

Colborne Chronicle

First poppy presented at Colborne Legion

CECILIA NASMITH
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COLBORNE — Each year, around the end of October, Royal Canadian Legion branches across the country gear up activities in preparation for the proper observation of Remembrance Day Nov. 11.

At Branch 187 in Colborne, Legion members and members of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion Army Cadet Corps are organizing how they will cover various locations throughout the Colborne area to distribute poppies, the red floral emblem that is the official symbol of Remembrance.

Passers-by — usually customers at businesses close to where these volunteers are stationed — are welcome to pick up and wear a poppy in return for a donation of their choosing. Funds raised in this way provide assistance to veterans and their families, and the amount collected each year varies.

Donations seemed to be up last year, perhaps because it was the year two military men were tragically lost.

Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, who was stationed at the 438 Tactical Helicopter Squadron in St. Hubert, Que., was struck down by a car driven by a troubled young man who had embraced radical Islam.

Less than a week later, Corporal Nathan Cirillo, a reservist from Hamilton who was serving with the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada Regiment, was standing on ceremonial sentry duty at Ottawa's Canadian War Memorial when a Jihadist supporter killed him on his way to mount an attack inside the Parliament building.

"Both these brave men were struck down in service of their country," Colborne Legionnaire Howard Siddall said

"There was a significant increase in the amount of the donations received during last year's poppy program, which clearly shows the public's sorrow with the loss of these two soldiers. One of the ways that they showed this sorrow was to in-



In preparation for the 2015 poppy campaign, (from left) Colborne Legion president Bill Lutton and poppy chair Gord McDonald recently presented the first poppy to Second World War veteran Don Prentice, along with warrant officer Bill Chisholm and poppy co-chair Carol McDonald. Poppy trays will be at businesses throughout the county until Nov. 11.

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crease their contributions to last year's Poppy Fund."

Typically, Siddall said, the poppy campaign begins two weekends before Nov. 11. In Colborne, they will set out the poppies starting Oct. 30.

The usual period to wear your poppy ends on Nov. 11.

In Colborne, Remembrance Day will include parade to the cenotaph for a Service of Remembrance, after which the Legion branch will host a time of fellowship. A special 6 p.m. dinner is also planned.

"There is no policy carved in

stone in regards to ending the period of wearing the poppy. Different Legions follow their own protocol," Siddall said.

"For example, at the Colborne Legion after the evening meal, the poppies are removed. In other Legions, if you should walk into their Legion still wearing your poppy after Nov. 11, they may ask you to remove it.

"The main idea is that they are off Nov. 12."

Siddall shared a list of businesses that have generously agreed to allow Legion and Army Cadet vol-

unteers to be posted outside their premises Oct. 30 and 31, and again on Nov. 6 and 7 — The Big Apple, Ultramar, Tim Hortons, Foodland and the LCBO.

"At the conclusion of this year's program it is anticipated that over 3,000 poppies will be distributed in our community," he predicted.

And while the generosity of the community is appreciated, he added that poppies are also tokens of Remembrance that everyone is entitled to wear. Anyone unable to offer a contribution will not be denied a poppy regardless.

Mayor Marc Coombs urged the community to show their support.

"It's a very important fundraising drive for our local Legion. They do a lot of work throughout the year, especially supporting our local food banks and Christmas-hammer programs," Coombs said.

"The monies raised go to support a lot of local families that need help, especially throughout the Christmas season but also all year long."

cecilia.nasmith@sunmedia.ca
twitter.com/NT_cnasmith