

1st Hussars
Wolseley Barracks
701 Oxford Street East
London, ON N5Y 4T7



May 8, 2020

City Of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London ON, PO Box 5035
N6A 4L9

Attention: Councillor Shawn Lewis
Chair, Community and Protective Services Committee

HOLY ROLLER MEMORIAL PROJECT

Dear sir,

The Sherman tank designated “Holy Roller” took part in the D-Day landings, June 6, 1944 as part of London’s 1st Hussars Regiment. It fought continuously with the 1st Hussars in the liberation of France, Belgium, and Holland. On VE Day, May 8, 1945 “Holy Roller” was one of only two tanks in the Canadian Army to have survived the entire campaign in North West Europe. It was brought home and presented to the City of London in 1949. Since 1956 it has rested peacefully in Victoria Park as a memorial to all those who served and in particular to the 196 members of the 1st Hussars who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

I am writing to you today, on the 75th anniversary of VE Day, to request the concurrence of the City of London to permit a major preservation of the “Holy Roller” memorial by the 1st Hussars through our charitable foundation, the 1st Hussars Cavalry Fund. The memorial will soon be our last World War II veteran and it is in urgent need of care. Although regularly maintained by the 1st Hussars a technical inspection of the interior conducted in 2017 revealed serious corrosion. It is estimated without major repairs the structural integrity of the hull will be lost in 10 to 15 years. To prevent this, we propose to move “Holy Roller” from its present location to a workshop in the summer of 2021. It will then be repaired, preserved and returned to Victoria Park in time to celebrate the 1st Hussars’ 150th Anniversary in the spring of 2022. With the aid of modern preservation techniques it is estimated that the memorial will be sound for another 50 years without further major repairs. The memorial project will be funded through private subscription.

Unfortunately we cannot prevent the passing of our living veterans but we can preserve the memorial to their sacrifice. I would be pleased to attend your committee meeting along with the Project Director, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Ian Haley should you have any questions. Thank you for considering our request.

Yours sincerely,

Allan Finney, CD
Lieutenant Colonel
Commanding Officer



Councillor Shawn Lewis
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Dear Colleagues,

I am writing as a supplemental communication to the one received from Lt. Col. Finney of the 1st Hussars with regard to the restoration of the Holy Roller tank memorial in Victoria Park.

Having consulted with Lt. Col Finney, Lt. Col. (retired) Haley, and our staff, I intend the move the following motion at CPSC on May 26th.

That the concurrence of London City Council be communicated to the Commanding Officer of the 1st Hussars; and that Civic Administration be authorized to take all necessary steps to work with the 1st Hussars Cavalry Fund to allow private donations to be received and transferred to the City of London through the appropriate reserve fund mechanism for the cost of this project; and that staff be requested to report back to a future meeting of CPSC with a recommendation for other partnership measures that could be undertaken by the City of London itself toward this restoration effort in recognition of the historical significance of this municipally owned asset.

It being noted that a similar partnership was undertaken by the City of London with the Royal Canadian Legion in regard to the restoration of the Cenotaph.

Sincerely,

Shawn Lewis
Ward 2 City Councillor
London ON