





## **RICHMOND (Pacific 5) BRANCH THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION**

**BOX 141, 185 – 9040 BLUNDELL RD., RICHMOND, B.C. – V6Y 1K3 – (604) 278-1535**

July 26, 2001

Richmond City Hall  
6911 No. 3 Road  
Richmond, B.C.  
V6Y 2C1

**ATTENTION: COUNCILOR BILL McNULTY**

Dear Bill:

After reading the various articles in the local papers concerning the development of a Convention Centre on Garden City between Westminster and Alderbridge Way, may I suggest that Council consider allowing Richmond (Pacific 5) Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion to also have their establishment in that same area.


The reasons for this are:

- 1) Richmond (Pacific 5) Branch is the oldest Veteran's Service Club in Richmond dating back to May 25, 1927.
- 2) Between the years 1979 through 2000, we have been able to put more than \$605,000.00 back into the Community. This does not include those monies between 1927 through December 1978. Nor does it include all of the Volunteer work that Legion Members have done throughout the Community.
- 3) Enclosed is a current copy of the History of Branch 5 which may enlighten Council on some of what Branch 5 has done throughout the years, including a copy of monies disbursed from our Meat Draws and various other means of raising money to give back into the Community.

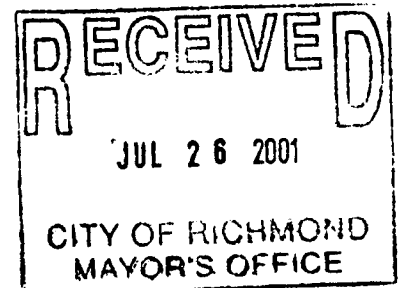
Should you consider our request to have our Veteran's Service Organization on the above mentioned site, we will still endeavor to do our utmost to Serve the Community as we always have.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Yours truly,

  
William H. Costain  
President, Branch #5

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## **THEN AND NOW: A SHORT HISTORY OF BRANCH #5**

By: A.A. (Bob) Griffiths, former Secretary/Manager

In the year 1927, a group of men and women, namely: H.A. McBurney, G.H. Saunders, J.W. Lackhart, Rev. A. McKay, Nursing Sister Mrs. J. Sheppard, Nursing Sister Miss Conway-Jones, H. Foster, F.A. Hall, A. Ward, G.S. Hunter, F.B. Fisher, E.A. Chaloner, H.E. Turner, S. Roberts and J. Beckwith and others got together to form the first Legion in Richmond. It was known as Branch 5, British Empire Service League, now known as Branch 5, Royal Canadian Legion.

Long hours and hard work was put into forming this Branch. Their first meetings were held in their own private homes until they purchased the property on the corner of Granville and St. Albans with an old house on it from Mr. & Mrs. Singer for the sum of \$1,600.00. It was named "The Chicken Hall" because it was a converted chicken house. However, at a further cost of \$500.00 it was made into a Club, which was used, for several functions such as concerts, boxing and wrestling bouts.

Our first Branch was originally an old house with a welcome door for all returning Veterans. Their first President was Comrade H.A. McBurney, second; Comrade G.H. Saunders, third; Comrade Carlos and fourth; Comrade S. Roberts. Slow progress was made, but with the help of the Ladies Auxiliary who signed their Charter in April 1931, they never gave up to further the aims and objects of the Legion.

For the first few years they had no license, only occasional permits, until 1930 when they received their license to operate a Canteen. They had to haul their own keg beer, and one man in particular, Alex Tait, hauled with his farm truck or team and wagon. Alex hauled many a barrel for the Club, but remember, at that time a barrel would last a week, for their Membership was very small. Also, when the beer arrived, there was no cooler to store it in, so it was served at room temperature with no complaints. There was no paid Staff in those days and everyone helped themselves and enjoyed doing it.

In 1945 and 1946, with the last War over, Membership increased to about 300, it was then decided that their old house was too small. A Committee was set up to look into the building of a new Club on the same property. In 1947 they moved into the new premises, known to many of our Members "Barn" and many a good time was had there.

The first Bar Manager in the new premises was Robert Simpson, who left Branch 16 to take over this position. From 1947 it was a hard struggle for the Branch, they floated bonds for their new building of \$20,000.00 which took many years to repay. Between 1947 and 1959, they purchased a parcel of land across the street for the parking from D. Clarke.

From then on, things began to happen. In 1949, Ladies were allowed into the Canteen. Entertainment, first of its kind to be held in any Legion Club. Comrade Blackie Douglas was the member responsible for the new era of Entertainment in Legion Branches across our Province, which helped put our Branch where it is today.

There was one mistake we made in planning our new building. I guess we were not thinking ahead, and that was the Ladies Washrooms. So, something had to be done. A new Powder Room was added to the building. This helped the Ladies, but it didn't help us, for at least once a week our septic tank overflowed, and many of our dollars were spent looking after that. Everything was fine now for the Ladies, or at least for a while, until one Saturday night all hell broke loose. Some women set fire to the Ladies Room. Within a short while the Canteen was full of smoke. That didn't matter to Members or guests or Entertainers, they just carried on with what they were doing. With the Staff running around with pails of water we managed to put out the fire before much damage was done. The next time we had a problem in the Ladies Room, some female plugged the sink and turned the water on, guess what happened? It took us three days to dry the place out, never a dull moment. What about the Saturday night one of our Members put itching powder down one of our females' neck. She scratched so badly that we had to take her into the back room and wash her down. Or, what about the time one of our barmen put a coaster between a hamburger for one of our patrons and he actually ate the whole thing. How about this, two Race Trackers rode the horses they were training down through Brighthouse, to the Legion and into the building. That's not the best. One was picked up for impaired driving.

Our younger Executive were now having their problems, so in 1959 a Committee was set up to look into the feasibility of building a new Club on the same property. Result, the Municipality said no. Reason, no sewage and too close to private homes. They decided to look elsewhere and came up with the property our Branch is now located on at 7831 Westminster Hwy. Price: \$45,000.00 paid in cash from Branch Funds.

The next problem was to raise \$150,000.00 for the building. After many meetings we came up with the money from the Bank, and we were well on our way, and we haven't looked back since.

Those men who worked so hard on our Building Committee, before and during the time this building was being raised, deserve many thanks for the hours, days and months they gave of their time so that we may enjoy what we have today.

Our first Mortgage Payment was in January, 1964, with the last being paid in full in January, 1970. Plus \$15,000.00 in private Loans making a total of \$165,000.00 in approximately (6) six years. We can be proud of this achievement with the Club we have today, forward we shall go, to further the aims and objects of the Royal Canadian Legion.

### **A SHORT HISTORY OF BRANCH 5**

By John Jones

Richmond Branch 5 Canadian Legion of the British Empire Commonwealth Ex-Services League received it's Charter on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of May in 1927. It later became known simply as Branch 5 Royal Canadian Legion.

At that point in time the first Branch building was situated at 836 Granville Avenue and was nicknamed the "Chicken House".

During 1946 and 1947, with the influx of New Members from World War II, a new building was built directly behind the "Chicken House" facing on St. Albans Road. It was built with mostly Volunteer Labour and a great deal of free material.

The Membership kept growing until this building became too small. The Branch then bought it's present building at 7831 Westminster Hwy. A new building was built, completed and opened in October of 1963. Since then it has thrived very well.

Among the many contributions the Branch has made to the Community are:

Completely furnishing a room in the new Hospital as well as several hundreds of thousands of dollars for various High Tech Equipment.

On August 28, 1976 we officially opened a 64 unit Senior Citizens Housing Development at 7251 Langton Road in Richmond which has been very successful.

We carry a large supply of wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and canes for our Members.

We also support the Army, Navy and Air Cadet Leagues as well the Boy Scouts and Junior and Senior Sports.

We are currently in the process of planning and building a new Branch and a building of 168 suites for affordable housing. We are selling these suites at cost with no profit to the Branch.

We might at this time give some reference to the Cenotaph which stands in front of City Hall. It was originally erected to honour the memory of all Members of the Forces who gave their lives in World War I.

At that time in 1921, the Great War Veterans Association formed a Committee together with the I.O.D.E., the Red Cross and several other Organizations, and many Private Citizens to raise funds and erect a Cenotaph. It was completed and dedicated on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1922 to coincide with the Anniversary of Vimy Ridge. We have used this Cenotaph every November 11<sup>th</sup>, where we hold Ceremonial Services not only to Remember those who died in World War I, but also for those who gave their lives in World War II and the Korean War.

### **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE GOLDEN MEWS – SENIOR COMPLEX**

By Ed Cliff

Following the Royal Canadian Legion Convention in Prince George, when Branches were encouraged to participate in low cost housing for Seniors, Richmond Branch 5 initiated preliminary discussions on the subject in 1966.

February 17, 1969 an organizational meeting was held and Committees formed to investigate the possibility of building a Seniors Housing Project. The current and main objective was to find a suitable location at a reasonable price. Prime "Downtown" property was too expensive, so the search concentrated on residential areas.

February 25, 1970 the purchase of property on Langton Road, a six acre site, was approved, and the purchase was completed on May 22, 1970.

The next five years saw extensive planning. Initially 110 units were planned, but due to rapid rising construction and interest costs, it was scaled down to 64 units.

In November, 1975 the "Sod Turning Ceremony" was held, and on August 28, 1976 the "Official Opening" was held. Rents were set at \$135.00 for Studio and \$175.00 for 1 Bedroom Units

### **A SHORT HISTORY OF BRANCH 5 LADIES AUXILIARY**

By Barb Ash

The Ladies Auxiliary of Branch 5 received their Charter on April 8, 1931, and in 1996 they celebrate their "65<sup>th</sup> Year of Service" to the Veterans and to the Community.

Sixty-five years ago a group of Veterans from the British Empire Service League, Branch 5 Richmond made a decision at their General Meeting that were in need of a Ladies Auxiliary. So, they approached Mrs. Sheppard, a Members wife to ask if she would assist in the forming of the British Empire Service League Ladies Auxiliary, and we received our Charter in 1931, and have worked with the Branch ever since to reach the goals we have achieved and set.

Did you know that our first President was Mrs. E. McBurney, 1931 – 1932? The Meetings were held in the afternoon until the 1950's. The major form of fund raising was "Whist Drives", where admission was 25 cents and that included a door prize and refreshments. The Ladies took turns supplying the refreshments.

Several of the Ladies: S. Fisher, A. Aspin, C. Saunders, J. Hart, Vi Moslin, S. King and others spent their spare time knitting socks for the fellows "Overseas", meeting "Troop Trains" with coffee and large boxes of cigarettes. They tell me that they were in flat metal packages of fifty. Magazines were a key element in those days so the fellows "Overseas" had some idea what was happening back home.

#### **1945**

Mrs. Saunders reported distributing over 10,000 magazines to Active Service Depot, Merchant Marines and Marpole Hospital.

A "Whist Drive" cost you fifty cents and you had 29 tables.

We made sandwiches and coffee for the workers on dykes when flooding was happening on the North Arm of the Fraser River. The cost to make this was \$20.00. This Project was then helped with the aid of Branch 209, Sea Island and Branch 16, Vancouver. Our Canteen was at #5 Road and River Road with a twenty-four opening made possible by the above mentioned groups.

A Major Project of the Ladies Auxiliary was being able to provide wheelchairs for the wounded and handicapped during the War and into the late 50's. Our Ladies played a very active part in visiting the "Veterans" at the Marpole infirmary and Shaugnessy Hospital,

taking chocolate bars and 50 cents to be used as they wished. We worked for many years at the Blood Donor Clinics, with most of the Ladies looking after the coffee, tea and soft drinks for the donors.

Early in the 1950's, we changed our meetings to Monday Evenings. The first Monday Meeting was held on September 8<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 pm with President D. Hale presiding, and our Bank Balance was \$244.66 and our Treasurer was Muriel Ogilvy.

We were still visiting the Marpole Infirmary, hosting 11 patients. We also had a Junior Auxiliary in the 1950's with Mrs. McBurney overseeing this group.

In those days, the Provincial Executive Meeting was held in Mission with the cost of bus fare being \$2.10 return and the busses left from Vancouver Bus Depot, and our Convention was in Nelson, B.C.

We also entered a Float in the P.N.E. Parade and received a letter commending us on the lovely Float.

We also awarded \$100.00 Scholarships in 1953 to Richmond High Students.

In 1955 we bought wheelchairs from Hycroft at a cost of \$110.00 which included a plaque which read: Donated by Ladies Auxiliary Branch 5. That was the same year we started the Veterans Dinners.

In 1960 we gave a cheque for the Wading Pool in Minoru Park.

In 1963 we opened our new Legion Building on Westminster Hwy. Where the Ladies were busy making cold plates.

We have a "Great Organization" who strives to maintain the Aims and Objects of the Ladies Auxiliary mainly in support of the Veterans and assisting the Branch.

1977 saw the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Branch.

We started with a Membership of 8 very dedicated Ladies, and our Membership peaked in the 1970's to 110, and dropped in the 1990's. Our Auxiliary became an "Open Auxiliary". This means those showing an interest in helping the Veterans can join now.

Perhaps you are interested? We have something for everyone, be it visiting the Vets at George Derby, Hosting Luncheons in the Canteen for Shaugnessy and George Derby Vets, Catering or helping with our 50/50 Draws. We need your support to help keep this Organization going.

For more information you can contact Branch 5 at 278-1535.

## **BRANCH 5 CONCERT BAND**

By: Jack Thompson

On February 14, 1973, the first Band rehearsal was held. Fourteen enthusiastic people trying to do something for their Community and Branch. The success they have had can be measured in the music they play and the fact that fourteen people have now become more than a Thirty Piece Concert Band under the direction of Al Sweet with an ever increasing number of Junior Members each time out.

Success at any level is often written about, but success only comes from those who work behind the scenes. The people who give of their time and work for no remuneration to support a project they believe in.

One such group that has helped in our Band Project since it started is the Ladies Auxiliary to Branch 5. These Ladies have donated many hours of hard work on our fund raising programs. To these Ladies our sincere appreciation and thanks for a fantastic job well done.

There are so many others, too many to name individually that have given of themselves. To name a few: Al Boschalk, George Granger, George Harrison, Dick Henderson, and then the Dance Bands who played for us free gratis. Our thanks to them all.

To date there are three concerts on the agenda that some of the Members may wish to attend.

On February 19<sup>th</sup> we performed for "All Vets Night" at 284 Army & Navy in Steveston, and as anyone who attended will tell you, your Branch 5 Band was well received.

We shall be doing a concert at Shaugnessy Hospital on Sunday afternoon in March. Date to be announced later.

Then in May we will be doing a concert and playing for the Inspection of Air Cadets of Air Canada Squadron to be held in the Maintenance Base on Sea Island. Date to be announced. For further information you may contact the Band at rehearsals on Mondays at 7:30 pm in the Legion Auditorium.

## **HISTORY OF BRANCH 5 CONCERT BAND**

By Ian Michie

Branch 5 Legion Band is a concert and Marching Band, which has been sponsored since its inception by Richmond Branch 5 of the Royal Canadian Legion.

The Band was formed in 1973, as a result of the vision and determination of Jack Thompson, then Vice-President of the Branch. Jack put the ball into motion by persuading Al Sweet, a Bandmaster of many years experience, to accept the position of Music Director. Under Al Sweet's baton, and starting with a small handful of members, the Band grew rapidly in both size and competence and before long was giving quite creditable public performances. Equipped with uniforms, the Band played at a variety of formal and informal functions. A yearly schedule would typically include Legion Ceremonies and Parades, and performances



at hospitals, retirement homes and special civic and other events. Al continued to direct these activities until 1979 when he decided to retire. However, before finally stepping down he made a very important contribution to ensure the Band's continued success: he introduced Bob Mullett. When Al Sweet finally laid down his baton in March 1979 Bob was appointed to the position of Bandmaster.

Under Bob Mullett's direction the Band moved to new heights of excellence, both in concert and on parade. Bob is a consummate musician and an energizing conductor. In 1986 he masterminded a concert at the Richmond Gateway Theatre, in collaboration with the Delta Community Band and Branch 83 Legion Pipe Band. The production was very well received and paved the way to what has become an Annual Event, held on or close to the last Thursday in November.

Seeking to expand the Band's musical activities, Bob decided to form a Dance Band from musicians in the Concert Band. The Dance Band soon became a permanent feature and for a number of years has provided music for Sunday "Tea Dances" held in the Legion Auditorium. These highly successful events contributed greatly to the funds raised to help cover the cost of a Band Trip to England and Scotland in 1989, and later to Holland.

Over the years the Band participated in many public functions, for the Legion, for the City and for the Province. Of these, perhaps the two most memorable were the Ceremonies which marked the opening of the Fraser Bridge in 1986 and the 2 Road Bridge in 1993.

In 1995 the Netherlands mounted a major Celebration to commence the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Countries Liberation by Canadian Forces. Branch 5 Legion Band, together with the Legion Colour Party, was invited to take part in these Ceremonies, culminating in an impressive and exhilarating parade at Apeldoorn on May 7<sup>th</sup>. No one who was able to attend will forget the affection and gratitude displayed by the Dutch people. The Band was immensely proud to be able to represent Canada during these Celebrations. Branch 5 Legion Band has come a long way since the first rehearsal on a chilly February afternoon, 23 years ago. With a current membership of 59 active musicians the Band performs to a high level of musical competence and is now regarded as Richmond's Official City Band.

Sadly, Jack Thompson was not to see the culmination of his ambition. Two years after the Band's formation he was taken ill with what was thought to be a kidney complaint but turned out to be a ruptured aneurysm, from which he died. A tragic loss to his wife and family, to the Legion and to the Band.

However, in just tribute to his pioneering vision and enterprise, Jack's Band continues to develop, continues to provide music for a variety of social and ceremonial events, and continues to provide an enjoyable and stimulating activity through which people of all ages can pursue their interest in music. Rehearsals take place on Monday evenings; stage Band at 6:30 pm and Concert Band at 8:00 pm. New Members are welcome.

**DISBURSEMENTS FROM RICHMOND (PACIFIC 5) BRANCH**  
**OF THE Royal Canadian legion**

**FROM JANUARY, 1979 THROUGH DECEMBER 2000:**

VETERANS & PATIENT COMFORTS	\$ 125,494.87
CADET GROUPS	98,534.14
HOSPITAL PROJECTS	35,970.91
COMMUNITY EVENTS	101,875.25
SENIOR GROUPS	36,821.92
BURSARIES	23,496.60
BRANCH #5 CONCERT BAND	28,610.67
SENIOR & JUNIOR SPORTS	54,913.60
CHARITIES	99,896.77
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS TO DATE	<u>\$ 605,614.73</u>

IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT BRANCH #5 GOT IT'S CHARTER ON MAY 25, 1927, AND THERE ARE NO RECORDS TO INDICATE HOW MUCH MONEY WENT BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY BETWEEN 1927 AND DECEMBER, 1978. THIS COULD POSSIBLY BE A VERY CONSIDERABLE SUM.

**Box 141, 185-9040 Blundell Rd., RICHMOND, B.C. – V6Y 1K3 – (604) 278-1535**

**Richmond (Pacific 5) Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion received its Charter on May 25, 1927.**

**Since those days Branch 5 has donated much time and effort as well as many hundreds of thousands of dollars back into the Community. A great majority of these dollars came from Meat Raffles, Bingo's, dances and many other fund-raising projects.**

**Branch 5 has also completely furnished a room in the Richmond Hospital, as well as building a 64 unit Senior Citizen Housing Development at 7251 Langton Road, as well as paying for the Centennial Wading Pool at Minoru Park in 1960.**

**Branch 5 Concert Band has also been very active in the Community by playing summer and fall concerts in front of the Cultural Centre and the Minoru Seniors Centre on Minoru Blvd., as well as retirement homes and hospitals, November 11<sup>th</sup> Ceremonies at the Richmond Cenotaph. The Band was also present for the opening of the Fraser Bridge in 1986 and the No. 2 Road Bridge in 1993 as well as many other Public Functions including City Centre Celebrations held in Minoru Park on the third Saturday in July.**

**Branch 5 holds the Hughie MacLeod Annual Food Drive to help the needy families in Richmond who may not have a very Merry Christmas. One member of the Committee holds the names of the families until it comes time to give these Food Hampers away. This same member gets the names of the families from the Nurses and Principals of the Schools. Some of the accomplishments of our Food Drive are:**

- 1993 – delivered Food Hampers and Christmas Presents to 30 single parents.**
- 1994 – delivered Food Hampers and Christmas Presents to 30 families and 73 children.**
- 1995 – delivered Food Hampers and Christmas Presents to 50 families and 91 children.**
- 1996 – delivered Food Hampers and Christmas Presents to 73 families and 150 children.**
- 1997 – delivered Food Hampers and Christmas Presents to 73 families and 150 children.**
- 1998 – delivered Food Hampers and Christmas Presents to 64 families and 150 children.**
- 1999 – delivered Food Hampers and Christmas Presents to 64 families and 140 children.**
- 2000 – delivered Food Hampers and Christmas Presents to 69 families and 175 children.**

**During the months January 1, 2000 until June 30, 2000 as you can see from the Comparative Income Statement, Branch 5 lost \$34,744.81 in Revenue. Much of this is due to the WCB Smoking Ban from January 1<sup>st</sup> until March 31<sup>st</sup>. And, as you can also see, the loss for the six months was almost \$71,000.00 which is almost the amount we paid for our Property Taxes which was \$71,300.00.**

**Therefore, Branch 5 would like to suggest to City Council that we be allowed to open our Lounge, which has been closed for approximately five (5) years now. We would re-open it as a Designated Smoking Area for our Members and their Guests during cold and damp weather. This is so that our Members will not suffer from Colds, Flue or even pneumonia. And, because many of our Members ages range from the late 60's to late 80's, we feel that this is not an unreasonable request.**

**It should also be noted that The City of Vancouver has allowed Designated Smoking Areas within the City, and, while we are under the G.V.R.D. Umbrella we feel that the City of Richmond should also go along with G.V.R.D. Having Designated Smoking Areas in our establishment could also add to business in the City from the Tourists who are visiting.**