

War Memories across Canada Conversation Kit:

Royal Canadian Legion Calgary, Alberta Prince Albert, Saskatchewan



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To support veterans and their families the Royal Canadian Legion was established in 1925 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, as an advocacy organization. The Legion expanded its membership to include female veterans, family members of Canadians who served, and eventually, the general public. 360,000 members are part of the 1500 legion branches that are scattered across Canada today.

Each year, the Legion raises millions of dollars through the poppy campaign and other fund raising efforts. Funds are used to support service men and women and their families, as well as their communities.

Discussion Questions:

In the vignette you see several generations taking part in legion activities. Why is it important for multiple generations of veterans to socialize together?

Legion membership is open to the public. Why do you think it is important for veterans to share their experiences with Canadians who have no military connections?

How do legions help soldiers who have recently returned from service process their war experiences and reintegrate into civilian life? In how far do you think the legion membership can support veterans and active service personnel and their families?

Ed Laird, Second World War veteran makes the point that the war brought people from diverse social-economic backgrounds together to work, fight and make sacrifices for a common cause. How do you think war equalized Canadians of different backgrounds in terms of race, religious beliefs, and economic status? Can you give examples of situations where people from diverse backgrounds worked together for a common cause in today's society? What do you think happens to soldiers after the war or deployment when they no longer had the equalizing influence of military life? How do you think legions help veterans today retain that bond and reconcile their wartime experiences with regular daily life?

In what way do you think legions across Canada serve as places of commemoration for Canadians who serve? How do they function as a sort of interactive living monument that a statue, cenotaph or historic site ever could?

Activities:

Contact a Royal Canadian Legion branch in your community to learn how you can get involved or volunteer. What benefits do legion members enjoy? How does the Legion give back to your community and how do membership fees support veterans, police officers, and military personnel and their

families?



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Research the history of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). How were the psychological effects of war recognized and treated during the Second World War? How is PTSD displayed in veterans today and what are the main treatment options?

Conduct a [Poppy Campaign](#) in your school or volunteer to help raise funds for the Royal Canadian Legion. Include an awareness campaign about how the Legion uses poppy funds to support veterans and their communities.

Resources:

Websites:

The Memory Project

<http://www.thememoryproject.com/>

One of the Memory Project's goals is to share veterans' stories with Canadians. The site has reflections, photos and interviews. Available in [French](#).

Royal Canadian Legion
<http://www.legion.ca/>

The Royal Canadian Legion Calgary (Alberta No. 1)
<http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=5146>

Shades of Gray (1948)
A United States Army video about PTSD.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKK5f4E7AFg>

Books and articles

Branching out: the story of the Royal Canadian Legion, by James Hale. Royal Canadian Legion, 1995.

Canadian veterans reflect on life after war, by Adrian Morrow. The Globe and Mail (November 7, 2012).
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/canadian-veterans-reflect-on-life-after-war/article5080346/?page=all>

Young veterans and the legacy of war, by Ilona Dougherty. iPolitics (November 10, 2015).
<http://ipolitics.ca/2015/11/10/young-veterans-and-the-legacy-of-war/>

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