

Cadets serve Spaghetti this Saturday to support trip to Vimy Ridge



By Brock Weir

Have a hankering for a bit of piping hot pasta as the cold weather sets in? Head over to the Royal Canadian Legion this Saturday night, November 26, for a plateful of fresh spaghetti dished up by your local army cadets.

Each forkful will get 40 members of the Queen's York Rangers Army Cadets, recently selected to represent the area in France this coming spring for the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, closer to their goal ? and they're almost there!

Running from 4.30 p.m. ? 8 p.m., the \$15 per person event includes not only the pasta, but also meatballs, salad, tea, a cash bar, door prizes, a penny raffle, and music and games.

?It's a fun night with delicious food, so everyone should come out,? says 16-year-old cadet Cpl. Amanda Pruss.

Amanda, a history buff, has been chosen as one of the 40 cadets making the trek. Always fascinated by the tactics that lead up to the decisive Canadian victory, she says she was motivated to ?put my all? into securing a place.

?I tried to put myself to a higher standard so I could secure a position,? she says, noting this ranged from the little things like being there on time or the big things like throwing herself into volunteer opportunities. ?I was ecstatic [to make the cut] but also surprised because I joined the cadets so late. I was told there was no point, no chance that I would be selected, so I took that as a challenge and it felt really good to achieve it in the end. I worked really hard and it was so rewarding.?

Another cadet along for the ride is MCpl Natalia Butylkin. Natalia, also 16, says prospective members of the trip were ?supposed to be the best of the best? and set examples for the others.

?The first 20 names were called and my name wasn't,? says Natalia. ?The fundraising I did hadn't gone through, and when the next week they called up the next ten to make it 30 and my name still wasn't in it. Later, they said I had moved into 12th position because of my fundraising and I was super happy. I was so happy my work paid off and I was super-excited because my friends were going.?

Natalia was an active volunteer at the last Spaghetti Dinner and, this time around, she will be running the dish pit. Both she and Amanda say the event will be a great opportunity not only to help them along the way, but learn more about what the cadets have to offer.

And, in the end, it is all about the learning experience.

?I want to put myself in the [soldiers'] shoes and understand what they went through, and there are so many troops that still go through it to this day,? says Amanda, of what she hopes to learn following in the footsteps of Canada's First World War soldiers. ?I hope when I go there and get a better understanding of what they lived through I will respect them even more than I already do!?

Tickets for Saturday's Spaghetti Dinner will be on sale at the Lt. Gov. John Graves Simcoe Armoury on Industrial Parkway South this Friday from 7 ? 9 p.m., or by calling 905-726-8600. A limited number of tickets will be available for sale at the door on Saturday evening. For more information, visit www.rangers2799.com.