

Regimental colours, Prince's visit are significant for Rangers, according to Honorary Colonel



By Brock Weir

Darrell Bricker says with a degree of pride that he doesn't do anything in half-measures.

Indeed, doing anything by a half-measure would not sit well with the pollster, who is the Global CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs. In addition to being an author, and one of the media's go-to guys for insightful political commentary, he also has an additional role in being honorary colonel of Aurora's regiment, the Queen's York Rangers.

"I grew up in the military," he says, noting that with his father in the Royal Canadian Air Force, he lived on bases until the age of 15 and was active within cadet programs.

This instilled in him an interest in Canada's military and, in particular, the work of reservists in their community. The more he learned about reservists like the Queen's York Rangers (QYR), the more impressed he became with their dedication to serve their country.

"I realised if there was something I was going to put my shoulder to the wheel on, this is something I could really get behind," he says. "I never do anything in half-measures. I had never heard of what an Honourary Colonel was, but when people started to discuss the idea with me, given I have always had a passion for the military but never had a chance to serve, it just struck me as an opportunity that was unique to provide something back to an institution, and the service of an institution I regard so highly.

"The reason I am doing it is because it really does represent what I think is the epitome of community service from these soldiers and they deserve our support."

Mr. Bricker was appointed to the position for a six-year term in 2010.

As Honorary Colonel, he is very much looking forward to welcoming their Colonel-in-Chief, the Duke of York, to celebrations in the Aurora and Toronto areas on June 5 to recognize what are now five new battle honours for the QYR.

"This is the first time the Regiment has received any battle honours since the First World War, so it is a century in the making, and two centuries when you go back to the four honours the Regiment is receiving for their service in the War of 1812. Rolling it forward, we are now receiving a fifth battle honour along with a whole series of other regiments in Canada for serving in Afghanistan.

?It is really important because it shows the consistent service to the nation, going back almost to our founding, to today, and this concept of the citizen soldier being at the heart of who the regiment is.?

Bricker defines his role fourfold. First, there are the ceremonial duties. The second is assisting the regiment with fundraising activities to make sure soldiers are taken care of in ways that go beyond the Department of National Defence. There is community outreach in underscoring the fact those serving in the Regiment could be our neighbours and really educating people on what reservists do. The fourth is simply ?being there for the soldiers.?

?Sometimes it might be sitting down and talking with them about their civilian careers,? says Mr. Bricker. ?Sometimes they need a little bit of assistance at one point or another in their personal lives, and it is a matter of being there to help them. It is part of the support team for the Regiment.?

Since he became involved with the Regiment near the end of their involvement in the Afghan conflict, Mr. Bricker says he has been ?really pleasantly impressed? with the degree of community support the Regiment has throughout York Region.

?I don't think people really understood the level of service commitment that come from Reservists.

?Thankfully, we haven't had any physical casualties in the Rangers, but I think there is a real appreciation for what the Military does and their service that the Rangers do provide. The thing is what happened to a large degree is people felt there was this regular force aspect to this, that it was full-time soldiers that were putting themselves in harm's way and would, unfortunately, be coming down the Highway of Heroes, was thought of as something distant. They didn't realise these people who were also putting themselves at risk were from their own communities.?