



The past year has been a breathe of fresh air and a very welcome relief coming from the pandemic, isolation and lockdowns of the previous two years. It was great to see our cadets, officers and volunteers get out and interact together again, and not participate via a computer screen.

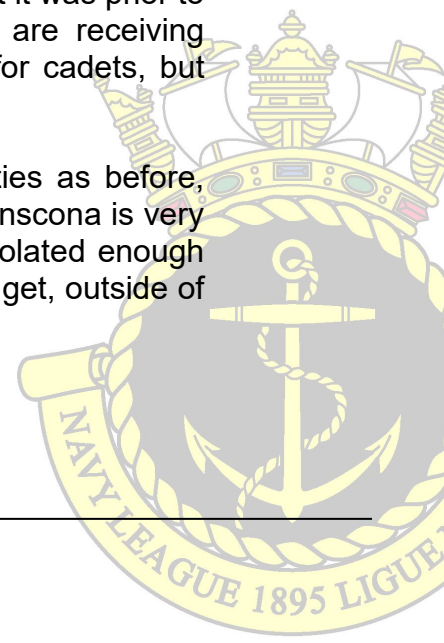
That isn't to say that there were some issues that weren't there prior to the pandemic. Our Selkirk Corps returned to an aging facility that the city has recently begun to close. Thankfully, a new community centre will eventually be constructed, but relocating the offices, stores and other training gear temporarily is proving to be requiring much planning and space. Unfortunately, no timeframe has been given, except that the condition of the building, roof and unfortunately, mould, have placed an urgent need to vacate the space. In the worst case scenario, the Legion has offered their space for the corps to meet, and we appreciate the offer. The City of Selkirk is very much behind the Sea Cadet and Navy League Cadet programmes.

One corps has been relocated from HMCS Chippawa to 17 Wing, CFB Winnipeg. Going forward this move may help rebuild the corps strength as a they are now have access to communities that weren't necessarily served by the three corps at HMCS Chippawa, although that potential hasn't been realized just yet. The corps and branch are both working with RCSU(NW) and Division to help promote the programme outside of 17 Wing.

The two corps that remained at HMCS Chippawa have dealt with the growth of the reserve unit that continued to occur throughout the pandemic. One corps changed training nights and both corps lost offices and spaces that were previously available. Most of their stores are now located off site, not necessarily at permanent locations, just yet – at least for one corps.

NLCC JRK Millen, except for the space issues, has not experienced any changes at HMCS Chippawa. The home unit has very much supported this programme, not only with the facility but also allowing reservists to volunteer with the training staff. That being said, the corps strength is very much reduced from what it was prior to the pandemic (less than ½), but it's growing! Every week, we are receiving requests for information to register and join the corps, not only for cadets, but volunteers as well.

Transcona was finally able to resume training in the same facilities as before, sharing both a church and an elementary school. It seems that Transcona is very much still a community that is technically part of Winnipeg, but isolated enough that it receives support that the other three corps don't necessarily get, outside of their Legion support.





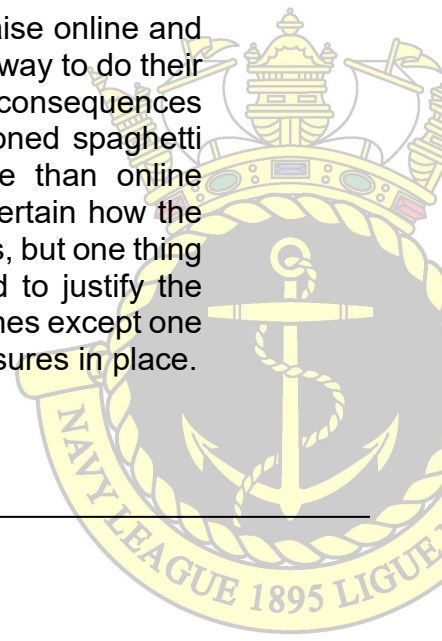
RCSCC Dawson in Lorette lost the use of the school that they were in prior to the pandemic, but they were able to relocate their training to one of the local churches for a time. Eventually, they were allowed back into the school. Both the corps and the branch appear to be successfully rebuilding with young cadets and new volunteers. Hopefully, certain issues that have plagued not only the corps, but also the branch (some for separate reasons) can finally be left in the past.

The Brandon branch, responsible for RCSCC Swiftsure and NLCC Stan Hawitt, has successfully navigated from the pandemic. They have always worked with the community to provide support for their cadets. NLCC Stan Hawitt relocated from the Brandon Armory to the local Legion and made the required adjustments required not having use of a military facility anymore. The community was eager to participate and join the corps once in-person training was available again. Growth has been much more apparent with the younger Navy League Cadets Corps than it has been with the Sea Cadet Corps – perhaps a sign of the times? We can't say what may be causing, but it is not limited to just the Sea element. It is also quite apparent as well that it has become much more difficult to attract and retain volunteers and officers since the pandemic.

It is encouraging to see that DND may finally be the recruiting and training of CIC officers and civilian instructors a little more “imminent”. The extreme lack of priority and length of time to enroll individuals has led to the loss of many potentials.

We are also experiencing issues attracting Navy League Officers, particularly of the male gender to ensure the required supervision personal are on hand at all times. It's been workable so far, but we can see the issue to a point where training and activities will be affected. Transcona is very receptive to supporting a Navy League Cadet Corps, in fact, were about to stand up a corps but the process came to a halt due to the covid pandemic. Again, biggest problem, and more so now, is attracting volunteers and officer staff. We see the formation of a new corps inevitable.

The branches are making adjustments to be able to digitally fundraise online and it hasn't been without some setbacks. Some have learned the hard way to do their due diligence and research the opportunities before the negative consequences are able to occur. It's also very much apparent that the old fashioned spaghetti dinners and pig roasts are as successful as ever, much more than online fundraisers have shown themselves to be, so far. We still aren't certain how the recent directives from DND will affect the branch's fundraising efforts, but one thing is certain is that much more forethought and planning is required to justify the undertaking. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. Financially, all branches except one (1) are doing very well and have good budget and fundraising measures in place.





One (1) corps is without a branch currently and is under the direct support of the division. One of the problems that is hindering forming a new branch is DND's current sharing of information or lack thereof, as far as the parents and guardians of cadets is concerned.

Another is the small size of the corps, currently. Hopefully both issues will work themselves out with some imaginative solutions to get both the corps and the branch back into a much more sustainable position. It should be noted that even though the pandemic may have exacerbated the situation, events have been leading up to this years prior and only recently came to a head.

The division is going to look much different after our annual general meeting coming up very shortly. People have passed away, resigned and left and it has been increasingly difficult finding replacements to step up. Currently, we do not have any vice-presidents and are short at least three (3) other directors. Another sign of the times? I hope not, but it isn't encouraging. Two (2) of our branches – Cornwell and Brandon have helped to fill in the gaps that have been created. We are doing what we have to do to make things work – so far.

One of my main goals for next year is to provide training and education to all of our new members and volunteers. Perhaps with more knowledge and history of our program and procedures more will be willing to step up and serve, as corny as that sounds.

On a more personal note, this past year hasn't been very productive for me. Due to various health events, I had to stand down for much of the ACR season and finally spent three (3) months in the hospital starting August 29th due to heart failure. I am grateful to the help that I received when several members assumed my duties. While I was still able to do what I could from my laptop, most notable was the assistance and friendship from our immediate past president and current treasurer, Phillip Bingham. He made a point out of visiting the corps and the branches to keep the wheels moving in the right direction.

Everything is pointing to next year being another growth year, not only for us and our corps, but with DND and changes to the cadet training as well. It doesn't look like it will ever be "the way it was", but I hope that it will always be a program that our youth will enjoy and be proud to say, "I was part of that" just like we do today from our time in cadets.

