

Rangers? lunch gives residents up-close encounter with regiment



By Brock Weir

Whether they were looking for tips on embarking on a career in the armed forces themselves, or simply the chance to take on a ?tough mudder?, Aurorans of all ages had the opportunity to do just that ? and meet members of their local regiment.

The Queen's York Rangers took over Machell Park on Sunday morning with a special lunch not just to pay thanks to the local members of the Regiment and their families, but also raise a bit of money for their Regimental Assistance Fund.

Featuring grub served up by the Optimist Club of Aurora, scores of personnel from the Queen's York Rangers were on hand with their military vehicles, equipment and uniforms prepared to answer any and all questions people might have had ? whether they had been anticipating it for weeks, or simply coming in off the street.

One young man who came prepared was Neil Bender. Neil has a deep interest in the military and when the opportunity presented itself, he came prepared with a list of questions.

?I had questions about the ranks, as well as the colours of the berets, the weapons, as well as the distance of the scope,? he said, his hands freshly relieved of a rifle. ?I have never been able to come out and see something like this before, and I think it helps that I have learned a lot about the Canadian military and can ask them specific questions about it.?

On hand to help answer these questions were many members of the regimental family, including Corporals Melissa Blair and Ricky Chan. Called to pitch in at the event at the last minute, they said they both saw the value of getting in touch with the Town the Regiment calls home.

?Events like this give us a chance to show people that we're involved, what we're doing and educate them too,? said Cpl. Blair. ?The kid are great! This shows what we actually do, the vehicles we use, and the actual equipment we use and I think it is good for people to see.?

The Queen's York Rangers partnered with the Aurora 150 Committee on one aspect of the event, hosting the ?tough mudder? which young kids patiently stood in like waiting to take on. Helping oversee some of the youngsters as they took on the challenge was 16-year-old Air Cadet Jonathan Clark.

?The kids are having lots of fun and that makes it a lot of fun for me because it is great when people are enjoying themselves,? he said.

The lunch was the second of three fundraising events for the Regimental Assistance Fund based on ?A Day in the Life of a

Soldier.? The next event, a dinner, will be held at The Manor at Carrying Place on Thursday, October 26. For more information, visit qyrappreciation.ca.