

Newsletter February 2026

In this edition:

A message from the President

Welcome to new members

Upcoming Events at a glance

Community Support : Making a difference together

A member's story: submitted by Patty Kelly

Veteran Profile : submitted by Bill Streeter

Poppy Trust Fund Branch Status Report

Remembrance Poster and Literary Winners

Retirement Notice

Executive Nominations coming soon...

Connect with us

A Message from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to 2026.

It is looking like 2026 will be a good year for the Royal Canadian Legion. As you may know this is our Centenary year for our organization. There are two events going on presently.

1. Everyone who pays their 2026 dues will have a chance of winning a 2026 Ford F 150 truck. Dominion Command is running the draw as a way of giving back to our members. If you know anyone who has not paid their dues yet, let them know of the draw.
2. Any new members coming into our organization will have their first year membership free. As we celebrate our 100th year we are interested in getting people into to see what our organization is all about. Join us in welcoming new members to our branch with a friendly hello.

Exciting news, a new chair lift is being installed continuing our commitment to improved accessibility for our membership. Installation will start on February 4th and the lift will be out of service for approximately 2 weeks for testing and safety audit.

For all of our members, I wish you health and happiness in the future. Come in out of the cold into the branch and join your friends for a good time.

We will remember them.

Yours in comradeship, Dan Kelly, President, Branch 340 Royal Canadian Legion

Branch 340 Royal Canadian Legion Website : [Port Elgin Legion](#) **Facebook:** [Royal Canadian Legion Branch 340](#) **Address:** 630 Green St. Port Elgin, ON **Telephone: Office:** 519-382-2903 or **Clubhouse** 519-389-9917

Welcome new members!

We have accepted approximately 50 applications since the beginning of January. Below is a picture of a few of our new members. Please take a moment and introduce yourself to someone new.



Left to right Blair Eby - Membership chair, Leanne Grant, Brenda McNeill, Al McNeill, Tom Zorzi, Harold Agla, Dan Silenzi, Dave Roberts and Dan Kelly Branch President. Missing in the picture is Lloyd Johnston

How to Join: It's easy to become a member! Visit our Branch during opening hours or download an application form <https://portal.legion.ca/join> To renew your membership: <https://portal.legion.ca/renew/>

Upcoming Events at a Glance

- **General Meeting:** Our next meeting is on **March 3, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.** in the Main Hall.
- **Meat Draw:** The next meat draw is on **February 14, 2026** in the club room, starting at **4:00 p.m.**
- **Trivia Night: February 21, 2026 - pre-registration is required**
- **Bingo:** Every **Wednesday night** in the Main Hall.
- **Dance Club:** Regular dance programs are on **Friday nights** in the Main Hall from **7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.** The cost is **\$5 per couple**
- **[Online Calendar](#)** check out the online calendar for the latest list of activities and event details

Branch 340 Royal Canadian Legion Website : [Port Elgin Legion](#) **Facebook:** [Royal Canadian Legion Branch 340](#) **Address:** 630 Green St. Port Elgin, ON **Telephone: Office:** 519-382-2903 or **Clubhouse** 519-389-9917

Community Support: Making a Difference Together

Charitable donations confirmed by membership at February 3, 2026 General meeting

- Motion to donate \$1000 to **Bernie's Boat** moved by Gord Kelly, seconded by Al Ellis - carried
- Motion to donate \$200 to the 2026 **Marine Heritage Festival** moved by Gord Kelly seconded by Robert Harrison - carried
- Motion to donate \$400 to the **Junior Firefighters program** moved by Gord Kelly seconded by Debra Atkinson
- Motion to donate \$100 to the **Bluewater Science & Technology program** moved by Gord Kelly and seconded by Linda Ribey - carried

Also Thank you to members and guests for your support of our community during the Christmas Holidays. The Food bank was happy to receive 7 turkeys & 3 hams from the December meat raffle winners. Salvation Army reports that with Branch 340's Food and Toy drive, we assisted over 200 children with brand new toys to open on Christmas morning - your donation towards ensuring that children in our community wake up to the excitement of a new toy is truly immeasurable.

Music Bingo - January 10, 2026. The Music Bingo event is run with the proceeds directly going to organizations in our community. On behalf of Branch 340, Shelley Hewson delivered cheques of \$200 each to the following organizations.

1st photo: Trish Verburg, Director/Pastor Living Hope Church, **2nd photo:** Kylie Hutton, Community Services Team Leader at the Salvation Army, **3rd photo:** Jo Smyth, Treasurer of St. Vincent de Paul



Branch 340 Royal Canadian Legion Website : [Port Elgin Legion](#) **Facebook:** [Royal Canadian Legion Branch 340](#) **Address:** 630 Green St. Port Elgin, ON **Telephone:** Office: 519-382-2903 or **Clubhouse** 519-389-9917

Bursary Program - Deadline to apply is the last Friday of March 2026

Students, the [Royal Canadian Legion Bursary program](#) is open for applications and is designed to assist those students who are pursuing post-secondary education (including courses and training programs of a technical and vocational nature).

It is funded through the Ontario Command Branches and Ladies' Auxiliaries Charitable Foundation.

Thank You Branch 340 - A member's story submitted by Patty Kelly

In the spring of 2025, our street was being prepared for a major renovation project that would actually last the entire summer. Two days prior to the start of the project a construction worker was doing Depth Checks in the yards and boulevards and unfortunately, a gas leak accidentally occurred. On this day I had decided to putter around the house and do some yard work. Honestly, I was not looking forward to the digging and the possibilities of no water for periods of time. My day was abruptly interrupted with hard knocking on the front door. I expected to find the construction worker on my porch with the news that our water would be going off tomorrow. What I did not expect to find was several firefighters swarming our house. The firefighter who had been doing the knocking urgently asked if I was alone in the house. On replying that I was indeed alone I was instructed to quickly pack a bag as I needed to be evacuated due to a gas leak. Once again, she asked the question "is anyone else here?" Triggered, I replied that my husband is outside on a ladder cleaning the eavestrough, but he is almost done. Another firefighter took off to find him and to get him moving too. He did finish the eavestrough before climbing down the ladder. So, with bags packed we grabbed our car keys with plans to head to relatives for a drink on their patio.

We were told that we had to walk out. The car was to be left behind as too much of a risk of a spark and to leave all doors to the house unlocked. Off we went carrying our bags as we started calling family to pick us up to only get their voicemails. We decided we would just go to the Legion while knowing we would need to wait for it to open. We found a bench in the shade as it was a hot spring day. We kept checking the lot on the off chance the bar steward may have come in early. We were thrilled to discover his car in the designated parking spot. We went downstairs to the cool club room and told our tale of woe. We were most welcomed with tall glasses of ice water. I decided to lay down on the couch as I developed a headache. Once again, the bar steward kindly checked on me if I needed anything.

Gord has always told our children who are Branch 340 members that if you ever find yourself in trouble while travelling to go to the local Legion as someone will help you.

Thank you, Don Dudgeon, for being that someone for us. The Kellys (Patty & Gord)

Branch 340 Royal Canadian Legion Website : [Port Elgin Legion](#) **Facebook:** [Royal Canadian Legion Branch 340](#) **Address:** 630 Green St. Port Elgin, ON **Telephone:** **Office:** 519-382-2903 or **Clubhouse** 519-389-9917

Veteran Profile: A Boy Soldier from Southampton

DONALD ALBERT GILLIES

A BOY SOLDIER FROM SOUTHAMPTON

To legally enlist in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in WWI, all young men had to be at least 18 years of age at the time of enlistment. Stories are widespread of those who went in younger by not telling the truth about their actual age. There were also many recruitment officers that were being rewarded based on the number of recruits that they signed up and accepted.

This is the story of our own Southampton "Boy Soldier". His story has some intrigue, mystery, lots of facts and some good memories. His name was DONALD ALBERT GILLIES.

[For complete story](#)

WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM

Researched and

written by: G. William Streeter

Poppy Trust Fund Branch Status Report

Balance in Branch Poppy Trust Fund as of 1 January 2025		\$ 50,051.70
Income from Campaign & all other sources	\$ 24,973.30	
Sub Total		\$ 75,025.00
Campaign expenses & Youth Education Program	\$ 5,549.48	
Donations from Fund	\$ 33,873.72	
Total Expenses & Donations		\$ 39,423.20
Closing Balance as of 31 December 2025		\$ 35,601.80

The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 340 Poppy Trust Fund Branch Status Report 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025 If you or a veteran you know needs assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our Branch Service Officer, Janice Pepe, at 519-382-2903 All inquiries are confidential.

Further information on national Legion veteran services:

<https://portal.legion.ca/branch-and-command-resources/veterans-services>

Branch 340 Royal Canadian Legion Website : [Port Elgin Legion](#) **Facebook:** [Royal Canadian Legion Branch 340](#) **Address:** 630 Green St. Port Elgin, ON **Telephone:** **Office:** 519-382-2903 or **Clubhouse** 519-389-9917

2025 Remembrance Poster and Literary Winners

Primary Poster Contest

Black and White	Colour
1st - Nova Scammell - St. Joe's	1st - Ava MacDermid - St. Joe's
2nd - Cohen Grass - St. Joe's	2nd - Elle Stephenson - Northport
3rd - Aeryn McIntee - St. Joe's	3rd - Aubrey Stephenson - Saugeen Central

Junior Poster Contest

Black and White	Colour
1st - Poppy Bablak - Northport (*Also placed 3rd at Zone)	1st - Norah Jermome - Northport
2nd - Carrstyn Molholland - Northport	2nd - Aria Afrooz Panah - Northport
3rd - Alex Singh - Northport	3rd - Rory Steward - St. Joe's

Intermediate Poster Contest

Black and White	Colour
1st - Brielle Hagen - SDSS	1st - Brielle Hagen - SDSS (*Also placed 3rd at Zone)
	2nd - Ella Carr - SDSS

Literary Contest

Junior Poems	Senior Essay
1st - Greta Clark - Northport	1st - Hamna Hussain - SDSS
2nd - Vyoma Patel - Northport	

Branch 340 Royal Canadian Legion Website : [Port Elgin Legion](#) **Facebook:** [Royal Canadian Legion Branch 340](#) **Address:** 630 Green St. Port Elgin, ON **Telephone: Office:** 519-382-2903 or **Clubhouse** 519-389-9917

RETIREMENT NOTICE - Norma Dudgeon

The executive of the Port Elgin Legion has received Norma Dudgeon's notice of intended retirement.

After many years of dedicated service, the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 340 in Port Elgin extends heartfelt congratulations and thanks to **Norma Dudgeon** on her retirement.

Norma has been a long-term member and a steady, dependable force within our branch. Her commitment, work ethic, and quiet leadership have helped shape the welcoming and respectful environment our Legion is known for. Whether supporting members, assisting with operations, or simply being someone others could rely on, Norma's presence has made a lasting difference.

Branch 340 is stronger because of her contributions, and her impact will continue to be felt long after her retirement.

We thank you, Norma, for your loyalty, service, and friendship, and we wish you health, happiness, and many enjoyable moments in the years ahead. Enjoy your well-earned retirement — you will always be part of the Port Elgin Legion family.

When you see Norma don't forget to share your thanks for her expertise and commitment.



Note: (Norma will be leaving at the end of this fiscal year - May/June 2026), a search for her replacement will begin shortly with job details posted on Port Elgin Legion [website](#), [Facebook group](#) and posted on the Legion bulletin boards.

Branch 340 Royal Canadian Legion Website : [Port Elgin Legion](#) **Facebook:** [Royal Canadian Legion Branch 340](#) **Address:** 630 Green St. Port Elgin, ON **Telephone: Office:** 519-382-2903 or **Clubhouse** 519-389-9917

Executive nominations coming soon...Please consider running for a position or submitting a nomination.

Next session will run from June 1, 2026 to May 31, 2027

It's time for us to start working on our SUCCESSION PLAN to ensure that the Executive will remain strong in its leadership. The Royal Canadian Legion's Executive team consists of various roles, each with specific responsibilities that contribute to the effective operation and governance of the organization.

Key Executive Roles and Responsibilities

President: Acts as the chief representative of the Branch, ensuring that the mission and values are upheld. Leads meetings, sets the vision, and makes key decisions for the Branch. Oversees the organization of Remembrance ceremonies and community events, ensuring respect for veterans.

Immediate Past President: Provides continuity and support to the new President, serving on the Executive Committee. They may chair committees and offer guidance based on previous experience.

Vice Presidents (1st and 2nd): Support the President in managing the Branch and represent the interests of the members. The 1st Vice assumes the President's responsibilities in their absence. Both Vice Presidents are involved in various initiatives to engage members and enhance the Branch's activities.

Secretary:

Responsible for maintaining records, managing correspondence, and ensuring that meetings are documented accurately. Plays a crucial role in the administration of the Branch and supports the President in organizational tasks.

Treasurer:

Manages the financial affairs of the Branch, including budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting. Ensures that funds are used appropriately and that financial records are maintained accurately.

Committee Chairs:

Various committees are chaired by elected members who oversee specific functions and initiatives within the Branch.

They report to the Executive and help implement programs that align with the Legion's goals. Some of these positions include: Bursary, Youth Education, Track & Field Sports, Veteran Services, Poppy Committee, Lottery Chair, Membership Committee, Building Management, Honours & Awards Committee, Ways n Means Officer, Public Relations Officer, Bar Chair.

Branch 340 Royal Canadian Legion Website : [Port Elgin Legion](#) **Facebook:** [Royal Canadian Legion Branch 340](#) **Address:** 630 Green St. Port Elgin, ON **Telephone: Office:** 519-382-2903 or **Clubhouse** 519-389-9917

Additional Information

Elections and Nominations: Members must be in good standing to run for office, and nominations typically occur at an annual meeting. Some positions may have prerequisites, such as a minimum time as a member. Want to learn more? Please contact any of the executive for insight into roles and responsibilities. To reach an executive, call 519-389-9917 and leave a message indicating which executive member you are trying to reach; be sure to include your contact information for a return call.

Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this newsletter, details may change and errors may occur. Please check our website or contact the Branch directly for the most up-to-date information or to offer a correction.

If you have received this newsletter by mistake or would like to be removed from the distribution please respond to the sender with a “remove me please” message

Branch 340 Royal Canadian Legion Website : [Port Elgin Legion](#) **Facebook:** [Royal Canadian Legion Branch 340](#) **Address:** 630 Green St. Port Elgin, ON **Telephone: Office:** 519-382-2903 or **Clubhouse** 519-389-9917