



BC/YUKON COMMAND

17618 58 Avenue #101, Surrey, BC
Canada V3S 1L3

Tel.: (604) 575-8840
Fax: (604) 736-1635

legionbcyukon.ca

News Release

For Immediate Release

June 5, 2019

World War 2 Veterans Honored in BC, Across Canada

BC – 2019 marks the 75th Anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. The BC/Yukon Command of the Royal Canadian Legion branches have been involved in hosting and facilitating commemoration events since the beginning of this year.

“This year marks a special year for generations affected by World War 2. Our World War 2 veterans are reducing in number, but their honored sacrifice will remain with us forever,” said David Whittier, Executive Director of the BC/Yukon Command. “While being a veteran myself, and going overseas several times, there is a certain reverence when in the presence of our World War 2 veterans.”

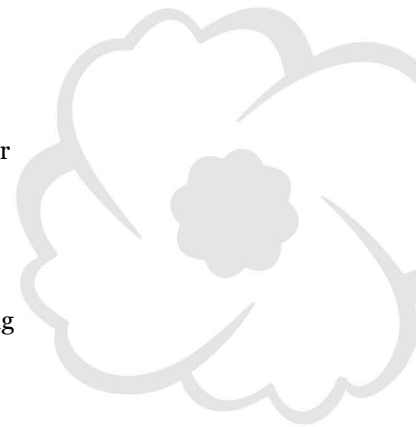
Several branches across BC have participated in D-Day commemoration events, bringing people from diverse backgrounds together to celebrate and learn more about Canada’s involvement in D-day. BC/Yukon Legion Members provided the color party for the launch of Veteran Affairs Canada “Boots Across Canada” event on March 29, 2019 at Pacific Central Station in Vancouver. Many WWII vets attended a Veterans Tea at Government House recently, hosted by Premier Horgan. Branches have chosen to initiate their own commemorative events in remembrance of those that stormed Juno Beach and fought in the Battle of Normandy. Several BC, World War 2 Veterans will be traveling to Halifax to take part in Veteran Affairs Canada’s ceremony on June 6, 2019. Their bios are listed in the backgrounder.

“We are keepers of remembrance. And as we continue commemorations, we must look and listen to our younger generations to pass on our proud traditions. It is our duty to honor the sacrifices made by men and women who have served, those who are currently acting in service to our great country, and at this time, our World War 2 veterans.”, said BC/Yukon Command President Glenn Hodge. “Membership is open to all citizens and we encourage community members to join their local legion and participate in building Canada’s legacy of diversity, vibrancy and strength.”

BC Legion branches commemorating the 75th Anniversary of D-Day on June 6 can be found in the backgrounder below.

For more information about the BC/Yukon Command, or to see what’s happening in your community for Legion Week, visit www.legionbcyukon.ca

Contact: Bryan Lutz
604-579-0060
Toll free: 1-888-261-2211
bryan.lutz@legionbcyukon.ca



ABOUT THE LEGION

Established in 1926, the Legion is the largest Veterans service organization in Canada with more than 320,000 members. Its mission is to serve all Veterans including serving Canadian Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police members and their families, to promote Remembrance and to serve our communities and our country.

The Legion’s Service Bureau Network provides assistance and representation to all Veterans including serving CF and RCMP members, and their families regarding their disability claims, benefits and services from Veterans Affairs Canada and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board. In communities across Canada, it is the Legion that perpetuates Remembrance through the Poppy Campaign and Remembrance Day ceremonies. With more than 1,450 branches, The Legion supports programs for seniors, Veterans housing, Long Term Care, youth leadership, education, sports, Cadets, Guides and Scouts. We will Remember Them.

NEWS RELEASE

Backgrounder

The Royal Canadian Legion/BC Yukon Command is a non-profit organization consisting of 147 Branches, 67 Ladies' Auxiliaries and over 47,500 members. We are one of the foremost and most respected community service organizations in Canada, serving veterans, ex-service personnel, seniors, youth and many aspects of community life.

Fast facts about the BC/Yukon Command of the Royal Canadian Legion:

- The Legion is a developer of veteran and senior affordable and assisted living housing in BC.
 - Over 4,500 units in 70 facilities
- The Legion Poppy Campaign raises around \$2,500,000 per year for services and support in BC
 - Grants for Veterans and their families in need
 - Veteran transition programs
 - Comforts for Veterans and their spouses who are hospitalized and in need
 - Support to Cadet units
 - A network of Branch and Command Service Officers across the province
 - Donations for disaster relief
 - Promotion and administration of Remembrance activities
- The BC/Yukon Legion Foundation gives more than \$500,000 a year to support veterans and strengthen communities
 - Research and treatment of trauma and PTSD
 - Cockrell House provides shelter, food and support services to Veterans who are homeless or under-housed
 - The Veterans Transition Network provides group-based counselling and transition programs to help military members to overcome barriers to their transition to civilian life
 - Medical and other equipment for seniors' care
 - Veteran programs like the Vancouver Island Compassion Dogs
- The branches in BC/Yukon Command raise \$1.2 Million/year through gaming which is re-invested in community programs
- The Legion holds contests for youth with cash prizes
 - Poster and Literary
 - Video

BC Legion branches commemorating the 75th Anniversary of D-Day on June 6:

Port Coquitlam Branch #133 – 11am at Port Coquitlam City Hall Cenotaph

Vedder Golden Branch #280 – 10:40am at Vedder View Gardens 44675 Watson Road, Chilliwack

Kamloops Branch #52 – 11am at the Battle Street Cenotaph, Kamloops, BC

Cranbrook Branch #24 – 1pm in Rotary Park, Cranbrook



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World War 2 Veterans from BC - Biographies

*Biographies are sourced from the veterans themselves from Veterans Affairs Canada. Veterans are responsible for their own stories.

Chow, George



George Chow was Born in Victoria, British Columbia in 1921. He decided to enlist two months before his 19th birthday without his parent's knowledge. He was honorably discharged in 1963 and retired with the rank of Master Warrant Officer.

Chow was sent to the Seaforth Armoury in Vancouver, British Columbia for basic training. He was later dispatched to Windsor, Ontario for further training and then shipped to Halifax to board a vessel bound for England.

During the Normandy Campaign, Chow was a member of the 2nd Army Group Royal Artillery (AGRA). He held the position of gunner. They were lucky when they came off the Landing Craft Tank (LCT) on the beaches of Normandy as the water was only 9 inches deep. After landing on D-Day they continued to move inland to Caen and other regions of France before heading into Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Chow had volunteered to prepare for the Pacific theater after the victory in Europe, but his new assignment ended soon after successive atomic bombs were dropped on mainland Japan. After the war, Chow joined the 43rd Heavy Anti-Aircraft of the Royal Canadian Artillery as a gunnery instructor. He had reached the rank of Master Warrant Officer holding the position of Battery Sergeant Major upon retirement. George was awarded numerous war medals and the Canadian Forces Decoration (CD). In 2012, he was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal. In October 2014, he was awarded the rank of Knight of the National Order of the Legion of Honour by the French Government and was subsequently presented the Medal of Legion of Honour by Consul General Jean-Christophe Fleury of the Consulate General of France in Vancouver, British Columbia in April 2015. George is currently 97 and continues to keep himself active. He still drives during the day for shopping, running errands, and social events.

Buckley, Hugh Wall



Hugh Wall Buckley was born 11 December 1924 in Sooke, British Columbia. He enlisted in the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps in England in October 1943. He retired with the rank of First Lieutenant in October 1945. He served in Great Britain, France, Holland, Belgium and Germany.

Buckley was a member of the Sherbrooke Fusiliers during D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. He held the position of gunner in a tank. Buckley was on one of the many ships that sailed across the English Channel to Normandy on June 6, 1944. His unit's landing craft had been delayed about three hours due to rough seas. This meant they missed the heat of the battle on D-Day. He landed on Juno Beach right next to what is now known as *La Maison Des Canadiens*. During the Battle of Normandy, the Sherbrooke Fusiliers were one of the regiments in charge of taking Caen.



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In recognition of his service during the Second World War, Buckley received the 1939-45 star, the France and Germany Star, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal. In 2015, he received the French Legion of Honour medal and a Knighthood from the French Government.

After the war, Buckley went to the University of British Columbia to become an engineer. He occupied many roles, including Municipal Engineer for Surrey as well as Manager (British Columbia Division) for Stanley Associates. In 1973, he co-formed the consulting firm Buckley, Graham & Kim Inc.

Buckley has four children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He currently resides in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Kirby, Norman Harold



Norman Harold Kirby was born on 9 July 1925 in New Westminster, British Columbia. With his father's blessing, he joined the Canadian Army in 1943 as an underage recruit and served until the end of the Second World War in 1945. He served in Canada, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

He was assigned to the North Shore (New Brunswick) Infantry Regiment a few days before D-Day. His main role was that of Bren gunner. Near the end of the war, Kirby's rank had been elevated to that of Sergeant and he was A/Platoon Commander.

On the morning of June 6, 1944, Kirby stormed Juno Beach. While making their way to shore, his unit's landing craft hit a mine. Kirby reached the shore with no weapons, save a knife, fork and spoon. Later, during the Battle of Normandy, one of his company's missions was to overtake a fortified bunker. The company ended up retreating without Kirby and the two crew who assisted with the Bren gun. Kirby and his crew did not make it back until later in the day.

In recognition of his service, Kirby has received the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp; the 1939-45 Star; as well as the France and Germany Star. Along with those medals, he also received a citation for the Commander in Chief Gallantry Award and was awarded the Legion of Honour Medal and a knighthood from the French Government.

Kirby was discharged in 1945. He went on to become part owner of a real estate company and later the property manager for a large development company operating in Alberta and British Columbia. He currently lives in Lions Bay, British Columbia with his wife Victoria, to whom he has been married for over 50 years.

Norman Harold Kirby is thankful to have served and for the life he has had: "I am glad I took part in the landing and so thankful I got through it with some luck".

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