

# THE ALMONTE LEGIONNAIRE

*The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 240, Almonte*

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## An email Newsletter for branch members



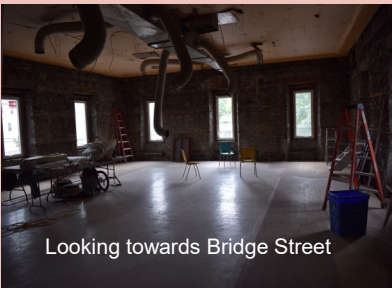
**Membership Renewal.** Early Bird Memberships must be paid by November 30, 2020 to be included in the draws for the free 2021 Memberships. We have three draws made at the end of September, October and November. The membership fee remains at \$55.00. To remain a member in good standing, your annual membership must be paid by January 31st of each year. If you have any questions, please contact Peggy Byrne at: [byrne065@gmail.com](mailto:byrne065@gmail.com)

### Our Financial Status



As members will know Royal Canadian Legion branches have, for many years been, and continue to be, a gem in the life of the community. Over the years they provided a social gathering place; a get together with other veterans or friends; and a venue for parties, wedding receptions, funerals, and other events. The Covid-19 virus has meant that many Legion Branches have been forced to close as there is no source of funding to keep them alive. Fortunately, Branch 240 is in a reasonably good fiscal position and can survive the closure for a while yet. However, this cannot go on for ever and donations are always welcome to ensure that the branch can be sustained until full opening is permitted. Donations can be made to: [donations@rcl05240.ca](mailto:donations@rcl05240.ca)

### Hall Renovations



Looking towards Bridge Street

To take advantage of the closure, major structural changes are being made to the upstairs hall. All the paneling has been removed such that the previously covered windows have been exposed and daylight let in. New windows have been donated by various members and have already been fitted. The result, a major

transformation to the look and feel and of the hall. As you will see from the attached pictures there is still much work to be done. Exposure has revealed other essential replacements including the electrical wiring. All the work associated with removal of the paneling and restoration of the window



One of the new windows



The hall bar without the bar!

cavities has been undertaken by a group of volunteers at no cost to the Branch. Thanks go to Comrades Paul Brundige and Jim Evans who have been the leaders in undertaking and planning the restoration work.

Resulting from articles posted in The Millstone and on Facebook \$20,000 in donations were received from the community for the renovations. Some windows are being individually dedicated and all donations will be acknowledged in the hall.

All of the pictures were taken as work progresses. It is planned to have most work completed by Remembrance Day.

## Branch Meetings

During the Covid-19 lockdown the Legion executive



met every two weeks to plan and implement re-opening rules dictated by the Legion Provincial and Dominion commands and for planning the hall restoration work stages.

Following the stage 2 re-opening rules the executive has reverted to the standard monthly meetings. However, special meetings are called as required as the renovations proceed. At the time of writing we are not permitted to hold the monthly "general" meetings.

## A New Bar for the Upstairs Hall

As part of the renovations a new bar is being constructed that will be repositioned following the removal of the wall between the old bar and the space sometimes referred to as the cloak room. In addition, a storage room will be added that can be converted to a disabled washroom when funding becomes available.



## Remembrance ceiling tiles moved.

During the hall renovations it was decided to transfer the remembrance ceiling panels to the lounge. We hope you like this change as it was considered more appropriate to include them in the area along with other Legion memorabilia.



The branch is now open on Thursday and Friday at 4pm and on Saturdays at 3pm for bar service only. Servers will deliver your order to your table.



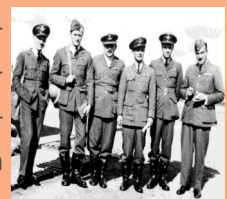
Saturday monthly breakfasts and Wednesday night "wings" remain on hold. Oh and we now have a portable debit machine so you don't have to bring cash. As well an ATM machine is available if you do require cash.

## Remembrance Ceremonies

The importance of a live ceremony honouring our Veterans and their sacrifices is considered paramount by the Legion, especially during the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. For branch 240 these will be limited in scope this year because of Covid-19. There will be a small event at the Almonte cenotaph with the pipe band on November 11th at 11.00am but no return to the Legion afterwards. Unfortunately the ceremony at Clayton is cancelled. The Pakenham ceremony, organized by the local school, has yet to be confirmed. For the first time, spectators will be discouraged from attending in person, due to the requirement to physically distance. We hope to live stream the Almonte Cenotaph ceremony on Facebook and we encourage you to watch from home. Pre-ordered wreaths will be laid by members of the branch executive.

## *Lest we forget*

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. More than 100 Canadians flew in the battle, principally as members of the RCAF's No. 1 Squadron (later renamed 401 Squadron) and the RAF's 242 Squadron. An estimated 300 Canadians served as groundcrew.



**We will remember them.**

## The Covid Pipers of the Almonte Legion Pipe Band



The Almonte Legion Pipe Band, along with every other group activity, was abruptly halted on March 17 when Ontario enacted a State of Emergency and issued the emergency orders necessary to stop the spread of Covid-19. The band executive quickly began to meet on

Zoom, and soon decided that the only way we could assist would be to use our pipes in the most traditional sense, as a call for courage to the front line, and so began the Covid Pipers. A small group of pipers began to venture out on Wednesday evenings, taking all possible precaution in physical distancing and numbers gathered.



We played at Almonte Country Haven, and the Almonte General Hospital, at Fairview Manor and at Orchard View. We played to recognize the bravery and support frontline workers, and to bring cheer to residents and the community. The following week we played at Almonte Country Haven, then drove over to Carleton Place to play at

Stoneridge Manor and other seniors' homes.

Our small group grew, and soon we had a group playing in Almonte, Carleton Place, and Carp, with never more than 5 in one place, and always with precaution. When the number of people allowed to gather was raised to 10, we invited the drummers to join in. We have created ceremony where we thought none was possible – to honour the six CAF personnel killed in the Helicopter crash off the coast of Greece, and to commemorate the Battle of the Atlantic.



We have tried to bring cheer by visiting local veterans, and people facing illness, and celebrated birthdays and anniversaries. We have played in public spaces and for seniors, in private gardens and for ourselves, in Almonte, Pakenham, Clayton, Carleton Place, and Carp.

At the time of this writing, the Covid Pipers have played for 26 consecutive Wednesday evenings, and have only been rained out once.

Every time we go out, we are aware of our good fortune and health, and we try not to gather large audiences, and try to keep physical distance between each other. On August 22 we took to the field at the fairgrounds as the only band present for the North Lanark Highland Games! We do not know when band practice will restart indoors. Once the cold weather arrives it will be difficult to gather outdoors to play, but the Covid Pipers will probably have another 5 or 6 Wednesdays!



Make sure to follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AlmonteLegionPipeBand> or find us at [www.almontelegionpipeband.ca](http://www.almontelegionpipeband.ca)