

# Royal Canadian Legion

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KINCARDINE BRANCH 183

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## A Brief History

**Legion** 

Following the First World War several local veterans were members of the G.W.V.A. or the Great War Veterans Association. In November 1925 the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League was formed in Winnipeg. At that time, the G.W.V.A. was dissolved. Members were able to transfer their years of service to the new organization.

Wingham Branch 180 sponsored the formation of a Kincardine Branch of the Canadian Legion and in 1937 the MacDonald Branch 183 was granted its charter. The first president of the branch was George H. Fry. The branch was named the MacDonald Branch in honour of D.J. (Mac) MacDonald who was one of the founding members. The first meetings were held in the Kincardine Armouries at 273 Lambton St. (currently home to Kincardine Printing) and then moving in 1942 to the I.O.O.F. building, also known as the Morrison Block at 743 Queen Street (currently home to Fine Table & Bed, Fashion by Rose).

In November 1945 the branch formed a Ladies Auxiliary with Lillian Bell as its first president.



*Memorial Hall*

Following the Second World War a new crop of veterans were welcomed home and became involved. A committee was struck to look for a new home. In 1950 the new memorial hall was erected at 832 Queen Street (now home to Gilley's Feed Lot Restaurant). In that same year the branch received the Commission of H.M.C.S. Kincardine and the ship's bell. The bell rested in the lobby of that building for its 27 years of operation. A fire in 1952 caused \$13,000 damage. The mortgage for that first building was paid off and burned at a special ceremony in 1955.

Eventually the branch hall with a capacity of 100 became too small. This was partly due to the increase in population fueled by the Bruce Nuclear Power Project.

The membership was presented with two options: one being to build onto the existing structure using a vacant lot next door and two being to purchase Ardloch Lodge around the corner on Lambton Street which had come onto the market. A special meeting was held to make the decision and the Ardloch Lodge site was chosen. The building was purchased in March of 1976. The summer kitchen was taken down and 700 of the bricks were kept and used as part of the construction of a new hall attached to the original building. The purchase and renovations put the branch into debt for \$268,000. This is after receiving a \$61,000 grant from Wintario to make the hall accessible to the public. The mortgage was eventually paid off in March of 1989. During those years the membership of the branch swelled from 400 to 800 members, an accomplishment for which the branch was commended by Dominion Command of the Legion.

Ardloch Lodge is a heritage building and has been kept as close to original as possible. The building was originally constructed in the 1890's by a lawyer named Wintringham Clifton Lascombe. Unfortunately he ran out of money during the construction and had to cut some corners. As a result the heating system was inadequate for the 11 bedroom home. Lascombe died in 1909 leaving the home to his daughter. She lived in California and had no use for the place. It was then sold to Sir Alexander Mackenzie in 1912 who used it as

a summer home on and off during his life.

Sir Alexander was certainly the most famous owner of the building. He was born in 1860, the son of a local blacksmith and his wife and one of 10 children. He proved to be a hard working student and eventually went on to be a lawyer in Toronto, articling in 1882. In 1899 he was chosen to be instrumental in the formation of the Brazilian Traction Company of South America which later became Brascan. Speaking fluent Portuguese was definitely an asset. When F.S. Pearson, Brazilian Traction's founder, drowned on the Lusitania



*Sir Alexander Mackenzie*

in 1915 Mackenzie assumed the presidency and under his leadership the company became the world's largest utility complex and also Canada's largest off-shore corporation. In 1919, King George V of England honoured Mackenzie with a knighthood for his service in WW1. He personally financed a military hospital known as "Kerry House" at Kingston Hill in Surrey. He retired as Brascan president in 1928, however remained on as a director. On July 28, 1937 Mackenzie transferred ownership of the house to his brother-in-law Alex F. Stuart at no-charge. Sir Alexander died on July 12, 1943 at Ardloch after suffering with throat cancer and was buried in the Kincardine Cemetery.

The house remained with the Stuart Family until February 14, 1952 when it was sold to Charlie Thrower who operated it

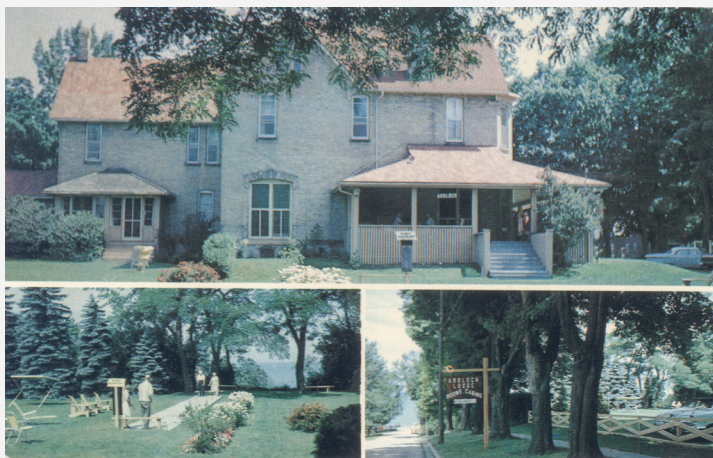


*Ardloch Lodge*



as Ardloch Lodge. Ardloch Lodge advertised ten bedrooms, most of which featured hot and cold running water and spring mattresses. Also available for rent were four cottages on the property. Meals were provided in the dining room.

Elmer and Alice Clubb then bought the lodge in 1967 and operated it until 1976, at which time the Legion became the owners.



In 2017, Branch 183 celebrates its 80th anniversary of becoming part of the Royal Canadian Legion. Members can look back with pride over the many years of hard work by countless volunteers in providing service to our veterans and our community.



# Our Great Organization

The Legion was founded in November of 1925 in Winnipeg Manitoba as the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League (BESL) and was incorporated by special Act of Parliament, Charter being issued in July 1926.

The principal objectives of the Legion were to provide a strong voice for WWI veterans and to advise the government on veterans' issues. These goals were maintained in the years leading up to 1939. During World War II the Legion increased efforts to help veterans and returned service members and to provide educational support and in-theatre comforts for serving personnel at home and abroad. On October 14, 1949 the Great War Veterans' Assn. of Newfoundland amalgamated with the Canadian Legion. During the Korean War the Legion again offered support and comfort to the troops. In 1960, the Queen gave consent to attach the word "Royal" to the Legion's name.

Following the Korean War, the Legion became increasingly involved in community service. Many valuable programs have been established such as the Athletics Program for Youth established in the 1950's. This has been instrumental in producing some of Canada's top track and field competitors and other athletes. Our Youth Education program includes public speaking, poem and essay competitions across the country.

The Legion has never faltered in its efforts to improve the lot of veterans and of ex-service members and to provide support to local communities.

This booklet has been assembled from information found  
in the Legion's own archives and elsewhere.

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