

HISTORY OF THE LEGIONS

SIR WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL BRANCH OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

The Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League was instituted in Winnipeg, Manitoba in the year 1926. In the following year - 1927 fifteen veterans of the New Toronto applied for and received a charter to be known as Lakeshore Ontario No. 3 Branch of the Canadian Legion - B.E.S.L.

The charter members were Percy Flint, Sidney Wilmott, William Lomas, Thomas Derry, Arthur Rigby, Robert Armour, Ralph _____, George Moore Jr., Sydney Finch, Arthur Fletcher, James Yuili, Sr. Magnuo Armour, Daniel Smyth, Joseph Nuni and Roy Lush. Through their own efforts and _____ that held their association of the time, they saw that guidelines that have enabled us to go from strength to strength over the past 58 years.

The first home of Branch 3 was sometimes termed as a storeroom over Heathcote Hardware situation on the north side of Lakeshore road between Fifteenth and Sixteenth Streets. In this small room they helped needy veterans in the area who had served in the Boer War and First World War - and the widows and families of those who had perished as a result of their service in conflicts.

After spending four years in the above premises in 193_ Branch 3 moved to the old Orange Hall on Tenth Street. The renovations on the outside and inside were accomplished through the efforts of the members to make the hall a more suitable meeting place, where Legion activities could also be expanded to accommodate the increasing membership.

In 1935, once again Branch 3 moved - this time to Sandford Barn located on the laneway south of Lakeshore Road between Eight and Ninth Streets. This building was also refurbished by the members. It was no small task converting a barn where horses had been kept to a suitable meeting place for the ever increasing membership.

The biggest event in the history of Branch 3 to that date happened in 1941 when the membership voted at a general meeting to purchase a building on Seventh Street north of Birmingham Street. That building has been built by Browns Brass which later became Anaconda American Brass and is now Arrowhead Metals Limited. The building had been built-in as a rooming house for the employees of Brown Brass in 192_, the building was purchased by Mowhawk Radio who turned it into a radio factory.

On December 29, 1941 permission was granted by Dominion Command to rename our Branch after Britain's wartime prime minister and the branch became known as Winston Spencer Churchill Branch 3 of the Canadian Legion - B.E.S.L.

During the war years the Branch was very active. The Branch executive and members organized and held entertainment nights in the Capitol theater on the corner of Fourth Street and Lakeshore Road. The monies raised from these Sunday night events was used to send cigarettes and comforts to men and women from New Toronto serving in the Armed Forces. After VE Day and VJ Day in 1945 and into 1946, Comrade Fred Barrett, member of the Branch executive met every troop train arriving at the CNE grounds to welcome the returning veterans and arrange for their transportation homeward. The Branch also arranged the transportation of their own members and families to go to meet their returning loved ones.

In 1953, when Churchill was knighted, Branch 3 immediately applied for and was granted permission to change our name this time to Sir Winston Spencer Churchill Branch 3.

In 1958 by order-in-council, Dominion Command passed a resolution that the British Empire Service League be dropped and that all branches be known as "The Canadian Legion".

In 1961 "Royal" was added but became known as "The Royal Canadian Legion: the name we use today.

After 2 years of operation on 26 Seventh Street the need for repair was becoming more essential and the need for better facilities for the swelling membership. It was regularly passed at a general meeting that we would build a new hall immediately to the north on an adjoining property that had been purchased with foresightedness a few years earlier.

This spanking new Legion hall was officially opened in 1963 with a number of well known dignitaries present in the modern banquet room.

On February 25, 1977, Branch 3 celebrated their 50th anniversary at a banquet with Provincial President David Capperauld as guest speaker. The evening concluded with dancing.

In 1975 a couple of years earlier we had been informed by Metropolitan Toronto that we were being expropriated to make way for the southward extension of Islington Avenue. This forced the Branch into purchasing property and building a new home at 15 Eight Street, a block or so to the southwest. Ultimately in July 1978 the doors were opened to the membership. The official opening of the new premises that we occupy today was held on February 24, 1979 with the Dominion President _____ as a guest speaker at the ceremony and banquet.

Looking to the future Branch 3 should be here for many years to come enabling us to carry on with the aims and objects laid down by our Comrades who first started Branch 3 in 1927. We are well known in the community for helping veterans and their widows and families, for supporting community sports and senior citizen groups and for

providing bursaries in the educational fields. As time marches on Branch 3 will be ever striving to serve the community on an even greater scale.

THE LADIES AUXILIARY OF LEGION BRANCH 3

The Ladies Auxiliary of Branch 3 received its original charter on January 13, 1947 but little of their early activities have been recorded. In 1960 however the ladies elected Mary Fleming as their president for the year 1960 and 1961. Later in 1978 Mary joined James Clark in turning the soil for the new building on Eighth Street.

On March 5, 1971 the charter was re-constituted and established as Sir Winston Spencer Churchill (Ontario No. 3) Branch of the Ladies Auxiliary, Dorothy Brag_ was the President in 1971 when they were presented with their new charter.

HISTORY OF THE NEW TORONTO CENOTAPHS

In 1919 a group of interested citizens of New Toronto comprising mainly veterans and wives, widows and mothers of veterans formed an association known as "The New Toronto Comfort Association. Their main objective was to assist First World War veterans and their families and to raise funds for a cenotaph that would be a fitting memorial to the men and women of New Toronto who had paid the supreme sacrifice in the war. This was successfully accomplished the same year and on November 11, 1919, the cenotaph was dedicated during the Remembrance Day Service. It was situated on the southwest corner of Lakeshore Road and Eighth Street.

After the Second World War, the Goodyear Overseas Veterans Association and the Anaconda Veterans Association met the members of Branch 3 each year, without fail at the old cenotaph on the corner of Lakeshore Road and Eighth Street on November 11th for memorial services.

The Goodyear Vets paraded from the Goodyear, the Anaconda Vets paraded from the Anaconda and Branch 3 paraded from the old Legion Hall on Seventh Street each arriving about five minutes to the hour for the service. After the service the respective groups paraded back to their starting points.

In 1953 a delegation from Branch 3 met with the mayor and council at the Town of New Toronto with the intent on having a new cenotaph constructed in a more convenient and prominent location which would commemorate not only the First World War dead of 1914-1918 but also those who gave their lives for their country in the Second World War of 1939 - 45 and the Korean war of 1950-53.

After many meetings the town father passed a resolution that a new cenotaph would be erected on property adjacent to the Town Hall on the southeast corner of Birmingham and Fifth Streets. It was duly erected and was dedicated on the Remembrance Day Service on November 1954. The last service at this location was November 1982 as after further negotiations with the New City of Etobicoke this Cenotaph and the older one were both relocated to where you see them today in front of our present building - just in time for our Remembrance Day Service in November 1983.

At the VE Day Service on May 6, 1984 the members of Branch 3 gathered together to witness the re-dedication of these two cenotaphs and consecration of the ground they stand on as a constant reminder of those men and women who made the supreme sacrifice on behalf of their country and fellow men during both World Wars and the Korean War.

Each year services at the cenotaph are held on the Sunday before November 11th this being the beginning of Poppy Week on November 11th at 11:00 a.m. a small group of veterans gather at the cenotaph for a short wreath laying service in memory of those who paid the supreme sacrifice.

LONG BRANCH BRANCH 101 OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

Chartered in June 1927, Long Branch Branch 101 of the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League quickly established itself as a leading component of the local scene. In the ensuing 59 years, membership grew from 16 original charter members to the point now where Branch 101 boasts a roll-call in excess of 1100.

Many of the older types are still quite involved in Branch activities, and display at least as much energy, or more, as some of the young ones do.

Regrettably, none of the charter members remain with us today. But Ed Haylock, whose father, Joseph Edward, was a veteran of the South African campaign at the turn of the century, and whose uncle Tom was wounded and gassed in the Great World War, still visits the Branch regularly.

Early and Present Quarters

The first Branch-owned premises was a house "out in the woods" on Thirty-Fifth Street, which unfortunately was destroyed by fire in 1937. However, it was replaced shortly afterwards by a larger hall constructed next door, with much of the labour volunteered by Branch members and their friends to help minimize costs.

The main structure of the present building, erected at 3850 Lakeshore Boulevard West in co-operation with the incumbent reeve, Marie Curtis, and local builders, craftsmen, suppliers and merchants, was formally opened on May 24, 1958. It was subsequently enlarged considerably and re-dedicated in June 1967.

Community Involvement

From its inception 59 years ago, the Branch has been active in the community, through provision of financial assistance to local hospitals, church organizations, scouts and guides, and sports groups. Local students have benefited from our annual public speaking, literary and poster contests sponsored under the Branch's youth education program, and from a university scholarship established by the Ladies Auxiliary in honour of the Branch's charter president, Dr. H.R. Adams.

Some Notable Members

Although not an original charter member, Harry Staughton became a highly respected president of the Branch. Our Quiet Room is named after that fine gentleman. Tastefully furnished in March 1962 by the Ladies Auxiliary, this room bears testimony to the indebtedness of the Branch to Harry, one of its three recipients of the Legion Meritorious Service Medal, the highest award that Dominion Command confers on a member. The others have been Reta McCrindle (deceased) and Bruce Robertson. Harry's LMSM also bore the Palm Leaf in recognition of his outstanding service to the community.

Earlier, in 1950, Harry had been made a life member, and on November 12, 1981, he was presented with a watch and fob by the Branch to celebrate his 90th birthday, accompanied by a congratulatory message from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

George Thistle, a past Branch President now living in Orillia, remembers hell on earth as a combatant with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in three of the big battles in Europe during the Great War.

Dave Robb remains reticent about his winning of the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Force Cross during RCAF sorties over Europe as leader of a Lancaster bomber squadron during the Second World War.

Bruce Robertson, who flew 100 operations on armed reconnaissance and convoy escort missions with the RCAF in PBY Catalina flying boats in the Burmese campaign, remembers the good times with Len Birchall, his commanding officer for a time.

And Don (Fergie) Ferguson, one of our congenial bar stewards since 1980, would prefer to speak of his father-in-law, Fred Shaw, a charter member of the Branch and one of the early police chiefs of Long Branch, than to think of his 15 missions with the RCAF over occupied Europe as a rear-gunner in ZLQ "Queenie", a Canadian-built Lancaster bomber.

Lending a Hand

The Branch's members have always been ready to lend a helping hand wherever and whenever needed as, for example, in the housing and feeding many of those affected by Hurricane Hazel in October 1954 and by the Mississauga train derailment in 1979.

Other Significant Events to Remember

1962 - Branch 101 of the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League formally became Branch 101 of the Royal Canadian Legion.

1964 - Muriel Jacklin was sworn in as first ex-servicewoman of the Branch, by President Nat Pollock.

1965 - The Canadian "Red Ensign" was lowered in favour of the new "Maple Leaf" flag of Canada.

1966 - Part of our land was expropriated by the Ontario Government to accommodate the GO train service, for which the Branch was recompensed \$20,350.

1967 - An HMCS Haida plaque was presented to the Branch as a gift by Carl Rogers. A display of war memorabilia was officially dedicated in the new building extension. And, the Branch celebrated its 40th anniversary.

1969 - Return comradeship was established with Waterford Post 285 of the American Legion, Erie No. 470 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Erie (Millbrook) Post 773 of the American Legion, all in the State of Pennsylvania.

1974 - A plaque was donated to the Branch by the Ghurkas.

1975 - The Rainbow Room, formerly Orchid Room, had its name changed again... to the Red Caboose Room. And, a contingent of Dutch war veterans visited the Branch.

1976 - The 50th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion was celebrated for a week.

1977 - The 50th birthday of the Branch was celebrated, and Reverend Howard L. Shantz, M.A., D.D., was installed as Branch Padre.

1978 - Through an anonymous telephone call, a bomb threat to the Branch was received which, after a police search, proved to be a hoax. Through police and media efforts, the perpetrator was apprehended and suitably dealt with.

1979 - A friendship plaque was presented to the Branch by our confreres in American Legion (Millcreek) Post 773, Erie, PA.

1980 - The annual Toronto District D "Old Sweats" dinner was held at Branch 101, attended by more than 200 veterans of the First World War.

THE LADIES AUXILIARY OF BRANCH 101

Shortly after the Branch was chartered in June of 1927, the Ladies Auxiliary followed suit with 15 charter members.

Their first president was Mrs. Pete Nicholson, whose husband was a charter member of the Branch, later to become a Branch president.

A most notable member of the Auxiliary and their eldest is Lil Staughton who recalls that, during the dark days of the Second World War, members of the Auxiliary were on hand to "meet and greet" the wounded and disabled who were returning day and night at Union Station. They could also be seen handing out gift parcels to Armed Forces personnel departing from Exhibition Stadium for the various theatres of war.

For her exploits, the Auxiliary has awarded Lil a Medal of Merit and Bar and, in 1985, a 60th diamond jubilee pin. In 1976, she was awarded the Legion's 50th Anniversary service medal and, this year, the Legion Jubilee service medal.

Without a doubt, Branch 101 would not exist as it stands today were it not for the steady and dedicated contributions of time, services and money provided by the members of the Ladies Auxiliary. In particular, the ladies have contributed substantially over the years with the proceeds from their weekly bingo and euchre nights, and their catering function. May God bless them all!

COL. J.E.L. STREIGHT LEGION BRANCH 210

The Early Years

Etobicoke Branch 210 of the Canadian Legion of the British Empire League was granted its charter on August 12, 1931. In those days meeting halls, like many other facilities, were in short supply, with the result that the Branch's monthly meetings were held in private homes until a room was finally found in the Islington Public School on Cordova Road.

As membership grew, the need for more suitable quarters became evident, and a new home was found at the corner of Bloor and Islington in "Mrs. Dyer's Store". This was really just an oversize room, but it filled the bill as a place to hold social events and membership business meetings. The year was still 1931.

These were the days of the "depression" and, almost equally depressing, "prohibition". Fund-raising was difficult in the extreme, and red ink often appeared on the Branch's bank statement, but the members were survivors by nature, and their perseverance ultimately prevailed. Card games, dances, monthly draws and "good cheer" raffles provided the main revenue for the fledgling organization.

Turning the Corner

At this point, Col. J.E.L. Streight appeared on the scene. A veteran officer of the Boer War and the First World War, the colonel perceived the plight of the Legionnaires, who still were lacking a permanent home. He offered them, at modest rent, a building on Bloor Street just west of Islington Avenue, then known as Ryan's Barbeque and Dance Hall. This building was located on what is now the east parking lot of our present property. In 1933 we moved in, and there we remained until 1944.

A Time of Transition

The Second World War, which exploded upon us in 1939 and continued unabated for six years, saw thousands of young men and women gathered to the Armed Forces. Our need was starkly clear --larger premises to accommodate the flood of veterans who would be returning to our midst.

Early in 1943, largely through the efforts of then branch president, William McKenzie, a plan was conceived to erect a new building that would be large enough to meet our foreseeable needs and prestigious enough to befit our growing municipality, and to serve as a tribute to those who had served and as a memorial to those who inevitably would not return.

A committee was formed to approach Col. Streight with a proposal to purchase the property. It was hoped that an arrangement would be agreed upon whereby the

Branch could embark on the immense task of assembling the necessary to funding for a new building. The colonel was so generous in his terms that it seemed only fitting to re-name the Branch in his honour. And so it was that we became Col. J.E.L. Streight Branch 210 of the Canadian Legion--B.E.S.L., after the appropriate changes had been made to our charter. But, we still had no building!

Under the leadership of Comrade McKenzie and the good offices of Cyrus B. Payne and other early members, an initial amount of \$20,000 was subscribed to cover preliminary costs. To raise the balance of funds needed, it was again Col. Streight who came to the rescue in a unique way. He provided funds to construct a bungalow on Dundas Street, to be put up as the winning prize in a gigantic raffle. The house became known as "Victory Villa", and thousands of raffle tickets were sold world-wide at \$1.00 each. It is comforting to recall that, when the lucky ticket was drawn at a huge picnic and rally at Central Park, the winner was a young soldier serving at the time in Germany.

With funds in hand, the original \$20,000 of interim financing was retired, and construction was begun of the present building designed by architects Hanks and Erwin and completed by general contractor James Seback. The new building was officially dedicated, free of debt, on Sunday, December 16, 1945.

After V-J Day

Membership continued to grow in the immediate post-war period, and with growth came gradual change.

In 1949, Charles D. Hardy was the first WW-II veteran to be elected president of the Branch. Under his leadership, veterans of both wars became united on the executive council to begin building a solid future for the Branch. We were at last off and running.

But we had not run far when in 1950 a fire broke out in the lower clubrooms. In retrospect, this might now be viewed as a blessing in disguise for, in the ensuing years, major modifications and improvements resulted, including installation of a new bar, a soundproof drop-ceiling, new furniture and carpeting.

This was a time also when new community projects were undertaken. The Branch became involved with the Kingsway Youth Baseball League, the West Mall Hockey Association and other youth-oriented programs and activities. These programs and several others are still among Branch 210's ongoing community projects.

To digress for a moment, on the 35th anniversary of the Canadian Legion in 1960, the Queen gave her consent for the Legion to affix the "Royal" before its name. The national organization was then officially re-named the Royal Canadian Legion.

During the early 1960's, development of our fine auditorium was begun. Known as the Coach Light Room, this facility has proven to be a boon, not only to Branch 210, but to the community as a whole. An elevator was installed to facilitate the work of the Ladies Auxiliary, that indefatigable group of dedicated women to whom we owe so much.

The Perils of Progress

November 15, 1966, was a red-letter day in the history of the Branch. By registered post we were advised that part of our lands were to be expropriated by Metro Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission as a result of the inexorable westward thrust of the subway. We were to lose some 12,000 square feet of land, the equivalent of forty parking spaces. It was time to fight, again!

The ensuing battle was classic. But, when the smoke had cleared, the negotiators won more land than they had surrendered, and the expropriating authorities picked up the tab, which was sizable.

Almost a decade of serenity followed until, on Good Friday, 1975, a truly serious blaze erupted, which caused heavy fire damage to the roof and upper floors of the building, and water damage to the lower areas.

Once more the fight-back spirit prevailed, and by mid-summer Branch 210 had been restored "ship-shape and Bristol-fashion".

The Uxorius Years

The "seventies" were marked by extraordinary and profound changes in the Legion organization. Long the bastion of male chauvinism, the Branch, which had successfully fought financial struggles, fires, floods, legal battles, politicians and the Establishment, fell before the subtle blandishments of the fair sex. The ancient shibboleths of masculine suzerainty disappeared. The "no females" rule passed into history. Ex-service women were granted full membership privileges.

Other major changes have since been implemented, including broadening of the Associate class of membership to accept sons and daughters of ex-service personnel, with full voting privileges and the right to hold office.

Looking Forward

This year, as we observe the Diamond Jubilee of the Royal Canadian Legion, we are proud that Branch 210 is not only flourishing, but is also planning further expansion in new premises. Construction is expected to get underway by the Shipp Corporation in the near future. The new building will be located immediately to the west of our present site and will be totally modern in every respect. Floor area will be about doubled and parking facilities greatly expanded.

And Finally

Our history is rich in colour and content. If we have heroes, they are those who serve in the front line of Legion and those who have done so in the past. Our Branch is the lengthening shadow of all who have gone before. Unfortunately, a roll-call of the men and women to whom we are collectively indebted is not possible here. Nor is a detailed chronological recitation of events. We have touched only the highlights.

ON THE DISTAFF SIDE OF BRANCH 210

The late Joseph Conrad wrote..."Being a woman is a terribly difficult task, since it consists principally in dealing with men". The Ladies Auxiliary of Col J.E.L. Streight Branch 210 have met this challenge and won the day.

It was in 1931, the year of the Branch's founding, that the Ladies Auxiliary of the Branch was formed under the presidency of Ethel Ide, who served in that office until 1935.

As Legion members on the uxorial side, they have made much more than a token contribution to the Branch during their 55-year existence. Their motto is "Service" and they have abundantly fulfilled that mandate. Their largesse, their dedication and their untiring efforts are boundless. As visitors to the sick and aging, as sponsors of fetes and parties for the benefit of the disadvantaged, and as donors of bursaries and charitable grants, their ongoing sense of duty to the community marks their dedication. We appreciate them! We honour them! We salute them!

YEARS OF REMEMBRANCE

Fifty-five years have come and gone since the founding of Legion Branch 210. In that time members have never forgotten "the fallen". No monthly meeting is ever opened without the "Silent Tribute" that marks our community of spirit with those who died on foreign soil.

Each November, the Branch invites all citizens to join them in a ceremony of Remembrance.

In the early years, these events were marked by parades to various churches, and subsequently to a memorial cross erected in Central Park. Now, the service is held at the cenotaph at Etobicoke's civic centre.

This remarkable structure rises eighty feet and is embossed with a 60-foot silver cross. It stands as a credit to Branch 210 and to the municipal council of the day. In an historic ceremony the cenotaph was formally dedicated on Nov. 3, 1968,

coincident with the 50th anniversary of Armistice Day. It is probably the tallest war memorial in the land, apart from the Peace Tower in Ottawa.

[Ed. note: This item is based on earlier accounts on the subject by Branch 210 padre, Reverend Stewart B. East, ----, D.D. and honorary padre Reverend Father L. Burns.)

RANGERS BRANCH 213 OUR FIRST FIFTY-FIVE YEARS

The Queens Rangers in Upper Canada a regiment formed by Lt. Col. John Grave Simcoe who was destined to become the first Lt. Governor of that Province.

Throughout the course of subsequent history the Rangers were to stand in the forefront of epic battles and receive many honours and decorations. An American General of the Revolutionary War had once remarked that the Queens Rangers was the most efficient single unit on either side. Praise from the enemy is praise indeed.

Rangers Branch 213 of the Royal Canadian Legion draw its name from this illustrious regiment.

IN THE BEGINNING

Almost every branch of the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League developed from humble origins, Ranger Branch 213 is no exception.

The forerunner of the Canadian Legion was the Great War Veteran Association which had presence in Weston as early as 1919. Lacking permanent quarters this small group led an itineran existence until 1921 when they acquired a small bungalow on Elsemere Avenue.

It is an interesting side-note that in 1928 an independent group formed St. Alban Branch 118 with its headquarters in the 100 Building on Church Street. This Branch was fated to short life for in 1931 surrendered its charter and amalgamated with Ranger Branch 213 when the latter received its charter in November 1931. The Charter President was W. Matthew's S. The transition from GMVA to the Canadian Legion and the amalgamation of the former St. Alban Branch with the newly formed Branch 213 in 1931 created need for larger premises which were found over a garage on the other side of Elsemere. There we remained until 1949.

MOVING AHEAD

The year between 1930 and 1931 were uneventful. The great depression was upon us money was hard to raise and growth was slow, but Legionnaires are fighters by nature and they persevered. Membership grew slowly reaching only about forty five but scarcely formidable force in 1939 changed all that. The world exploded in cataclysm and Branch 213 alone with the Ladies Auxiliary responded as expected. The records show that the Weston Legion War Service Fund during 1940 - 1945 contributed over half a million cigarettes, 1,570 pairs of knitted socks and two hundred gift parcels to the 910 members of the armed services from Weston serving overseas.

The members of Rangers Branch 213 foresaw the flood of service men and women who would be returning to our midst and began to make plans to accommodate them. The great need was for funds to meet the cost of expansion.

With entrepreneur business acumen they decided to invest in real estate by purchasing the property adjacent to the club premises. Every member made personal commitment and contributions regularly each month toward the cost of acquisition. Then the Ladies Auxiliary added nearly \$600 outside contributions provided sufficient funds to make the downpayment. Three years later the mortgage was burned in a special ceremony. The time had come to realize profit and proceed to the business of acquiring a new and more viable location.

The Town of Weston came to the rescue in more way than one. First they donated a site at 14 Main Street and then further assisted in the project of financing, the Town also contributed \$5,000 from a special "Armed Forces Fund" which had been earlier established. The new hall was appropriately named the "Legion Memorial Hall". Although it had human interest this rather momentous occasion the members contributed their own physical labour. The dedication ceremony was held May 6, 1949.

The trial and tribulation of the last eleven years were offset by success achieved in Branch activities such as street dances and raffles and by support from private donors. The tireless efforts in labour and fund-raising by the Ladies Auxiliary also provided much needed support.

THE CHANGING SCENE

As the sixties dawned burgeoning membership forces us to recognize that the time had come again to raise our sights and dream great dreams. We had reached yet another crossroads, another moment of truth. Our old building was not only inadequate but was located in a "dry area" which did nothing for the future success or even survival of the Branch.

We thought about our immediate requirements but with the potential for further expansion in the future. We needed a location where a license would not be arbitrarily denied. We found a place at 4 Dennison Road East, a house and lot belonging to the Dennison estate.

It is largely to Jack Burges that we owe a debt of gratitude for his entrepreneurial skill in negotiation to turn our dream into reality. Negotiations were opened in 1958 and later in June 1960 we moved in with full hearts and an empty treasury, in fact the branch purse had no funds to cover the cost of stocking the bar. This shortfall was personally bridged by Harry Clark. We were referring to our enterprise as "Phase I" How indomitable is the human spirit!

The sixties proved to be time for real growth. In an eight year period Branch 213 was awarded Command Annual Six Percent Increase Award.

Midway through the decade the need for premise expansion was recognized. Phase Two was under way.

Contracts were let and second storey and the little ugly duckling that was our home was transformed into a prestigious edifice. On April 10, 1965 the formal opening ceremonies took place benchmarking the history of Branch 213. Many distinguished guest, including civic officials, members of parliament and senior Legion officers were in attendance.

In recognition of the immense role played by the Ladies Auxiliary it was deemed appropriate that a special room be set aside for their uses. It is not exactly coincidental that this room is convenient to the kitchen.

THE WAY WE GROW

Throughout the seventies and into the eighties growth continued apace under the guidance and leadership of a series of ever able president and senior executive offices and the precedent setting inauguration of our first lady president Peggy Hamilton who went on to serve in that office from 1971 to 1983. It is almost redundant to observe that the success of any organization depends finally on the acumen dedication and administrative skills of its executive officers. Branch 213 has been fortunate in this regard with a roster of able and responsible leaders. With pardonable pride we point to some Rangers Officers who have gone on to higher recognition:

Ria Collins, Past Branch President who has served through Zone, District and Provincial offices and is Past president of Ontario Provincial Command.

Alex Dobson, Past Deputy Zone D-2 Commander

Jim Weir, Past Deputy Zone Commander

Gord Moore, Past Zone D2 Commander

Clare Wall, Provincial Service Bureau Officer

Tom Latus, District D Sports Officer

Mike Hamilton, Past Deputy Zone D-2 Commander

Ernie Halcrow, Deputy Zone D-2 Commander

RANGERS ON PARADE

The Pipe and Drum Band under Pipe Major Wally Eden A Trinkwo and Doug Stinson have performed in many parades and tournaments through Canada and the USA. The colour guard under the command of our present Sgt-At-Arms Bob Carsla and his predecessor have received accolades where it has appeared adding greatly to the reputation and prestige of Branch 213.

THE SPORTING LIFE

Sports have traditionally played an important role in the varied activities of Ranger Branch. We have enjoyed many success over the years but win, lose or draw a sense of friendly competition has always prevailed.

Our sports officer over the years have contributed to the spirit of what good sportsmanship is all about. Tom Latus in this position since 1968 has an enviable record. His first year in office was marked by the winning of the Ontario Provincial Cribbage Championship in Orillia. For over 10 years Ranger cribbage team have played in home in home series with Queen's Own Rifles Branch 344.

A Team from Rangers have competed in Provincial championship play in euchre, snooker and shuffleboard and have won Zone and District championships. It was Tom Latus who convened the euchrethon for five years which raised over \$10,000 for Legion Village. These were grueling 18 hour non-stop events, enough ties for the mettle of the most intrepid players. Ten pin bowling began eight years ago with a league of twenty players and now boasts 48 enthusiasts.

Darts is the ever popular mainstay of club activity. Horseshoes is a very popular activity. Hockey, baseball and broom ball are the other activities in which Branch 213 compete against other local teams.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Many of the men and women who hear the haunting drum roll march await rendezvous with destiny. Those who returned came back to a world forever changing even as they were forever changed. Then for a special elite who share camaraderie's and esprit de corps that is totally exclusive and inestinguishable. It is the copula that binds Legion members together.

Born out of the travail of war is the Royal Canadian Legion in nationwide fraternity of men and women dedicated to the service of the community - the well being of our former comrades in arms and their families and the preservation of the memory of those who died in the defense of Canada. The Legion epigraph translated from the Latin, says simply, "We will remember them!"

"Long quiet are the distant guns

Faint heard the bugle's cry

And muffled, roll the battle drums

Beneath a silent sky."

THE LADIES OF BRANCH 213

Our Ladies Auxiliary came into being with the granting of their charter on May 10, 1932.

The growth of the Auxiliary during the early years was not spectacular reaching only a scant two dozen by 1940 but their response to the outbreak of hostilities was typical of the result of a group of women. Reference has been made elsewhere to the volume of the contribution made to our young people of active service. Many of the resources to provide these comforts derive from the efforts of the Ladies Auxiliary who raised the funds through bingo games, weekly luncheons, draws, bazaars, dances and other special events including monthly games sponsored by the "Euchre Group" held in the members' homes.

In concert with Auxiliaries from other branches our ladies also took their turn serving the Transit Bureau at Union Station where they assisted, advised and provided small comfort to the troops passing through and greeted those who were returning from overseas.

With the coming of peace the Auxiliary found itself deeply involved in fund raising to help with the expense of relocating the Branch and the attendance increased cost of operation. To do this they began acting to service clubs and other associations as well as private social events and weddings while continuing with the Saturday night bingos. When in June 1960 we moved to Dennison Avenue it was the Auxiliary that provided the funds to equip the kitchen with the major appliances and covered other capital costs.

As in every organization their is always an on-going ebb and flow in membership through illness, retirement, transfer and other uncontrollable factors. From time to time the Auxiliary has feelen victim to these eventualities and it is tribute to their indefatigable spirit that the group continues to be vital and enduring unit of the Legion.

A tribute to Olive Mattison, 42 year member of the Branch 213 Ladies Auxiliary who served eleven years as President of the Auxiliary. She held no fewer than six Legion medals including the highest award for meritorious service from Dominion Command and a Certificate of Appreciation from Ontario Command. Miss Mattison a native of Weston, passed away in December 1982, in her 83rd year.

MIMICO--HUMBER BAY LEGION BRANCH 217, THE EARLY YEARS

Mimico - Humber Bay Branch 217 of the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League received its charter on January 8, 1932. Comrade Fred Wiltshire presided over the Branch or Post as we were known in those days, during the formative years of 1932 and 1933 Branch 217 was in fact a splinter group from Lakeshore Branch e a move that transpired when veterans in the Humber Bay Mimico area realized that they might be better served through having an identity of their own.

During the "hungry thirties" hardship was rampant because of the great depression and many veterans of the Great World War were hard pressed financially. A group of veterans from that area had set about in 1930 to obtain membership in the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League the name of the national organization of the time. After obtaining their charter, their first meetings were held in private homes until use was gained of St. Andrews Hall on Church Street and Royal York Road.

Shortly thereafter improved space was found on the second floor of the "piano factory" on Royal York Road and Newcastle Street.

Early in 1933, yet another move was made, this time to Bailey House on "the hill" located just west of Park Lawn Avenue on the street now named Legion Road. The house was formerly owned by Sir Henry Pellatt of Casa Loma fame. Rent was \$1.00 per year payable to the Township of Etobicoke.

Tales are still told of the good times had on the hill - dancing under the stars on Saturday nights to Wally Bromby's orchestra on the open air floor built by the members, of the corn roasts, the card parties and the picnics. Admission for some functions was 25 cents - which included sandwiches prepared by the Ladies Auxiliary and a quart of beer, bootlegged of course.

It was in November 1933 that the first memorial supper was held in Connaught Hall on Mimico Avenue. This memorable event grew into an annual supper known as "The Old Sweats Dinner" in honour of the Great War veterans from the surrounding district.

During this period many interesting articles of the happenings of the Branch were submitted to The Lakeshore Advertiser, and other media. These clippings are preserved in a book and bring back many memories not only of the Legion but of the local community as well.

Those were the depression years and only the great efforts and zeal of the members left, but their presidents and executive bodies led to survival of the Branch and eventual prosperity. There was very little cash to be had, and from 193_ to 193_ the presidents and their committees were hard pressed to finance the efforts and projects. To their everlasting credit they did succeed and Branch 217 did survive and flourish where many others failed because of financial or other problems.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND AFTERWARDS

In 1938 we moved to a house on Drummond Street at the time when clouds were gathering over Europe. Undaunted though, the members made plans to construct a new meeting hall on a lot next to the house. Many problems were encountered with shortage of materials and tradesmen and other obstacles. But these were eventually overcome and in 1951 a new building was completed. It was named The David Hornell Memorial Hall in honour of the Mimico man who was the first officer of the RCAF to be awarded (posthumously) the Victoria Cross.

Many members will be remembered for their contribution to the new hall on Drummond Street and to the veterans cause and the community. One well remembered is Comrade Charlie Ring a veteran of the Spanish American War who fought with Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. Comrade Ring was wounded at San Juan Hill in Texas. Later he moved to Mimico became a Canadian citizen and joined Branch 217. He is well remembered for his valuable aid in the construction of the new hall and for his many other projects in the Legion and the community.

During the second World War Branch 217 was kept busy with efforts to help shorten the conflict. Men and women from the area who volunteered for active service were remembered by parcels from the Branch. Many of those who returned became members of the Branch to carry on the traditions of the Legion.

Later in 1951 a disastrous fire gutted the recently opened building on Drummond Street. Many records and much memorabilia were destroyed. After the Drummond Street building had been gutted the decision was made to purchase the building we now own on Royal York Road and negotiations were entered into with the owner, William Morrisey. The building in itself had a very interesting and historical background being the old Edward Stock homestead. The Stock family were early pioneers in the area and had erected this home in 1887 when the surrounding area was farmland.

When negotiations were completed and the Branch moved into the new quarters there were many things to be done to prepare the building for meetings and social functions. A member was contracted to add on what is now the main hall - this was completed in 1954 and was followed by a string of other renovations.

The downstairs club room was completed in 1961 and during this time became known as the Royal Canadian Legion instead of the Canadian Legion--B.E.S.L.

In 1966 when the Town of Mimico was incorporated into the Borough of Etobicoke, the town colours were presented to the Branch for safe keeping.

Other renovations to the building included the addition of a ladies lounge, a new front entrance, extensive revision of the plumbing and heating and a new bar and kitchen on the second floor in the period from 1968 to 1973.

In 1983 another major renovation was completed with the combining of the ladies lounge and the men's clubroom into one opening and one 3 foot wall that separated the two.

AN EPILOGUE

Over the years the spiritual guidance of the Branch has been well serviced by Rev. W. Watt, Rev. R. A. Wigby and now Rev. Keith Kiddell.

"We will remember them is part of the Royal Canadian Legion's pledge and Branch 217 has exhibited this in many ways, one of these being a very active Poppy Committee. Over the years this committee has raised funds through the sale of poppies to alleviate the stress and hardship suffered by the less fortunate of our veterans and their families.

In its 54 year history through good times and lean, peace and war, Branch 217 has always been in the foreground of the community and of veterans and Legion activities. Sponsorship of hockey, ball, lacrosse and other team sports for the youth, the awarding of bursaries to deserving students, help for our members down on their luck, assistance to Red Cross blood donor clinics and outings for our senior citizens, are but a few of the many commendable endeavors undertaken by the members.

This is but a brief account of a proud Branch of The Royal Canadian Legion whose members now join comrades across Canada in celebrating their Jubilee year. The value of the Branch to veterans and to the community in difficult times for who can estimate the intangible spirit of co-operation that has been the backbone of the Branch through the years. For fifty four years - Mimico Humber Bay Branch 217 has been in the forefront with other larger and possibly more affluent branches.

We have tried to record here some of the good times along with the bad. May the Branch and the Legion celebrate many more birthdays in the years ahead.

THE LADIES OF BRANCH 217

The history of the Ladies Auxiliary of Branch 217 in a large way paralleled that of the Branch. Although the Auxiliary and the Branch have together suffered many frustrations, a great number of joint efforts have been brought to a happy conclusion through the generous co-operation of both arms of the Branch.

When Frances Lomax and her colleagues held their early meeting to prepare an application for a charter from Dominion Command, conditions were much different than they are today. The memory of the First World War was still fresh in the minds of the people. The suffering of the wounded who had returned home, the hardships of the widows and families of those who would never return and the deprivation caused by the great depression weight heavily on the shoulders of every one. However, this band of courageous ladies undertook to form an auxiliary arm of the still unchartered Mimico-Humber Bay Branch of the Canadian Legion. They were indeed very jubilant when their charter was granted on the same date as that of the Branch, January 8, 1932.

A special project of the Ladies Auxiliary is the bursary grants program. These grants are to veterans children who may need financial assistance to further their education. Funds for a special project of the Ladies Auxiliary is the bursary grants program. These grants are to veterans children who may need financial assistance to further their education. Funds for this and other projects have been raised through such endeavors as annual bazaars, rummage sales and bake sales.

In 1963 the first Ladies Concert was produced under the direction of Molly Dixon. These shows have become a tradition with Branch 217 and have been enjoyed by many people both at the Branch and at outside locations. In later years the show has been under the capable direction of Doreen Strader and Marion Boyd. The enthusiasm of all who take part marks the enthusiasm of all members of the Auxiliary in general.

One of the senior ladies, in age, but not in effort is Lil Redding, who joined the Ladies Auxiliary in 1933 and was initiated in January of that year by President Lomas in the old Mimico Town Hall, which was then the Methodist Church on Church Street. The Ladies held their meetings in the church and later at the old Beech House and Lil tells us that the dues were ten cents a month.

Many happy meetings were held in private homes where quilting bees, sewing parties, both social and card parties were held and many pleasant evenings can be recalled by the older members.

Another community effort of the ladies has been their aid to the Salvation Army for many years in canvassing the homes in the area for funds.

May this dedication that has been so greatly exhibited in the past fifty four years be carried through the next half century.

THE EARLY YEARS OF MAPLE LEAF BRANCH 266

While researching background material of the Branch, we came across transcripts of early interviews with three of our "old sweats" from the First World Ward - Tommy Bonner, George James, and Bill Gornell (now deceased).

Rather than rewriting history, we felt that the following excerpt from their interviews would make for an interesting insightful and informative account of 266's early years. We hope you will agree:

FORMING UP!

Bonner - "Now here is some of the history our Legion Branch 266. It was started as an independent club, with a committee of six veterans in the late twenties. The first president was Charles Jackson who worked at the CPO. Comrade Jackson was interested in veterans activities and had asked me and five more veterans if we were interested in starting our own club. Eventually the six of us gave Charles permission to apply for a charter, which was granted on October 4, 1934."

THE HOUSE ON JANE STREET

Bonner - "We all knew a man named Bill Ward who owned an old house on Jane Street and he would sell it for \$1,500. We had a meeting and put \$50.00 amounts us down - the rest was paid at 5% interest. Then we did some repairs amongst our little group. A veteran named Bob Johnson had no home, so we let him live in the house and look after it for us."

Bonner - "Then we decided how we could make some money to pay the interest and get some returned men to join. The committee got together, but West Toronto was dry, so one of the boys said, 'If we can get some cases of beer to sell, we would soon get some customers.' A member said he would look after the beer, which he did, and we sold it at a good profit."

Bonner - "Our furniture was an old Quebec heater and a couple of sofa chairs. We made a table and were doing fine till one day the police were coming to see us. Bob burned all our records in the stove so that the police could not summon us for selling beer without a license. So we, the committee had to find some other way to make some money."

James - "As far back as I can remember, the club bought a four room cottage and made it into two rooms. It had a small bar and big old box to keep the beer in. Vic Hill used to bring the ice in the summertime every other day. The club would hold between thirty and forty members. It was filled all the time. Bill Howard was the first steward. He worked the day shift. Bill Hanson was the night steward."

Gornell - "Everybody turned out for a parade and on meeting nights. Everybody helped the club to get along."

James - "Before they got their charter there were a few members and myself who would go over on a Sunday afternoon and a few times during the week for beer at 20 cents a pint or three quarts for a \$1. But somehow the law walked in and the club was charged with bootlegging! It was closed down!"

Gormell - "I couldn't tell you the year we broke away from that Army and Navy. When I joined the club, I know I was made 25th or 26th member"

James - "After they received their charter in October 1934, there were about 70 members. Most of them were Englishmen, Scotsmen and a few Canadians. There was a piano in one corner. When the piano was played and the sing-song was in progress it was just like Armistice Day. This was a weekly ritual on the weekends. There was always a card game going on, cribbage and euchre."

Gormell - "At one meeting night on Jane Street during the early part of the Second World War, the club voted for \$25 towards the British War Veterans Fund. Going home that night I was thinking to myself \$25 is not much. I had a gold watch and chain which needed repair. I took it to the watchmaker and got it repaired. I went back Friday night for the shindig and I gave the watch to Bob Ede and told him to raffle it off towards the \$25.

"The time came for me to draw that lucky ticket, who should I pick but my friend. I could have dropped through the floor. Anyway, he gave it back for the next month. That watch was raffled off three times in three months, that fund swelled us good - close to \$85 - if I am not mistaken - for the British Veterans Fund. Nearly \$100 was eventually sent over.

The funny part was there was a Telegram reporter there and he wanted to take a pitcher of the winner and me standing behind the table holding the watch up.

The next night I was looking for the picture in the paper. There was no picture, just a write-up and I enquired why the picture wasn't in the paper, they told me there were too many beer bottles on the table so they couldn't publish the picture. We had a good laugh about that!"

Bonner - "When we were still located on Jane Street the committee thought of another way to make money. I would go to a small store on Dundas Street at High Park Avenue and rent fifty bingo cards for one dollar. We rented the upstairs of that old small store on Dundas at High Park Avenue and rent fifty bingo cards for one dollar. We rented the upstairs of the old Fire Hall Ernie Woods as there was not enough room in our premises. The prizes were groceries and this helped us to raise a little money every three weeks towards a new building as well as for the unfortunate veterans in the vicinity. We advertised on a notice board on the front lawn near the sidewalk at the house on Jane Street, which helped us a great deal to get players to come in and join us."

Grovel - "I helped to get that Jane Street hall ready, but it got too small for us. We were going to build on the same premises but that fell through, so we bought a house on Dundas Street next to the club we are in now." (Ed note - this was in the 1942-43 period.)

THE FARMHOUSE ON DUNDAS STREET

Bonner - "We had a veteran join the Legion, who was a lawyer named Captain. A small committee was formed and he stated that he had instructions to sell the old building and land on Dundas Street West and if the committee could find \$10,000 then he could purchase it. We then went and saw the bank manager along on Dundas Street, who advised us the best thing to do was to sell bonds and he would lend us \$10,000. We had the bonds drawn up in denominations of \$10. and \$20 paying 5% interest. The bonds were sold to members and anybody else who would buy them. After selling the house on Jane Street and issuing the bonds, the property on Dundas Street was purchased."

Gormell - "In our spare time we all volunteered and tore all the inside of the house on Dundas Street. We all pitched in every night till we got finished late at night at 11:00 o'clock, sometimes 11 o'clock at night. We gave our service free. We didn't expect anything, but it only helped the club"

Grovel - "When we got the hall ready, I supplied the lights, kept them supplied with lights. I brought the water pipe free of charge and donated that. I wasn't the only one all the club members helped every night until we got the place finished."

Grovel - "When we were ready to move in from the house on Jane Street each one carried the tables and chairs and marched along Jane Street. We pushed the piano up along the street, playing the piano along the way - and we all had a good time."

James - "The RCAF gave Legion Branch 266 an invitation to take part in their next parade at Manning Pool in 1942 at the Exhibition Grounds. We were commended for our great turnout at this parade. Three carloads went to that parade. After which we were all invited to the Air Force canteen. We could drink all the beer we wanted at 10 cents a pint. As you can imagine quite a bit of beer was consumed. The six fellows who went in my car decided to go to the old National Hotel on the corner of King and Sherbourne Streets, which was noted for the lovely hookers...".

James - "In the summertime they would charter a couple of buses, load up with beer and head off to Midland on a fishing expedition. As soon as we got out of the city the beer would start to flow. When we got to Midland we hired a boat. Most would sit on deck drinking beer and a handful would fish. When it was time to go home most of them would go to the fish store and buy fish they would proudly carry home claiming to have caught themselves."

THE NEW HALL ON DUNDAS STREET

Grovel - "The club on Dundas Street prospered. The house got too small for us so we decided to float bonds and we built up the hall as you got it now - a lot of hard work, a lot of volunteers for nothing - and we got a big kick out of doing it for nothing."

Bonner - "The property of Dundas Street was paid for in five years. Then we the committee decided to tear down the old farmhouse and anybody that wanted any one of the bricks or old lumber could have what they wanted. Then we all got together and cleaned the property up."

Grovel - "When we got that fixed up we got a free bottle of beer and enjoyed ourselves doing it."

Bonner - "With the money we raised we got busy and built Legion 266 as it now stands with the help of different members, most who gave their time free to get a nice new home for the veterans and their relations. With the different presidents carrying on with the good work of the members, it had all helped to make it as it is today. (Ed note. The building cornerstone was placed on May 11, 1946, by Victoria Cross winner "Toppy" Topham, a renowned member of Branch 266.)

Grovel - "We used to have lots of entertainment to get the funds to run the club."

James - "They had a number of members who used to go to other clubs to compete in euchre or cribbage tournaments. They used to do really well. Every month or two months they would hold a church parade - alternating between the Church of the Advent, the Salvation Army and St. Paul's Angling Church on Willard Avenue. These parades were led by Boy Scouts Bands and the Salvation Army Band. They would always have a good turnout. People would come out on their verandahs to see them all march by dressed in full regalia - cream pants and navy blue blazers. The colour party bearing the flags followed the bands."

LOOKING BACK!

Bonner - "Those were great days getting established. But unfortunately, a lot of the names escape me now."

James - "Most of the members were on a very small pension, some ready to retire and others were on the pogie. It is too bad that the time for them were not as they are today."

Grovel - "Those were the good old days at 266."

CORPORAL FREDERICK GEORGE TOPHAM, V.C.

1917-1974

Born in Toronto "Toppy" Topham was educated here before working in the mines at Kirkland Lake. He enlisted on August 30, 1942 and served at home and abroad as a medical orderly.

March 24, 1945, while serving with the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion he defied heavy enemy fire to treat casualties sustained in a parachute drop east of the Rhine near Wesel. Rejecting treatment for his own severe face wounds he continued to rescue the injured for six hours. While returning to his company he saved three occupants of a burning carrier which was in danger of exploding. For these exceptional deeds Topham was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest decoration for valour in the British Commonwealth.

Corporal Topham laid the cornerstone at Sunnybrook Memorial Hospital on November 10, 1945 and also the cornerstone of Legion Branch 266 our present building on May 11, 1946. After the war he resided in Etobicoke, worked as an emergency repairman for Toronto Hydro and became a member of Maple Leaf Branch 266. He died suddenly on May 31 1971 at the age of 54.

THE LADIES AUXILIARY OF MAPLE LEAF BRANCH 266

The organizers of Branch 266 Ladies Auxiliary held their first meeting in King George school on St John's Road with about 26 members present and a Mrs. Pegg in the chair.

After gaining their charter on April 17, 1942 they held card games in each others homes every week to raise money for the equipment needed to furnish a kitchen in the Branch Hall and also to buy wool to knit for the army. They campaigned with the men on poppy days and worked hard at veterans functions. During the war many of the ladies went down to Union Station to meet the soldiers and help check their bags and give them meal tickets if they were waiting to meet other trains.

The ladies often visited Park View Lodge where there were always quite a number of war brides of veterans still overseas who had no one here. They were always pleased to see the Ladies Auxiliary and receive their goodies and a little cash. The ladies also formed a kitchen band and went to different clubs and played old-time songs, which everyone enjoyed greatly.

From these somewhat humble beginnings, the Branch 266 Ladies' Auxiliary has grown to more than 80 members. They are ever active in their support of the Branch and the community. A pet project for many years has been their weekly euchre, held every Thursday evening in the upstairs hall.

PAST PRESIDENTS - MAPLE LEAF BRANCH 266

1935-37	Charles Jackson	1961-63	James Gillman
1938	Fred Ryves	1964-65	Thomas Cuthberson
1939-41	Robert Reid	1966-67	James Drysdale
1942	Joseph Bell	1968-69	Thomas Cuthberson
1943-44	Robert Whitton	1970-71	James Gillman
1945-46	Albert Dunk	1972	Harold McKay
1947	Charles Grainger	1973-74	Ed Ford
1948-49	Reginald Webber	1975-77	Joseph McIsaac
1950-53	Walter Jemmett	1977-84	Ed Ford
1954-55	Russell McMullen	1984-85	Ed Gratton
1956-59	James Drysdale	1985-	Ed Ford
1960	Norman Gilbert		

CUTLINES

Located on the west side of Jane Street just before Dundas Street and decorated here with Union Jack and Victoria Bond Poser early in the Second World War, this bungalow served as quarters for Maple Leaf Branch 266 from about 1931 to 1943. The sign above the doorway reads "Canadian Legion - B.E.S.L. Post 266. In those days, Legion branches were sometimes termed "posts".

In 1943 the members of Post 266 transplanted their doorway sign to this old farmhouse on Dundas Street West, in which they held their meetings and social functions until a new building was erected on the site in 1946 - 47.

The new building, erected at 359_ Dundas Street West on a cornerstone laid by Victoria Cross winner and Branch 266 member "Toppy" Topham on May 11, 1946, was officially opened in 1941 and has served the members admirably ever since.

CORONATION BRANCH 286 OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

On November 11, 1918 at the close of the Great World War it was time to go home for the thousands of Canadians service their country in faraway places.

Shortly after their return a national organization was formed known as the Great War Veterans Association. This organization along with others was founded to provide assistance in meeting the needs of veterans and their families.

In 1926, the GWVA, the Canadian Legion, and the British Empire Service League merged into a new group named the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League. A charter in this organization was granted to Coronation Branch 286 on April 2, 1937. On April 5, 1939 a charter was received by the Ladies Auxiliary.

Under the leadership of Padre R. Davidson, charter president of the new branch the first executive was formed and the tough paths ahead were laid down for consideration.

To begin with executive meetings were held in private homes of members and a 5 cent levy per member was paid to the homeowner. One of the first decisions made was with regard to membership dues, which were decided as follows: "Annual membership fee to be \$2 per annum and in the event that a member be in dire straights, payment would be accepted at 50 cents quarterly.

The property on which the Branch now stands was donated by Mr. Bert Irwin, a prominent member of the community on Irwin Road on which the Branch is located, was named after him. Donation of the land enabled the executive to plan construction of the original building of Branch 286 with a small but dedicated membership, constructed went ahead with donated materials and voluntary labour, a way in which most Legion Branches began operations. The first premises to be constructed consisted of a single story facility, which from 1942 to 1949 was also used by the local Board of Education during daytime hours as a school.

A volunteer firehall was located on the northwest corner of the property on Irwin Road, which served as a temporary home for special and executive meetings until such time at the new facility was opened and dedicated by the Branch.

As membership increased in the year that followed and new Legion comrades expressed a desire to participate actively, stand for office, and become leaders in furthering the aims and objects of the organization, plans for improvement and extension of the hall were initiated.

Thence from that single story premises on the original 2 acre property we now enjoy a facility that includes a banquet and assembly hall that accommodates up to 200 people, a dining room run by the Ladies Auxiliary, a lounge with full bar, a downstairs bar and lounge and a fully equipped clubroom.

Plans for the future include further extension of Irwin Hall with a view to increasing banquet accommodations and providing a new cloakroom and storage areas and a wheelchair access to washrooms.

Over the years the service bureau of Branch 286 has been fully supportive not only of veteran members, but also in compliance with Royal Legion dictates of non members with veteran status in times of need. A representative of the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs visits the branch on the first Wednesday of the month to listen and offer guidance to any veteran requiring assistance.

Beside caring for personal needs, we arrange for hospitalized veterans to visit the Branch for various social functions and entertainment. The committee responsible for these activities also runs bingo evenings at Sunnybrook Hospital on a regular schedule, so that those unable to attend our functions the Branch still receive our care and attention.

The Legion's involvement in community affairs and its support of senior citizens groups is far reaching throughout Metro Toronto and district and not confined to our own immediate area. Over the years money has been donated to Metro Toronto Legion Village, Metro Toronto Finchurst Legion Homes, Etobicoke Seniors Homes in Rexdale and Etobicoke Parks and Recreation for seniors, also the St. John Ambulance, the Cancer Fund, Woodstock and Barrie Disaster Funds, Hospital for Sick Children, Etobicoke General Hospital, Salvation Army, Arthritis Society, World Vision Organization, War Amps, Annual Metro Toronto Police Games and the Canadian National Games.

Junior activities also receive donations such as the Etobicoke Swim-A-Thon, Rexdale Soccer, bowling, baseball, softball, hockey, scouts, boxing and the Navy and Air Force cadets, and our banquet hall has been made available for all sorts of local youth functions at no charge.

Another important part of our community support is that afforded to the eight high schools in the area. Bursaries and other scholastic awards are put forward annually to encourage recipients to further their education and commit themselves to involvement in business and vocational training.

Donations to community projects from Branch 286 from 1980 through 1985, have totalled \$81,088.

Students within Branch 286 poppy area are invited annually to compete for Legion awards in the essay, poem, posters and public speaking competitions. The elementary and secondary have proved to be very supporting in encouraging their students to take active part in this, our Youth Education Program.

On parade, Branch 286 has always been strong in turnout, and has been well led by its presidents, pipe band and colour parties. Unfortunately in recent years our own band has folded and we have had to seek the support of others to lead us when needed. This has proved successful and with a full colour party we have been able to compete with the best in Toronto Zone D1 Command. Annual parades include Warriors Day at the CNE, our annual D-Day service at Sanctuary Park and the Branch's Remembrance Service held each year during Legion Week and on November 11 - the national day of Remembrance.

Brigade 286 of the Order of the St. John Ambulance accompany us on most parades. They are the first St. John Brigade in Canada to be sponsored by a branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. They bear the number of our Branch 286.

Branch sports activities have been expanded over the years to include not only indoor sports but also outdoor sports.

Bowling league teams have been competing since 1951 and curling since 1958 both continue to thrive. Indoor activities include darts, shuffleboard, snooker, euchre and cribbage and in summer there's our golf tournaments and fun days.

Awards won in various events at the Zone, District and Provincial levels are on display in the Branch's clubrooms.

Entertainment in the Branch has seen many changes in our 42 years of operation, but with awareness for the need to enjoy celebrative times together, the opportunity to do so has never been overlooked. For instance, the first Branch picnic in 1938 involved a boat trip to Port Dalhousie at a return fare of 20 cents.

Although prices since then have increased dramatically, our annual New Years Eve dances, Monte Carlo Nights, corn roasts and ham and turkey rolls continue to receive full support.

The children are not forgotten either. Over the years their introduction to an inclusion in Legion events should be a memorial held dear to them, summer picnics, Christmas parties, Warriors Day Parades at the CNE and the visits from Santa Clause at Christmas-time.

Bingo commenced in 1937 and continues to this day. It attracts not only members of the branch, but also the local community who have always been made welcome.

In this the Diamond Jubilee of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 286 has been strong in support of the 60th anniversary celebrations. The special tulips imported from Holland, a special strain, blood red in colour and plated last fall will have bloomed by now as a symbol of our Remembrance of Them. Ceremonies and celebrations are not over yet - much is planned to round our commemorative year.

To forget the service given by the Ladies Auxiliary of Branch 286 during our years of struggle would be remissful. To begin with their strength in numbers was scant, but their response at the outbreak of the Second World War was typical of a determined group of women to help in a time of need. They raised funds in conjunction with other branches to assist and supply comfort to troops overseas. Their efforts after hostilities were devoted to raising funds for the improvements of the Branch's facilities and to the introduction of catering to social and private events. Our ladies continue to uphold the aims and objects of the Royal Canadian Legion and hope to receive help from younger members now joining the ranks. It is a tribute to the Ladies Auxiliary and their indefatigable spirit that the group continues to be a vital and enduring unit of the Branch.

We continue strong in our endeavor and with Pride in our Past, Faith in our Future - we will dedicate ourselves with fervor to all future commitments.

LEGION--WHAT DOES IT STAND FOR?

- L** Loyalty to Canada to organized government, and to our Sovereign.
 - E** Encouragement to junior and senior groups to continue in their activities, through our support
 - G** Giving of our voluntary services, to promote goodwill and harmony in our community
 - I** Interest in the welfare of our needy veterans and their families in providing entertainment, care and advice.
 - O** Opportunities for students to further their education through Legion sponsored bursaries, scholarships and other incentives
 - N** Never to forget the aims and objects of our organization in support of the cause we are dedicated to.

MALTON LEGION BRANCH 528

Malton veterans of World War 2 were not as slow as those of the First World War in organizing veterans' service groups, but their reasons for uniting were the same as those of the Royal Canadian Legion's founders sixty years ago, in 1926.

After the second world war, the veterans of Malton felt the need to unite for social contact and comradeship, as well as an urge to serve their community in peacetime. Thence, the Malton Veterans' Association was formed in the late forties.

After much struggle to hold the Association together, an application for a Branch Charter in the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League was accepted, and the charter granted. So it was that Branch 528 Malton was born in the fall of 1951.

The first years as a branch of the Canadian Legion were an up-hill climb. For a branch without a "home" there wasn't much to offer a fellow veteran except a membership card.

Community facilities and civic utilities in Malton at that time, were little better than those to be found in the boon-docks.

Social activities were limited to one or two a year. Old die-hard prohibitionists did little to promote a feeling of "good will" toward this new veterans' organization now established within the community.

The lean years rolled by, with very little growth in membership and little broadening of activities. Not until Branch 528 gained a voice in municipal government through an incumbent president did they get a break. Public utilities and even paved streets and parking areas were installed at local recreational facilities. These improvements were the turning point in Branch 528's early life.

A big increase in social activities resulted, and membership in the Branch grew by leaps and bounds. As the community's growth continued, so did the Branch's.

Attempts were then begun to locate a suitable place to call home. During this time, efforts were increased to build up the Branch's prestige in the community through sponsorship of kids' hockey teams and Boy Scout groups. Relief provided for victims of Hurricane Hazel by the Branch did much to convince the citizens of Malton of the sincerity of the efforts of Branch 528 in its role as a service organization dedicated not only to its own members, but also to the community as a whole.

Meanwhile, funds were being built up for the day when the Branch might find a permanent home. The opportunity came in 1960 with the enlargement of Malton Airport and the offer for sale by the government of many nearby barracks buildings. One of these, the clubhouse of the Toronto Flying Club, which included a dancehall was procured, and Branch 528 members never looked back.

Despite a mountain-size mortgage and only about a hundred willing hands, the Branch survived. In those early days it was considered to be the "poor country-cousin" by the other branches of District 'D' Command. To-day, it is recognized as being second to none in the greater Toronto area.

The members of Branch 528 can be rightly proud of their standing in Ontario Provincial Command. They have made substantial contributions to Legion work in general, and to the community of Malton especially.

For the past twenty years or more, Branch 528 has been a strong supporter of youth sports groups in the community as well as some outside Malton. It also donates thousands of dollars each year to various charitable foundations, including Legion housing projects operated for veterans and spouses by District 'D' Command.

The community of Malton has seen and felt the work done in the community by the different committees of Branch 528. Legion Memorial Gardens in Wildwood Park, with its beautiful cenotaph and mounted CF-100, is a landmark put there by hard working members of Branch 528 and certainly goes a long way in enhancing the beauty of Malton as well as creating a feeling of pride in the community itself. The students of Malton are also aware of the influence of Branch 528 through members' work in youth education in support of school projects and presentations of bursaries. The efforts of the Branch's Youth Education Committee have uncovered much talent in the area schools, so much so that one student in the area recently won a Dominion award for the best Remembrance Day poster in its class.

Major contributions to the welfare of Malton and area residents have included the following:

- a new station wagon donated to the Malton branch of the Canadian Cancer Society in 1980.
- \$10,000 to the Etobicoke General Hospital in 1982 toward the purchase of a Computer-Assisted Tomographic (CAT) scanner.
- \$6,000.00 to the Malton Community Council in 1984.

Truly, the members of Malton Branch 528 of the Royal Canadian Legion, in this their 35th year, can stand up with the rest of the branches across Canada in this, the Legion's Diamond Jubilee Year and proudly say, "Pride in Our Past--Faith in Our Future".

A Tribute to the Malton Legion Ladies

The members of Malton Branch 528 would be remiss if they failed to mention their Ladies Auxiliary. Once the Branch had gained a permanent home, the ladies were not long in organizing themselves into one of the finest auxiliaries in the country. They obtained their charter on January 8, 1961.

Their untiring efforts over the past twenty-five years have brought many thousands of dollars to the coffers of Branch 528. Their excellent catering skills have drawn countless people to the banquet hall to celebrate weddings and anniversaries, and to attend dinner meetings and parties of a wide variety, boosting rentals of the facility almost to the limit. ever has so much been owed to so few.

Aside from their willingness to help the Branch at all times, these hard-working, generous girls also give their full share of support to the Provincial Command Ladies Auxiliary body each year.

A Padre's Message

The sixtieth anniversary year of the Royal Canadian Legion makes 1986 a singular historic year. It means that the Legion has grown in age--from its early years, through middle age, and now goes on!

The Legion proceeds now with a treasury of experience, good leadership, public understanding, and an energetic building programme throughout all Canada.

This rich heritage brings with it a responsibility--to serve needy veterans and their families. Because of our age, which the membership reflects, parades with banners flying and crowds applauding will become shorter in marching distance, and may even dwindle to a few in number in the next ten years.

The Legion will have to measure its programmes for November 11th, and perhaps provide new formats for aging veterans. However, the Legion is relevant, and will adopt programmes and actions to continue to serve.

There will always be the Royal Canadian Legion. And, the Act of Remembrance is our sacred trust.

PHOTO CUTLINES

Branch 101--B.E.S.L. "out in the woods" in Long Branch, sometime before the building burned down in 1937. (Photo from the Advertiser-Guardian)

The Long Branch cenotaph on the southeast corner of Long Branch and Park Avenues was placed under care and control of Legion Branch 101 in 1972.

Photo by H.R. Badowski

The opening ritual of Legion general meetings often includes initiation of new members. Here are fourteen initiates repeating the oath of allegiance after President Nat Pollock, during a mass initiation at Long Branch Br. 101 on April 17, 1967. Can you pick them out?

HMCS LONG BRANCH

The corvette HMCS Long Branch was launched at Clydebank on August 30, 1943. After being commissioned on January 5, 1944, she was transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy as part of an exchange for Canadian-built Algerine minesweepers, and saw active service escorting North Atlantic convoys and hunting submarines out of Halifax. She was immediately adopted by the villagers of Long Branch and her crews welcomed the gift parcels of "smokes", knit-wear and heavy blankets provided regularly by Branch 101 and the Ladies Auxiliary, and by other community organizations. Bearing identification K487, she was paid off on June 17, 1945, and saw merchant marine service until being scrapped in 1966. At that time, the ship's watch bell was presented to the Branch, but its whereabouts is now unknown.

CANADA'S FIRST AERODROME

In May 1915, Canada's first aerodrome and flying school was established in Long Branch, on the site now occupied by Ontario Hydro's Lakeview Generating Station. The school was managed by John A.D. McCurdy, Canada's first aviator. Most of the graduates went England at their own expense to join either the Royal Flying Corps or the Royal Naval Air Service.

Here we see a graduating class posing before three 2-seater, twin-control biplanes believed to be JN-3's, twelve of which were produced by Curtis Aeroplanes & Motors on Strachan Avenue in Toronto during 1915. (Photo source unknown)

Wednesday, April 23rd, 1986
ZONE D-1 PUBLICITY REPORT
April 1986

Comrades,

Nineteen representatives were on hand last Saturday morning, the 19th, at Malton Branch 528, for the second workshop on the Jubilee newspaper supplement.

Attendees included District D Commander Roy Kennett, Zone Commanders Fran Antrobus and Ray Knibbs of Zone D-1 and D-2, respectively, Deputy Zone Commanders Wilf Prendergast and Ernie Halcrow of D-1 and D-2, and most of the branch Jubilee chairmen, publicity officers and/or newsletter editors.

Material was received from seven of the eight participating branches and is now being processed for publication. It is hoped that the eighth will respond soon to avoid serious disruption of printing schedules.

A wider offering of photos would still be helpful, and short items on "this-and-that" would be useful as filler material. The matter of purchased space for joint promotion of the branches and their facilities remains to be resolved with some of the participating branches. But, overall, it looks like all systems are "go".

My thanks are extended to Carole Johnson who again acted as chief coffee-maker and secretary for the morning's proceedings, and to manager Bert Reid and the members of Malton Branch 528 for complimentary use of their executive meeting room for the second time on this project.

If no one has beat me to it, I wish to announce that the venerable Mel Heisler of Malton Br. 528 will be presented with the 1986 Volunteer Service Award by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture at Kitchener next Tuesday, the 29th.

The award recognizes Mel's outstanding contribution to scouting in the Malton Thunderbird District during his many years of residence in the area, and relates also to his long and dedicated service to his church and to the Royal Canadian Legion.

That concludes my report for April.

Respectfully submitted
in Comradeship,

R.A. Johnson