

The Prescott Ladies Auxiliary

By The Prescott Museum & Visitor Centre

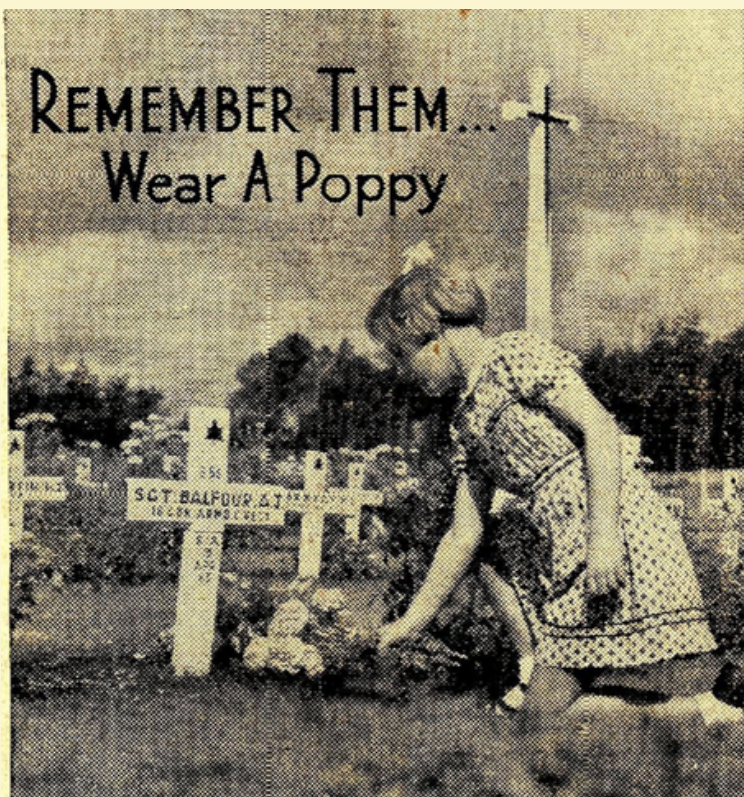
The founding of the Ladies Auxiliary dates to WWI, when groups of women across Canada volunteered to help wounded veterans returning home and provide support to their families during and after the war. When the Royal Canadian Legion was established in 1926, these women were welcomed into the organization as an extension of the Legion, continuing to support ex-service members and assist the Legion in local programs and events.



Example Logo of the
Ladies Auxiliary of the
Royal Canadian Legion

Although many of the wives, mothers and sisters of ex-service members volunteered their time to the Legion since Prescott's Branch 97's founding in the 1920s (especially with the Overseas Welfare Club),

it wasn't until 1948 that an official Ladies Auxiliary branch was chartered. Officially formed on April 14th, 1948, with an extravagant ceremony. A.H. Kincaid acted as chairman, and Mrs. A. Coburn led the ceremonies of installation for 30 members, which included the following names: Mary McGrory, Jean Henry, Norwena Brown, Hazel Pomeroy, Ann Smith, C. Kincaid, Florence Donovan, E. Morris, M. Seeley, A.M. Snyder, B. Fisher, P. O'Connell, M. Durant, E. McGee, J. Miller, Enid Simzer and M. Hoy.



Remembrance Day Newspaper Advertisement, Dated 1949

Some of the organization's first major projects included hosting a covered-dish supper for all Prescott war brides in February 1949, setting up the young women with bridge classes (short-term academic programs) to help them get accustomed to life in Canada. Later that same year, they would host Royal Canadian Legion Branch 97's first Remembrance Day tea and food sale, raising around \$285 (roughly \$3,800 in today's currency).



Prescott Legion Branch 97 at 141 Henry Street West



The Prescott War Monument at Old Town Hall, Photo Circa' 1950

Alongside assisting the men with the annual poppy campaign, by the 1950s the group had initiated the tradition of creating decorative poppy sprays to adorn the graves of veterans at cemeteries across the Grenville area, a tradition that the organization continued until the 21st century.

Another tradition started during this period of the Ladies Auxiliary was the creation of a cookbook featuring recipes used in their weekly community lunches. The first of these books was published in 1953, with the proceeds used to update the hall's kitchen facilities and card room to include darts and cribbage areas.

Mrs. M. Leonard Installed Legion Aux. President

Mrs. Mary Leonard was installed as President along with her suite of officers of the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Canadian Legion, Prescott Branch 97, on Monday evening when Earl D. Simzer, President of the Legion Branch, officiated, assisted by J. R. Fader, Second Vice-President.

On her retirement as President since the Auxiliary was organized two years ago, Mrs. B. P. McGrory was presented with a beautiful string of pearls by Mrs. H. Pomeroy on behalf of the Auxiliary members. In reply, Mrs. McGrory stated the two years of Auxiliary work had been of harmonious co-operation, where members of various creeds met under a common obligation.

Reports of annual and current activities were presented, and Mrs. Roy Lindsay was initiated into membership by the new President, assisted by Mrs. W. C. Donovan, Standard Bearer. At the close of the meeting, a social hour was held during which Mrs. D. Fisher and Mrs. C. Tannier conducted a Chinese auction of a basket of groceries, won by Mrs. C. Hewitson. A sing-song was enjoyed with J. A. Morris at the piano, and refreshments were served by the committee headed by Mrs. Fisher.

Officers installed were:
President—Mrs. M. Leonard.
1st Vice-Pres.—Miss E. Simzer.
2nd Vice-Pres.—Mrs. G. J. W. Shaver.

Rec.-Sec.—Mrs. B. Black.
Corr. Sec.—Mrs. Jason Brown.
Treas.—Mrs. H. Pomeroy.
Standard Bearer—Mrs. W. C. Donovan.

Pianist—Mrs. J. R. Fader.
Executive—Mrs. K. McLean, Mrs. J. Simzer, Mrs. K. Knapp, Mrs. R. Magee, Mrs. H. Fortier, Mrs. F. R. Henry.

Publicity—Prescott Journal, Mrs. T. Delaney; 97 News, Mrs. W. C. Donovan; Advertising, Miss E. Simzer.

Welfare—Mrs. K. McLean, Conventer; Mrs. O'Connell, Mrs. J. R. McIntyre, Mrs. R. Magee, Mrs. B. P. McGrory, Mrs. R. Norris.

Property—Mrs. W. C. Donovan.
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By the 1960s and 1970s, the group was actively involved in raising funds for charities such as the Red Cross, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Cadets, and the Salvation Army. When the Prescott Red Cross branch closed in the early 1970s, the Ladies Auxiliary took over many of its programs. They sewed diapers, blankets, and towels for children in Africa affected by war. Led by Comrade Jean Henry, the Ladies Auxiliary expanded sewing projects to include yearly donations of socks and mittens to families in need across Leeds and Grenville. The organization also ran a pocket novel collection, donating books to veterans overseas and hospitals across Canada.

In 1998, the organization celebrated its 50th anniversary with an extravagant celebration at the Legion Hall. In attendance was guest speaker Provincial Officer Rose Green and representatives from every auxiliary in Zone G-3. Following the presentation, each member of the Prescott Ladies Auxiliary, consisting of 26 members, was awarded a pin and a diploma for their efforts in bettering the community. Some of the dedicated women honoured that night included Judy Stead, Madeliene Campeau, Edna Stephenson, Lousie McCallam, Isabel Arcand, Rita Whitney, Mary Johns, Joyce Doherty, Anges Dodge, Mabel Hodge, Tracey Holden, Dorothy Lennox and Gail Rocky.

Sale of Poppies, Wreaths Exceptionally Good

Exceptionally good results were realized this year from the sale of poppies and wreaths, according to W. McEathron, 1st Vice-President of Prescott Branch of the Canadian Legion. Poppies, sold by the Women's Auxiliary, realized \$189.89, and over 300 wreaths were purchased by Prescott citizens and business houses from the Branch Committee.

Newspaper clipping from the Prescott Journal, Noember 16, 1950

Today, the Ladies Auxiliary remains a dedicated organization within Prescott, alongside the Legion, hosting community lunches, bingo and dances, they also continued the tradition of hosting Remembrance Day activities at the Prescott War Monument, annual poppy campaigns and honouring Prescott's veterans.

New Legion Ladies Aux. Instituted Last Night By District Officers

In a colourful ceremony last night, the newly organized Branch of the Ladies' Auxiliary associated with Branch No. 97 of the Canadian Legion was duly instituted when Mrs. Coburn of Brockville, Zone Representative of the Ontario Command, visited the Canadian Legion Memorial Hall in Henry Street and installed the new officers, Mrs. Tomkins, President of the Brockville Auxiliary, also initiated 40 members into the privileges of the Branch.

A. H. Kincaid, President of Prescott Branch, acted as chairman in the opening ceremony, and briefly addressed the meeting when he stated his pleasure on behalf of the Men's Branch in the formation of this new Auxiliary.

Douglas Thompson of Ottawa, Commander of District G, gave a very informative address on the Aims and Objects of the Canadian Legion. He explained what the Legion is attempting to perform and pointed out what the Ladies' Auxiliary could do on behalf of the ex-service personnel and their dependents. His remarks were greatly appreciated. Mrs. Coburn, Zone Representative, expressed her pleasure in welcoming this new Auxiliary and thanked all who had made its formation possible.

The following officers were installed by Mrs. Coburn: President, Mrs. B. P. McGrover; 1st Vice-Pres., Mrs. Frank Henry; 2nd Vice-Pres., Mrs. Jason Brown; Secretary, Miss Enid Simzer; Treas., Miss Mildred Hoy; Standard Bearer, Mrs. H. Pomeroy; Executive Committee, Mrs. A. H. Kincaid, Mrs. Stuart Miller, Mrs. E. Deschamps, Mrs. L. Mallon, Mrs. W. C. Donovan, Mrs. Thos. O'Connell.

Future meetings of the Auxiliary will be held in the Legion Memorial Hall on the second Monday of each month. The appointment of Committees was left over for the Executive to arrange.

Mr. Kincaid reminded the ladies of the District Meeting to be addressed by the Hon. Milton Gregg, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., E.D., at Cornwall on April 25th to which all ladies were cordially invited. They were asked to notify the Branch Secretary not later than Saturday, April 17, so that the Cornwall Branch could be notified.

An invitation is extended to all eligible ladies in the community—daughters, sisters, and mothers of ex-service men and women, or widows, sisters or daughters of men who paid the supreme sacrifice, to become associated with this new Auxiliary. The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 11, at 8 p.m.

Votes of thanks were extended to District Commander Douglas Thompson of Ottawa, and to Mrs. Coburn, Zone Representative, Mrs. Tompkins and the officers of the Brockville Auxiliary for their assistance.

Newspaper clipping from the Prescott Journal, April 15, 1948

The Prescott Museum & Visitor Centre
Open Wednesday - Saturday, 11-5
202 King Street West, Prescott, ON

