

**Widows wept**

**Early recollection of Legion member at Somme parade**

The Diamond Jubilee (What it means to me)  
By BOB McNEILLY  
Diamond Jubilee Chairman  
G.B.S. Cousins, Branch 120

At the cessation of hostilities in World War I, the British House of Commons prepared to accept the return of the veterans. Faced with a massive influx of men into the work force, and few jobs available, the worst was expected.

"Men, who had been trained to be killers were returning home. High unemployment and bitterness against their government, who was unable to help them, could only lead to an uncontrollable increase in the crime rate". (Winston Churchill, House of Commons 1918). The British Government was wrong. The increase in the crime rate did not happen. The crime rate dropped.

The men returning were not "killers", but were men who loved their families, their communities, and their country.

Throughout the country, little clubs were formed. Veterans clubs, navy clubs and regimental clubs sprang up, so that the "boys" could help one another and make their community a better place.

To become a viable force, Earl Haig set out to organize these associations, this was the beginning of the Legion.

My early recollection of Legion was an annual parade on July 1st, the anniversary of the battle of the Somme. Over thirty per cent of the men in one town did not return. Many of the survivors were maimed

or suffered from exposure to poison gas.

At the cenotaph, I watched as widows wept, and the men, wearing their medals proudly, bowed their heads and remembered their dead. I remembered. I will always remember. What I did not realize, all the survivors carried hidden scars, the remembrance of the stench of cordite, burning flesh and the sight of comrades falling on the battlefield.

Sixty years and two wars have passed, and the Legion, 600,000 strong in Canada, is still assisting veterans and organizations within its communities.

Millions of dollars have been contributed to a multitude of causes. Much of it, quietly and unknown. The Legion's policy can be summed up in the words:

"Not to strive for fame or seek for favours place, or build up wealth from clay and selfish goals be won. But in humility and Dignity of Grace, Let other men assess what we have done." Anon.

Sixty years is a long time, attrition has taken its toll, but a new young breed, the sons and daughters are showing their willingness to get involved in the Legion's cause. The passing of the Torch to the associate members and the re-affirmation of all members by the signing of The Articles of Faith, guarantee the continuity of this great organization.

This is what the Diamond Jubilee means to me.  
I am proud to be involved.

Distinguished and decorated, members of the Canadian airborne forces association marched on old city hall Sunday, commemorating Allied Airborne D-Day and the 1944 landing at Normandy by allied forces.

Paratroopers from across Canada and representing seven nations, gathered for a weekend reunion. V. Lockwood of Georgetown attended the festivities.

John McGillis, CAFA president said it was the first reunion of allied airborne involved in the Normandy landing since that day. "Some of these men haven't seen each other in



Pictured here is the late Lt.-Col. G.B.S. Cousins, the man whose name the Branch 120 Legion bears. Lt.-Col. Cousins was given the Military Cross for his heroics in the First World War. He is also the

former postmaster in Georgetown; The full title of the Georgetown Branch is G.B.S. Cousins Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 120. (Photo submitted)

41 years," McGillis said. "You might say some are from the original cast."

While June 6, 1944 is recognized as the day American, Canadian and British forces landed on the beaches in occupied France, it a the paratroopers who landed first June 5 and 6, setting the stage for the beach invasion.

"We remember the men and women who gave their all that there might be peace in the world," said Canon D.C. Candy at City Hall cenotaph ceremony.

"We are deeply conscious of the cost and the personal sacrifice of

separation from family, friends and one's normal life."

The paratroopers were inspected by Major-General H.C. Pitts Members of the Canadian airborne regiment and the first Canadian parachute battalion were among oncotaph reath barriers.

The city of Toronto declared the inva occa on allied airborne weekend and McGillis was introduced in the provincial legislature by Premier David Peterson.

More than 300 airborne members attended representing the U.S., Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Great Britain and Canada.

**Message from Norm Ward**

The Royal Canadian Legion has reached another plateau in its development, reaching 60 years of service to veterans and the community in each of the cities, towns and villages in which a branch is situated.

Whilst its primary object, laid down by the founders, was to protect the interest of Canadian Veterans and to secure the rights of their dependents has been truly realized through this sixty years, the Legion has become the largest service organization in Canada.

I will not elaborate on the service to the town of Georgetown and its surrounding area, donations mentioned elsewhere in this supplement will give some indication of financial evidence of this but I must give the example of the kid hockey program in this town which for many years was run solely by the Legion and uncountable hours were spent by an army of Legion members and, assisted by others recruited by their example, will be remembered by many citizens who came up through this system.

Again, through the efforts of our ladies auxiliary, many readers will have had contact with our branch through the use of our auditorium for functions such as weddings, reunions, organizational etc. events and, of course, the many donations of the hall to raise funds for community groups and for their social events. Indeed, we have helped other service clubs to establish themselves in the community to enrich this town through their efforts.

In closing, I would like to thank The Herald, not only for the opportunity to present ourselves through this unique supplement but for the many years of support and co-operation they have given us.

Norman Ward  
President  
Lt. Col. GBS Cousins Branch 120  
The Royal Canadian Legion

**Airborne march on City Hall**

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