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Shelburne Legion celebrates 94 years of service and community connection

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Shelburne Royal Canadian Legion Branch 220 recently marked its 94th anniversary, celebrating nearly a century of service to veterans and the broader community.

According to Legion president Dan Sample, the anniversary gathering drew a strong turnout.

?It was a well-attended anniversary for us,? Sample said. ?Probably 40 to 50 people showed up, which is one of our bigger ones. We had a few veterans attend as well, which was great.?

Those in attendance were treated to cake-cutting and an informal time for members to reconnect.

While the anniversary focused on celebration, the milestone also offered an opportunity to reflect on the branch's long history in Shelburne.

Lesa Netzke, a local resident who has worked to compile information on veterans' activities in the area, said there is a long history, dating back to the First World War.

?The Great War Veterans Association was formed in 1919 following the Great War,? she said. ?There is little information on this group, although they have been given credit for initializing the raising of funds for the Memorial to those of Dufferin North area who lost their lives in the war.?

The Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League was established nationally in 1925 and later became the Royal Canadian Legion in 1960, after Queen Elizabeth II approved the addition of the word ?Royal.'

?While our branch, number 220, was granted its charter in December 1931, it was not presented with it until February 1932 by the Provincial President, who came here and made the presentation,? Netzke said. ?In 2026, our branch will celebrate its 95 Anniversary.?

In the early years, Legion members met in several locations around town as membership continued to grow.

In 1962, the branch moved into its current home when the Village of Shelburne transferred the former skating rink and curling club building to the Legion for $1. Thanks to dedicated volunteers, the space was transformed into the Legion facility, which is still in use today.

The branch's Ladies' Auxiliary, chartered in 1953, has also played a key role in the Legion and community. Over the decades, the Legion has supported the local hospital, youth sports, cadet programs, and a wide range of community organizations. That's support that still continues today.

Sample said Branch 220 currently has about 310 members, a number he considers healthy for a town of Shelburne's size.

?We've stayed pretty steady over the last few years,? he said.

Looking ahead, Sample emphasized that the Legion remains active and welcoming.

?We're always looking for volunteers to help with events and programs,? he said. ?We want people to come in, see what we do, and be part of it.?

After 94 years of supporting veterans and the community, Legion Branch 220 in Shelburne continues its historic legacy of giving back to the community and maintaining a familiar, welcoming place for veterans.