wheelchair access	5,775
Automatic Doors	20,769
Door frames & painting of doors	895

Electrical	309
Parking lot & curb painting	<u>550</u>
	28,298

Equipment Additions

Shelving for Kitchen cooler	353	
Shredder for the office	246	
Hot water tank for upstairs	449	
Computers - donated		3,358
Microwave - donated		355
Various Kitchen equipment-donated	1,052	

Thank you to the Executive for keeping our Legion going during all the Covid restrictions.

Branch 257 Gaming Report 2020-21

Sept 2021 Balance \$1,645

Meat draws were cancelled during much of 2020-21 due to Covid Restrictions.

However, we were able to hold them part of each year.

Thank you to Denise Palmer, Joan Mezzatesta, & committee for running them.

Of note, BC Lotteries has discontinued Pull Tabs for our Legion.

<u>Gaming Account</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021 thru Sept</u>
Income	19,983	7,222
Expense	<u>11,915</u>	<u>3,853</u>
Profit before donations	8,068	3,369

Donations

Pacific Gael	300	
Nanaimo Diamonds	300	
1st Neck Point Scouts	100	
Nanaimo Loaves & Fishes	500	
Nanaimo 7-10 Club	500	
Salvation Army	500	500
Canadian Red Cross	1,000	
One time for need donation	500	
2422 Royal Army Cadets	1,000	
205 Collishaw Squadron Air Cadets	1,000	
Royal Canadian Sea Cadets Amphion	1,000	
Navy League of Canada Cadets JP Bell	1,000	
Lantzville Fire Rescue	250	500
VIU Foundation Letters & Images Bursary	1,000	
Great Nanaimo Toy Drive	250	

Remembrance Day Food	478	
Nanaimo Unique Kids	250	
Vancouver Island Military Museum	250	
Lantzville Girl Guides	250	500
Lantzville Boys and Girls Club	<u>250</u>	500
Cadet Medal		30
Total Donations	10,678	2,030

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 257 Poppy Trust

September 2021 Balance \$41,712

People were extremely generous during the last Poppy Campaign, so we were able to be generous with our donations as well as helping many Veterans.

Of note, Veteran spouses are now eligible for bursaries if they qualify financially.

<u>Income</u>	<u>Oct 2019-Sept 2020</u>	<u>Oct 2020-Sept2021</u>
Donations	\$ 53,199	\$ 69,914
Interest	<u>\$ 6</u>	<u>\$ 5</u>
Total Income	\$ 53,205	\$ 69,919

Expenditures

Grants to Veterans	\$ 9,447	\$ 15,166
Veterans' Dinner		\$ 750
Bursaries	\$ 5,500	\$ 3,000
Donations to Cadet Corps	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
Donation to Compassion Service Dogs	\$ 2,000	\$ 5,000
Donation to Nanaimo Hospital Foundation	\$ 2,000	\$ 5,000
Donation to Wheels for Wellness	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Donation to Broadmead Veterans Lodge		\$ 5,000
Donation to Cockrell House		\$ 5,000
Donation to Nanaimo Hospice		\$ 2,000
Donation to Red Cross Loan Cupboard		\$ 2,000
Donation to Meels on Wheels		\$ 2,000
Donation to Dufferin Place		\$ 2,000
Donation to Palliative Care		\$ 2,000
Donation to RCEL		\$ 2,000
Elevator Maintenance	\$ 4,785	
Poppies, wreaths,campaign expenses	\$ 4,514	\$ 3,754
Poster and Literary Contest	\$ 1,458	\$ 1,458
BC/Yukon Command Assessment	\$ 2,404	\$ 3,129
Zone Assessment	<u>\$ 150</u>	<u>\$ 150</u>
Total Expenditure	\$ 42,258	\$ 69,405

