



# The Advance

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Issue # 9

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION - BARRHAVEN BRANCH 641

February 2012  
Edition

Editor: Jon F. Klaus

Branch Website - <http://www.rcl641.ca>

## The President's Corner



*Comrades All:*

Our Editor, Comrade Jon Klaus, make use of the word "Innocence" in the Valentines box on this page. He attributes this to meaning a growth and a rebirth of our Branch. This is food for thought!

By the time you get this newsletter we will be ready to carry out our involvement with our two Councillors, Desroches and Harder, as a Tribute to our, soon to be former Chief of Police, Vern Smith. We join with the community of Barrhaven in wishing him all the best as he restarts his career as an honourable member of our country's Senate.

At the Feb. Executive Committee meeting, I made the announcement that our AGM and Elections meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 17, 2012, starting at 7:00 p.m. At that very same time, I appointed Past President Ernie Hughes to be our 2012 Nominating Committee Chairman, also asking him to form a three or five member committee which will include himself. Comrade Ernie will be issuing information and detailed instructions about

the rules and regulations that govern our Br. 641 - 2012 nominations and elections. *C. W. (Gus) Este*



We are experiencing a drop-off in attendance at our Friday night dinners and dance-band entertainment. It seems that some of this stems from a lack of participation by our own members and it may also be attributed to the very repetitive menus. We are studying this with the Special Events and Hospitality Committee, who will bring forth, in a report to the Executive, their recommendations and plans to improve the status-quo.

Upcoming this year from June 10th to the 13th will be the Dominion Command's "Call to Convention." It will be held in Halifax. We have five delegate votes. Others that wish to go may do so as observers. The package is too large to send out to all members, however, if you would like to go, we will have it placed as a link on our website.

## Valentines Day "Innocence" Edition



We are somewhat concerned by the large number of members that have not renewed their memberships. At last count they were over 100. Dues are expected to be paid by December 31st of each year, with an extension granted to the end of January of the new year. We do know that Dominion Command will send out final reminders to all of those that have failed

to keep up their membership and they will become "not in good standing" which automatically halts their benefits, such as being able to use the Clubhouse without being signed in, getting the newsletter and the Legion magazine. Don't let this happen to you.

*Gus*

C.W. (Gus) Este, CD,  
KStG, President  
2011-12

### ATTENTION LIFE MEMBERS

The Legion Magazine circulation Auditors require the magazine to update its records every three years for those subscribers who are Life Members of the RCL.

If you are a Life Member please visit us at [www.Legionmagazine.com/Lifemembers.pdf](http://www.Legionmagazine.com/Lifemembers.pdf), fill out the form and e-mail it to us at Magazine @legion.ca, or print it out and mail it to Legion Magazine, 86 Aird Place, Kanata, ON K2L 0A1. Thank you.

613-591-0116

LEGION MAGAZINE



## Reflections by Chaplain Ray Desjardins

### LEADERSHIP

Probably one of the most important documents received by the Branch this month has been the Branch Officers Training Package. Why, because for the first time, Command is turning away from real or perceived skills training to the greatest task in most Branches, that of Leadership.

Unfortunately as a Branch we are not immune to personality conflicts, poor judgment, poor management and many misunderstandings and that includes all of us who hold positions of accountability and trust. Individually we all believe we are doing it right. As a collectively of leaders we have all made mistakes and we have a tendency to not accept that fact. We are loath to accept our errors, apologize and correct them. It seems that one has to be right all of the time. If you live in that "time-warp" you are living a dream and not real life. Everyone makes mistakes – it's part of our nature. Why are we so sensitive about it? In business, if a CEO of a corporation gets the answers right 30% of the time he/she is considered in the top 10% of Executives.

I think the problem is that many of us are in positions for which we have received little or no training, rarely pay attention to our oath of office, are not familiar with or use the Officer's Manuals and Handbooks provided (I dare to say some haven't

even read them), rarely go on training seminars in the things we are responsible for. The other issue is that many of us are Legionnaires with five or less years of experience and that often shows. The Training and Organizational Development Committee of Ontario Command is going back to basics and offering a series of training sessions on Leadership. Its part of the way back as Legion Branches all over the province lack vibrant and effective leadership, based on RCL principles and practices.

You have got to know the whole story of the Legion at the Branch level, understand the protocol, the By-Laws and the process to be an effective leader. We must therefore get involved in the learning process so we have the fundamentals at our fingertips and a greater opportunity to move our Branch to even greater heights. If we don't, you can see the results all around you – Branches are failing! If it continues, then ultimately the Legion will fail. I don't think that thought even crossed the minds of the few who launched Branch 641. We owe it to them and to those who served and are still serving to be there when the call for assistance comes. And I can assure you it will come! Let's be out in front and stay there – we can be great leaders both as individuals and as a Branch. Leadership Training will give us the edge so make a pledge to get involved. **Ray**

## Editor's Comment

Again this month and for many months to come, we are profiling our members and especially those you see at Branch 641 on a regular basis, make your day just a little easier because of their commitment to the goals and objectives of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Executive, comradeship, service to the community we represent and the best of "volunteerism."

This month is Dave Cole (our Legionnaire of the Year) and then Sheila Sielatycki followed by Ray Desjardins, Ernie Hughes, Jim Duff and other reluctant including hopefully some more of the "Original Six" and 12.

I am especially pleased that the Chief of Ottawa Fire Services, John de Hooge, has graciously agreed to step up to the plate. I expect that we will also have other guest commentators in the new year from our partners in the law enforcement, military, community and public services.

In this issue and also in the months to follow, we will be highlighting stamps issued by Canada Post over many decades to highlight not only the Royal Canadian Legion but the efforts and sacrifices of Canada's armed forces, the civilians and the families that support(ed) them.



It seems appropriate for this issue to concentrate on the living organization that RCL 641 has become and what the attributes are that mark it is a evolving, growing and learning entity. It can never become "static" otherwise little further growth, adaptation, renewal and leadership can develop.

The photo of "Innocence" is not by chance but reflects what I believe is a rebirth and growth of a new RCL 641 with "new" members.

Youth are our future. Engagement of the community, other legions, charities, cadets and schools are just some examples of positive Outreach. RCL 641 "Hail to the Chief" must indicate this with "significant others".

The response of contributors for *The Advance* has been overwhelming and it will have to be a topic of discussion at an Executive meeting as we could easily go to 20+ pages. Please keep your submissions coming - we will do our best to accommodate all articles which are submitted.

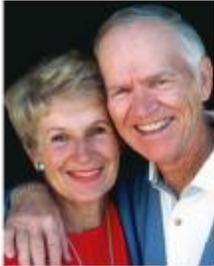


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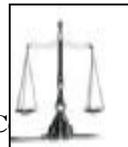
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### Book Review. "On to Civvy Street"

#### ***On to Civvy Street. Canada's Rehabilitation Program for Veterans of the Second World War***

By Peter Neary

The story of the origins of the Veterans Charter, a program that shaped the future of a generation of Canadians.

The bungled demobilization of Canadians returning from the First World War contributed to a period of intense political, social, and economic upheaval. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Ottawa - having learned from the previous domestic turmoil - immediately began planning for the return of veterans, who ultimately numbered more than one million, to civilian life. ***On to Civvy Street*** tells the story of the development and administration of the resulting program, which shaped an entire generation.

Detailing the ways in which the Canadian government built on existing programs for veterans, Peter Neary identifies the key figures and events responsible for developing the orders and statutes that came to be known as the Veterans Charter, creating the Department of Veterans Affairs, and establishing sweeping new benefits for servicemen and women. Comparing rehabilitation programs after the Second World War with those after the First World War, Neary reveals the lasting importance of the country's new way of expressing its obligations to veterans. He shows that the measures developed to reintegrate them into civilian society became essential building blocks for the Canadian welfare state and helped pave the way for the unprecedented prosperity of the 1950s.

A comprehensive study of a fundamental change in the relationship between government and citizens, ***On to Civvy Street*** is also a timely reminder of the debt the country owes its veterans.

Peter Neary is professor emeritus in the Department of History at The University of Western Ontario

<http://mqup.mcgill.ca/book.php?bookid=2712>

\*\*\*Copies can also be ordered by entering the name of the publication into a search engine and the online price will be displayed.\*\*\*

### Branch humour in hindsight

#### Vitamin F = Priceless

This vitamin has no monetary value but it is one that pays back constantly and in many ways. It is absolutely priceless but necessary to us.

Why do I have a variety of friends who are all so different in character? How can I get along with them all? I think that each one helps to bring out a "different" part of me.

With one of them I am polite. I joke with another friend. I sit down and talk about serious matters with one. With another I laugh a lot. I may have a drink with one. I listen to one friend's problems. Then I listen to another one's advice for me.

My friends are all like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. When completed, they form a treasure box. A treasure of friends! They are my friends who understand me better than myself, who support me through good days and bad days. We all pray together and for each other.

Real Age doctors tell us that friends are good for our health. Dr. Oz calls them Vitamins F (for Friends) and counts the benefits of friends as essential to our well being. Research shows that people in strong social circles have less risk of depression and terminal strokes. If you enjoy Vitamins F constantly you can be up to 30 years younger than your real age. The warmth of friendship stops stress and even in your most intense moments it decreases the chance of a cardiac arrest or stroke by 50%.

I'm so happy that I have a stock of Vitamins F!

In summary, we should value our friends and keep in touch with them. We should try to see the funny side of things and laugh together, and pray for each other in the tough moments.

Submitted by Gus Este and friends.





**FROM THE SPORTS DESK**

## ZONE SPORTS 2012

EVENT/ DATE/ LOCATION/ LAST DATE FOR SIGN-UP

**MIXED DARTS** Mar. 10 - Westboro - Feb. 24.

**SHUFFLEBOARD** Apr. 14 - Bath, On - Mar. 23.

Posters and sign-up sheets are posted on the Bulletin Board at the Legion. Late sign-ups will not be accepted.



**Dave Hagar**  
Branch 641 Sports Officer

**District competitions:**  
*The complete schedule is on display in the branch.*

**5-Pin** Bells Corners  
March 3, 2012

**Euchre** Rockland  
March 24, 2012

**Shuffleboard** Bath  
April 7, 2012

**Mixed Darts** Almonte  
May 12, 2012

**Golf** Orleans  
August 11, 2012

**Horseshoes** Hawkesbury  
June 16, 2012

**Golf** Barrhaven  
June 11, 2012

**Sports Desk Update**

On January 29, 2012 our Branch held the 3<sup>rd</sup> dart Tournament against our friends across the river - the Manotick Legion. And while the Manotick Legion gave it a good try, they lost and Branch 641 gained the win.



The tournament stands at Barrhaven (Legion 2, Manotick 1), but we still have 2 more to go. These tournaments are much more than just a competition between the Legions - we have made many good friends.

Dave Hagar  
Branch 641 Sports officer

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## The Original Six

No, this is not a hockey story. Anyone who frequents the Barrhaven Legion has undoubtedly heard the terms "Charter" and "Founding" members, especially if you attend the General Meetings or ride a stool at the bar. I was certain that I knew the correct meanings, but was very surprised to learn that I did not. My discussions and research have shown that many others are just as misinformed as me on this subject. To begin, we need to look back at how and when the Branch was formed.

Sometime in the year 2002, Gus Este and Ray Desjardins suggested to a few fellow members of Branch 593 Bells Corners that they should start a new Legion Branch in Barrhaven. They all agreed it was a great idea. But how, and by whom?

Time passed, and human nature being what it is, nothing got done and this dream was only talk by people in blue blazers. More time passed, and it wasn't until 2004 that Ray Desjardins put pen to paper and started the laborious, intensive process to turn their vision into reality.

There's no manual on how to start a Branch, and initially, there were few who believed it could be done, including Ontario Command. Luckily for us, Ray is a determined individual who doesn't easily accept "NO" for an answer.

To obtain a Legion Charter, there were many obstacles to overcome, including the requirement to have 50 members. In that list of 50, there had to be a minimum of 10 new members who had never previously belonged to any Legion.

Allow me to backtrack for a minute. I incorrectly assumed, as did others, that our "Founding" members were the "Original Six" who had the vision and tenacity to start our Branch.

They were:

- Ray Desjardins
- Gord Ley
- Gus Este
- Ernie Hughes
- Don Phair
- Judy Phair
- 

I also incorrectly believed that our "Charter" members were all members at the time we received our charter and officially became Branch 641 Barrhaven.

After a lengthy discussion with Ray, who has all the right answers, I've learned that our Branch has 12 members who are officially recognized as "Charter" members.

These 12 were the new, voting members who had not been re-instated or transferred in from another Branch.

They are:

- Wing Cdr J.D.W. Campbell
- F. Paul Charlebois
- Larry G. Charlebois
- Linda Charlebois
- Pierre Deveault
- Peggy Johnson
- Beverly Schlivert
- Greig Schlivert
- John Sielatycki
- Sheila Sielatycki
- Jim Wilson
- Sharon Wilson

Our "Founding" members include everyone who was a member in 2005 when our request for a Charter was submitted for approval. At that time, there were four re-instated members, 18 transfers and 32 new members, which included the 12 "Charter" members, for a total of 54 "Founding" members.

Since receiving our Charter on April 22, 2005, our Branch has grown steadily from humble, unlikely beginnings. From living room discussions to meetings at the Walter Baker Centre and our first clubhouse on Cedarview, it's been quite the ride.

The latest move to Fallowfield Road has proven to be an unquestionable success by our members and the community at large.

We are now approaching 500 members and have become one of the largest and most vibrant branches in Zone G5. At our present rate of growth, it won't be long before the need for a larger, perhaps permanent facility, will be thrust upon us.

We owe a great deal of gratitude to the "Original Six" who had the vision, energy and determination to create Branch 641 Barrhaven.

There are dreamers, and there are doers. We at Branch 641 are extremely fortunate to have both.

**Submitted: Dave St. Amand.**



**See construction pictures in the photo section of our website = March, April & May 2010.**



## Branch information

**Executive Meetings** are held on the 1st Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m.  
**General meetings** are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month also at 7:00 p.m.

The deadline for submissions for *The Advance* is the 15th of the month. Members can submit articles they feel that are of interest.

The Branch **Calendar of Events** is published and updated on the RCL 641 Website. [www.rcl641.ca](http://www.rcl641.ca)

Note that reservations for the Friday night dinners can be made by calling the Branch at 613-843-8691 (No messages please). Reservations must be made by 1:30 p.m. on Thursday. Dinner will be served from 5:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.

## Did You Know

That you can renew your membership for one, two or up to five years?

Please renew now as a significant number of memberships have not been renewed and this, of course means that your standing is affected especially related to Voting.



**RENEW NOW**

Membership Chairman  
Linda Laframboise

## External Fundraising

Our third series of place mat ads are well under way. For those that do not know , they are used during our Friday night dinners. I am hoping to get these printed in February.

Nine spots have been taken already, leaving only seven remaining.

If you know of any businesses that may be interested in advertising, they can contact me. **The cost is \$250.00 per ad.**

**Dave Sereda**  
2VP  
External Fundraising

## Hail to the Chief Charity Fundraiser

On Sunday, February 19, Councillor Harder and I, along with Barrhaven Legion Branch 641, will be hosting a special charity fundraiser in honour of Chief Vern White.

This is the opportunity for Barrhaven to show its appreciation to the Chief for all he has done for our community and the City of Ottawa as a whole. Proceeds from the evening will benefit project s.t.e.p., a charity chosen by Chief White, which supports school-based addictions treatment, education and prevention.

Tickets can be purchased at the Barrhaven Legion Branch 641 for fifty dollars each, while quantities last. The festivities will begin at 5:30pm. If you have any questions, please call my office at 613-580-2751. [Steve.Desroches@Ottawa.ca](mailto:Steve.Desroches@Ottawa.ca)



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### ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST

Once again, the Royal Canadian Legion is conducting a Public Speaking Contest. The Contest provides youth the opportunity to speak in public with the aim of developing their leadership skills. This year, the competition will be held **March 3, 2012** at the Orleans Legion Branch 632, 800 Taylor Creek Drive.

Cash prizes are to be won.

There are four categories: grades 1 to 3; grades 4 to 6; Grades 7 to 9; and Grades 10 to 12. The speech topic is open for students and speeches can be in either French or English.

Due to time constraints, the number of entries that may be accepted is limited and as follows: Grades 1 to 6 – 30 entries and Grades 9 to 12 – 30 entries.

Registration forms will be accepted on a first come first served basis and are to be sent by e-mail or fax to Comrade Shawn Taillon Royal Canadian Legion Zone G5 Youth Education Officer at [staillon@ca.inter.net](mailto:staillon@ca.inter.net) or fax: 613-829-6537

Contest rules and entry forms may be found at both the Barrhaven Branch and Zone websites ([rcl641.ca](http://rcl641.ca) and [rcl-zoneg5.ca](http://rcl-zoneg5.ca)).

Bert Boehme  
Youth Education Officer  
RCL Branch 641



### Special Fundraiser—Perley Rideau Veterans Super Bowl XLVL

What would Super Bowl Sunday be without a party? That's what the Canadian Army Veterans (CAV) Cambrai Unit asked themselves. Without any further ado, they put their heads together and decided to organize a fundraiser for the Perley Rideau Veterans.

On Sunday, February 5, the CAV's generous volunteers donated all the food for the party. They cooked chili, deep fried French fries and barbecued hamburgers, hot dogs for more than 100 hungry football fans. An outdoor camp kitchen was set up where the chefs did all the cooking while the team of volunteers inside the Branch put out snacks and all the fixings for their guests.

At the end of the game, almost \$1,000 was raised through the sales of food, raffles and miscellaneous donations. Congratulations to Jim Ireland and the CAV members as well as the Legion volunteers.



Names Right to Left - Back row: Standing.  
Jim (road name Sailor), Barry (road name Roadkill)  
Bill (road name Plowman), Andre (road name Frenchy)  
Dave (road name Doc).  
Front Row: Sitting :Sheryl (road name Skids), Beth (road name Lucky), Elizabeth (road name Medusa), Denise (road name Boots)



## Comrades in Arms at Barrhaven Branch 641

### **Chief Warrant Officer David M. Cole, KStG, OSJ, CD, PA**

Born and raised in Niagara Falls, Ontario, CWO Cole enrolled in the Canadian Forces Sept 1975 as a Medical Assistant in the Canadian Forces Medical Services (CFMS). Upon completion of all required basic/trades training, was posted to 2 Field Ambulance Petawawa in 1976 and a year later to 4 Field Ambulance Lahr, Germany.

While in Germany in 1978, he was one of the first three Canadians to be awarded the US Army Medical Corps *Expert Field Medical Badge*, the first time any Canadian had been honoured with this qualification/award. Also during this time, he completed the Basic Parachute course then conducted at CFB Edmonton, Alberta.

In 1981 he was posted to CFB Cold Lake, Alberta during which time he completed the Basic Aeromedical Evacuation Course at 426(T) Sqn. CFB Trenton Ontario.

Upon promotion to MCpl in 1982, he returned to Petawawa and worked in a para-position with E Bty (Para) 2 RCHA. During this time he participated in many exciting domestic and international exercises/operations, including 2 RCHA's first UN deployment to Cyprus in 1985/86 (*Operation Snow Goose*) as well as a short exchange to Fort Bragg, N.C., obtaining his Basic US para-wings. Other accomplishments during this period included his investiture in the Order of St John of Jerusalem as a Serving Brother in 1986, for work within the instructional field of first-aid and extensive volunteer service in the community. CWO Cole also completed the Emergency Preparedness Canada course as well as successfully challenged the Ontario Ambulance program of the time (*EMCA*) which enabled him to apply and hone critical skills in the civilian paramedical environment. In 1987 then M. Cpl Cole was posted to CFB Trenton, Ontario where he further expanded and developed skills and abilities in the air evac

Promoted to Sgt in 1989, CWO Cole was posted to CFB Gagetown NB where he obtained the NB civilian Ambulance certification thus enabling him to continue practicing key skills in emergency care in a civilian environment. In December 1990 he was tasked as an augmentee to 1 Canadians Field Hospital for its joint deployment with the British Army Medical Corp to Saudi Arabia during the 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War. His exemplary performance and dedication was rewarded with a Middle East Commander's Commendation.

In 1993, he was promoted to Warrant Officer and returned to Petawawa where he then attended the Physicians Assistant Course in CFMSS (now CFHSTC) at CFB Borden. This training further prepared him for a wider variety of independent clinical duties. Once this training was completed, then WO Cole underwent familiarization/sensitization training in

pathology/mortuary affairs for a tour of duty as the NMLO to UNPROFOR/IFOR in the former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and in the absence of an available Medical Officer, he was then attach-posted to 2 CER CFB Petawawa as the senior medical authority.

In April of 1997, then WO Cole was selected for training at the USAF School for Aero Space Medicine San Antonio, Texas, FN/AET Course for advance air evacuation training where he achieved honours standing. He was then attached to 23/43 US Tactical Air Evacuation Sqn Pope AFB NC for a preceptorship.

This training and experience lead to a posting to 426(T) Sqn 8 Wing Trenton as an Air Evacuation Instructor and Flight MWO in late 1997.

**Bio continues on Page 10**





Already armed with a wealth of operational experience, he was again deployed, this time CCUNDOF Golan Heights as the NCO i/c and Senior PA for this UN mission.

Returning to Canada in March 2000, he was then posted to Royal Military College in Kingston as a clinical Physician's Assistant. A year later he chose to take a component transfer to the Primary Reserve and a posting to Ottawa, where he has resided and worked since. During the past 10 years he has served in a variety of positions including clinical, operational, strategic and administrative capacities.

CWO Cole presently holds two positions - the RSM of 28(Ott) Field Ambulance (a volunteer position) and as the Operation and Taskings Officer for 1 Canadian Reserve Field Hospital Detachment Ottawa (formerly the CF Health Services PRL).

CWO Cole has actively parlayed his military experience in to related community service. He is an active volunteer with both the Canadian Army Veterans (CAV) Motorcycle Unit (Cambria, OG) and The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 641 Barrhaven. In the latter he has held seven executive positions over the past six years, most recently as the Branch Chairman and Operations Officer. As a result of his continued community service, he was invested in the Knightly Order of St George in the Americas on the 4 June 2011. He has also recently joined the Barrhaven Lions Club.

CWO Cole is married to Anne and has two nearly adult daughters Catrina (Catie) and Charlotte. With what little spare time he has he enjoys walking his two mixed breed dogs and spending time either



Legion  
Member of  
the  
Year 2011  
Dave Cole

Presented  
by the  
Branch  
President  
Gus Este

## From our Fire Chief - John deHooge

### Resilient Leadership = Resilient organizations

It has been argued that once change begins it can gather momentum like a snowball rolling downhill, soon we are buried in the avalanche of change that had a small beginning.

Resilience can be defined as an ability to recover from or adjust easily to change.

Today's global fire service leaders continue to be deluged with the reality of economic and political uncertainty that imperil our integrated response capabilities and our budgets. With technological change, the bombardment of social media is more rapid than many can manage. The loss of experiential knowledge of our retiring fire service leaders, there are fears that we've failed to adequately coach, mentor and equip our next leaders. Perhaps, worst of all, is the alarming public apathy towards front line emergency responders that some believe, provide diminished returns on investment. All of us continue to be challenged to do more with less or in some cases, less with less.

Daryl Conner's book "Managing at the Speed of Change" talks about five characteristics that leaders ought to monitor and develop in order to be resilient.

1. Positive: Display a sense of security and self-assurance that is based on their view of life as complex but filled with opportunity.
2. Focused: Have a clear vision of what they want to achieve.
3. Flexible: Demonstrate a special pliability when responding to uncertainty.
4. Organized: Develop structured approaches to managing ambiguity.
5. Proactive: Engage change rather than defend against it.

We are in a critical period, a period of time in an organization where it is extremely vulnerable to internal and external factors which could stunt its growth or abort its vision.

The critical period demands resilient leadership to overcome adversity and make the right choices during tough times.

Resilient leaders have a choice, either be a passive victim of circumstances or, be the active hero of your organization.





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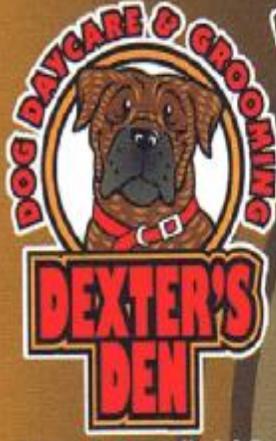
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## Barrhaven Food Cupboard (BFC)

The BFC would like to thank our membership for helping out this year with donations of non perishable food items and cash.

# Would you like to help support your Local Barrhaven Food Cupboard?

As a community we can help maintain a measure of relief to those families that need our help.

## Come join us at our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting

AGM will be held on:

*Date:* May 1/2012      *Location:* Barrhaven Legion Branch 641  
*Time:* 6:00 p.m.      3500 Fallowfield Road, Unit #3  
Ottawa, ON K2J 4A7

To become a member and vote at our AGM, you must first sign up as a member, before March 30/2012, please email: [barrhavenfoodcupboard@live.ca](mailto:barrhavenfoodcupboard@live.ca) for further information. Please note membership is free.

The Barrhaven Food Cupboard is a non-profit agency that provides service to self-identifying individuals who live in our neighborhood and require emergency food.

Over the last year, BFC has seen a dramatic increase in the number of families requesting food assistance and frequency with which requests have been made. If you would like to be a part of our family, join us, become a member and vote at our 1st AGM.



Thank you to all! Comrade David Sereda, 2VP Branch 641 & Steering Committee Member, BFC



## Branch and Legion news and events

### REMEMBRANCE LITERARY AND POSTER CONTEST 2011

As part of the Royal Canadian Legion's Remembrance activities and forming part of the Youth Program Barrhaven Branch 641 conducted yet another successful Remembrance Literary and Poster Contest. The Contest was co-ordinated by Comrade Bert Boehme, Youth Education Officer for Branch 641. This year saw a record number of contestants participating from many of the Barrhaven Schools. Over 400 entries in the various contest categories, including Colour Poster, Black and White Poster, Essay and Poem were received.

An awards ceremony to recognize the first, second and third place winners in each category was held on January 15, 2012 at the Branch Hall. Special guests joining the Branch President, Comrade Gus Este, and making presentations, were Councilors Steve Desroches and Jan Harder and noted poet Ms. Lois Laycock.

Cash prizes of more than 1,500 were awarded to the 33 Contest winners. Ottawa Catholic School Board's St Luke Elementary and Mother Teresa High Schools had an especially strong showing, taking the majority of the awards. A special Remembrance School Program Certificate was also presented by Branch President Comrade Gus Este to Ms. Miriam Basten, a teacher at St Luke's School, for her outstanding support of the Contest and for her efforts in co-ordinating her school's entries. Several of the students also won Ottawa Zone 5 awards, which were presented by the Zone 5 President, Comrade Blaine Kilry and the Zone 5 Youth Program Chairman, Comrade Shawn Taillon. A special mention must go to Selena Quang from Adrienne Clarkson Elementary School, who in the Primary Colour Poster category was also recognized as the District winner in that category.

Special congratulations go to all the winners for their participation and outstanding work. Winners' names are posted on the Branch's website [rcl641.ca](http://rcl641.ca)

The ceremony was well attended by parents, teachers and students from the various Barrhaven schools who enjoyed refreshments following the Ceremony.



Ms. Miriam receiving her School Remembrance Award from Comrade President, Gus Este



The St Luke winners



Selena Quang receiving her award from Zone Commander, Kiley and Zone Youth Ed. Chairman, Taillon



The Mother Teresa winners receiving their awards from Deputy Mayor Steve Desroches



## LEGION DRESS

[Excerpted from the Ritual & Insignia Manual by Comrade C.W.(Gus) Este]



**We, as members of The Royal Canadian Legion, project an image when wearing our distinctive dress.**

**It is a positive image that recognizes our great organization and it demonstrates pride in our country and ourselves.**

**It is, therefore recommended that Legion dress be worn while attending any formal Legion function, including Legion meetings.**

**All Officers or Executive members occupying a position at the Head \Table of any Legion meeting should be in Legion dress**



Photo Credits - [http://www.legion.ca/ PDF/Supply/Catalogue\\_Fall\\_11\\_Web\\_e.pdf](http://www.legion.ca/PDF/Supply/Catalogue_Fall_11_Web_e.pdf)

### Standard Legion Dress -

The order of dress for Legion activities is as follows:

1. Navy blue beret with Legion crest. Brass Branch numerals may be worn on the beret; or
2. Headdress acquired during current or previous Canadian or Allied Forces. Not to be worn by members of the Colour Party; and
3. Summer Dress from 1 May to end of Sept., Blazers removed - Legion badge on shirt.

### Formal Dress -

From time to time, Black Tie and others call for White Tie.

The Dominion Executive Council has authorized the following as optional Legion Dress for all formal occasions: Blazer with crest, Legion lapel badge + discharge/CD badges, Miniature Service Medals, White formal shirt with fold-down collar, Black/White bow tie, Black cummerbund, Grey trousers, Black socks & shoes.

**NAME BADGE/SUPPORT THE TROOPS BADGE ARE NOT TO BE WORN.**



## The forgotten war

### The first Gulf War marked a fundamental shift in the role of the Canadian Forces

By Tyler Olsen, The Times November 10, 2011

*Retired Canadian Forces engineer Mike O'Connor still has vivid memories from his time at the head of a bomb disposal team in Kuwait following the Gulf War* Photograph on Page 16 by: Tyler Olsen, TIMES

It is the spring of 1991 and Mike O'Connor is on the phone trying to reach his family back home in Newfoundland. In the background, the rat-a-tat-tat of evening celebratory gunfire is ringing through the desert night. But on the other end of the phone, the operator in Goose Bay, is confused. This man is saying he is in Kuwait, of all places. Which is impossible. "No, no, no, Sergeant O'Connor" the operator says. "The war's over. Everybody's home." Saddam Hussein's army had been decimated. Order had been restored. And the Canadian government had announced that those few troops who had been deployed to the Gulf were already coming home. "I guarantee you, I'm here," O'Connor insisted. The gunfire starts up again. "What's all that noise?" "That's rifle fire, now do you believe I'm here?"

#### PHOTOGRAPHS TELL THE STORY

Twenty years later, O'Connor sits in his tidy Ashwell Road home and slowly flips through the pages of a large three-ring binder filled with photographs of his deployment to Kuwait. It starts like any military travelog. There is O'Connor riding a camel. Here he is at a museum in Doha, Qatar. But next, come photos of his cramped living quarters in Kuwait, to which he was deployed shortly after the Iraqis fled. And then Kuwait itself. Miles upon miles of empty roads. Here and there, the scars of a brief and violent war are visible, smoke spewing from oil fires in the distance. Over the penned heading "Job sites in Kuwait City," come pages and pages of O'Connor sitting and standing amidst mountains of ammunition boxes and fields of exploded, and sometimes unexploded, bombs. And there's more: anti-aircraft guns and burning oil fields and bombed out bunkers and roads littered with overturned tanks and burned out cars.

#### COLD WAR PREPARATION THE MAIN MISSION

O'Connor grew up in Low, Que., a tiny town an hour from Ottawa. In 1969, at the age of 23, he joined the army's engineering corps on the recommendation of his high school principal, who was in the reserves. It was the Cold War and, as such, the military's main mission was to prepare, prepare, prepare for a possible war with the Soviet Union. O'Connor was sent to Chilliwack to learn trades before being shipped out to Petawawa, Ont. He learned to maintain weapons, operate heavy equipment, blow up a bridge and build another. For the next 20 years, he would shuttle between postings both in Canada and Germany, where he and other soldiers formed the front line for a war that would never come. Then, rather suddenly, everything changed. The Berlin Wall came down, the Soviet Union descended into chaos, and the Canadian military's raison d'etre for the last 45 years was suddenly in question. Amidst all this, a dictator in the Mideast decided to invade a tiny oil-rich neighbour. Today, the first Gulf War is largely forgotten. Only a handful of Canadians were deployed to the brief military engagement. Thankfully, none died. But the war marked a fundamental shift in the role the Canadian Forces played, both in Canada and on the world stage. Twenty years later, soldiers have been deployed to Bosnia and Croatia and Kosovo and Libya and, of course, Afghanistan. For O'Connor, it meant that his decades of training would finally be put to the test.

#### NEVER REALIZED THE DANGERS

Just three weeks before the Gulf War was officially concluded, O'Connor arrived in the region. "I really didn't know what to suspect," he says. "I'd never been in the situation before." Now a sergeant, he was involved in keeping the gears of war in, well, gear. His crew kept the trucks running and maintained the runway at the Qatari military base he was stationed at. Every so often, they would retreat to bunkers when a scud missile was fired towards the bases. "I'm just thinking, 'If this is a war zone, there's nothing much to it,'" he remembers. "I don't know if we didn't realize the danger." Then the war ended. But while the newspapers declared that the Canadian support troops deployed to the region were coming home, O'Connor was shipped to Kuwait, where he was to lead a three-man team in clearing a 20-square-kilometre area of explosives. The area to which his team was assigned was strewn with debris and it all had to be cleared of anything that could blow up. "We walked every inch of it," says O'Connor.

Continued on page 16



(Continued from page 15)

The work was dangerous and monotonous—a potentially deadly combination. In the field, the danger of booby traps, real and imagined, lingered over even the simplest of tasks. Obsess over the dangers, and you wouldn't be able to do your job.

Forget about them, and you might make a careless mistake that would kill you or your teammates.

"It became routine, and that's when you have to stand up and say, we have to take a break," he says.

Meanwhile, there was the stress that came from being separated from his family in Newfoundland.

O'Connor's young daughter was the only child of a soldier in her French immersion school. Once her Grade 6 classmates learned that her father was in Kuwait, they began taunting her, saying her father is killing people and will die. The school eventually intervened and held an assembly at which children were educated about the war and the role of soldiers like O'Connor.

### TRENCHES WERE THE WORST

O'Connor flips past a series of photographs of blown-out bunkers and debris-strewn lots and abruptly stops. He points to a picture of a dark room: there's a bed frame, a pile of blankets and, poking out from underneath a heap of clothing, a pair of Iraqi army boots.

O'Connor and his crew had to clear every nook and cranny of their area: rooms full of unused ammunition; roads lined with overturned tanks; manhole covers; and Iraqi live-in trenches like the one in the photo.

The trenches were the worst. "That was very hard to do," he says. "These were underground of course. You had to get on your belly and crawl in with your bayonet and prod the sand to make sure there was nothing buried that would blow you up: look for trip wires. It was very, very hot, about 45 degrees Celsius.

Diagnosed with a mild case of post-traumatic stress disorder, the bunker still haunts his dreams.

"I went into this one myself and the first thing I saw is . . . the pair of boots. The way they were lying there, I thought, oh, there was a body in there.

"It takes a while. You back out a little bit and take a couple of breaths and you've got to go back in. I think of that a lot. But I try to write it down. See if you can get on with it."

O'Connor also worries about the so-called Gulf War Syndrome that has affected veterans of the conflict downwind of burning chemical weapons depots.

In many of O'Connor's photos, the sky is grey, and sometimes black, from the smoke.

"You get a cough and you worry, 'Is that from the smoke?'" says O'Connor, who took a buyout in 1993 and left the full-time Forces but served in the reserves until 2005. "But so far I'm OK."



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Submitted by his Brother—  
Comrade Phillip O'Connor,  
A member of the RCL,  
Barrhaven Branch 641

***Mike O'Connor reminisces as he looks over his photo album.***