

16 April 2024

Distribution List

District A Spring 2024 Convention Report

General

1. The District A Spring 2024 Convention was held at Branch 501, Lambeth, from 12-14 April 2024. Branch 594 sent the following delegates: President Morris Brause, Past President Tom Friesen (Youth Ed and Bursary Chair), Brian Robinson (Membership Chair), and David Woodman (Colour Party Commander and Executive Member). The overall convention was very informative. The convention reports are in a binder in the office for anyone who wishes to review them. This report will only highlight some key points or changes that were noted.

Membership

2. Delegate: Brian Robinson Numbers have increased in the Legion across our District. An Achievement Award 2023 was presented to Branch 594. We achieved a growth of 100+ % more over the previous 2022 membership numbers. Dominion Command is encouraging all Branches to use the Portal to maintain membership records. Changes are made from time to time, but slowly. The response to some suggestions was “not a priority as this point.” Another concern was the time that it took for new members to receive their membership cards. I had the opportunity to talk to Mark Rogers, Provincial Membership and Paula McEwen, District Membership. My concern at Branch level is that after more than 10 years doing membership, I have only heard about one seminar which I attended. My message to those involved with membership is that seminars need to be offered. There should be opportunities at all levels for membership chairs to get together to discuss and share our different approaches to organizing and keeping records.

Honours and Awards

3. District covered the Honours and Awards given out over the last year. It was noted that only two MSMs have been forwarded from all Ontario for this year. We need to review this medal of recognition as our Branch has not received a successful recipient of this medal for years. It now goes directly to Provincial Command for review before being forwarded to Dominion Command.

Military Recognition Book

4. Emphasized the importance of this book and the revenue that is received. Comrade Tom Friesen is our representative to vet and forward these short histories of local veterans and/ or serving members from our Military along with a picture. Please encourage veterans and serving members to write. They do not have to be a member of a Legion. Three MSRB submissions were hand delivered by Tom Friesen Br 594 MSRB correspondent to Jim Dunn District A MSRB chair. One was not accepted as the family had not signed off (family could not be found).

Seniors Report

5. In the March Provincial Administration meeting a motion was passed to keep Seniors as part of the Provincial VSS Committee. The Seniors Literary contest (poetry and essay) saw a minor increase in participation. Branches are encouraged to get our Seniors to enter poems and essays. Awards were given out to the best in each category.

Poppy Report

6. We still have several Branches sitting with large amounts of funds in their Poppy Accounts. All Branches are encouraged to spend their funds and not build large accounts. Our Branch has also reviewed our spending and increased our donations that go out a minimum of twice per year. The Poppy Committee has also determined how much must be kept in the fund to handle emergencies, especially in responding to Veterans requests for support. The Branch Poppy Committee must have the following as members: Poppy Chair, President, Treasurer, Service Officer and should have a Chair in training. Other members can be included.

District a Track and Field Report

7. Key dates are as follows:
- a. District A Meet is back at Sandwich Secondary School June 21 and 22.
 - b. The Provincial Meet will be at York University on July 12 and 13.
 - c. The National Meet will be in Calgary August 9 – 11.

Volunteers are required to do the following duties: raking jump pits, chaperones, registration, message runners, medal presentations, greeters, etc. Our Track and Field Chair, Comrade Jeff Morrell, will be recruiting volunteers for the District A meet at Sandwich Secondary School.

Note did you know there is a Windsor Legion Track & Field Club?

Public Relations Report

8. Legion Week is September 15th to 21st, 2024. Submissions to the Legion Magazine and contact information for Comrade Roy Eaton: Email: reaton@on.legion.ca 567 – 294 B North Channel Drive, Little Current, ON P0P 1K0. Note: There is a requirement for Zone A-1 to have a Public Relations Officers Meeting and discuss strategic planning with the Branches. Public Relations should have a base that consists of the Branches Strategic plan for the year, then add the Zone A-1 layer on top. Otherwise you will have too many requests to the media; which in turn, could shut off that important resource. Comrade Morris Brause (Deputy Zone A-1 Commander) will work with the Zone A-1 PRO and Branch reps to plan a meeting. This may have to occur after the elections. It is imperative that the Branch and Zone A-1 PROs go attend the next District A training.

Insurance Discussions

9. Many Ontario Branches moved their insurance over to Cooperators and received major savings. Some deductible premiums went up, and that should be reviewed by our Branch Financial Committee. PIB also lowered rates for some Legion Branches to ensure that they did not lose their business.

Leadership Development

10. The seminar for Poppy and Youth Education will be held on Sunday, July 21st, 2024, at Branch 335 Highgate. Information will be sent middle of June. Please note that the President is involved with his daughter's wedding that weekend and will not be able to attend.

District A Website

11. Comrade Tom Friesen noted that the District A website is not up to date. The website manager is not getting timely information to post.

All information is to be sent to our District Website Coordinator, Jamie Hughes (legionjamie@outlook.com) who will pass it on to Webmaster Elaine Dunn to enter into www.rcldistricta.com website.

Veteran's Service Report

12. "Operation Leave the Streets Behind" has aided 1,187 homeless or near homeless Veterans since 2009. The Ontario Legion Branches in District A have provided \$232,282.43 to support this program.

199 Ontario communities have received support for: rental payments, utilities payments, food vouchers, store vouchers, transportation support, medical expenses, moving expenses, and other similar expenses. Mental health and counselling have also greatly benefited our Veterans who have found themselves in dire need of support.

All Veteran members are strongly encouraged to apply for their NDI-75 Veteran Service Identification card. This card is intended to identify former CAF members, acknowledge their service, and recognize their enduring affiliation with the Canadian Forces family. Spouses of Veterans should apply for CF1 cards.

CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT: On March 19th, 2024, the Government of Canada has agreed to settle the class action lawsuit. Later this year Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) will automatically provide settlements to Veterans receiving disability pensions. Estates, family members of deceased Class Members and other Class Members who do not currently receive disability pensions directly from VAC will be required to submit a Claim by March 19th, 2025. Claims can be submitted at the administrator's website: veteranspensionsettlement.kpmg.ca or on the French website: veteranspensionreglement.kpmg.ca. A dedicated call centre has been established to address general inquiries: 1- 833 – 839 – 0648.

Dominion Convention

13. The Dominion Convention will be held August 24-28, 2024, in St John, New Brunswick. The Executive will provide a recommendation to the Membership on who should attend and determine a budget for that attendance.

District A Fall Convention

14. District A Convention will be hosted by Zone A-7 at RCL Branch 513 in Donnybrook (Dorchester) from October 18-20, 2024.

Branch Contributions

15. There was a total of \$273,985 donated by District A Branches as follows: Ruck to Remember \$54,500, Poppy \$10,500, Track and Field \$750, Leave the Streets Behind \$46,485, Host Trus \$20,500, Parkwood Vets support \$2,000, Parkwood Bus \$55,500, another Vet group \$2,000, Charitable Foundation \$19,500, Youth and Ed \$3,750, Bursaries \$25,600, RCEL \$10,500, Vets Initiative \$3,500, Service Dogs \$19,500.

Other Reports

16. There are many other reports that have been provided in the binder for this meeting. Any member is welcome to come to the office and read the reports.

Comment from a Member who attended a District A Convention for the First Time

17. Comrade Brian Robinson attended his first District A Convention and these were his thoughts/comments: *“I appreciate seeing attendees in Blues and Greys. I was amazed at the amount of money raised by various Branches for causes that the Legion supports. District A convention was well organized and had opportunities for Delegates to ask questions and make comments. I liked the President's meeting for allowing me to make comments about my role with membership”.*

Submitted by: Comrade President Morris Brause, Comrade Past President Tom Friesen, Com Membership Chair Brian Robinson, and Comrade David Woodman (Colour Party Commander and Executive member).