

Presidents Report 2019-2020

Dear Members, Supporters and our incredible Volunteers:

I always look forward to our Annual General meetings where we can meet, chat and catch up in an informal setting. This time last year, we would not have thought that what we are experiencing was even possible. We are 8 plus months into what is a life altering event for all of us.

In June, we all held onto the thought that this too shall pass and decided to try and return to normal this fall. It has become apparent that we cannot predict the future; we have decided to hold our AGM Virtually with a very redacted Agenda.

Although we are not meeting in person, we have had what can only be described as an exciting and productive 18 months.

7 years ago, we were annually averaging, under 400 Army Cadets in the province and had 11 Cadet Corps and there were very few functioning support Committees, engaging with the League, and fulfilling the obligations from the MOU.

Fast forward to this year and over the past four years we have consistently seen enrollments moving up and have been consistently seeing enrollments in excess of 500 Cadets. We have established Support Committees, at all our Corps and are seeing excellent development and engagement from the volunteers out there. Work continues and through concerted efforts and partnering with the RCSU NW to ensure that the authority and responsibility of the leagues Support Committees is understood and respected.

Of significant note, is that our relationship with the National Office of the ACLC, has become very productive; with two way participation and greatly improved communications from the National down to support committees, via the Branch, and conversely back up to National from the Support Committees.

Manitoba has become a very active and contributing member to National Council and is working directly to ensure that opportunities to improve our processes are communicated and implemented.

We hosted our National Executive Director as he attended the Royal Canadian Legion National Conference when it was held here in Winnipeg; and hosted a meeting of the Provincial Presidents this past March. We used that opportunity to organize a meet and greet with the National Presidents and our provincial volunteers. We presented much deserved volunteer medals to many long serving volunteers, in the presence of our Provincial Presidents! Congratulations to you all!

We also used that opportunity to present a suggestion from one of our Support Committee Chairs regarding the need to modernize our financial practices to allow receipt of funds electronically in approved instances. Less than two weeks after this meeting, we all went into lockdown due to Covid; hard reality was that the Leagues were in a very precarious situation with our cash based financial processes. Seeing an opportunity; National Executive Committee approached Manitoba about

developing the policy for approval; this was unprecedented; an idea brought forward by a Support Committee to National, the policy developed by a provincial branch, reviewed, and approved by the National executive in less than 6 months! This, although a lot of hard work and uncharted territory, was extremely exciting to us.

Also last year, we decided to start mounting all medals for all Army Cadets. In the past it was hit and miss for Cadets to have their medals mounted. We have a volunteer who under the tutelage of the Base Taylor learned the skills to do so. The Branch absorbs the cost of the ribbons and findings to provide this service to Army Cadets.

Most know that three years ago, we lobbied the National Office to act on its initiative to provide basic asset insurance to cadet Corps. This is in addition to the officers and director's insurance for our volunteers as well as accidental death and dismemberment insurance for our volunteers and Cadets. It is important to understand that Civilian Instructors are also considered "volunteers" and as members of the Branch fall under our insurance and are required to become members of the Branch in the Province of Manitoba. Unlike other provinces, we do not download the charge back from National office to our Support Committees and we receive no funds from any level of Government. We strongly adhere to the premise that the program is free to all Cadets; depending on membership fees and donations from people who share our belief that this is the best youth program in Canada and is open to all youth 12-18 regardless of their socio economic status.

We thank you all for your support and words of encouragement, as we move to modernize our thinking and practices. I cannot tell you how important your support is to all of us on our executive.

We have seen many changes to our board and have built a strong talented board and are attracting younger community members who see the benefits of this program to our communities, our province and our country.

In August, we held a small intimate ceremony at Government House, hosted by her Honour the LG Janice Filmon (our patron) to present one of our members with the National Volunteer of the year on behalf of the National ACLC President - Cathy Bach. Our volunteers are appreciated and recognized not just here in Manitoba, but Nationally.

I want to personally thank the members of our executive, and the Support Committee members who provide support and advice to me; who step up and "make things happen" to ensure that we are supporting the Manitoba Army Cadet Corps and being the "partner" we are envisioned to be in the MOU between the Leagues and the Department of National Defense. This MOU has been under review for a couple years, and I am pleased to advise that it was signed by all parties and approved in July of this year.

We have acquired a GSuite platform, that provides all our Support Committees the ability to host virtual meetings, store information and use social media to enhance our ability to reach people remotely, especially during these challenging times.

We have a modern, updated website, with tools and supports for all our volunteers, as well as an active Facebook presence. We encourage you to look us up and follow along with us. The future is now, and DND, the Leagues and our sponsors and friends are turning to social media more and more to stay connected and safe.

Thank you for your continued support, encouragement, and commitment to the Army Cadet program in Manitoba. We are very focused on figuring out how to continue to provide the supports in a post Covid world, but know that with your support, we will come out the other end #strongertogether!

Sincerely

Linda Wall
President