




Royal Canadian Legion



Branch 625 Richmond



Legion  Canada's Largest Service Club

Foxy's Tales



December 2020

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President	(613-838-4269)	Brian Goss
Immediate Past President	(613-838-3244)	Jane Louks
First Vice President	(613-838-2548)	John Villeneuve
Secretary	(613-838-6078)	Elizabeth Douville
Treasurer	(613-838-2652)	Pat McGrath
Sgt-at-Arms		vacant

Branch Executive Committee

Eric Booth
Boyd Dulmage
Joanne Heinbuch
Jack Lemyre
Mavis Lewis
Tom Louks
Louis Seward

Branch Committee Chairs

Bar	(613-838-3244)	Tom Louks
Branch Regulations		Jack Lemyre
Bursary		Jane Louks
Bulletin		Wendy Ryan
Catering		Jane Louks
Cenotaph		Jane & Tom Louks
Chaplain	(613-838-3942)	Dcn. Louis Seward
Hall Rentals		Shirley Morris & Jane Louks
Honours & Awards		Jane Louks
Long Term Planning		Eric Booth
Membership	(613-838-5055)	Boyd Dulmage
Poppy		Jane Louks
Property		Johnny Villeneuve
Public Relations		Brian Goss
Service Officer	(613-838-3948)	Jack Lemyre
Sick & Visiting		Louis Seward & Shirley Morris
Sports		Mavis Lewis
Training & Development		Vacant
Ways & Means and Catering		Jane Louks
Website		Wendy Ryan
Youth	(613-838-6078)	Elizabeth Douville



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Club 55 Executive

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Vice President	(613-838-2548)	John Villeneuve
Secretary	(613-838-6078)	Elizabeth Douville
Treasurer	(613-838-3244)	Tom Louks

Committees

Branch Liaison	Shirley Morris
Cards (for people)	Brenda Goss
Coffee	John Villeneuve
Euchre	Joyce Cook
Exercise	Shirley Morris & John Olsen
Membership	Joanne Heinbuch
Movies	Tom Louks
Telephone	Marg Hogan



Deadline to submit for the next bulletin is always t
he third Friday of March, June, September and December by 6 pm please

Send to wryan1955@hotmail.com

All articles appearing in this publication are the opinions of their author.

President's Message

Year End Report for 2020



During the early days of the pandemic Club 55 voted to present the Branch with their usual annual donations a bit earlier than usual. A transfer of \$6500 was made to the Branch account. This was so appreciated and the Branch thanks you. We are now 9 months into the Covid19 pandemic with the only income coming from the generosity of Club 55 transferring the coffee hour money to the Branch. Coffee hour was not for the full 9 months but only since the Province relaxed the restrictions last summer.

We had started exercises with the relaxing of the past restrictions, and then with new restrictions we had to stop. With the starting, stopping and now starting once again we are open for exercises with current restrictions. We are not a Legion with daily bar hours and are unable to cater, rent, hold barbeques or begin our Dart League. To this end we are applying for the Emergency Support Funding recently put out by the Federal Government. Our application was emailed on 27 November.

It was a strange November with no Remembrance Dinner, door to door Poppy Drive, sitting with donation boxes in the LCBO and Grocery Store among other, no service in Munster and only with a small contingent in Richmond at the Cenotaph. We were so used to having an Open House for the community at the Branch it was very strange to have none. It was as if the month didn't exist.

Now we are going into December without our Christmas Club 55 Luncheon and Branch Potluck. We are restricted to 10 people for any attendance. The Province now wants us to restrict our Christmas gatherings to immediate family members. Another lost month.

It's not all gloom and doom as there is word of a vaccine coming and with hope we will be back together in the spring or early summer. The other good news (for some and maybe not for others) general meetings have been cancelled until spring as well as elections. So, you have me for another six months. Enjoy.

Christmas is still Christmas and online shopping seems to have taken over from the store to store trips we loved. Church services will continue with reduced attendance and the services streamed. Houses are being decorated earlier than usual. We seniors must now learn a whole new way of living and catch up with the younger crowd which should pump some life in our bodies.

With all that is happening around us, Brenda and I wish all our members a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Brian Goss

Last Post

**Ron Reynolds
December 2020**

We Will Remember Him



Club 55

Merry Christmas to all our members.

Happy to report that we have not heard of any of you that are sick, maybe sick of being confined to the house, -hey let's count our blessing, a warm home, food on the table and good friends and family that love us.

So until we can meet again and hopefully with the vaccine in sight it won't be forever, let us keep our spirits up and keep safe and well.

Joanne Heinbuch



The Richmond Legion lit up for Christmas - thanks to Eric Booth for the picture and Boyd & Pat for decorating!

Please note to those with a hard copy of the bulletin these pictures are all in colour so go to the website www.richmondlegion.ca to get the full effect.

Pictures from Boyd Dulmage of the Legion display for the 2020 Santa Claus Drive Through Parade! Details are in his column on the next page.





Membership Report

It continues to be a different kind of year and a different kind of times for everyone at the Richmond Legion and throughout the world. Even though we have been restricted as to what we can and can't do, we have still managed to get some things done.

I am happy to report that we have enrolled 10 new members into our legion since I have taken over, and it is with high hopes that when things get back to normal that I will begin a membership drive, with a goal of enrolling another 20 members in 2021. Having talked with several people, the hope is that people will be looking for something to do and I want to make sure that our legion is the place for people, to join, volunteer in positions, bring new ideas to our legion and create fellowship with all our members.

Eric Booth and myself set up a table with displays for the last Richmond Craft Show held at the back of the Richmond Fairgrounds. We were there for the 2 days, the weather was great and people were very generous with their donations to the poppy fund. Thanks also to my wife Pat Laninga, (a new member this year) for helping out over the 2 days.

My wife and I spent a day putting up lights at the legion. Hope you have had the opportunity to drive by at night to have a look. The lights will be on from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. until just after the New Year. I gathered some donations, so the cost of buying the new LED Lights was almost covered. A big thank you to Kerr Karpentry for the donation.

Again, with the help of my wife, we decorated my van for the static Christmas Parade held at the Richmond Fairgrounds on 5 December. For those who did not get a chance to drive through the parade, we had a Christmas Living room set up inside my van, with a lighted village, a train, fireplace, with lights inside and out. We went at 3 p.m. and set everything up and then were there until 7:30 p.m. It was cold and a little windy, but there were so many cars coming through and the smiles on everyone's faces was well worth it. Thanks so much to Marg and Angela Barkley and Wendy Ferguson for loaning us some Christmas lawn decorations.

We have had about 75% of members who have renewed for 2021. Just a reminder that you can renew online. If you have not already done so, you just need to create a log in, using your membership number and a password of your choice. You will see on the page after you log in where you can renew.

If anyone knows someone that would like to join our legion, they can also enroll online at www.legion.ca. Please make sure you tell them to select Richmond and District #625. We have had a couple of people put Richmond in the search area and ended up joining the legion in Richmond, BC, or the one in Richmond, QC. No problem if they do as it is easy for me to bring them back.

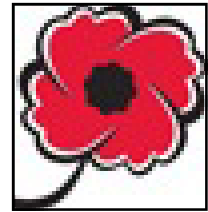
With the festive season nearing, please remember those who live alone, or those who can't get out as often as they like, maybe a phone call or a drive by their house for a little distant visit at the front door would be nice. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a joyful Christmas and all the best in the New Year.

Take good care of yourself and be safe.

***Boyd Dulmage, CD
Membership Chair***



November 11 2020



November 11th in Richmond was in stark contrast to previous years, but in keeping the Dominion Command's request and local health authorities' advice, the Richmond Legion held a very small invitation only ceremony that had just 7 invitees. And there was no ceremony in Munster at all this year.

There were several email notifications and it was on our website advising that if you did NOT get a phone call from Poppy Chair Jane Louks asking you to attend, that you please stay away from the memorial park at 11 am to protect those who were part of the ceremony itself.



Thank you to all those who complied with our request not to attend the invitation only service in Richmond and, to those who showed up without an invitation, why did you do that?

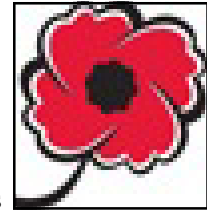
There were a handful of spectators who kept to the sidewalks around the memorial park and we thank them for keeping their distance.

There was also a sign on the fence across the street from the park saying Richmond Guiding Remembers and dozens of home made poppies on the fence as well. Thank you for this display of support.

Other Legions in our area did not seem to comply with Dominion Command's request to limit attendance which was evidenced by the coverage in the local papers with pictures showing an abundance of attendees at their ceremonies.

Thank you to Oscar Clench, Brian Goss, Eric Booth, Tom Louks, Louis Seward, Johnny Villeneuve and Jane Louks for organizing, setting up and taking part in the November 11th ceremony.

Poppy Report



Our annual Poppy drive has come and gone for 2020 and I am pleased to report that despite the restrictions put on the Branch due to Covid 19, we did quite well this year.

My deepest thanks go to the people of Richmond & District and to all the local businesses who stepped up and made generous donations in support of the veterans and their families.

Thanks also to our Legion members who donated their time, businesses who displayed counter boxes, Rebecca Hanbidge who provided us with a free booth at the Richmond Outdoor Christmas Market at the fair grounds on November 7th and 8th, and to Boyd Dulmage, Pat Laninga and Eric Booth for managing the booth, which turned out to be a huge success for both donations and signing up new members!

For contacting and collecting donations from all the businesses who usually sponsor our wreath rack at the cenotaph, thank you to Bob Leighton and Tom Louks.

For overseeing the dropping off, replenishing and picking up of the counter boxes at the local businesses, thank you to Eric Booth, Bill Murphy and Tom Louks.

For placing the crosses on the graves, thank you Oscar and Joyce Clench, Brian Goss, Eric Booth, Louis Seward, John Villeneuve and Tom Louks.

For counting the money for deposit Shirley Morris, Sharon Murphy, Pat McGrath, John Villeneuve and for rolling all the coin Brian Goss.

Thanks to the following members we were able to put on a small Remembrance service on November 11th, 2020 at the cenotaph: Oscar Clench, Brian Goss, Eric Booth, Louis Seward, John Villeneuve and Tom Louks.

For the 2019/2020 Poppy financial year we granted five \$1000 bursaries to two students from Sacred Heart High School in Stittsville and three students at South Carleton High School in Richmond.



And a special thank you to all my Poppy committee members for a job well done: Brian Goss, Shirley Morris, Elizabeth Douville, Wendy Ryan, Louis Seward, Bob Leighton, Eric Booth, John Villeneuve, Keith Thurrott and Tom Louks.

I wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!

***Jane Louks
Poppy Chair***

PS A big thank you to Jane Louks for once again spearheading an excellent Poppy campaign despite the limitations (she also helps with counter boxes, counting and all the other areas) and to Tom Louks for all the extras he did to keep Jane happy and sane!

Youth Ed Report

In November each year, the Royal Canadian Legion launches the Remembrance Contests across Canada.

This year, the pandemic did not stop our students from taking time to create a poster or write a poem or essay .

They came through with some inspiring, thoughtful and beautiful work .

We thank South Carleton High School, St Philip Catholic, and Richmond Public for the fine entries. And especially, we thank the teachers who provided the time and guidance so that our students had the opportunity to take part.

We had 267 entries! 194 posters, 51 poems and 22 essays.

8 First Place Winners will have their work sent on to the Zone Level of Competition in late December. 2 Colour Posters, 2 Black& White Posters, 2 Poems and 2 Essays.

Here (right side of this page) is the entry in the Senior Poem Category, Sarah Northcott is a grade 12 student at South Carleton.

Elizabeth Douville

We Will Never Forget

Skies are somber, the air blows cold
For on this November day, a story is told.
Battles with heroes, new and old,
The patter of gunfire upon the foe.

We remember the past, the lives taken,
The families torn apart; partners left shaken.
Delve into the memories of lives we have lost
And never forget the sacrifice and cost.

For Canadians are strong; are fierce and proud.
We show our spirit, shout it out loud.
Our freedom we cherish; our democracy is strong.
We never forget, "O Canada", our beautiful song.

A moment to pause, come together again,
And contemplate those women and men
Who defended our country, with hope they led,
Those serving the flag, now, white and red.

Today we remember, we think of the past,
Of the sacrifices we still feel, ever last.
We thank those who left, never came back,
And we see the clouds part, sun shine through the black.



Photo 1 = Eve Mulligan won 1st at Branch, Zone and District Levels and at the Provincial Level she placed 2nd. Eve was a grade 12 student at SCHS and entered the Colour Poster Contest, Senior Category.



Photo 2. Liv Rodger won 1st at Branch Level and 2nd at Zone. Liv was a Gr. 11 student at SCHS and entered the Black & White Poster Contest, Senior Category.



Photo 3.
Dasha Papkov won 1st at Branch and Zone Levels and at the District Level she placed 2nd. Dasha was a Gr. 10 student at SCHS and entered the Essay Contest, Senior Category

The following pages contain a 5 part series written by Jamie Hammond in 2018 and forwarded to me in 2019 to share. Since this year's Remembrance events were curtailed by Covid, I thought it was a good opportunity to share these articles.

Colonel (Ret'd) James W Hammond, OMM, CD

Jamie Hammond was appointed to his current position as Assistant Deputy Minister Strategy and Competitiveness in the BC Ministry of International Trade on September 28th, 2015. Previously, he was the Private Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of BC from 2011 to 2015. In that role he supported two Lieutenant Governors by advising on their constitutional, celebratory and promotional roles across British Columbia, as well as their work with First Nations and the hosting of Royal and diplomatic guests to the province.

Prior to that, as a Colonel in the Canadian Forces, he served across Canada, in Germany, Brunei, Hong Kong, Bosnia, Afghanistan and England in a variety of command and staff positions in the Infantry and Special Forces. He commanded sub-units in Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, the Royal Green Jackets, 2nd King Edward VII's Own Goorkhas, the Canadian Airborne Regiment and Joint Task Force Two. He also founded the Canadian Special Operations Regiment and commanded the Canadian Special Operation Forces Task Force in Afghanistan in 2002. Most recently, he served nine months in Kabul, Afghanistan in 2011 – his second tour to that country. Mr. Hammond has also worked on NATO and arms control policy and was seconded to the Privy Council Office. He has published a number of articles and essays on leadership and military issues. He was awarded a British Division Commander's Commendation for his work in Bosnia, and was also named to the Order of Military Merit.

Mr. Hammond has a BA (Hons) in History from the University of Victoria, a Master's of Arts in International Affairs from Carleton University, and a Master's of Strategic Studies from the US Army War College. He pursued doctoral studies and taught political science at Carleton and has published a number of articles

Why we go to memorials on Remembrance Day

Col. (Retired) Jamie Hammond / Times Colonist NOVEMBER 6, 2018 12:24 AM COL. (RETIRED) JAMIE HAMMOND Col. (Retired) Jamie Hammond, OMM, CD, served around the world for 28 years in Canada's infantry and special forces.



The BC Afghanistan Memorial in Victoria BC.

‘And the young people ask, what are they marching for? And I ask myself the same question.’
From the song *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda* by Eric Bogle

On Nov. 11, the Royal Canadian Legion will take the lead in hosting Remembrance Day ceremonies around the city, where veterans and serving members will form up, march and salute and wreaths will be laid. Each year, it seems that, although the number of veterans diminishes, the number of spectators seems to increase. Even the number of memorials is growing.

According to Veterans Affairs Canada, there are more than 125 military memorials in Greater Victoria. They range from the cenotaphs at the Legislature and in each municipality, to plaques and stained-glass windows, to roads dedicated to the fallen such as part of Shelbourne Street, Veterans Memorial Parkway and Myles Mansell Road. Even Save-on-Foods Memorial Centre and the Memorial Cup that the Royals covet are so named ... lest we forget.

As a 14-year-old Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Army Cadet on parade in front of the Legislature, as a 28-year career infantry and special forces officer who served long tours in Bosnia and Afghanistan, and as a member of a small group of volunteers who created and dedicated the B.C. Afghanistan Memorial in Victoria last year, I have often asked myself questions such as the one posed by Eric Bogle and reflected on the meaning of Remembrance Day.

So, why do we go to Remembrance Day in such large numbers — especially when few of us today have a direct, personal connection with one of the fallen, as was the case a few decades back?

Beyond expressing our sadness at loss, we go to memorials for inspiration. For those who serve, it is obvious. As a junior infantry officer serving in the Patricias in Germany in the 1980s, I was immersed in regimental history. I paraded at Vimy Ridge, visited military cemeteries around Europe and carried the regimental colour adorned with the battle honours of the regiment.

Through these conscious acts of memory, we were imbued with courageous examples of those who went before us and we dedicated ourselves to strive for excellence and overcome risk, fear, pain and hardship.

In a similar way, most Canadians feel a sense of that inspiration in our daily lives when we associate with those who stood up for something, gave their all and sacrificed for others. It helps us to put the challenges in our lives into perspective and motivates us to overcome them by making personal sacrifices for our friends, family, teammates or a worthy cause in our lives.

Beyond inspiration, we all feel another emotion on Remembrance Day — a sense of belonging. We stand together as Canadians and feel a part of something larger than ourselves. Collectively, we cherish values such as justice, equality, inclusion, tolerance, respect for diversity and the rule of law. At times, we must stand up to for these concepts in real and concrete ways.

On Remembrance Day, we reflect on the costs of standing up for our values and we feel a bond with other Canadians who believe in justice and the responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves. There is a third emotion that we feel on Nov. 11 — respect. Respect is the basis of our society. It is the basis of reconciliation, collaboration and progress.

Although I always thought I understood the meaning of respect for the fallen, I have learned more recently that true respect starts with understanding. In late 2009, a small group of six or eight of us were standing in the PPCLI Hall of Honour in Calgary to witness the engraving of a single name alongside the other 1,800 Patricias who had given their lives in service to Canada.

Continue on next page...

There was no great fanfare, just a simple dedication prayer from the chaplain and the uncovering of the new name — Cpl. N.A. Bulger. Nick was killed by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan that summer. Embraced in the curved walls of the small memorial hall were a few officers, friends and his widow, Rebeka Bulger, the grieving young mother of two daughters who were then only two and four years old.

As we had a moment of silence after the name had been unveiled, I looked at Rebeka and then contemplated the other names on the panels and recognized, as perhaps I had not before, that knowing Nick and Rebeka's story helped me understand and bring life, meaning and respect to all the other names. Moreover, I understood that my respect, which had always been focused on the fallen, should also be shared with those left behind.

There are 163 names on the B.C. Afghanistan memorial and each has a story. Most are young infantry soldiers in their 20s, but there are also five civilians who died on contract with the government of Canada, 13 officers, a chief warrant officer, five women, seven medics and 17 reservists or part-time soldiers. There are two from Victoria, 17 from B.C. and many more who served, studied or trained here.

Over the next few days, I hope to give the reader more insight into the lives of just a few of those names, such as Nick Bulger. Understanding their stories brings life to the sacrifices of the 118,000 others whose names appear on the Roll of Honour in Ottawa. It also helps us understand the sacrifices of their families and those who returned with physical and mental wounds.

When, on the 11th day of the 11th month, at the 11th hour someone reads out loud the line, "We will remember them," there will be sadness, grief and a sense of loss. But by remembering the personal stories of the lives of the fallen, those emotions can be transcended by the higher feelings of inspiration, belonging and respect that are central to the continued importance of Remembrance Day.

Col. (Retired) Jamie Hammond, OMM, CD, served around the world for 28 years in Canada's infantry and special forces, including several tours to Afghanistan and Bosnia. He was private secretary to two lieutenant-governors and was most recently an assistant deputy minister with the B.C. government. He was also a member of the society that created the Afghanistan Memorial in Victoria. This is the first in a series leading up to Remembrance Day. For more on the memorial go to vicaafghanistanmemorial.ca.

Times Colonist Wed, 07 Nov 2018

This is the second in a series leading up to Remembrance Day.

Capt. Jon Snyder was a true Canadian hero in Afghanistan (pictured left)



The resilient people of Afghanistan have long used underground aqueducts known as a karez or qanat to move water long distances and provide nourishment for their crops and families. Like the arteries in our bodies, a karez protects the fluids needed for life in that harsh region.

Seen from the air, they look like the result of a bombing run, a series of holes in the ground in a straight line. Up close, the deep holes link a stream up to 30 metres below the surface.

During the operations in Afghanistan, there were always rumours, and some evidence, of karezes being used to store weapons and ammunition or to move insurgents. There were however, practical

limitations to using them for anything but water transportation due to their depth and the steepness of their walls as we discovered after June 7, 2008.

Capt. Jonathan Snyder, a 26-year-old member of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry from Penticton and a University of Victoria grad, was on his second tour of Afghanistan. He had already distinguished himself so well on his first tour in 2006 that I tried in vain to get him off his second tour, so he could join the special operations command.

He was later recognized for his bravery on that second tour with a Star of Military Valour, Canada's second-highest award for bravery, for his leadership of a team assigned to an Afghan company that was ambushed by Taliban insurgents.

The citation reads that Snyder seized control of the situation, and that he and four other Canadians, "with little chance of survival ... exposed themselves to great peril and retaliated against the enemy... Because of their dedication, leadership and valour, many Afghan and Canadian lives were saved."

A few nights after that incident, humble and dedicated, he was back on patrol. Carrying the combined weight of his helmet, body armour, tac vest, magazines, weapon, radio and ammunition, he was patrolling across a contested area of grape fields dotted with karez shafts.

Snyder stepped near the edge of a karez in the darkness and the ground gave way instantly. He fell 20 metres down into the darkness and into water. His patrol members worked desperately to recover him. A helicopter eventually carried him to the medical facility at Kandahar Airfield, where he was pronounced dead. The lifegiving waterway had taken Snyder's life.

Snyder, who served us all so well in his short life, continued to serve even after his death. His example caused a reassessment of how we define sacrifice in the Canadian Armed Forces. The Sacrifice Medal, Canada's equivalent to the U.S. Purple Heart, was initially approved for presentation to a soldier who "died or was wounded under honourable circumstances as a direct result of hostile action." As the task force commander, Brigadier-General Dennis Thompson, said about Snyder's death: "This tragic accident has deeply impacted us all ... It's just a tragic accident." There was no doubt that it was an accident.

As his death was not "a direct result of hostile action," however, Snyder would not be eligible for the Sacrifice Medal that was announced later that summer. He was, nevertheless, patrolling at night in territory where an enemy was active. As he was unable to give away his movements, using white light was not an option and his death, though accidental, was a direct result of his operational service in Afghanistan.

A review of the policy took place and with Snyder's case top of mind, the eligibility criteria for the medal were amended the next year to read "as a direct result of a hostile action or action intended for a hostile force" and "as a result of an injury or disease related to military service."

No matter what the circumstances of his death, for Snyder's father David, his mother Anne, brother Adam and fiancée Megan, all of whom were at the unveiling of the Afghanistan memorial last year, there was no doubt about the significance of the sacrifice that had been made.

With time, Canadians have accepted that all deaths and injuries related to an operation where a hostile force is operating deserve recognition. We have Snyder to thank for that, a Canadian hero in every sense of the word.

Times Colonist Thu, 08 Nov 2018

This is the third in a series leading up to Remembrance Day

Soldiers went to war because they wanted to make a difference

Why do soldiers go to war? I have always believed that soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen join and deploy with higher causes in mind.

Once they are in harm's way, they fight for their comrades. Call it primary-group cohesion, an emotional bond or Shakespeare's "band of brothers." Members of the forces take on unnatural risks for the benefit of others.

The three local heroes whose names appear on the B.C. Afghanistan Memorial are evidence of that. Bombardier Myles Mansell, Cpl. Andrew Eykelenboom and Lt. Andrew Nuttall were very different individuals, but they shared a purpose and vision for the world.



Mansell graduated from Belmont High School and paraded at the Bay Street Armouries as a reservist with the 5th (British Columbia) Field Artillery Regiment.

He fought forest fires in the summer of 2003 and was a carpenter.

DND Andrew Nuttall, Andrew Eykelenboom & Myles Mansell

He was 25 when he was killed, along with Lt. Bill Turner, Cpl. Randy Payne and Cpl. Matthew Dinning, in a lightly armoured vehicle that was struck by an improvised explosive device on April 22, 2006.

Eykelenboom was a 23-year-old medic from Comox with a huge smile and a reputation for being quietly competent, laid back and easy to get along with. He had saved numerous lives during his six-month tour.

On Aug. 11, 2006, he had completed his work "outside the wire," turned in his medical bag and was due to spend the next two weeks in Cyprus. He was packing his bags to leave but was asked if he would accompany a resupply run. He wasn't scheduled to go, but volunteered to head out one last time, when a suicide bomber crashed into his vehicle at Spin Boldak on the border with Pakistan.

Nuttall was a 30-year-old commander of about 36 soldiers in Nakhonay, Panjwaii District, southwest of Kandahar. He lived in Saanich, volunteered at the University of Victoria radio station, loved to snowboard and taught CrossFit before joining the army.

He blogged regularly about his tour, until he was killed on Dec. 23, 2009, while on a joint foot patrol with Afghan National Army troops. He later received a rare, posthumous award of the Meritorious Service Medal for his work in the district.

While these three local heroes were different, they all shared something in common. They were good Canadians, the kind we can all be proud of, and what's more, they were all well-liked by their peers and carried endearing nicknames such as Smiley Myley, Boomer and Nutts (in recognition of the insanity of his CrossFit workouts).

More important, they all shared a desire to serve others. After caring for a young Afghan girl and her infant sister, Boomer, the medic, gave the girl a doll that had been made by a friend of his mother.

He wrote home in July 2006: “A special thanks goes from her older sister to your friend for such a wonderful gift; and a thanks from me for being the one to accept her gratitude. Making the children happy is the most rewarding thing about this tour.”

When asked what he was going to do in Afghanistan just before he deployed in 2009, Nuttall simply replied: “I am going to help the Afghan people.”

In his blog, a few weeks before he died, Nuttall described the local villagers as people who “are frightened, impoverished and seek nothing but safety and prosperity for their families.”

Like Myles and Boomer, he gave his life to help and protect others who couldn’t protect themselves.

A few years ago, Nuttall’s father, Rick, and a small group of volunteers met to design and create the B.C. Afghanistan monument. An initial design was selected that involved maple leaves falling to the ground, but something was missing. As we discussed options, we realized that the monument should not only recognize the fallen and those who served with them, but it should also recognize the purpose of their service.

The image selected was that of a Canadian soldier reaching out his hand to an Afghan child, which had appeared on the front page of the British paper The Telegraph. Our local heroes didn’t serve to help warlords or the current government. They served to give the next generation a hand up.

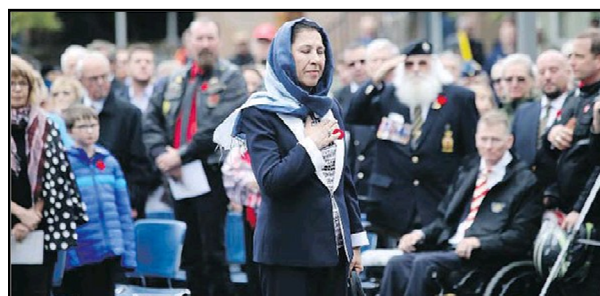
Although Afghanistan still has a long way to go, there is, at least, a new generation of young Afghan women and men who have been given the tools for a better future through 12 years of uninterrupted school.

They can, in part, thank Myles, Boomer and Nutts for that, local heroes who went global.

Times Colonist Fri, 09 Nov 2018

This is the fourth in a series leading up to Remembrance

Women were protectors and role models in Afghanistan



At the unveiling of the B.C. Afghanistan Memorial on Quadra Street in September 2017, Shinkai Karokhail, Afghanistan’s ambassador to Canada, spoke with passion:

“As a woman who has stood for women’s rights and has represented men and women for a decade in our parliament, I know very well what the Canadian sacrifice has meant to my nation.”

Continued on next page...

She went on to point out the changes in Afghanistan since 2001 — more women in parliament (about 28 per cent now, just ahead of Canada's 27 per cent); 36 per cent of all students are female (there are three million girls in school, compared with about 50,000 in 2001) and better health care across the nation. She thanked Canadians for the sacrifices of their “daughters and sons.”

Daughters and sons. We don't often hear it stated that way, but as an Afghan woman, she has a right to put the emphasis on the role Canadian women played during the operation and the change it meant for women in Afghanistan.

I first met Karokhail in 2011 in her home village of Khak-e-Jabbar, the tiny capital of a district about an hour-and-a-half drive south of Kabul. Our meeting in the village included about 20 men and one woman, Karokhail, the local member of the lower house of the Afghan parliament.

She was the only woman there, but she was the dominant voice in that room and held everyone's attention by her dignity, her understanding of the history of her region, the fighting of the 1990s, the departure of half the population of her district as refugees, the status of women locally and throughout the country, and by her ability to articulate the needs of her region in English, Dari, Pashto and Urdu.

A champion for the future of Afghanistan, not the past, Karokhail went on to fight for revisions of textbooks and changes in repressive laws, and she played a strong role in mentoring young women and fighting for their rights.

So when she thanked Canadians for the sacrifices of our “daughters and sons,” I knew she wanted to place a special emphasis on the women who served in Afghanistan, not just for their service, but for their examples.

About 4,000 Canadian women deployed to Afghanistan. While many supported reconstruction efforts or delivered humanitarian and medical projects, more than 300 served in frontline combat roles in the infantry, artillery, combat engineers or armoured corps.

They also distinguished themselves doing so. Maj. Eleanor Taylor received a Meritorious Service Medal for her service as an “exceptional combat leader” of an infantry rifle company. After intense combat in Nakhonay, Capt. Ashley Collette's Medal of Military Valour citation reads that her “fortitude under fire and performance in combat were critical to defeating the enemy.”

On the B.C. Afghanistan Memorial, the range of women's contributions is carved in stone. There are better-known names, such as that of Capt. Nichola Goddard, who died while directing artillery fire and close air support on May 17, 2006. Not only was she the first female Canadian combat soldier to be killed in conflict, she was also the first forward observation officer to direct fire missions in support of Canadian manoeuvre operations against a known enemy since the Korean War.

Journalist Michelle Lang's name also appears on the memorial, as she was embedded with the Canadian Task Force when the vehicle she was riding in rolled over an improvised explosive device. Her name is etched alongside four others who died in that explosion: George Miok, Zach McCormack, Kirk Taylor and Garrett Chidley.

There are other women's names on the memorial, less known to Canadians, but each showing the range of women's service in Afghanistan: Karine Blais from Gaspésie, a 21-year-old trooper in the armoured corps, Michelle “Mic” Mendes, a 30-year-old major in the intelligence branch, and Kristal Giesebrecht, a medical technician from Petawawa, share space on the memorial.

They not only served Canadians, but each in her own way served as a role model for a generation of Afghan women. As Karokhail said, as she finished her comments in Victoria last September: “You have all made the world a better place and there is nothing more noble than serving others.”

Times Colonist Sat, 10 Nov 2018

This is the fifth and final part of the series.

Families, loved ones and the wounded also heroes

In 2010, my wife and I attended a fundraising dinner for the Edmonton Garrison Military Family Resource Centre that supports military families. It was a typical fundraising gala with guests, dressed in their finest evening attire, bidding on silent and live auction items for a worthy cause.



J W Penner Afghan Ambassador Shinkai Karok-hail, left, speaks at the B.C. Afghanistan Memorial dedication ceremony with Capt. Trevor Greene, who received a severe brain injury on March 4, 2006, in Zabul province.

Many well-known names in the Alberta legal world and oilpatch attended. At this gala, there was also an abundance of guests in scarlet army mess uniforms with medals, and women in long ball gowns.

One table near us stood out. It was a group of slightly nervous women in their 20s and early 30s. At a quick glance, they could have been any group of a dozen mothers dressed up for a night out, away from the stresses of parenthood for a few hours.

On that night, however, they were all widows being honoured with a night dedicated to them and in recognition of the loss of their partners in Afghanistan.

Perhaps the garrison towns of Petawawa, Ont., and Valcartier, Que., like Edmonton around 2010, were microcosms of small-town Canada in 1918 or 1945. In those communities, we all knew the widows, and the kids at school knew which children's fathers had died.

It is hard to explain the impact on families when a parent goes off on long tours in conflict zones, even for the families whose loved one comes home safe. Every phone call or knock on the door becomes stressful.

Even a chance meeting in the schoolyard with one of the widows or widowers is awkward, a guilt-laced relief that it wasn't your spouse and a reminder that your loved one could be next. As a community, we all mourned.

All of the 163 names on the B.C. Afghanistan Memorial triggered a ripple effect of grief. As serving military members, we all attended too many funerals. Some ceremonies were filled with both tears and laughter as we remembered the fallen as a loved individual with their own character whom we felt lucky to have known.

At the graveside, however, there was no laughter, just the inconsolable, unforgettable tears of the 22-year-old fiancée or the mother who fell onto the lowering casket. These engraved names represent only the 163.

individuals, with their unrealized potential and their grieving families. A beret, some medals, or a folded flag handed over at the graveside are meaningful, but somehow a pittance when compared to the loss.

Engraved on one end of the memorial, alongside the names, are the words: “The families and loved ones,” whose contribution is too often forgotten. The inscription is a reminder that for everyone who served or fell, there was a family who supported them, made their own sacrifices and were affected by the service of their loved one.

In the same way, there is a reminder at the other end of the memorial for “those who returned with mental and physical wounds.”

More than 2,000 Canadians were listed as injured and wounded during the conflict. For some, the wounds are obvious: Maj. Mark Campbell was leading teams mentoring Afghan soldiers when they responded to a fire-fight on June 1, 2008. He and his team ran toward the sound of the guns, established a defensive perimeter and fought off the Taliban.

Campbell was obviously taking charge of the situation when the Taliban targeted him and set off a remotely detonated bomb of fertilizer and diesel that tore off one leg above the knee and damaged the other so badly it had to be removed.

Thanks to the quick action under fire of medic Sgt. Martin Côté, the lives of Campbell and three others were saved. Côté won the Medal of Military Valour that day, but the lives of Campbell and the others were changed forever.

Despite his injuries, Campbell continues to serve us all as a champion for the rights of the more than 650 Afghanistan veterans wounded in action.

Since the war in Afghanistan, Canadians have become well attuned to the phrase “post-traumatic stress disorder.” In previous wars, they spoke of shell shock, but whatever the terminology, the challenges of mental health are the same. Of the 40,000 who served in Afghanistan, Veterans Affairs Canada reports that more than 6,000 are receiving disability benefits for mental-health conditions.

As we planned the B.C. Afghanistan Memorial, we spent a great deal of time discussing how to recognize those who returned with severe mental-health conditions. What about the approximately 70 who, according to news reports, took their own lives after completing a tour in Afghanistan?

Unfortunately, there is no definitive list of whose names should or should not be added. The agreed solution was to leave space for new names if a list emerges in the future, but also to acknowledge the ravages of mental health by inscribing the reminder on the end of the memorial.

On the day the memorial was unveiled, 17 families of the fallen were invited to participate in the ceremony. One family was asked to represent all of those who returned with mental-health injuries. Sheila and Shaun Fynes from Victoria were there to remember their son, Cpl. Stuart Langridge, who took his own life on March 15, 2008, three years after finishing his tour in Afghanistan.

Langridge’s service to the people of Afghanistan was as important as every one of the other 40,000 Canadians who served, and he, like his colleagues and their families, should not be forgotten.

Over the past five days, I have tried to give a small insight into the lives of a few who served, so that they might help bring life to the others we have remembered every Nov. 11 for the past 100 years. The B.C. Afghanistan Memorial, like other memorials around the city, reminds us of all the complexities of war and conflict. It reminds us to think of those who served, the fallen, the injured and the families, but it also reminds us to reflect, not just on Remembrance Day, but throughout the year, of what that service represents.

Continued on next page...

On Remembrance Day this year, heed the advice of John McCrae's poem In Flanders Fields, and take the torch thrown from failing hands and hold it high. Its light is there to inspire us, to remind us to respect others and to remember that belonging to a great nation with shared values comes with both the privilege of being Canadian and the duty to uphold our values.

Remembrance Day Write-up – Alex Gagnier

Hello, My name is Alex Gagnier and I am a manager in our Human Capital consulting practice. I am also a mother of two boys Everett (4) and Thomas (2). My husband Gavin serves as a pilot in the Canadian Armed Forces.

As Canadians, many of us are lucky enough to say that we have not lived through or experienced military conflict. We are assured in our safety through security granted by the oceans that border us and our neighbour to the south. Furthermore, unlike our European allies, our country does not bear the physical scars of war; buildings damaged and destroyed, grassy fields still marked with indentations from shells, and rows upon rows of tombstones that serve as visible and enduring reminders of the sacrifices made in the name of the liberties we enjoy today.

I come from a family with deep military roots. Both my Grandfathers served, as did my father and my uncle. Now I proudly support my husband through his service, although it is not without its challenges. The realities of his job have become all too real for me as he deploys into areas of conflict, leaving me and my children for months at a time. I worry constantly for his safety and mourn the missed milestones such as birthdays and holidays where we can't be together as a family. While his absence is difficult, we are fortunate that he has always returned home safely. There are many who have not.

As we live through the COVID 19 pandemic we have caught a glimpse of what it looks like when the world is entirely consumed by one event. We were asked to protect our country and keep each other safe by closing our businesses, shutting down our lives and staying at home. This was a small price to pay. Between 1914-1918 and then again from 1939-1945 the world was consumed by the largest and deadliest military conflicts in history. World War I claimed the lives of 22 million people while World War II claimed over 50 million. Canadians were asked to serve their country, and many men and women answered the call, giving their lives to keep us safe.

Death and destruction of this magnitude seems unimaginable today, but military conflicts, natural disasters, and global pandemics continue to rage on. Wherever there is a need the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces continue to serve our country and keep us safe. I am personally grateful for their sacrifice and today on November 11th I will observe one minute of silence and remember them.

When removed from the realities of conflict it is easy to forget ... it is a privilege to forget.

Lest we forget.

Submitted by Debbie McSheffrey

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS



From the Old English 'Cristes Mæsse' ~ meaning the 'mass of Christ' ~ the story of Christmas begins with the birth of a babe in Bethlehem.

Many Christmas customs are based on the birth of Christ. Such as giving presents because of the Wise Men, who brought presents to the baby Jesus. Christmas carols based on Christ's birth and scenes of the birth with figures of shepherds, the Wise Men, and animals surrounding the baby Jesus.

But some of the ways people celebrate Christmas have nothing to do with Christ's birthday. Many bits of older holidays have crept into Christmas!

It wasn't until about 200 years after Christ's death that Christians even thought about celebrating his birth. No one knows the exact date of his birth. It is believed that December the 25th was chosen to turn people away from celebrating other holidays in this time of the year.

Saturnalia was the Romans holiday that they celebrated in December. It was a time of feasting and parties. Also, in northern Europe there was a holiday known as Yule. They celebrated this holiday by making great fires. They then would dance around the fires, yelling for the winter to end.

In time, Christmas took the place of these holidays. But people kept some of the old customs -- such as burning a Yule log and having feasts and parties. The word Yule is still used as a name for the Christmas season.

As time went on, new customs crept into Christmas. One was **the Christmas tree**, which was started in Germany. As the Germans settled in new lands they brought with them this tradition.

In 16th-century Germany fir trees were decorated, both indoors and out, with apples, roses, gilded candies, and colored paper. In the Middle Ages, a popular religious play depicted the story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

A fir tree hung with apples was used to symbolize the Garden of Eden — the Paradise Tree. The play ended with the prophecy of a saviour coming, and so was often performed during the Advent season.

It is held that Protestant reformer Martin Luther first adorned trees with light. While coming home one December evening, the beauty of the stars shining through the branches of a fir inspired him to recreate the effect by placing candles on the branches of a small fir tree inside his home



The Christmas Tree was brought to England by Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert from his native Germany. The famous Illustrated News etching in 1848, featuring the Royal Family of Victoria, Albert and their children gathered around a Christmas tree in Windsor Castle, popularized the tree throughout Victorian England. Brought to America by the Pennsylvania Germans, in the late 19th century.

Last but not least is Saint Nick. A long time ago, a bishop named Nicholas lived in what is now the country of Turkey. No one knows much about him.

There are stories that he often helped children in need. Many years after his death, Nicholas was made a saint. In time, he became the patron saint of children.



The origin of Santa Claus begins in the 4th century with Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, an area in present day Turkey. By all accounts St. Nicholas was a generous man, particularly devoted to children. After his death around 340 A.D. he was buried in Myra, but in 1087 Italian sailors purportedly stole his remains and removed them to Bari, Italy, greatly increasing St. Nicholas' popularity throughout Europe.

His kindness and reputation for generosity gave rise to claims he that he could perform miracles and devotion to him increased. St. Nicholas became the patron saint of Russia, where he was known by his red cape, flowing white beard, and bishop's mitre.

A History of Christmas copied from the History Channel website.

Christmas is celebrated on December 25 and is both a sacred religious holiday and a worldwide cultural and commercial phenomenon. For two millennia, people around the world have been observing it with traditions and practices that are both religious and secular in nature. Christians celebrate Christmas Day as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, a spiritual leader whose teachings form the basis of their religion.

Popular customs include exchanging gifts, decorating Christmas trees, attending church, sharing meals with family and friends and, of course, waiting for Santa Claus to arrive. December 25—Christmas Day—has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1870.

How Did Christmas Start?

The middle of winter has long been a time of celebration around the world. Centuries before the arrival of the man called Jesus, early Europeans celebrated light and birth in the darkest days of winter. Many peoples rejoiced during the winter solstice, when the worst of the winter was behind them and they could look forward to longer days and extended hours of sunlight.

In Scandinavia, the Norse celebrated Yule from December 21, the winter solstice, through January. In recognition of the return of the sun, fathers and sons would bring home large logs, which they would set on fire. The people would feast until the log burned out, which could take as many as 12 days. The Norse believed that each spark from the fire represented a new pig or calf that would be born during the coming year.



The end of December was a perfect time for celebration in most areas of Europe. At that time of year, most cattle were slaughtered so they would not have to be fed during the winter. For many, it was the only time of year when they had a supply of fresh meat. In addition, most wine and beer made during the year was finally fermented and ready for drinking.

In Germany, people honored the pagan god Oden during the mid-winter holiday. Germans were terrified of Oden, as they believed he made nocturnal flights through the sky to observe his people, and then decide who would prosper or perish. Because of his presence, many people chose to stay inside.

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Saturnalia

In Rome, where winters were not as harsh as those in the far north, Saturnalia—a holiday in honor of Saturn, the god of agriculture—was celebrated. Beginning in the week leading up to the winter solstice and continuing for a full month, Saturnalia was a hedonistic time, when food and drink were plentiful and the normal Roman social order was turned upside down. For a month, slaves would become masters. Peasants were in command of the city. Business and schools were closed so that everyone could join in the fun.

Also around the time of the winter solstice, Romans observed Juvenalia, a feast honoring the children of Rome. In addition, members of the upper classes often celebrated the birthday of Mithra, the god of the unconquerable sun, on December 25. It was believed that Mithra, an infant god, was born of a rock. For some Romans, Mithra's birthday was the most sacred day of the year.

Is Christmas Really the Day Jesus Was Born?

In the early years of Christianity, Easter was the main holiday; the birth of Jesus was not celebrated. In the fourth century, church officials decided to institute the birth of Jesus as a holiday. Unfortunately, the Bible does not mention date for his birth (a fact Puritans later pointed out in order to deny the legitimacy of the celebration). Although some evidence suggests that his birth may have occurred in the spring (why would shepherds be herding in the middle of winter?), Pope Julius I chose December 25. It is commonly believed that the church chose this date in an effort to adopt and absorb the traditions of the pagan Saturnalia festival. First called the Feast of the Nativity, the custom spread to Egypt by 432 and to England by the end of the sixth century.

By the end of the eighth century, the celebration of Christmas had spread all the way to Scandinavia. Today, in the Greek and Russian orthodox churches, Christmas is celebrated 13 to 14 days after the 25th. This is because Western churches use the Gregorian Calendar, while Eastern Churches use the Julian Calendar, which is 13 to 14 days behind the Gregorian Calendar. Both Western and Eastern churches celebrate Epiphany or Three Kings Day 12 days after their own respective Christmases. This is the day it is believed that the three wise men finally found Jesus in the manger.

By holding Christmas at the same time as traditional winter solstice festivals, church leaders increased the chances that Christmas would be popularly embraced, but gave up the ability to dictate how it was celebrated. By the Middle Ages, Christianity had, for the most part, replaced pagan religion. On Christmas, believers attended church, then celebrated raucously in a drunken, carnival-like atmosphere similar to today's Mardi Gras. Each year, a beggar or student would be crowned the "lord of misrule" and eager celebrants played the part of his subjects. The poor would go to the houses of the rich and demand their best food and drink. If owners failed to comply, their visitors would most likely terrorize them with mischief. Christmas became the time of year when the upper classes could repay their real or imagined "debt" to society by entertaining less fortunate citizens.

When Christmas Was Cancelled

In the early 17th century, a wave of religious reform changed the way Christmas was celebrated in Europe. When Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan forces took over England in 1645, they vowed to rid England of decadence and, as part of their effort, cancelled Christmas. By popular demand, Charles II was restored to the throne and, with him, came the return of the popular holiday.

The pilgrims, English separatists that came to America in 1620, were even more orthodox in their Puritan beliefs than Cromwell. As a result, Christmas was not a holiday in early America. From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was actually outlawed in Boston. Anyone exhibiting the Christmas spirit was fined five shillings. By contrast, in the Jamestown settlement, Captain John Smith reported that Christmas was enjoyed by all and passed without incident.

After the American Revolution, English customs fell out of favor, including Christmas. In fact, Christmas wasn't declared a federal holiday until June 26, 1870.

Washington Irving Reinvents Christmas

It wasn't until the 19th century that Americans began to embrace Christmas. Americans re-invented Christmas, and changed it from a raucous carnival holiday into a family-centered day of peace and nostalgia. But what about the 1800s piqued American interest in the holiday?

The early 19th century was a period of class conflict and turmoil. During this time, unemployment was high and gang rioting by the disenfranchised classes often occurred during the Christmas season. In 1828, the New York city council instituted the city's first police force in response to a Christmas riot. This catalyzed certain members of the upper classes to begin to change the way Christmas was celebrated in America.

In 1819, best-selling author Washington Irving wrote *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, gent.*, a series of stories about the celebration of Christmas in an English manor house. The sketches feature a squire who invited the peasants into his home for the holiday. In contrast to the problems faced in American society, the two groups mingled effortlessly. In Irving's mind, Christmas should be a peaceful, warm-hearted holiday bringing groups together across lines of wealth or social status. Irving's fictitious celebrants enjoyed "ancient customs," including the crowning of a Lord of Misrule. Irving's book, however, was not based on any holiday celebration he had attended—in fact, many historians say that Irving's account actually "invented" tradition by implying that it described the true customs of the season.

A Christmas Carol

Also around this time, English author Charles Dickens created the classic holiday tale, *A Christmas Carol*. The story's message—the importance of charity and good will towards all humankind—struck a powerful chord in the United States and England and showed members of Victorian society the benefits of celebrating the holiday.

The family was also becoming less disciplined and more sensitive to the emotional needs of children during the early 1800s. Christmas provided families with a day when they could lavish attention—and gifts—on their children without appearing to "spoil" them.

As Americans began to embrace Christmas as a perfect family holiday, old customs were unearthed. People looked toward recent immigrants and Catholic and Episcopalian churches to see how the day should be celebrated. In the next 100 years, Americans built a Christmas tradition all their own that included pieces of many other customs, including decorating trees, sending holiday cards and gift-giving.

Although most families quickly bought into the idea that they were celebrating Christmas how it had been done for centuries, Americans had really re-invented a holiday to fill the cultural needs of a growing nation.

Who Invented Santa Claus?

The legend of Santa Claus can be traced back to a monk named St. Nicholas who was born in Turkey around 280 A.D.. St. Nicholas gave away all of his inherited wealth and traveled the countryside helping the poor and sick, becoming known as the protector of children and sailors.

St. Nicholas first entered American popular culture in the late 18th century in New York, when Dutch families gathered to honor the anniversary of the death of "Sint Nikolaas" (Dutch for Saint Nicholas), or "Sinter Klaas" for short. "Santa Claus" draws his name from this abbreviation.

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In 1822, Episcopal minister Clement Clarke Moore wrote a Christmas poem called “An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas,” more popularly known today by its first line: “‘Twas The Night Before Christmas.” The poem depicted Santa Claus as a jolly man who flies from home to home on a sled driven by reindeer to deliver toys.

The iconic version of Santa Claus as a jolly man in red with a white beard and a sack of toys was immortalized in 1881, when political cartoonist Thomas Nast drew on Moore's poem to create the image of Old Saint Nick we know today.

Christmas Facts

Each year, 30-35 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States alone. There are about 21,000 Christmas tree growers in the United States, and trees usually grow for about 15 years before they are sold.

In the Middle Ages, Christmas celebrations were rowdy and raucous—a lot like today’s Mardi Gras parties.

When Christmas was cancelled: From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was outlawed in Boston, and law-breakers were fined five shillings.

Christmas was declared a federal holiday in the United States on June 26, 1870.

The first eggnog made in the United States was consumed in Captain John Smith’s 1607 Jamestown settlement.

Poinsettia plants are named after Joel R. Poinsett, an American minister to Mexico, who brought the red-and-green plant from Mexico to America in 1828.

The Salvation Army has been sending Santa Claus-clad donation collectors into the streets since the 1890s. Rudolph, “the most famous reindeer of all,” was the product of Robert L. May’s imagination in 1939. The copywriter wrote a poem about the reindeer to help lure customers into the Montgomery Ward department store.

Construction workers started the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree tradition in 1931.



A Little Christmas Humour

Q: What kind of Christmas music do elves like? A: "Wrap" music.

Q: How can Santa deliver presents during a thunderstorm? A: His sleigh is flown by raindeer

Q: What do you call a snowman with a six pack? A: An abdominal snowman

Q: How does a snowman get to work? A: By icicle

Q. What's a sheep's favorite Christmas song? A. "Fleece Navidad"!

Q. What does the Gingerbread Man use to make his bed? A. Cookie sheets!

Q: What are the best books to read during the holidays? A: The Lord of the Five Golden Rings No Country for Old Menorahs For Whom the Jingle Bells Toll Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret Santas Frankincense and Sensibility

Q: What do reindeer say before they tell a joke? A: This will sleigh you

Q: How does Santa keep his bathroom tiles immaculate? A: He uses Comet.

Q: Why does St. Nick like the Temptations' version of *Silent Night* best? A: Because Santa Was A Rolling Stone.

Q: What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus? A: Claustrophobic.

My mother cast one of her students as the innkeeper for the Christmas pageant. All the third grader had to do was tell Joseph, "There is no room at the inn." But during the performance—after Joseph begged for a room for his pregnant wife—the boy didn't have the heart to turn him down. "Well," he said, "if it's so urgent, come on in."

A teenager waltzed into our jewelry store to buy a cross for her boyfriend. I showed her a selection, and she pointed to three: "Can I see that one, that one, and the one with the little man on it?" "Oh," I replied. "You mean Jesus?"

Just as I began my Christmas Eve service, the electricity in the church failed. The ushers and I found some candles and placed them around the sanctuary. Then I reentered the pulpit, shuffled my notes, and muttered, "Now, where was I?" A tired voice called out, "Right near the end!"

People act like the North Pole and the South Pole are exactly the same, but really, there's a whole world of difference between them.

**I WENT LINE DANCING
LAST NIGHT.
WELL, IT WAS
A ROADSIDE
SOBRIETY TEST...
SAME THING.**

**If it is true that
stress brings
on weight loss,
why the hell am
I not invisible.**

**Procrastination is
totally a good
thing. You always
have something to
do tomorrow, plus
you have nothing
to do today.**

Picked up a hitch-hiker. Seemed like a nice guy.

After a few miles, he asked me if I wasn't afraid that he might be a serial killer?

I told him that the odds of two serial killers being in the same car were extremely unlikely

**Does anyone
know if we can
take showers yet
or should we just
keep washing
our hands ??**

Me: (sobbing my heart out, eyes swollen, nose red)...I can't see you anymore... I am not going to let you hurt me like this again!

Trainer: It was a sit up. You did one sit up.

A Poem - "That Was Some of Us"

**A little house with three bedrooms,
One bathroom and one car on the street
A mower that you had to push
To make the grass look neat.**

**In the kitchen on the wall
We only had one phone,
And no need for recording things,
Someone was always home.**

**We only had a living room
Where we would congregate,
Unless it was at mealtime
In the kitchen where we ate.**

**We had no need for family rooms
Or extra rooms to dine.
When meeting as a family
Those two rooms would work out fine.**

**We only had one TV set
And channels maybe two,
But always there was one of them
With something worth the view**

**For snacks we had potato chips
That tasted like a chip.
And if you wanted flavor
There was Lipton's onion dip.**

**Store-bought snacks were rare because
My mother liked to cook
And nothing can compare to snacks
In Betty Crocker's book**

**Weekends were for family trips
Or staying home to play
We all did things together –
Even go to church to pray.**

**When we did our weekend trips
Depending on the weather,
No one stayed at home because
We liked to be together**

**Sometimes we would separate
To do things on our own,
But we knew where the others were
Without our own cell phone**

**Then there were the movies
With your favorite movie star,
And nothing can compare
To watching movies in your car**

**Then there were the picnics
at the peak of summer season,
Pack a lunch and find some trees
And never need a reason.**

**Get a baseball game together
With all the friends you know,
Have real action playing ball –
And no game video.**

**Remember when the doctor
Used to be the family friend,
And didn't need insurance
Or a lawyer to defend**

**The way that he took care of you
Or what he had to do,
Because he took an oath and strived
To do the best for you**

**Remember going to the store
And shopping casually,
And when you went to pay for it
You used your own money?**

**Nothing that you had to swipe
Or punch in some amount,
And remember when the cashier person
Had to really count?**

**The milkman used to go
From door to door,
And it was just a few cents more
Than going to the store.**

**There was a time when mailed letters
Came right to your door,
Without a lot of junk mail ads
Sent out by every store .**

**The mailman knew each house by name
And knew where it was sent;
There were not loads of mail addressed
To "present occupant**

**There was a time when just one glance
Was all that it would take,
And you would know the kind of car,
The model and the make**

**They didn't look like turtles
Trying to squeeze out every mile;
They were streamlined, white walls, fins
And really had some style**

**One time the music that you played
Whenever you would jive,
Was from a vinyl, big-holed record
Called a forty-five**

**The record player had a post
To keep them all in line
And then the records would drop down
And play one at a time.**

**Oh sure, we had our problems then,
Just like we do today
And always we were striving,
Trying for a better way.**

**Oh, the simple life we lived
Still seems like so much fun,
How can you explain a game,
Just kick the can and run?**

**And why would boys put baseball cards
Between bicycle spokes
And for a nickel, red machines
Had little bottled Cokes?**

**This life seemed so much easier
Slower in some ways
I love the new technology
But I sure do miss those days.**

**So time moves on and so do we
And nothing stays the same,
But I sure love to reminisce
And walk down memory lane.**

**With all today's technology
We grant that it's a plus!
But it's fun to look way back and say,
HEY LOOK, GUYS, THAT WAS US!**

**"Good friends are like quilts-they age with
you, yet never lose their warmth."**

BEWARE OF LOCK DOWN FEVER!!

Everyone PLEASE be careful because people are becoming stressed from being locked down at home!

I was just talking about this with the microwave and the toaster while drinking my coffee, and we all agreed that things are getting bad. I didn't mention any of this to the washing machine, because she puts a different spin on EVERYTHING!!

Certainly, I couldn't share with the fridge, because he's been acting cold and distant! In the end, the iron straightened me out! She said the situation isn't all that pressing and all the wrinkles will soon get ironed out! The vacuum, however, was very unsympathetic - told me to just suck it up buttercup! But the fan was VERY optimistic and gave me hope that it will all blow over soon!

The toilet looked a bit flushed but didn't say anything when I asked its opinion. But the front door said I was becoming unhinged and the doorknob told me to get a grip!! You can just about guess what the curtains told me: they told me to "pull myself together!"

We will survive!!

From Brian Beyer

My doctor said now that I'm older
I need to install a bar in the shower



Points to Ponder

We all look forward to a return to “normal” – whatever that is, was, or will become.

Little bits of “normal” still show up once in a while. I decided to extend my porch time before winter forced me inside for three or four long, cold months. A recently purchased electric fireplace did a fabulous job of keeping us toasty warm well into November. Who knew it used more electricity than six bungalows and a 10-storey condo?

Mice, apparently ignoring any social distancing protocols, still decided that moving into my basement was worth the risk, causing me to social distance from the entire lower floor, which I still refuse to visit without a mask. Because of the virus. The one mice carry, not the other one.

I long for normal nightly newscasts with politicians droning on about anything BUT the virus - the other one, not the one mice carry. I occasionally try to watch all-COVID-all-the-time, but usually end up switching to a movie channel. I never thought I'd hear myself say I almost miss the latest fake news spewing from the soon-to-be-gone-thank-God occupant of the White House.

If there was no TV, though, I'm not sure what I'd do...the mere thought of an extended power outage paralyzes me. I don't think I ever aspired to be an expert on home renovations, but the 500 reno shows on HGTV have left me little choice. I haven't quite reached the desperation point: TCM's silent movies from 1929.

About the mask thing....Lest you misunderstand, I am a believer and a rule-follower. I have a lovely selection of face coverings, but I have questions: How, exactly, do you quickly and easily don a mask when you are already wearing a hat and glasses? Do you dump the hat, revealing the “hat-head hairdo” which could easily frighten small children? Do you remove the glasses and risk walking into a door? Do you remove both and risk walking into a door while sporting a hideous coiffure? These are serious issues, people.



And don't even talk to me about the eyeglass fog. It was bad enough in the summer with all that air conditioning. It's even worse now. If you try to adjust or remove your glasses, the mask invariably pops free of one ear and there you stand, naked before the world – maskless. Don't think you can make a quick adjustment and carry on....No, no, no. You have to consider, at lightning speed, whether you've touched any potentially contaminated surfaces before you became unhinged. Keep your hands away from your face, remember? All this while trying not to draw attention to yourself. Six people are already glaring.

Heaven forbid you should actually have to cough, or sneeze, in public – just the regular kind, not the virus kind. But then, how would you, or anyone else, actually know the difference? I haven't felt the need to line up for eight hours to be tested....I see an average of two people a week. From a distance.

Speaking of unhinged....you may think that's what I've become. Who makes jokes about this stuff? Those who wish to retain their sanity. Trust me.

“An optimist laughs to forget; a pessimist forgets to laugh.”

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season - and lots of laughs.

Lynne Owen



Peter MacArthur	05-Jan
Elizabeth Vickers	06-Jan
Jim Becking	07-Jan
Michael McKenna	17-Jan
Roger Bourgeois	29-Jan
Susan Popowicz	30-Jan
Patricia Tate	02-Feb
Joyce DeMoor	03-Feb
Maureen MacAulay	03-Feb
Doug Cameron	04-Feb
Randy Jones	07-Feb
Brian Beyer	10-Feb
Elizabeth Douville	11-Feb
Allenby O'Neill	11-Feb
Colleen Jones	14-Feb
Eric Booth	20-Feb
Candice McKenna	20-Feb
Dr. Lucy Rabb	27-Feb
Wendy Virtue	28-Feb
Glenroy Huff	01-Mar
Tom Duffy	02-Mar
Rebecca Kelly	02-Mar
Irwin McCaffrey	08-Mar
Kira Cook-Brown	11-Mar
Edna Monahan	16-Mar
Kelly McKenna	16-Mar
George Murphy	23-Mar
Gerry Levesque	26-Mar
Sheila Payne	26-Mar
Rene Douville	30-Mar



Even the smallest act of kindness matters. It's like a ripple in a pond flowing positive energy forever outward to infinity...



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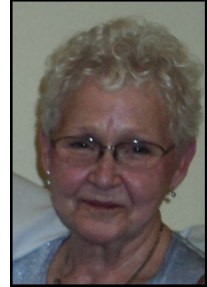
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A Very Big Thank You

Thank you to Shirley Morris for her many, many years (not sure how many but 30 at least?) as treasurer of Richmond Legion Branch 625. Shirley went above and beyond what the average treasurer does and she is the main reason that we are so very fortunate to be able to weather the recent months of little or no income due to the pandemic. Shirley kept her eye on the bank balance and made sure to invest any funds that were not needed in the immediate future; she was the driving force behind establishing a fund to cover future expenses for the upkeep of the building itself as well as the various components (furnace, freezers, etc). Everything from insurance coverage to heating costs were monitored by Shirley on an ongoing basis and she was able to keep expenses in line. Shirley has been the treasurer of the Poppy fund for many years and at one time was the treasurer for Club 55 and the Ladies Auxiliary (treasurer for all 4 at the same time! And was the secretary/treasurer for St Philip Church for years at the same time too!). AND she was membership chair for the past several years. Hall rentals, catering, barbecues, dinners, Poppy campaign, decorating, annual spring clean up, shopping for gifts etc - you name it Shirley has been part of it for years and years and there is no way to express the amount of gratitude she deserves, so THANK YOU Shirley Morris! Great job always!



Thanks to Eric Booth for the picture of the Richmond Memorial Park lit up for Christmas

Coffee is still being served at 10 am Monday, Wednesday and Friday
BUT because there is limited seating you must reserve your spot.

Please call Jane Louks at 613-838-3244 to book a reservation!



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