



The Royal Canadian Legion, BR008, Stratford, Ontario

Day of Remembrance during COVID-19

Public being asked to watch ceremony from home

STRATFORD – This November 11th Stratford and Perth County residents will again pay their respects to those who fought for our freedom, but they will do so from the comfort of their own homes.

There will be a scaled-down ceremony at the Stratford Cenotaph, but due to COVID-19 the public will not be invited to attend because of restrictions meant to prevent the spread of the virus. Instead, the service will be broadcast from 10:30 a.m. on Rogers TV (Cable 20 and *rogerstv.com*), 107.1 Juice FM and streamed via *BravoStratford.ca* with the assistance and support of Destination Stratford, Stratford City Centre BIA, Craig Thompson and Ballinran Entertainment. The ceremony in Ottawa, and those taking place elsewhere across the country, will be similarly restricted.

“We need people to understand that everyone is better off watching and listening from home, even our veterans,” says Dale Bast, president of Stratford’s 94-year-old Branch 8 of the Royal Canadian Legion. *“No one ever dreamed this would happen, but as our motto says ‘we will remember’ – and we will despite the changes this year.”*

There will be no parade this year, no children’s choirs, and instead of 79 wreaths being laid, only 19 will be placed.

“In recent years, the number of people attending the Remembrance Day Ceremony here has been doubling and tripling,” says Richard Boon, who co-chairs the annual ceremony with his father Arthur Boon. *“Even though this year will be different, the meaning of the service is still as important as it’s always been. In fact, in many ways it now has an added importance since it requires all of us to bond together against COVID, just as soldiers had to bond together during the wars.”*

CWO Arthur Boon, 95, will announce the laying of the 19 wreaths. Mr. Boon Sr. has not missed a single ceremony since returning from the Second World War in 1946. The Reverend Canon Dr. Lorne Mitchell will lead a scripture reading, give the Call to

Remembrance, read the Honour Roll and say the Memorial Prayer and Benediction. Loreena McKennitt, in her role as Honorary-Colonel of the Royal Canadian Air Force, will sing the national anthem, the hymn 'Faith of Our Fathers', and close the ceremony with 'God Save the Queen'. Church bells will also ring at sunset.

"People experience this event in their hearts, acknowledging the incredible sacrifices our veterans made," says McKennitt. "Just as those at war adjusted to their circumstances then, so must we adjust to our exceptional circumstances now."

The Poppy Campaign will continue this year, but also adjust to circumstances. The campaign relies on donations, rather than sales, and proceeds are used to support veterans, their families and related services. The hope is that people will be extra generous this year, especially since the Cadets will be unable to be on hand with the boxes during COVID-19.

While members of the public are being asked to stay home during the ceremony, they will be able to wander down to the Cenotaph later in the afternoon or evening to pay their respects while keeping socially distant.

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For more information, please contact

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The Royal Canadian Legion was established in 1926 with its mission to serve and care for all military veterans and their dependents, to promote perpetual remembrance of those Canadians who fell in war, and to be supportive of our community and our country.

The Legion's mandate of service includes those currently serving in the Canadian military forces, the RCMP, and their families. Some of the Veterans' Programs both locally and nationally which we currently support are Parkwood Institute for Veteran healthcare, Stratford General Hospital Foundation, the Service Dog Program, Homeless Veterans Fund, Last Post Fund, and VAC support for individuals.

Legion members care deeply about supporting the men and women who serve this country and want to make a difference in the lives of Veterans.