

Regiment's time at Armoury has permanent legacy at Town Park



By Brock Weir

There was something different underfoot at Town Park this Saturday when shoppers turned out for the Aurora Farmers' Market. Vendors, who traditionally line the main pathway through one of Aurora's favourite green spaces were, for the first time walking not on an otherwise unnamed pedestrian thoroughfare; rather, they were shopping on the newly-minted Queen's York Rangers Lane. Queen's York Rangers Lane, the new name for the pathway that connects the east side of Town Park on Larmont Avenue to Wells Street in the west, was formally unveiled by Mayor Geoff Dawe, Councillor Jeff Thom, and Darrell Bricker, Honourary Colonel of the Queen's York Rangers last Monday morning.

The naming is intended to be a permanent reminder of the Regiment's presence in Town Park after calling the Armoury at the park's northeast corner home for more than a century.

"This is an initiative that Darrell and I spoke [of] about six months ago and we were looking for a way to permanently recognize the Queen's York Rangers, especially as they have moved from the old Armoury here to the new Armoury on Industrial Parkway South," Mayor Dawe told the small crowd assembled at the pathway for the unveiling, an occasion attended by former mayor Phyllis Morris and former councillor and MPP " and current mayoral candidate " Chris Ballard.

"We had decided we wanted to rename this Queen's York Rangers Lane, and giving the Armoury the honorary address of 1 Queen's York Rangers Lane, it recognizes and helps to carry forward the tradition that started when the Armoury was built back in the 1800s. It is the longest-serving Armoury in Canadian history. It is an incredibly important asset to our Town and I am pleased Council supported the motion for renaming this, and also that we're moving forward with the renovations to restore this building to the glory it was."

Mr. Bricker was similarly enthusiastic about the designation, paying tribute to the Regiment's storied history not only in this community, but in what is now Ontario.

"I would like to thank the Town of Aurora for this wonderful initiative," said Mr. Bricker. "This building has lasted for a century. The history that the Queen's York Rangers, initially the York Militia here in York, has served us [goes] all the way back to the War of 1812 on behalf of the people of the time in Upper Canada.

"I would just like to remind people that out here on the playgrounds and other places that you see, in 1885, the 12th Battalion assembled here to go off and fight our first battle as a Regiment, and that is recognized on our flag, which is the Northwest Rebellion. Prior to World War One, and we are commemorating the 100th anniversary [the Armistice] this year, this is where they assembled before marching off to Toronto to get on the train to go off and fight the First World War.

"This is an extremely significant place for not just the Rangers, but in Canadian history, and also for this particular community. I think it is a wonderful initiative that the Mayor and Council have championed here, and we're certainly very proud"to be able to unveil this today."