

DIAMOND HEAD BRANCH #277 President's Message

It's been both an honour and a privilege to serve as President of Diamond Head Branch 277 of the Royal Canadian Legion for the last two years. As President of #277, I believe this is a position of responsibility, not status. Serving our veterans and their families is mine and #277's overall mission. We will continue to follow through on this mission.

Over the past year, our little Legion #277 has made a considerable amount of positive progress. We are more present in the community through displaying banners of our local veterans, supporting veterans' organizations, Squamish Days Loggers Sports Bed Races, and other non-profits who benefit from running our world famous Royal Canadian Legion Meat Draw. Our Legion is not using words, we're taking action to improve our community and our gathering space. In the motto of one of the former CAF units I served in, Facta Non Verba.

This brings me to Remembrance Day and the 2023 Poppy Campaign. This is quickly coming upon us here in the Sea to Sky. Our goal for 2023 remains the same as last year: to raise \$50,000 for our Poppy Fund. I want us to reach this goal; however, this can't be done alone, we need members out poppy tagging, speaking to schools and providing whatever assistance they can. For those who volunteered last year, I'm extremely grateful for your time and effort.

For this year's poppy campaign, Squamish Days Loggers Sports has generously lent us their Square System so we can do electronic transactions while out poppy tagging. As much as I enjoy the old school poppy tagging for cash donations, the days of people carrying cash are slowly disappearing. We must adapt because the method of commerce is changing. Luckily, our legion values will remain the same.

I am also very proud of the work being done to update our lounge. This for me marked the beginning of a new direction for our legion. Our membership was declining, the lounge had the energy of a hospital cafeteria. Some of our members were moving away and things were starting to look bleak. Let's face it, there was an atmosphere of uncertainty if #277 would survive. We needed to act. We needed a clear vision, a practical plan and a means of accomplishing it. Under the leadership of our Past Presidents, we started a revitalization project in 2018 with the installation of a new bar top. This led to the fixing up of our front foyer with a rejuvenated entrance with Diamond Head Branch insignia. When someone new walks in, they feel like they are walking into something special.

During COVID, we didn't take pity in our situation. Volunteers banded together and painted the walls up the staircase and repaired some of the worn flooring. On Jun 3,



2021, we installed our first table, a dedication to the history of the Canadian Army. This table was created to honour those who served our country and especially our Squamish veterans. Some of the artwork on that table is directly linked to our long-serving #277 members. As of Sept 30, 2023, all of our old interior tables, which have served us well, have now been replaced. We now have twelve beautiful, handcrafted tables that represent many aspects of Canada's military history and those who serve our community including a dedication to our Squamish Firefighters.

Our tables are the most unique of any Legion in Canada. They uplift our décor, while keeping with our Legion values of preserving our history and our community. Our walls now have beautifully stained wood paneling, creating a warm and welcoming feeling to our members and guests. I have had several members of other Legions from across Canada and the United States tell me how we are one of the nicest Legions that they have visited. Yet again, this is something to take pride in #277.

We have also received generous donations from local businesses and individual donors which have helped make this a reality. However, none of this could have been done without the work of some very dedicated and passionate volunteers. Whether it's helping out at the Meat Draw, assisting the staff by placing glasses in the dishwasher, IT and webpage support, building repairs, lounge improvement, lotto, event planning, organizing darts, etc. We're building something positive, and the result of that passion is obvious, #277 has some amazing members.

Finally, there is one thing that is very important to me, that's our #277 staff. They are a great team who work behind the scenes to ensure that this place runs properly. Without our staff, we would be lost. Keeping people happy and content nowadays can seem like an impossible task. Our staff does that, and for that...I'm extremely grateful.

As #277 President, I humbly request that we keep our values of courtesy and respect to be paramount within our lounge.

Lest We Forget

Russ Robertson
RCL #277 President