

Ceremony, street banners, exhibition to mark Cenotaph's centennial



A rededication ceremony, a street banner program, and a new historic exhibition are among the events that will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Aurora Cenotaph next month.

Originally unveiled in 1925 as a permanent memorial to the men of Aurora, King, and what's now Whitchurch-Stouffville who paid the ultimate sacrifice for King and Country in the First World War, the October commemorations will be led by all three communities.

The formal rededication ceremony will take place Friday, October 3, at 5.30 p.m. at Aurora Peace Park on Yonge Street, the formal name for the park surrounding the Cenotaph, the Altar of Sacrifice, which commemorates those who lost their lives in the Second World War, as well as monuments to the Korean War and the conflict in Afghanistan.

The Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion will lead the public ceremony, and they will also host a community reception at the Legion (105 Industrial Parkway North) following the event.

An exhibition on site at the Aurora Peace Park will explore "how Aurora, Stouffville, and King came together to memorialize those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the First World War," says the Town of Aurora in a statement. "Featuring artefacts from all three municipal collections, it tells the story of the memorial's creation and Peace Park's legacy. A travelling display and an online version are in development."

The Cenotaph's visual story will continue to be told through street banners commemorating the names of those on the memorial, which the Town says "will be displayed prominently across Aurora, Stouffville, and King."

In a statement, Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas said the partnership between the three municipalities "reflects the enduring spirit of cooperation among the municipalities and their shared commitment to preserving local history and honouring veterans."

"The Aurora War Memorial is more than a monument - it is a symbol of our community's remembrance," he said. "Collaborating with our neighbours in Stouffville and King on this meaningful initiative has been an honour. As we re-dedicate and unveil its restoration in celebration of its 100th anniversary, we come together in shared reflection to reaffirm our commitment to remembering those who served, their enduring commitment and their great sacrifice to achieve peace. This is a proud moment for our communities," said Mayor Mrakas.

Added King Mayor Steve Pellegrini: "The rededication of the Aurora-Whitchurch-King War Memorial stands as a solemn reminder of the profound sacrifices made during the First World War—a conflict that touched every community, including King. The names on this memorial reflect only a few of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, others are memorialized on cenotaphs and in church honour rolls throughout our community. King Township is honoured to have worked alongside our friends in Aurora and Stouffville on this important project. In grief and remembrance, our communities are forever connected. Together, we ensure that the legacy of those who served is never forgotten."

"Stouffville is proud to join with Aurora and King in marking this centennial," noted Stouffville Mayor Ian Lovatt. "By coming together to reflect, remember, and honour, we strengthen the bonds between our communities and ensure that future generations understand the true cost of the freedoms we enjoy today."

For more information, visit auroramuseum.ca.

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