

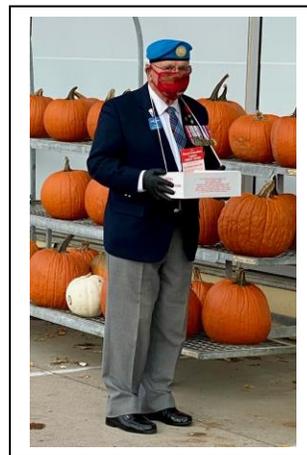
2020's Pandemic Poppy Campaign

2020 will go down in infamy as the first year of the COVID 19 pandemic. However, there is another reason for 2020 to be remembered, the sudden expansion of the Vimy Branch 145's Poppy Campaign.

Vimy's Poppy Campaign prior to 2020 was small, consisting of one or two drivers with eleven locations. Nevertheless about \$500 was usually collected but, towards the end of 2019, the picture started to change.

The Duchess of Kent Legion, which shut down several years ago, still maintained its Poppy Fund and distributed poppies every year. Their fund had once numbered over 700 boxes and collected over \$70,000 in donations and was the poppy powerhouse in London. Unfortunately, its volunteer base started to decline with the closing of the branch and in 2019 their Poppy Fund Committee closed down. This prompted our Zone Commander, Randy Warden, to lead the zone Poppy Fund Committee in reallocating the areas of responsibility for the Poppy Campaign in London. London's campaign would now be conducted by five branches instead of six.

As a result Vimy Branch 145 was allocated the downtown area bordered by:
the south side of Oxford Street from Wharncliffe to Adelaide,
the east side of Wharncliffe Road from Oxford Street to Horton Street and the river,
the north side of the river from Wharncliffe Road to Adelaide Street, and
the west side of Adelaide Street from the river to Oxford Street.



Sam Newman,
stood 3 shifts
at a Valu Mart
and collected
\$798.25
for Vimy's
2020 Poppy
Campaign

In December 2019 the Vimy Branch 145 executive approved the change to its Poppy Campaign boundaries and preparations were set to begin in March 2020. These preparations began with finding solutions to several challenges: the poppy box locations in our new area, the materials required, storage space for these materials, work area for preparation and post campaign activities, volunteers to do the work, counting the money and clearing up after the campaign and storage until the next year.

The first step was to seek out and talk with Brian Carey, the former chair of the Duchess of Kent Poppy Fund who, it turned out, had the key to the solution of many of our problems. Brian explained that the materials that were once used by the Duchess of Kent had been kept and stored at the Victory Branch, that the ANAF volunteers who served the longest route (Dundas Street) might be interested in continuing, and that we could use the old change counting and rolling machines his legion had once used.

This led to negotiations with Al Miller and Nellie Stevens of the Victory Branch. They agreed to allow us to continue to store the old Duchess of Kent's poppy supplies at the branch, to allow us to use their 'museum' as our work area for the duration of the campaign, and to permit us to continue to store our supplies at Victory after the campaign. Simultaneously discussions with Judi Helle of Army Navy Air Force (ANAF) Imperial Unit 229 led to her agreement to continue to distribute poppy boxes along Dundas and its side streets. Finally, Brian Carey agreed to teach Richard Waring and Brian Harris how to operate the change counting/sorting machine and the change tubing machine.

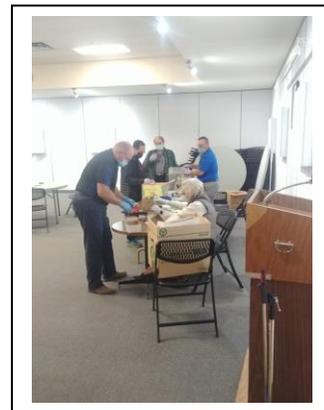
Once the routes were established drivers were recruited and a base in the 'museum' at Victory was established and the route materials were prepared. The campaign began on Friday 30 Oct and ended on Wednesday 11 Nov. On Friday 14 Nov our storage area at Victory was returned to its pre-campaign state and our work area was vacated. The next day our final deposit was made for a total of \$13,889.05 received in donations during the campaign

Vimy 145 volunteers made our success possible by working to canvass the new area, preparing our routes and the donation boxes for those routes, delivering those boxes to numerous locations downtown, servicing our locations, breaking down the boxes to extract the money, reassembling the boxes and preparing them for storage until next year, packing away returned poppies and, finally, counting and tubing and depositing the money.

Thanks to our Vimy 145 volunteers:

Alfie and Chris Aldington, Don Dennie, Brian Harris, Betty King, Dave Lavoie, Albert and Vicki Mok, Sam Newman, Pat O'Hagan, Keith Roden, Gail Sneddon, Beth Sayler, Bruce Stock, Randy Warden, Richard and Rosemary Waring.

Richard Waring
Poppy Fund Committee Chair



Sam Newman, Alfie Aldington, Richard Waring and Keith Roden break down boxes in preparation for counting.

Brian Harris counts the change for 'box accountants' Albert Mok and Bruce Stock while Don Dennie reports box totals to Rosemary Waring.