

The Legion Quarterly Newsletter



Dr. C. B. Lumsden Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 74, Wolfville, NS



A NEW LOOK FOR A NEW KIND OF LEGION

by Michael Bawtree

Hardly a day goes by without someone saying to one of our Legion members: "Hey, the new Legion building looks amazing!" Yes, indeed it does! In 2018 the century-old, former Baptist tabernacle, which has housed the Wolfville Legion since the 1960s, was on the verge of being condemned. Only one of its three floors was in use. The basement flooded in rainstorms. The roof was charred from an old fire. The electrical system was a maze of overloaded wiring.

So why did the Legion not bulldoze it down and start again? For two very good reasons. First, the site is small and could not accommodate the new building codes for parking spaces etc.. Secondly, there were all sort of grants available for restoring old buildings, none of which would be available if we had started from scratch.



So, with the wonderfully generous help of Mike and Therese Harvey of Harvey Architecture (see p. 5), and with a new Executive determined to put the Branch back on its feet, we got to work.

What we wanted was not just a building brought up to code and taking advantage of its great position in Wolfville, looking out on to Cape Blomidon and the Minas Basin. We wanted also to create a whole new type of Legion, with its primary mission being to help Veterans live happy, healthy and productive lives, and at the same time to serve as a social centre for the Wolfville community. Unlike many neighbouring villages, Wolfville has no community centre.

It was obvious that our scheme was going to cost a fair amount of money. We began by selling off a parcel of land which the Legion had owned for many years. This gave us some start-up funds to begin the lengthy



task of remedial work on the old building before the renovations could begin. At the same time one of our newer members at the time, Air Force Veteran Paul Murphy, sat down with me to start researching possible sources of grant funding. Largely through Paul's hard and painstaking work, in the last four years we have applied for thirty-one grants from all levels of government. Of these applications, no less than twenty-one have been successful, bringing in all or part of the funds applied for. Seven ... **cont'd page 2**

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Legion Quarterly Newsletter

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Hon Peter MacKay

applications are still outstanding, and others will follow.

For our non-governmental fundraising, our life was more complicated: legion branches are not considered charities, and are therefore not able to issue tax receipts. But there had been exceptions in the past, and early in 2022 we applied to CRA to ask that our renovation fund be accepted as a charity and so eligible for tax purposes. After a wait of over six months, we heard that we were denied. This was a blow. We had received very promising signs from several foundations as they would be prepared to donate, but they needed a tax receipt. And by this time, with the help of grants received, our renovations were well advanced. There was no alternative but to proceed with our fundraising without charitable status.

We launched our public fundraising campaign on October 5th, 2022, at Troy Restaurant in Wolfville. We have been pleased by the response from both Legion members and members of the community. We have also approached several large corporations, including some with which we have been doing business for years, and are hearing encouraging noises from many of them. In these approaches we have also been happy to have the vocal support of The Honourable Peter MacKay who grew up in Wolfville and is a former Minister of National Defence. However, we are still in need of further government buy-in, and are looking to our representatives at provincial and federal levels to continue pleading our case. With increasing supply costs, we are still looking at a \$1.2 million target.

We have been anxious to continue with the renovations at full speed, since we will be unable to earn revenue until the renovated building is open for business. We have been massively assisted in this with the help of a \$600,000 bridging line of credit from a generous Legion branch in Ontario, Branch 11 of Toronto. We will activate this as needed while we continue to fundraise.



We have also been assisted by the donation of supplies and services by a wide range of companies, both within the building trades and beyond. And Legion members have also helped to make considerable savings by staffing work crews to undertake demolition and clearing work, which would otherwise have to be done by contractors.

All in all, we still have a hill to climb, to reach the total of funds needed to complete our renovations. But the beauty of the new building, and the revolutionary programming that we are planning to provide, continue to draw funds from all directions. We are confident that we will be able to open by midsummer of 2023, and begin to pull in the revenue which the new Wolfville Legion Centre will undoubtedly attract, while launching programs of real benefit to the Veterans of our Valley and to the community. In fact, we hope that our Legion Centre will be nothing less than a model for Legions across the country.



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President Donn Miles

THE PRESIDENT’S WORDS

Good day to all. With all of the negative and bad news in the world recently; we as a Branch of the RCL are positioned to share the opposite. Our Wolfville Dr C.B. Lumsden #74 are pleased to inform all that the progress on renovations to our building are moving forward at an increased rate.

A great deal of thanks is due to the dedication of executive, various committees, and members who have given so much to ensure the ongoing effort, and completion of our mission.

I recall back in 2016 /17 on an occasion when Comrade Michael Bawtree had given his presentation on “The Pegasus Bridge” D Day 1944. On completion he, myself and my brother Comrade Mack Miles were making our way to our vehicles in the back parking area; we were discussing the Legion and talked of how nice it would be to have a renovated building with a upper deck to view the Wolfville Harbour and the beautiful Cape Blomidon. Much has taken place since then, many and varying issues were dealt with over many months. A few weeks ago we held a lunch to thank folks from Legion Branch #11 who are assisting us; and it came to mind that of all in attendance only Michael and I were left of the original

few who were initially involved with discussion and planning for a way forward. We at present have a new strong, dedicated enthusiastic executive and membership giving a solid effort to help us succeed; and if you have the opportunity to observe the ongoing construction, at the back, is now one of the outstanding features, our beautiful large observation deck, one of many other fine additions and innovations to come.

It will be an amazing reborn Legion Building; a modern, handicapped accessible establishment and a great contribution to Honour and Serve Veterans, Membership, the Town of Wolfville and surrounding communities. We as a Membership all anticipate the day our dream becomes a reality.

Please consider helping in any way you can. The numbers who have Served in War and Peace from this area and within our Ranks are many; some Gave Their All in service to God and Country .This was and is the reason the Legion was established. “We Will Remember Them.”

Donn R. Miles CD3
President #74

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Royal Canadian Legion Wolfville, NS

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The Legion National Youth Program - 50 Years

VISIT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MINISTER MACAULAY

On Friday, March 16th, our Legion was honoured to receive a visit from the Honorable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by our MP Kody Blois. He was met by our President Donn Miles, 1st Vice-President Paul Murphy, Past President Michael Bawtree and our Chaplain and Counselling Adviser the Rev. Jim Russell.

Mr. MacAulay's stay was short, but he was given a full tour of the Legion building, now in an advanced stage of renovation, finishing up in the Veterans Suite, with its Library/Counselling Room and its magnificent meeting room overlooking Cape Blomidon and the Minas Basin. The Legion representatives took advantage of the occasion to describe our plans for a new kind of Legion, dedicated to helping Veterans live healthy and productive lives. We indicated the problems we were given by being denied charitable status, and that this had made us even more dependent on government support.

We knew that Veterans Affairs did not provide funds for construction, but we told the Minister how we hoped that his Department would give support to our new programs for Veterans when they went into operation. We also described the federal applications we still had pending, and hoped the Minister would put in a word for us in the relevant quarter.

Both the Minister and our MP Kody Blois seemed much impressed both by the quality of the renewed building, and by our plans. He was relaxed and friendly, and we all felt that the visit had been very much worthwhile. We thank MP Kody for organising it.



L-R Chaplain Jim Russell, Hon Lawrence MacAulay Paul Murphy Reno Chair, President Donn Miles, MP Kody Blois, Author, Michael Bawtree.



PAUL MURPHY'S RENO UPDATE

Hello everybody! What a tumultuous 3 years we have just experienced! On 20th March, 2020, we shut down the Legion due to a Province-wide order regarding Covid 19. We had no idea that three years later we would still not be in our building! But here we are. We decided to push ahead on renovations, thinking we were going to lift our building up, replace part of the foundation, put in new drainage, add 2 sump pumps, fix up the basement bar, put in a couple of accessible washrooms, add another power door and maybe put a deck in the space above the 1st floor stage. But when we raised the building we

found a multitude of problems - the entire wooden beam support systems in the basement and the upper level needed immediate replacement with steel I-beams, or a collapse was inevitable. The Fire Marshal ordered us to replace the roof due to a past fire, and he noted that the electrical exit signage was obsolete and the entire wiring suspect. It was then that our Executive, later approved by Membership, entered into an agreement with our friends at harveyArchitecture for a more comprehensive renovation. We brought together no less than 30 work parties of Legion and community volunteers to remove all furniture and effects, strip down the interior completely to the studs, rip up all floors, remove all wiring, plumbing, mechanical and the sparse insulation, saving us about \$60K.

The renovation is now well underway. We are in the process of installing a new commercial-grade kitchen, 2 new power-doors and ramps, 6 accessible washrooms, 3 new bars, 6 adjustable accessible dart boards, an elevator, an accessible office, storage spaces, all new wiring, plumbing, HVAC, a deck, a library/counselling room and a Veterans Suite for Veteran training courses and seminars, but also for dances and rental opportunities. While we anxiously anticipate our Grand Reopening, in the next several months we will continue to meet on Wednesdays at the White Rock Community Centre for coffee and tea socials, 9.30 -11am. They have been gracious hosts to our membership over the past 3 years and we thank them heartily. Our Fundraising Committee has been busy, meeting weekly, coming up with new and innovative ways to raise funds. Our grant applications have been modestly successful but we still need help from our members, from our community, from the business community and all levels of government. Please continue to support our fundraising endeavours as we strive towards the finish line!

A MAGNIFICENT GIFT: A COMPLETE DESIGN FOR THE NEW LEGION

In the late summer of 2017, Mike Harvey, noted Halifax architect and a former marathon runner, strolled into the Wolfville Legion for the first time. Why? Because he had been invited by an old friend of his, Legion member Michael Bawtree, to do a brief walk-about, in order to provide the Legion (*pro bono*) with a report on the state of their building. His assessment was a sobering one: the building had some very serious deficits, and would need at least \$1 million to turn it around.

Wind forward 12 months, and we find that Mike's firm of Harvey Architecture (*hA*) has 1) undertaken to develop detailed plans of the building in its present state, and 2) offered to design a full scale renovation. By this time, Mike's wife Therese, an artist and designer in her own right, has joined the team. Both the Harveys have also become members of the Branch. Therese has even painted a portrait of Dr. Lumsden (after whom the Branch is named) and presented it to the Legion to hang in its main hall.

By the beginning of 2021 the designs were ready, just as COVID struck, forcing the closure of the Legion. In some ways this was a blessing, since the renovation was preceded by the need for some massive remedial work, which included raising the building by a foot, creating a drainage and waterproofing system outside and inside, and strengthening the entire basic structure with steel posts and beams to carry the extra weight of the new additions. Laurie Arnburg's Aylesford firm of Access Contracting was signed on to oversee the work, which still continues, with the plan to re-open around the middle of 2023.

The entire contribution of the Harveys and their firm has been donated to the Wolfville Legion free of charge: an extraordinarily generous gift. We asked the Harveys why they decided to commit themselves so fully to the Branch's hopes and dreams, which include not simply a new building but a new way of seeing the way a Legion can help veterans to live healthy, happy and productive lives. Mike responded:

"Therese & I were struck by the fact that our veterans deserved better facilities from which to run programs and to serve their members. hA proceeded to gather a design team, many of whom were motivated to see the project through not solely because they have military family but because veterans deserve a better base for support and comradeship. Without the generosity of the following engineering consultants who selflessly joined us, the project would not have been able to proceed.

Scott Underhill BMR Engineering – Structural

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Recipients, The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Award, Presented by LCdr Newsome & MLA Keith Irving

On June 2, 2022, His Honour the Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc released the design of the Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee Medal after approval was received from Her Majesty The Queen. The Platinum Jubilee Medal program concluded on 5 February 2023.

The medal was created to mark the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II’s accession to the Throne. The Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee Medal (Nova Scotia) was a tangible way for the province to honour The Queen’s service while also honouring significant contributions and achievements made by residents. Nova Scotia, along with five additional provinces (New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba Saskatchewan and Alberta), established Platinum Jubilee Medal Program in 2022.

The focus of this program was to honour those who have devoted themselves to the service of others, especially throughout the pandemic, be it as a result of their job, volunteer work or contributions to their community. We are very proud and honoured that we have three members of Branch 74 that have been awarded the Platinum Jubilee Medal.

Congratulations to Jo-Ann, Lawrence and Michael.



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THE WOLFVILLE LEGION, AN INPORTANT COMMUNITY PARTNER

By Wolfville Legion Chaplain Jim Russell

The Royal Canadian Legion in Wolfville has always had a key place in the life of the community in this area but with a newly renovated building and a new and enhanced vision, the Wolfville Legion is planning to become a more important community partner within the social fabric of Wolfville and Annapolis Valley. The Wolfville Legion's magnificent new building stands as an outward symbol of an enhanced vision to meet the changing and complex needs of a new generation of Canadian Armed Forces Veterans. In addition to being an integral part of the Wolfville community, we plan to develop new and innovative programs that help support our Canadian Veterans and their families. According to the latest Veterans Affairs Canada figures, in 2021, there were a total of 39,800 veterans living in Nova Scotia. In 2021, the average age of the 580,000 veterans living across Canada was 59 years of age.



Chaplain Jim Russell

The latest research informs us that programs to support our veterans and their families should address their needs in a holistic way, focusing on overall health and wellness. Because our future programs at the Wolfville Legion are going to be focused upon health and wellness, there will be no Video Lottery Terminals and no bingo in our newly renovated building. We will continue to be an active community partner in Wolfville and Annapolis Valley. We will continue our unique partnership with Acadia University. In partnership with Acadia University the Wolfville Legion leads the joint Remembrance Day ceremony at University Hall at Acadia. In addition, we plan to make our building available to a local community group who sponsor a community lunch open to everyone and free for everyone. At present, we offer our ongoing support and financial assistance to the innovative veterans' program "Heroes Mending on the Fly". As the building renovations continue, we are in the planning stages for new and innovative programs to support our veterans and their families. Some of our programs in the future will combine group counselling and support with physical activity such as in the planned, "Veterans' Cycling Group" and the "Veterans' Yoga Group". We also are envisioning a program involving music therapy. Our plan is that these proposed programs should be fully accessible to people of many levels of physical ability. The Roger Prentice Memorial Library, chaplain's office and counseling room will be available for group and individual counselling. We would also like to develop programs that support those wanting help in stopping smoking. In the future, we hope to host workshops and information sessions about Veterans Affairs Canada programs as well as workshops and information sessions relevant to Canadian Armed Forces Veterans such as: the challenges of the transition to civilian life, operational stress injuries, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The enhanced vision of the Wolfville Legion is to create a new and innovative center with new programs that will help meet the changing and complex needs of a new generation of Canadian Armed Forces Veterans. Bringing this new vision into reality entails long hours of hard work by all our legion team as well as the support and financial assistance of Wolfville and the wider community. In addition, we also need the ongoing support and financial assistance of Veterans Affairs Canada and many other levels of government.



The **Dr C.B. Lumsden Royal Canadian Legion Branch 74** in Wolfville, NS is a non-profit organization whose mission is to ensure that Canadians never forget the sacrifices the men and women made who served and serves our country in war and peace. **It is also our mission to share our resources in Wolfville and the surrounding communities.** Our new building at 310 Main Street, Wolfville will be a social centre, a meeting place and a comfort centre for anyone so in need. It will be a spectacular venue for entertainment, weddings and important occasions. [Follow this Newsletter... stay informed.](#)

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The Legion Quarterly News

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