

## Prince Andrew to experience "Aurora's pride" next month

**By Brock Weir**

The Queen's York Rangers have been part of Aurora's fabric for over 125 years.

Aurora residents might see them at community events, see their distinctive army vehicles cruising around the Industrial Parkway neighbourhood, but after so many years as fixtures in Aurora life, sometimes people don't take particular notice of them. That was certainly the case for Brian North and Kimberly Kerr. The Aurora residents saw members of the Regiment all the time, but didn't have a true appreciation for the value each individual in the Regiment brought to the community until they became involved in a series of events designed to allow the community to show their appreciation last year.

"It's all about the people," says Mr. North. "We have got to know a lot about them and the members who have actually served in other countries. They are regular people just like you and I. We always look at veterans as 90 year old people, but we now have 25-year-old veterans here in the Town of Aurora."

Their three-event "Year in the Life of the Soldier" series, which ran last March through November, was so successful, when a very special visitor appeared to be dropping in, organizers knew exactly who to call to help arrange next month's Royal Visit to Aurora.

Prince Andrew, Duke of York, has now been confirmed to visit Aurora on Thursday, June 5. As The Auroran reported last week, the Queen's son was due to take part in a series of community celebrations in Aurora and Toronto to commemorate the Regiment as their Colonel in Chief.

The main purpose of the visit is to commemorate new battle honours received by the Regiment.

The Aurora leg of the Royal Visit will take place in Aurora (at a yet-to-be-announced venue) at 9 a.m. on June 5 with a special fundraising breakfast in the presence of the Duke of York.

Components of the morning in Aurora will also likely incorporate elements of Aurora's recently re-named Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park, formerly known as Civic Square Park on John West Way.

Celebrations will then continue to Toronto for a reception at Queen's Park and further events at Old Fort York, which will include a parade of The Guidon, the "colours", or "flag", held sacred by the Regiment.

"The main part of the day is the actual trooping of The Guidon," says Ms. Kerr. "That is why he is coming and that is why we are all doing this. When we went to Fort York last Wednesday, we actually got to see The Guidon and how sacred and respected it is, and how special it is to the Queen's York Rangers."

Their planning for the Aurora portion of the visit, however, is focused on giving Prince Andrew a true flavour of Aurora.

"We wanted him to come to Aurora because Aurora is where the Armoury is and we wanted him to experience Aurora's Pride in having the Queen's York Rangers in the community," says Mr. North. "Unlike the rest of the day, which will have more pomp and circumstance, we wanted him to get the feel for Aurora."

"Our event, the way we have planned it, will hopefully come across with the Queen's York Rangers soldiers on site, commemorations of the day, and the legacy of him coming. We hope the entire event will be small town and really feel a connection towards Aurora."

The last member of the Royal Family to visit Aurora was King Edward VIII, then Prince of Wales, who took part in a fox hunt in 1927. The last Duke of York to come to Town were the future King George V and Queen Mary, Prince Andrew's great-grandparents, who had a whistle stop visit in 1901 as part of their tour of the Empire.

?You certainly don't get this opportunity very often and it is something that is another opportunity to bring the Town together,? said Mayor Geoffrey Dawe about the upcoming visit.