BRANCH **REPORT**

ON45 | Quinte

# President’s message

As I am preparing this report, later today Premier Doug Ford will be announcing which pandemic restrictions will be lifted or relaxed for Stage 3 in reopening Ontario. Needless to state the last four months has been unprecedented.

Since the branch established itself in 1968, it has had its office in the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 99 on Pinnacle Street, Belleville. Last year the Legion was given notice to vacate and they have been unsuccessful in securing new premises. They advised they are looking for a place that will accommodate us also. That is all the information I have presently. By the way, Task Force Engineering Ltd. won the bid to redevelop the Memorial Arena and Royal Canadian Legion and have recently launched a website featuring drawings and floor plans for the Memorial Market Place. ([www.memorialmarketplace.ca](http://www.memorialmarketplace.ca))

I am delighted to share that the branch was nominated for the 2019 Branch Excellence Award by Sayward Montague, Director of Advocacy. This stems from our hosting a federal all-candidates event for the Quinte Region last September. Unfortunately, the Quinte Branch was not the wining recipient, the Ottawa Branch was.

The branch needs to fill the position of secretary. In February Sharon Brohm advised she would be continuing, but in a director’s position. The expectations of the secretary are to attend the branch annual general meetings (1/year), board meetings (3-4/year) and office coverage (every 6 weeks except summer months). Our volunteers are priceless. This group of members contribute their time, energy and skills to work in the interest of the association without pay. As not-for-profit, member-based organization, Federal Retirees owes its existence and success to the contributions of our volunteers. Please consider this opportunity and let me know.

A message from Bill Robertson and Mary Culloden to the “Lunch Bunch”, a group of retired public servants and military that met Wednesdays, usually once a month for lunch in Belleville: until the present circumstance changes, the group won’t be gathering, but when it does, expect your phone call as to when and where. Many recent retirees of today may not know of this group so if you are interested in participating, send the branch an email with your phone number and it will be forwarded on to them.

And speaking of Bill Robertson, did you see the June 18 write up in the Intelligencer and Community Press - “8 AMS salutes 99-year-old war veteran with a special birthday surprise”. Here it is:

Bill “Robbie” Robertson got a big surprise Friday when approximately 20 members from 8 Air Maintenance Squadron from 8 Wing Trenton showed up at Quinte Gardens to wish the retired Flying Officer a happy 99th birthday. Several other family and friends turned out to sing Robertson a happy birthday. The Second World War veteran joked, “I was trying to forget this birthday, but next year will be the big one.” “Mr. Robertson has been very active with 8 AMS over the years and this small token is a way of thanking him during this unique time,” said 8 Wing Public Affairs Officer Maj. Trevor Reid in a press release. Mr. Robertson joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1942 to take part in either the Pilot Course or Observer Course. Initially selected for the Observer, he later transferred to the Bomb Aimer Course. He served as an RCAF Bombardier in a Royal Air Force crew on 158 Squadron, No. 4 Bomber Group. Early November 1942 saw him flying in a Halifax II aircraft, and later in a Halifax III. On one mission, his plane was shot down behind enemy lines. With the aid of many “helpers”, and by hiding in woods, attics, and barns, Robertson was able to evade capture and return to his squadron after more than four months. “Thanks very much, I don’t think of myself as a hero, I did what I had to do. There were plenty of lads my age that went and fought for their country. I hope it doesn’t happen again, but if war breaks out I’m sure there are plenty of young men and women who will do the same. I got shot down and survived and I thank the good Lord for that,” Robertson said. Upon returning home, Robertson requested to continue on other missions, but was denied due to health concerns. He was later discharged from service in March 1945 at the rank of Flying Officer. Immediately after leaving the service, Robertson commenced work with the federal government. His position was chiefly as an unemployment insurance advisor. He was an expert on the Unemployment Act and Regulations. If changes were to be made, Robertson would be called to the Ottawa head office to help write the new manuals. Since 1980, Mr. Robertson has been enjoying retirement in Belleville.

Our email ([fsnaon45@gmail.com](mailto:fsnaon45@gmail.com)) and telephone (613-968-7212) continues to be monitored; don’t hesitate to contact the branch.

Sincerely,

Joan Rockburne

President

