

March 5, 2013

City of Toronto and Canadian Forces to commemorate the Battle of York bicentennial with events on April 27

Details of the many events commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Battle of York were released in a presentation to the City of Toronto's Economic Development Committee today. The City of Toronto and the Canadian Forces will commemorate this defining day in the history of Canada and Toronto on Saturday, April 27.

"I'd like to invite residents and visitors to come out April 27 as Toronto honours the bravery and sacrifices of those who fought - and in some cases died - on that historic day 200 years ago," said Mayor Rob Ford.

His Royal Highness Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh, will present a new Regimental Colour to the 3rd Battalion of The Royal Canadian Regiment at a 10 a.m. ceremony in front of the Queen's Park Legislative Assembly of Ontario. His Royal Highness has been the Colonel-in-Chief of The Royal Canadian Regiment since December 1953.

After the presentation and consecration of the new Regimental Colour, a parade of more than 1,000 sailors and soldiers from the Royal Canadian Navy and the Canadian Army will march from Queen's Park to Fort York. This parade of marching bands, ceremonial uniforms and Regimental Colours will be one of the largest military parades ever organized in Toronto.

At 1:30 p.m., a commemorative ceremony will be held inside the walls of Fort York National Historic Site. Among the participants will be re-enactment units in War of 1812 uniforms, First Nations whose ancestors fought in the battle, and an honour guard of sailors and soldiers of the Canadian Forces who serve in Toronto today.

"The Battle of York was the only time Toronto has experienced war and so it is very important to remember such a significant day in our city's history," said Brigadier-General Omer Lavoie, Commander Joint Task Force Central/Land Force Central Area. "We are pleased to collaborate with the City of Toronto to commemorate the Battle of York on April 27 to remember the sacrifices that were made by so many."

"The Battle of York's day of remembrance is among more than a hundred Toronto War of 1812 Bicentennial events," said Councillor Michael Thompson (Ward 37 Scarborough Centre), Chair of Toronto's Economic Development Committee. "The events held so far have attracted more than a half million participants and have had a significant economic impact on the city."

The City of Toronto will also offer free themed tours at Fort York in the morning and afternoon, along with family-oriented activities and military demonstrations in the afternoon.

The important role the First Nations had at the Battle of York and throughout the War of 1812 will be remembered with a sunrise ceremony on the western waterfront and with a plaque dedication at Fort York National Historic Site at 3 p.m.

There will also be rededication ceremonies for two plaques: one commemorating the death of General Pike, which was originally donated to Fort York in 1934 by the National Society United States Daughters of 1812, and a second marking the battle location, donated by the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire.

Throughout Saturday and Sunday, St. James Cathedral, the St. Lawrence Market BIA and the Toronto Public Library will be staging ceremonies and events.

During the Battle of York, which took place April 27, 1813, Toronto – at that time called the town of York - was occupied by U.S. combatants. The town's public buildings were burned to the ground. More than 180 Canadian, British, First Nations and American combatants died in the battle - the largest military conflict ever to have taken place in Toronto.

The War of 1812 was a defining chapter in the story of Canada and Toronto. More information about the City's bicentennial program and events is available at <http://www.toronto.ca/1812>.

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