

Remembrance Day to be marked with RCAF flypast

By Brock Weir

November is a reflective time of year for many Canadians, but here in Aurora, Remembrance Day ceremonies will have an extra poignancy this year with an RCAF Flypast.

The Royal Canadian Air Force will provide a ceremonial flypast at the Aurora Cenotaph on the morning of Saturday, November 11, to mark the installation of the Peace Park's new LAV (Light Armoured Vehicle) which will be put in place to remember the Afghan Conflict and those who served.

Council approved the ceremonial flypast at last week's Council meeting following a Notice of Motion from Mayor Geoff Dawe seeking Council's consent.

Remembrance commemorations will get underway this Saturday at the Royal Canadian Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) with Legion's annual Remembrance Dinner & Dance.

The event opens with a cocktail reception starting at 5 p.m. with a commemorative opening ceremony getting underway at 5.45 p.m. with a march of colours and the march-in of local cadets.

Dinner, followed by speeches, will run from 6 ? 8 p.m. with the dance taking over from 8 ? 12 midnight featuring the music of Soul Benefit.

Tickets for both the dinner and dance are \$25 and available from the Legion Bar while tickets for just the dance are set at \$10.

Usually, the Aurora Legion hosts two Remembrance Day ceremonies each year ? one on the Sunday before Remembrance Day and one on Remembrance Day proper.

As Remembrance Day falls on a Saturday this year, organizers are putting their efforts behind one extra special event for Saturday, November 11.

This year's Parade will mass at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School with commemorations beginning at the Cenotaph shortly after 10.30 a.m.

By this time, it is expected the LAV will already been in place ? Aurora's Parks & Recreation Department estimated that installation work could begin as early as Wednesday of this week ? but will the ceremony will mark its formal dedication.

The placement of a LAV at the Cenotaph has been a contentious issue in Aurora since first approved in 2015. While proponents of its placement, and these proponents include the Legion and the Queen's York Rangers Regimental Council, say it is a fitting way to pay tribute not only to Afghan veterans but those who lost their lives in the conflict, others have said the placement of an instrument of war is anything but a fitting tribute.

This contention spilled over into last week's Council meeting as local lawmakers approved the flypast.

?There is going to be a more elaborate ceremony this Remembrance Day,? said Councillor John Abel. ?Usually we have an exceptional turnout for this event and it just speaks volumes to the support our community has for our Legion and those who made the sacrifice,? said Councillor John Abel.

Speaking specifically to Mayor Dawe's motion, Councillor Tom Mrakas offered his support, saying. ?This is great and I am really looking forward to it.?

Councillor Wendy Gaertner, however, reiterated the residents' concerns.

?I am going to speak on behalf of all the residents who are very unhappy the LAV is going to be at the Cenotaph,? she said. ?I just don't want people to forget there was dissent on this issue.?