

## LAV opposition is not an 'us vs. them' issue

(Re: Light Armoured Vehicle continues to roll to Cenotaph, December 3)

An Open Letter to Mayor and Council:

In the article of this edition, it appears that Col. Kirk Corkery has decided that this decision must be based on an us versus them issue.

While we are not a military family, we have always viewed Cenotaphs as a place for all peoples to gather and pay respectful homage to those that have fought in conflicts in defence for all the people of Canada.

A Cenotaph is intended as a substitute grave for those families who would never be able to visit the actual graves.

That is the meaning of Cenotaph, 'empty tomb' or, in effect, a commemorative cemetery to those who gave their all including their burials away from their home soil.

This is why each year we gather to re-enact the burials of the dead. It is also a memorial in remembrance to those various conflicts in which our soldiers served. To place any sort of armament here, takes away from that solemn respect that the Cenotaph and the Peace Park (created in the early 1990s), are intended to be.

Col. Kirk Corkery also states that he believes the letter-writers opposing the placing of the LAV near the Cenotaph did not attend this year's Remembrance Day ceremony.

We being one of those writers to Council and the Mayor, were at the ceremony and have for the last 30-odd years been in attendance and in some years have attended both the Sunday and the actual November 11 ceremonies.

Over the years we have seen the other letter writers in attendance as well.

In The Auroran's coverage there was no mention of Council asking which towns or cities are also placing this type of memorial near their Cenotaph. While the argument that we need a memorial to the Afghan campaign is correct, it should be a memorial reflective of the ones already there.

From what I can find, other towns or cities have added plaques to their Cenotaphs or planted trees to commemorate this conflict.

These are more appropriate memorials, as they fit in with the other memorials that our Cenotaph presently represents.

Traditionally, the military has always been very strict on the histories and protocols to place honours on memorials. Why is it that now they want to place an armament apart from the monument? Memorials should not be apart from the others, as if placed there as an afterthought.

Memorials need to be respected and honoured for what they represent and in the traditions of the past. Now that Council has once again decided to support the placement of armament as the fitting memorial near the Cenotaph and in the Peace Park, takes this armament and raises the status to equal in value of the other memorials placed there.

This is so wrong on many levels.

Armaments belong at armories not as memorials at Cenotaphs.

We need to honour and respect those that served in conflicts, not the military means.

As we all know, we are once again involved in another conflict, and what will be the memorials? How will we, in the future, honour those who are once again involved?

Rhonda & John Sanders

Aurora