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Branch 220 plans events to recognize National Legion Week in Shelburne

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The Shelburne Legion is looking to educate residents on the work the local branch does in the community as they celebrate the first annual National Legion Week.

The first annual observance of National Legion Week will run from Sept. 17 to Sept. 23.

?Believe it or not, a lot of people still don't know what the legion is and what we really do for the community. Any education that we can give to help veterans know they have a place to go or continue on with our duties for the community is great,? said Dean Schroeder, president of Brach 220. ?This week doesn't just educate [the community] about what the legion does, but can also help educate us on what our community needs.?

National Legion Week has been marked by some Provincial Commands and their branches since the 1980s, but this year marks the official approval by the Dominion Executive Committee to establish the week as a coast-to-coast celebration.

The purpose of the week is to educate visitors on the work the local legion branch does in their community, from reinforcing the importance of serving and supporting veterans to the contribution to the well-being of the community.

The Shelburne Legion will be hosting three separate events over the span of a week to commemorate veterans.

The first event will be an open house on Sept. 17 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., which will include various educational booths. Visitors will have the opportunity to learn and ask questions about the programs for veterans supported by the legion, such as Heros Mending on the Fly, Guide Dogs, and a Hospital Trust, as well as the community services they support, including the food bank and Back Pack Program.

On Sept. 18, the Shelburne Legion will hold its weekly bingo night, featuring president Dean Schroeder as guest caller.

The local legion branch will wrap the week up with a member's appreciation on Sept. 22 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

?The legion started as a place for veterans to talk with their friends who were also in the military, and over the years its evolved into a society that includes civilians,? said local veteran John Flannery. ?Functions like these let the public know that we're not just a bunch of disgruntled war veterans on our last legs, but that we try to do good deeds for the community.?

National Legion Week also aims to drive new traffic, memberships and volunteers to the legion branches in their community.

?The way the world is going, there's always a war going on, and we now have some younger veterans that have been a little hesitant to join the legion. In time, they will see the legion as a place to go and share their experiences. If we can tell the public about the good work we do as a functioning entity, it will entice non-veterans to also come and join,? said Flannery.

The commemoration will be held on an annual basis each September, kicking off on the third Sunday of the month in honour of the Battle of Britain Day and will wrap up on the following Saturday.