

- **CANADA'S LARGEST VETERANS ORGANIZATION**

- Legion is the largest of the many veterans Organizations in Canada with 370,000 members
- Member categories—Ordinary, Associate, Affiliate; open to all Canadian citizens and Commonwealth subjects; app. 40,000 members of Ladies Auxiliary; "Military Member-At-Large category for serving members of the CF
- Legion is non-profit, dues-supported, no financial assistance from any outside agency
- Since inception in 1926, Legion strives to secure adequate pensions and benefits for veterans and their dependants, dealing directly with Federal Government
- Major responsibility for the perpetuation of "REMEMBRANCE" in Canada through the Annual Poppy Campaign reminding Canadians of the 117,000 men and women who gave their lives in the wars and military missions around the world
- Poppy funds collected are used for assistance to veterans, ex-service members and their families who are in need
- Legion supports programs for seniors, community, housing, Long Term Care, youth, education, sports, Cadets, Guides and Scouts

- **HISTORY**

- By 1918—more than 15 veterans' groups and regimental associations with common goals but fragmented and largely unsuccessful
- 1925—Appeal for Unity led to formation of Dominion Veterans Alliance
- Legion founded at Winnipeg in November, 1925 as the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Services League (BESL) and incorporated in 1926
- BESL—founded in 1921 as coalition of Britain, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand and is now known as the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League (RCEL) with 57 member organizations from 47 nations
- Legion goals of providing strong voice for veterans and to advise the government maintained and Legion became a persuasive advocate for pension legislation and other benefits (treatment and appeals procedures, returned soldiers' insurance and assistance for those with tuberculosis) for veterans and their families
- 1930—passage of War Veterans' Allowance Act won financial assistance for men who had not been eligible for disability pensions even though they had been incapacitated by war service
- The Second World War saw increased Legion efforts with in-theatre comfort, canteens, entertainment at home and abroad as well as courses to assist their return to civilian life
- From the outset of the war, the Legion prepared for the troops' return with financial compensation, clothing allowances, pensions, medical treatment, training and land settlements. This nation-wide network of professional assistance continues today
- 1949—The Great War Veterans' Association of Newfoundland amalgamated with the Canadian Legion of the BESL
- Support for the troops continued during the Korean War, and after, the Legion became increasingly involved in the community
- 1960—"Royal" added to the Legion's name with the Queen's consent
- 2006—New Veterans Charter raises the complexity of claims
- Efforts to improve lives of veterans and ex-service members succeed due to the Legion's membership at all levels including Veterans Independence Program, spousal benefits, Pension Review Board and recognition of Dieppe and Hong Kong veterans

- **THE LEGION IN THE COMMUNITY**

- Founded for the cause of the veterans, Legion structure has led to community service
- Foster Fathers Program (1940s) helped boys who lost their fathers in the war and sparked the Legion's potential to serve Canada in the community with National Unity, seniors' programs, medical fellowships to promote geriatric and gerontology, to name a few

- Branches followed in community involvement with the likes of ambulances, sports programs and eventually with national and provincial projects including housing, national track and field program
- Youth athletics (est. 1950's) is one of most successful
- With 370,000 members, Legion is one of Canada's largest community based service organizations contributing millions of dollars and volunteer hours
- **KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE**
 - Legion most closely associated with Remembrance ceremonies and the Annual Poppy Campaign during which poppy emblems are distributed to raise money for needy veterans, ex-service members and their families
 - Remembrance Day, November 11, in numerous of communities, Legion holds memorial services to remember the nation's losses with 2 Minutes Silence
 - National Remembrance Ceremony held in Ottawa with many dignitaries in attendance
- **MEMBERSHIP**
 - Legion is non-profit, self-sustained with app. 1500 branches in Canada, United States and Europe and 370,000 members
 - Members receive Legion Magazine, one of Canada's largest paid-circulation periodicals covering issues of veterans, seniors, war-time history and Legion affairs
 - Members Benefits Package provides members with benefits for services through cooperating companies
- **THE NEW MILLENNIUM**
 - Legion is rededicated to the care of Canada's veterans and the perpetuation of Remembrance
 - 1999—implementation of "Two Minutes Wave of Silence"
 - 2000—established "The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier"
 - 2005—dedicated as "Year of the Veteran" Legion continues pressure on the federal government to improve benefits for those who serve and have served as their needs change.