



# WEBNEWS

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Ontario : Branch 50 - FRED GIES, Kitchener. 🍷

Volume - 1 Edition 49

Week Ending December 15, 2007

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## Fallen soldiers' tribute a moving experience



Recently, as my wife and I were returning from a trip to the Ottawa area along Highway 401 in the Trenton area, we found ourselves close behind a procession of vehicles heading for Toronto, carrying the bodies of the two French-Canadian soldiers recently killed in Afghanistan.

I drive the road a lot for my job and had seen the Highway of Heroes signs without giving it much thought . . . until now.

I consider myself well-read and well-informed but nothing prepared us for what started out as the novel experience of driving under the first couple of overpasses crowded with the firefighters, police and ambulance vehicles with their emergency lights on and people standing at attention. Then reality set in. Bridge after bridge, kilometre after kilometre, there were hundreds of people honouring two dead soldiers. Hawk or dove, it didn't matter. Bridges and ramps, one after the other, filled with people paying tribute to our fallen heroes.

Soon I was glad of the gathering darkness, it hid the tears as they slid down my cheek. As we drove silent kilometre after silent kilometre, a fierce feeling of pride overcame the sadness I was feeling. I would like to thank all those police officers, firefighters, paramedics, veterans and citizens who took time out of their lives to salute these men. This demonstration brought this foreign war home to my wife and I in a manner we will never

forget.

I think I will transfer my Remembrance Day poppy to my winter jacket and wear it with pride year round.

Monday, December 10, 2007  
Harry Stapley, Cambridge, The Record  
Section: Afghanistan

### In-house Pool League Results



Pool League Results as of Monday, December 10th, 2007:

Mens Standings:

Pete W. 35 points,  
Mike M. & Del tied with 33 points, and  
Nick 28 points.

Ladies Standings:

Bev 28 points,  
Darby 26 points, and  
Mary & Gloria tied with 24 points.

Tuesday, December 11, 2007  
Jerry Prince, Sports Officer  
Section: Sports

### Christmas Sick List



Christmas approaches and our minds are busy thinking of family and holiday plans. But please, if you can, save a thought for our members who are doing less well.

**Ron Cuthbert** is still in Hospital in London battling cancer. Ron had surgery on his tongue and then his on his throat, and now has an infection in the surgical site.

**Ross Dowling** who had his leg amputated this summer continues to have issues with the other leg resulting in further amputations on an outpatient basis. To make matters

worse, now his wife, **Mary Ann**, has fallen and broken two ribs.

**George Moser** was re-admitted to Grand River Hospital on the 12th of December for more surgery on his leg.

If your heart and beliefs permit it, please say a prayer for them, and for our other ailing members mentioned earlier.

Friday, December 14, 2007  
Vivian Peddle. Sick and Visiting  
Section: Sick and Visiting

### Reindeer over Kandahar



**MONTRÉAL, Quebec** — The holidays can be an extremely difficult time for deployed soldiers and their civilian counterparts.

Therefore, the Canadian Forces Personnel Support Agency (CFPSA) and a number of partners have joined together to create gift baskets for 3,250 Canadians deployed in Afghanistan, the 260 individuals on HMCS Charlottetown, and all other military personnel serving with the 17 operations Canada is currently involved in.

The gift baskets were put together and shipped from 25 Canadian Forces Supply Depot (25 CFSD) during the last week of October and will be opened by the recipients during the Christmas holiday season.

Packaging gifts for thousands of people is a major task, one which Michel Millette, the manager of special projects at 25 CFSD, is overjoyed to be part of. "I love taking a part in this, it's the highlight of my year," he said. "Every deployed soldier and sailor has received a gift at Christmas since 1998. It's something special."

Op SANTA CLAUS was initiated in Trenton, Ontario, when the local community started sending gifts during the festive season to military personnel serving overseas. From there, the idea quickly spread. Today

it is a national campaign directed by individuals such as Shirley Penny, CFSPA Amenities Coordinator and Mr. Millette, as well as a team of equally dedicated co-workers.

For Master Warrant Officer (MWO) Denis Bisson of 25 CFSD it has been particularly rewarding to see Op SANTA CLAUS not only continue but expand. He was the recipient of two gift boxes when he was deployed in East Timor, in 2000, during Op TOUCAN and when he was sent to Afghanistan in 2006. "It really warms the heart," he stated. "It really lets you know that people support you while you're on the mission."

The boxes contain everything from razors to candies, as well as other items, which are meant to be surprises when they are opened. "The nicest touch of the gift packages is without a doubt the Christmas card included in every box," said Mr. Millette.

Children from schools across Canada are encouraged to send holiday cards for deployed troops. This year, when a soldier posted in Afghanistan opens his card on Christmas Eve, he may just read something like: "Thank you for taking care of us and protecting us. Because of you, I am safe."

Hopefully, this is one Christmas card this soldier will never forget.

For more information on Op SANTA CLAUS visit the link below.

Friday, December 14, 2007  
Corporal Jasper Schwartz  
Section: Afghanistan

### Canadian NORAD Region Names Santa's Escort Pilots



Winnipeg, Man. – As Christmas gets closer, the Canadian North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Region has put the finishing touches on plans to track and escort Santa Claus when he visits Canada by naming four CF-18 fighter pilots as his official escorts.

Cpts. Dave Moar and Craig Sharp of 4 Wing Cold Lake, Alta., and Cpts. Colin Marks and Yannick Jobin of 3 Wing Bagotville, Que., will take on the

responsibility of welcoming Santa when he arrives in Canada on his annual Christmas Eve journey, and escorting him safely through Canadian airspace.

The pilots will also take photos and video of Santa and his sleigh using special NORAD SantaCams mounted on their aircraft. The SantaCams instantly download the photo and video imagery so that it may be viewed by children worldwide on the NORAD Tracks Santa website, [www.noradsanta.org](http://www.noradsanta.org), on December 24. All of this information will be available in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish.

In coordination with the North Pole, NORAD has been informed that Santa intends to begin his journey at 4 a.m. EST, on Dec. 24. The Canadian Air Defence Sector Operations Centre at 22 Wing in North Bay, Ont., will alert NORAD when their radars detect Santa entering Canadian airspace. Two CF-18 Hornet fighter jets from 3 Wing will welcome Santa as he enters Canadian airspace off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. As Santa flies across Canada from east to west, two CF-18 Hornets from 4 Wing will escort him out of Canadian airspace and turn over escort duties to the Continental U.S. NORAD Region so that he may continue his Yuletide trip.

Children can also receive updates on Santa's Christmas Eve journey by calling the traditional "NORAD Tracks Santa" telephone hotline at 1-877-HI NORAD, or by emailing NORAD at [noradtrackssanta@gmail.com](mailto:noradtrackssanta@gmail.com). Last year, the NORAD Tracks Santa Operations Center was staffed by more than 750 volunteers on Christmas Eve, who answered nearly 65,000 phone calls and 9,600 emails from children around the world.

NORAD uses a network of ground-based radars, sensors, air-to-air refuelling tankers, and fighter jets to detect, intercept and, if necessary, engage any threats to the continent. NORAD personnel are on duty 24 hours a day protecting North America.

To arrange an interview with an escort pilot (up to and including December 21), please contact: Lt. Alex Munoz, 3 Wing Public Affairs,

at (418) 677-4000 ext. 7277  
 Capt. Jennifer Jones, 4 Wing Public Affairs, at (780) 840-8000 ext. 8121  
 To arrange an interview with a radar operator (up to and including December 21), please contact:  
 Capt. Cynthia Elia, 22 Wing Public Affairs, at (705) 494-6011 ext. 2495  
 For more information on the NORAD Tracks Santa program, please contact:  
 Acting Sub-Lieut. David Lavallee, Canadian NORAD Region Public Affairs, at (204) 833-2500 ext. 6795

Friday, December 14, 2007  
 NORAD - December 12, 2007  
 Section: Entertainment

### Judge Frowns On Poppy - With Feedback



**KITCHENER Dec 8, 2007**  
 Brent Davis, Record Staff

An incident in a Kitchener court room has surprised and disappointed a Royal Canadian Legion official.

Shortly before Remembrance Day, a Waterloo regional police officer who was testifying during a case was told by the presiding judge that he should not have worn a poppy into her courtroom.

According to a court transcript, Justice Margaret Woolcott of the Ontario Court of Justice told Const. Dan Haines that the poppy may not be viewed as a "totally acceptable" or "totally neutral" symbol by everyone who comes to court.

Informed of the exchange, the legion's director of communications said he's never heard of anything like this happening before.

"My question to the honourable judge would be, 'Is there any rule, anywhere, that says you cannot wear a poppy in a court of law?'" said Bob Butt.

"Because if there's any ruling, we would certainly like to know about it. I've never heard of it before."

Butt called Woolcott's comments "worrisome."

The poppy, he said, has been a symbol of remembrance and sacrifice in Canada for more than 85 years.

"The reason we wear a poppy is to recognize those who've died to protect the systems we have," Butt said. "It's worrisome because small things can grow to be much larger."

The incident occurred Oct. 31 as Haines testified as a witness during an assault with a weapon trial. As he finished, Woolcott spoke to Haines, who was appearing in her court for the first time.

"I think that somehow I owe you something in training," Woolcott said. "I wouldn't wear my poppy to court."

"Oh, OK," Haines answered.

"Because however much -- and I really probably should have said something to (defence lawyer Richard Prendiville, who was also wearing a poppy) too -- but however much you may think that's a totally acceptable symbol, and that it is totally neutral, that might not be entirely the case for everybody who comes to court," the judge said.

Woolcott continued: "It represents a symbol of support and I suspect that 99.999 per cent of us happily wear it outside of the courtroom. You probably should not wear anything like that in court."

Before she excused Haines, Woolcott told him that she might ask him to remove the poppy next time.

"I thought that was perhaps a bit unfair for your first time around," Woolcott said.

In an interview, Prendiville said he opted to respect Woolcott's point of view.

"I think it's appropriate to strike a balance between public expression and personal sensitivity," he said.

"Especially in such an important public institution as the courts of justice."

Police officials called for a meeting with judicial representatives after the incident came to their attention, and Insp. Bryan Larkin said they consider the issue to be rectified.

Regional officers have always been

allowed to wear poppies on their uniforms, along with decorations such as exemplary service medals or the pins officers can now wear to support Canadian soldiers, he said.

"The poppy is something our service believes is an important part of symbolizing the sacrifices of our veterans," Larkin said.

"There are no intentions for our organization to make changes to our uniform procedure . . . We do not have any intentions of listing when and where we can or can't wear, for example, a poppy."

Members of the judiciary typically don't comment on issues that occur in court.

Woolcott, through her office, said she was not in a position to speak about the matter, and referred calls to the regional senior justice in London, who was unavailable for comment.

The administrative justice for Waterloo Region, Justice Gary Hearn, said the matter was dealt with in the closed meeting with police.

Ministry of the Attorney General spokesperson Brendan Crawley said the judiciary is independent of government, and as such, makes its own decisions about what happens in court.

"This is a matter solely within the authority and discretion of the judiciary . . . and it wouldn't be appropriate to comment on any decision made by a judge."

Attorney General Chris Bentley's spokesperson echoed Crawley's statements, but added the minister has his own view on the poppy's significance.

"It's regarded everywhere as a symbol of service and sacrifice of Canada's veterans," said Sheamus Murphy.

"They fought for the freedom that our system of justice upholds."

**Judges have proudly worn poppies in court**

Peter Foy, London, Dec 11 2007

*I retired from the Waterloo Regional Police Service just short of 14 years ago and in my 28 years service I attended court many times wearing a poppy. In addition, I served in Her Majesty's Forces for two years in the United Kingdom prior to coming to*

Canada.

*I'm writing in regard to the Dec. 8 article, Judge Frowns On Poppies In Courtroom, regarding comments by Justice Margaret Woolcott of the Ontario Court of Justice to a police officer in her courtroom.*

*I wonder what His Honour Judge Gord McConnell might have to say about this matter, being a veteran himself, and having worn a poppy on his gown during the Remembrance Day run up. One other prominent judge that springs to mind is Kitchener's naval hero, Judge J.R. Kirkpatrick, who was a stalwart member of the Waterloo Naval Association and also a proud wearer of the poppy both in and out of court.*

*Maybe Judge Woolcott might want to consider her plight had nor been for those brave men and women who gave their lives in many conflicts in order that we here in Canada and other areas of the world might have the freedom we have today.*

*I urge the Royal Canadian Legion to take up this matter with both the attorney general and solicitor general of Ontario.*

**The poppy should be welcome everywhere**

THE RECORD, Dec 11, 2007

*Canadians have become so terrified of offending somebody that they're forgetting who they are and what their country stands for. That troubling trend might explain the bizarre behaviour of a Kitchener judge who criticized a police officer for daring to wear a poppy into her courtroom before Remembrance Day.*

*There stood Waterloo regional police Const. Dan Haines proudly bearing on his chest the plastic red symbol of remembrance for all who have fought and died for Canada in war. And there sat Justice Margaret Woolcott of the Ontario Court of Justice chiding the officer for wearing what some people in court might not consider "totally acceptable."*

*"I wouldn't wear my poppy to court," the judge told Haines before warning him that, if he wore the poppy in the future, she might ask him to take it off.*

*With all due respect, Justice Woolcott is guilty of poor judgment. It's hard to*

*imagine who would be offended by anyone wearing a symbol of remembrance for the millions of Canadians who have served this country in uniform in the wars of the 20th and 21st century - and the more than 100,000 who lie buried on foreign battlefields after paying the ultimate price in their struggle.*

*That and nothing else is the true meaning of the poppy. It's not about glorifying war. It's not about politics. It's simply a humble message of remembrance, and recognized as such worldwide.*

*But let's cut to the chase. It is no exaggeration to say that were it not for the courage and sacrifice of Canadian servicemen and women, the democratically sanctioned laws that keep Justice Woolcott's courtroom open and operating freely today might not exist.*

*Had European militarism won out in the First World War, had Nazi Germany prevailed in the Second World War, Canada would not likely know the freedoms, the rights, the tolerance and humanity that are so cherished here today. Had Canadians not served in Korea and been an active part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization during the long decades of the Cold War, it is also possible that Communist totalitarianism of both the Soviet and Chinese variety would have spread their oppressive empires even further.*

*Does the judge not realize that Adolf Hitler cared nothing for the rule of any law other than his own -- a murderous variety delivered by thugs wearing jackboots? Or that had the fascists won the Second World War, Canadians would have been denied the paper on which to write their Charter of Rights and Freedoms?*

*When Const. Haines entered Justice Woolcott's court wearing the poppy he was representing himself and the police department -- not the court and not the judge. On the other hand, if a Canadian judge wished to wear a poppy, who could reasonably call the gesture inappropriate? The Canadian coat of arms is displayed prominently in many courtrooms throughout the land. After the passage of more than 80 years, the poppy is also a respected and accepted symbol of*

something truly Canadian.

Justice Woolcott never said who might take offence at a police officer wearing a poppy. That's because, in reality, no one probably would take umbrage. However, the best response to someone who objects to the poppy would be a polite but firm, "tough." Police who wish to should continue wearing the poppy. As for Justice Woolcott, she should read a good history book.

**Wear poppy with pride**

Cindy Thibodeau, Kitchener, Dec 11, 2007

*I'm writing in regard to the Dec. 8 article, Judge Frowns On Poppies In Courtroom, about Justice Margaret Woolcott telling Const. Dan Haines that he should remove the poppy he was wearing as it may not be viewed as a totally neutral or acceptable symbol.*

*Just where does this judge live? The poppy is not only acceptable but has been viewed for years as a symbol of the love and respect we give to our soldiers who have lost and are still losing their lives in battle. It is because of these brave heroes that we have a justice system!*

*Wear your poppies with pride and respect.*

*I have one question. If wearing a poppy is not allowed in this courtroom, does this judge allow the two minutes silence of respect for our war heroes on Remembrance Day, or does she find herself alone in her court room for those two minutes?*

**Our soldiers sacrificed to preserve legal rights**

Jeff Hunt, The Record, Dec 11, 2007

*In the Dec. 8 article, Judge Frowns On Poppies In Courtroom, Justice Margaret Woolcott admonished a police officer for wearing a poppy in her courtroom, suggesting that not all those in attendance would deem this a "totally acceptable" symbol.*

*The courtroom Judge Woolcott presides over, we are to assume, is one that interprets and enforces the laws of the land -- a legal system built on the values of this country and those who fought to preserve them. Does Judge Woolcott's job description and*

*mandate require her to observe evidence, interpret it and then apply the law accordingly? Or is it to utilize this forum to express personal bias?*

*Those that may find this symbol offensive need to ask why. Whether the individual is Canadian born or a welcomed immigrant, one needs to ask why anyone would find such a thing as a poppy offensive. We all chose to live here and benefit from the Canadian culture.*

*The men and women who fought, and sacrificed themselves to protect our values, laws, freedom and way of life need to be remembered. A singular day is allotted for this, a singular emblem -- the poppy -- is worn to show support and respect. Our veterans ask very little, but yet sacrificed so much. To even suggest that this would be offensive is offensive in itself.*

*In an era where our country is being rapidly exposed to new cultures, beliefs and ideals we can't overlook why Canada is seen as a country accepting of all cultures and beliefs. The Canadians, by birthright or through immigration, Justice Woolcott feels may be offended by this gesture have sought opportunity here for our freedoms -- most notably our freedom of expression.*

**Judge was out of line**

Alex Murphy, Kitchener, Dec 11, 2007

*Regarding the Dec. 8 article Judge Frowns On Poppies In Courtroom, I find the comments that were reportedly made regarding the wearing of a poppy in Justice Margaret Woolcott's court to be offensive and totally out of line.*

*Based on her belief that the poppy might be unacceptable and show bias to a tiny per cent of people who may be in her court, and therefore, not appropriate, I would suggest that there might be tiny per centage of people in her court who, if given a vote, probably would find her, or any other judge for that matter, to be unacceptable and biased. Does that mean she should be banned from the courtroom? Of course not!*

*I feel that Judge Woolcott should spend more time worrying about the trial she is in charge of and less on whether an individual in the court is*

*wearing a poppy.*

**Judge should apologize**

Bryan Schmidt, Kitchener, Dec 12, 2007

*Surprised, disappointed and anger are but a few descriptions of my feelings after reading the Dec. 8 article regarding the wearing of a poppy in a local courtroom by one of our regional police officers (Judge Frowns On Poppies In Courtroom).*

*Surely this should signal to all of us that the pendulum has swung too, too far. Do we as Canadians really care or should we even consider what others think of the wearing of a symbol of remembrance and respect in a court of law? I would say no.*

*And to have Justice Margaret Woolcott chastise the officer is simply mind- numbing.*

*I say that Woolcott should retract her comments and apologize to the officer, to Canadians, and most importantly, to all veterans.*

*Given the fact that Woolcott will not comment on her behaviour, I would suggest that the senior regional justice official investigate her comments and report publicly the findings.*

*As the son of a veteran who fought in the Second World War, I find Woolcott's comments very troublesome, hurtful and disrespectful to my father and all veterans.*

*The irony of it all is that the veterans fought to keep Canada free, so that people could maintain their right to free speech, but I would caution Woolcott that free speech used in a cavalier, hurtful way does a disservice to all Canadians.*

*An apology is desperately called for in this instance.*

**No rules banning poppies in local courts. Regional police have no plans to change uniform poppy policy**  
brent Davis, Record Staff, Dec 13, 2007

*There's no set policy when it comes to what someone can, or can't, wear into an Ontario courtroom.*

*In the wake of an incident in a Kitchener court in which a judge took issue with the poppy worn by a police officer, questions have been raised*

about whether Justice Margaret Woolcott was within her rights to say that she might ask the officer to remove the poppy in the future.

"A justice sitting in a trial court . . . has control of the courtroom decorum, if I can put it that way," said Justice Bruce Thomas, the western regional senior justice for the Ontario Court of Justice.

Any decisions on such things as attire or behaviour are left to the judge's discretion.

"As far as whether or not there is any policy, there isn't one," Thomas said, adding that he would not comment specifically on any issue that came up in court.

On Oct. 31, a Waterloo regional police officer had concluded his testimony as a witness in an assault trial when Woolcott told him he shouldn't have worn a poppy to court.

According to a transcript, Woolcott acknowledged the vast majority of people happily wear a poppy outside of court.

But she said it may not be viewed as a "totally acceptable" or "totally neutral" symbol by everyone who comes to court.

Thomas said some courtrooms post "minimalist" lists of dos and don'ts, such as turning off cellphones and pagers. Some of those lists may include references to proper attire.

But he said he's not aware of any attempt to draft formal rules.

Thomas was present at a closed meeting between police and judicial officials following the incident, and said he considers the matter resolved. Woolcott, through her office, declined to comment.

Insp. Bryan Larkin of Waterloo regional police said the service has no plans to change its uniform policy that has long allowed officers to wear a poppy in the period leading up to Remembrance Day.

#### **Judge's remarks were an insult to veterans**

Paul Filsinger, Kitchener, Dec 13, 2007

*I was flabbergasted when I read the Dec. 8 article, Judge Frowns On Poppies In Courtroom. It is shocking*

*that a judge in the Ontario court system would make a comment to one of our Waterloo regional police officers about the wearing of a poppy in her courtroom.*

*What does it mean that the poppy may not be viewed by everyone as "totally acceptable" or a "totally neutral" symbol?*

*In Canada, the poppy is totally acceptable and is a neutral symbol of the service and the ultimate sacrifice our veterans paid for the freedoms we now enjoy in this great country.*

*The very institution that Justice Margaret Woolcott represents is protected because of the sacrifice of our veterans. Therefore, the poppy should be allowed inside every courtroom in Ontario and Canada.*

*Would someone suggest next that our parliamentarians cannot wear the poppy in the House of Commons or in a provincial legislature?*

*The comment by Woolcott is an insult to our veterans. Our veterans should not have to continue the fight for the worthy respect they deserve.*

#### **A symbol of sacrifice**

Peter black, Kiychener, Dec 13, 2007

*Regarding the Dec. 8 article, Judge Frowns On Poppies In Courtroom, as a taxpayer I would gladly approve the expense of having Judge Margaret Woolcott flown over to France and escorted through the fields of white crosses where young Canadian men and women are buried. Most were teenagers in the prime of their life.*

*She should also go the Sunnyside Veteran's Hospital and sit down and talk to the veterans who spent their lives with shrapnel in their heads, or without arms or legs. Please explain to them why the poppy should not be worn in court.*

*Hopefully she will realize that nobody could be offended by wearing a poppy. We all abhor war, but until the justice systems of the world learn how to deal with fanatics before they kill millions of people, then war and the consequences of such are a grim reality. Anybody who doesn't believe that has their head in the sand. Poppies are the symbol of the sacrifice of all those people. No one had better dare to tell me not to wear*

*my poppy any place. How dare she demand that they not be worn in the courtroom.*

*The very courtroom she sits in, along with every public institution, is a monument to the death and suffering of all our soldiers.*

*Had it not been for these people, her courtroom and her cushy job would not even exist.*

*To add insult to injury she, along with all the spokespeople for the Ontario justice system, did not have the guts to defend their position when The Record asked for comments. A "balance between public expression and personal sensitivity" is a pile of hogwash, and they know it.*

*The attorney general of Ontario and all those answering to him have lost sight of how we got here.*

*Millions of people died at the hands of fanatics like Hitler, Stalin and now Bin Ladin.*

*It was a relief that, at least, this article was not run on Dec. 7, on the anniversary of the fanatical Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor which killed thousands of Americans.*

*Instead of worrying about the poppy, she should be solving the serious matters of fanaticism and tyranny in the world today.*

*History keeps repeating itself. We have to find a way to stop these massacres.*

*I demand that the Ontario attorney general stand up in the legislature and apologize to every veteran and the descendants of every veteran. We need to get rid of this tragic confusion and stop, once and for all, the insult to our veterans.*

*It is a simple rule: You may wear your poppy any place, any time, period.*

#### **Frowning on judge**

Ken Taylor, Cambridge, Dec 13, 2007

*I'm writing in regard to the Dec. 8 article, Judge Frowns On Poppies In Courtroom. Keep on frowning Justice Margaret Woolcott, and as for Constable Dan Haines, I hope he keeps on wearing that poppy.*

*As for anyone else who has the misfortune to be in her courtroom I would hope they not only wear*

poppies but, horror of horrors, perhaps a cross or a star of David.

The poppy is not just a symbol of remembrance, but a symbol of truth and justice earned for all Canadians by fathers, brothers, sons and daughters.

**Veterans deserve respect**

Don Ried, Wellesley, Dec 13, 2007

*I find the actions of Justice Margaret Woolcott to be utterly disgusting. (Judge Frowns On Poppies In Courtroom -- Dec. 8.)*

*To wear a poppy in the weeks prior to and after Remembrance Day shows the highest regard for those who gave their lives for our freedom, in past and present wars.*

*To wear a poppy in a courtroom should be regarded as a sign of respect, not a concern that someone's feelings would be hurt.*

*As a Canadian citizen I have vowed to wear a poppy in the highest regard to the fallen soldiers.*

*As for Justice Margaret Woolcott, maybe she should spend some time in the front line in Afghanistan with our soldiers so she may gain the same respect.*

Friday, December 14, 2007  
Various, The Record  
Section: Poppy Campaign

**Banner from Cambridge Touches Soldiers**



**CAMBRIDGE**

A banner created in Cambridge flies high over a desolate piece of land in Afghanistan.

On the banner are pictures of local veterans, handprints of local children and signatures of hundreds of Cambridge residents. The banner also bears the signatures of Prime Minister

Steven Harper and other cabinet ministers.

The idea for the banner came from Branch 121 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Galt and it became a joint effort with Rockwell Automation Canada Ltd.

Kevin MacDougall, a member of Branch 121, said the banner was a way to connect soldiers across the years.

"We thought we'd associate our old veterans with our new ones and it kind of snowballed from there," MacDougall said.

The banner was sent a year ago, but MacDougall said regulations and protocol kept it from reaching the soldiers until just recently. It arrived at a police substation in southern Afghanistan, where Canadian soldiers are deployed as part of the military's Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team.

Team members, responsible for transporting and protecting military supplies for surrounding troops, work in the Zhari and Panjwayi districts of Kandahar province, where the threat of improvised explosive devices has been large.

Seventy-three Canadian soldiers have been killed in the last five years in Afghanistan.

MacDougall said many of the deaths were caused by hidden explosive devices, and he hoped the banner would bring the soldiers working in these dangerous conditions a moment to think of home.

The soldiers sent their thanks for the banner in an e-mail, and included a photograph, he said. "They were really touched by it. . . . They were especially touched by the little kids' handprints because a lot of them have families back here, too, and it was kind of a moving moment for them to remember their families back in Canada."

MacDougall, who has not served in the Armed Forces, said support for the troops has to be taken deeper than at face value.

"Some people have the misconception that when you say 'Support the troops' they mean support the military action

that's going on over there, which I think is a common misrepresentation.

"We're not really supporting or not supporting their actions as far as the war goes, what we're doing is we're just saying we're thinking about them and their families and we support them."

Originally posted, The Record, Dec 05, 2007.

Friday, December 14, 2007  
Meaghan McBride, Record Staff  
Section: Afghanistan

**Public Relations Report to the Executive - December 13, 2007**

I attended the Zone PRO Seminar on Sunday, December 9th, hosted by Branch 234, in Guelph. Speakers for the Day were:

- Brenda Funston, District 'C' PRO & Web Design
- Pat Smith, District 'C' Deputy Commander
- Elaine Rice, Zone 'C2' PRO

Brenda spoke on getting our branch photos and articles published in the LEGION Magazine, and provided guidelines for photo and article submissions. She also provided a power point presentation with her laptop computer to illustrate what she was talking about. She also reported that Ontario Command continues to update their web-site and are in the process of developing guidelines for all RCL branches to follow for web-sites. This information will be shared with all when finalized.

Brenda shared the Tara Branch Honour Roll issue which was published for Remembrance Day, 2007. This project is a remarkable tribute to the veterans of Branch #383. I have shared this with a few members of my PR committee and it was well received. I will share it with you following the meeting.

Pat's talk was on the importance of the PRO, Membership Chair, and TOD Chair, working together to promote membership. Her message was very loud and clear – MEMBERSHIP MUST BE GIVEN TOP PRIORITY – without a strong

membership that supports the branch, our branches will fail.

This message doesn't just mean get more members. It means treat your current members and new members well, and they will continue to support your branch. Her handout was excellent and cited examples of why people do not renew their memberships. Some examples for non-renewal in Pat's hand-out are:

- Aging veteran population
- Increasing age of senior members
- Lack of interest in branch activities
- New members not made to feel welcome
- Petty bickering amongst members
- Cliques
- Lack of leadership
- Associate and affiliate members made to feel unwelcome
- Uninformed membership and public
- Negative environment in the branch
- Legion image.....and the list goes on

Pat reported that she presented this information at a Zone TOD Seminar hosted by the New Hamburg Branch in October, 2007, and that our branch TOD chairman will be presenting an 11 page questionnaire to our executive, to do an evaluation on how we are doing as an executive. At our seminar, Pat passed out page 11, which had the questions for the Public Relations portfolio.

The Public Relations Officer is the 'Good Will Ambassador for the Branch', and is required to work with all chairmen in promoting their services and/or events.

The information contained in Comrade Smith's hand-out is excellent and I would be pleased to make it available to any executive member who would like to read it.

Elaine reported that Ontario Command has named The Easter Seals Society as their Charity of Choice, and enquired how much each of our branches have raised for them to date. She also stated that as each donation for Easter Seals is received, an email should be sent to her to keep

her totals up to date.

This information was mailed out to all Branch Secretaries in early October, and it is my understanding that it's up to each branch executive committee as a whole, to decide what level of participation we will have in this campaign.

Elaine handed out a booklet on Communication, and said that each branch was previously sent a Public Relations Handbook, which should be in the possession of the PRO, not in the Branch Office. I have emailed Comrade Meyer, past PRO, to see if he can forward this handbook to me.

Now for Branch 50 Events:

- The web-site is very popular and Trevor has added a member section. Each member of Branch 50 can sign in using their current membership card and complete surveys relating to branch business, as well as update their personal information i.e. phone, address, email info, etc. This will help us keep our records accurate at least for those members who have access to today's technology.
- Diane Zarzycki is to be commended for the hard work she put into assisting Trevor in getting the membership data base current and uploaded to the web-site, and he wanted me to make sure the executive committee was aware of his gratitude.
- PRO has three sub-committees which have been approved by Comrade President Dave and they are: Community Relations, Dugout, and Web-site.
- The Official Launch of Branch 50's web-site scheduled for December 16th, has been cancelled. The official launch will occur once the finalized guidelines are received from Ontario Command.
- Branch #533 would like Branch #50 to visit them in London in the new year.
- The Hamilton Branch #163, has requested another branch visit for Saturday, September 13, 2008. They would like to attend one of our branch pool tournaments and arrange a rematch bowling tournament. These sports events will be coordinated between Peter Schafer of Branch 163 and Jerry Prince.

• The next edition of the Dugout will be January/February, 2008. If you have anything you would like included in this issue, please email me at [pro@rclbr50.ca](mailto:pro@rclbr50.ca) or leave the information at the bar.

- All members can contribute information to the web-site. If you have ideas, please don't hesitate to email me or Trevor. Trevor is [webmaster@rclbr50.ca](mailto:webmaster@rclbr50.ca).
- All executive members have email accounts linked to the web-site.

Saturday, December 15, 2007  
Gloria McKibbin, PRO  
Section: Executive

### The poppy is a symbol that represents war



I support Justice Margaret Woolcott who did not want a police officer wearing a poppy in her court. The wearing of poppies is no longer a neutral symbol of honour to our fallen heroes. Without intending disrespect to our veterans of the past, present, or future, I want readers to know that, for a small but growing percentage of Canadians, the poppy has become a partisan symbol of acquiescence to the necessity for war and violence as a solution to human conflicts.

Early Christians were almost invariably pacifists, like today's Mennonites. Then in the Fourth Century, Augustine suggested a way to allow Christians the option of following their leaders into war. His so-called "just war" theory presented five standards by which Christians may determine if the evil caused by war is justifiable:

Extremity: Is this war truly a last resort? Legality: Has this war been legally declared? Win-ability: Can this war actually be won? There is no justification for Christians' participating in simple suicidal violence.

Proportion: Is the evil of this war -- the violence, destruction, displacement and loss of life that this war will cause -

- likely to be less than the evil this war is attempting to overthrow or to defeat?

Discrimination: Can this war avoid involving civilians -- especially women and children -- in the suffering, displacement, and loss of life that war necessarily includes? Can the suffering of war be borne by military forces alone?

As anyone can see from the above standards, modern warfare, with its indiscriminate aerial bombings, roadside IEDs (improvised explosive devices), landmines, and suicide missions is simply too horrible to be any longer justifiable. I write as a Christian addressing other Christians.

Symbols and their meanings change. Human life has changed. The world has changed. Warfare has changed. I call on all disciples of the Prince of Peace, and others of goodwill, to refuse to participate in any future war.

Saturday, December 15, 2007  
Rev. Paul Bosch, retired, Waterloo, From The  
Record  
Section: Poppy Campaign

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