



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee      **Date:** January 21, 2020

**From:** Marie Fenwick, Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services      **File:** 11-7000-01/2020-Vol 01

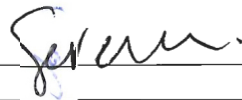

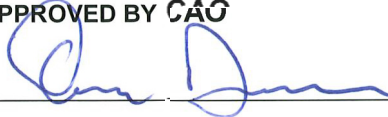
**Re:** Recognition of World War II Richmond Veterans

### Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled, "Recognition of World War II Richmond Veterans", from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, dated January 21, 2020 be received for information.

Marie Fenwick  
 Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services  
 (604-276-4288)

Att. 1

<b>REPORT CONCURRENCE</b>	
<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>	
	
<b>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>
	
<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b>	
	

## Staff Report

### Origin

At the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee held on June 25, 2019, the following referral was made:

*That staff explore options to recognize Richmond Veterans and others who played a significant role during World War II.*

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #3 One Community Together:

*Vibrant and diverse arts and cultural activities and opportunities for community engagement and connection.*

*3.1 Foster community resiliency, neighbourhood identity, sense of belonging, and intercultural harmony.*

### Analysis

Veterans are currently recognized by a number of organizations and various levels of government, including the City of Richmond. Richmond veterans are recognized through many different initiatives offered by the City, the Province of British Columbia, the Canadian Legion, and the Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society.

#### Current City of Richmond Recognition Program

The City recognizes the contributions of individuals who served in World War II and other veterans in the following ways:

- Cenotaph – Erected in 1922, the cenotaph serves to remember the soldiers, sailors and airmen from Richmond who died in World War I and World War II and is prominently located in front of the east entrance of City Hall. It is the physical heart and soul of the yearly ceremony which commemorates Remembrance Day (Attachment 1).
- “We Will Remember Them: The Lives Behind the Richmond Cenotaph” – Written by Mary Keen and published by the City of Richmond Archives in 1998, the publication includes information on the soldiers who lost their lives in military service during World War I and World War II.
- Remembrance Day Ceremonies – Organized by the Richmond Remembrance Day Committee, the annual public Remembrance Day Ceremonies honour and remember Canadian service personnel. Every year, there is a parade that features several hundred marchers, with a special place of honour for veterans. In 2019, an estimated 5,000 members of the public attended the event. World War II veterans are regularly invited, with some attending each year (Attachment 1).
- Annual Remembrance Day Display – Each year for Remembrance Day, Richmond Museum staff create a display in City Hall with artifacts related to the two World Wars.

The items displayed each year change and might include soldiers' belongings, war-related artifacts or items depicting life on the home front. While individual veterans are not specifically named, the display honours the contributions of veterans.

- Street and Place Naming – City policies on the naming of new streets and City owned places allow for the recognition of individuals who have “local significance” or “rendered outstanding service to the City”. A total of 61 Richmond streets have been named for local soldiers who died in military service. To further commemorate these soldiers, the Friends of the Richmond Archives initiated a program to install poppy-adorned street signs around the city in 2016 (Attachment 1).
- Virtual Exhibit, “We Will Remember Them” – City of Richmond Archives maintains a webpage on richmond.ca entitled “We Will Remember Them” with sections for both the “Lives Behind the Cenotaph” and “Lives Behind the Poppy Street Signs”. This page provides information on the lives behind those Richmond residents that lost their lives in World War I and World War II and are inscribed on the Richmond Cenotaph and/or have a road named after them.

#### Other Recognition of Richmond World War II Veterans

In addition to the efforts of the City and its community partners to recognize veterans, other organizations also support initiatives for Richmond veterans. These include:

- Anniversary Events – For significant anniversaries of World War I or World War II, the Canadian Legion organizes commemorative events. In 2019, to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy, several branches of the BC/Yukon Command of the Royal Canadian Legion hosted commemoration events for World War II veterans. Participation in commemorative events is at the discretion of individual branches of the Legion. In 2019, the Richmond Legion Branch #291 hosted a dinner in remembrance of those that stormed Juno Beach and fought in the Battle of Normandy.
- The Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society – The Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society was created in 1998 to research, collect, record and preserve stories, artifacts, memorabilia and photographs reflecting Chinese Canadian participation in both World Wars. The Society operates a museum in Vancouver which shares stories about Chinese Canadian veterans who served Canada in World War II or since, including two veterans from Richmond. The Society also organizes talks designed to promote awareness of the contribution and experiences of Chinese Canadian soldiers, and offers a scholarship program for veterans to assist in pursuing post-secondary education.
- Provincial Homeowner Grant – Most veterans or their surviving spouses can apply for a home owner grant which reduces the amount of property taxes paid each year on their principal residence.
- Special British Columbia License Plates – Veterans who are currently serving in or were honourably discharged from the Canadian Armed Forces, an Allied Force, or the Canadian or Allied War Time Merchant Navy are eligible to apply for special veteran licence plates to use on their vehicle.

- Military Service Recognition Book – Each year the BC/Yukon Command of the Canadian Legion publishes a Military Service Recognition Book with veterans' histories and photos. Members of the public are welcome to honour an individual by submitting their military history. Hundreds of veterans are recognized in the 13 volumes, with each having over 200 pages.

### Recognition of Veterans in Other Municipalities

A best practices environmental scan of six other municipalities of similar population size to Richmond showed that World War II veterans are being recognized through:

- parades and events on Remembrance Day and/or World War II anniversaries;
- physical memorials such as cenotaphs;
- parks named in honour of veterans or a specific individual veteran;
- special signs or plaques, such as poppy street signs;
- online honour rolls or exhibits;
- designated special areas within a cemetery; and
- parking privileges, such as reserved parking near a Legion branch.

The municipalities examined supported an average of three different initiatives. Current efforts by the City of Richmond to recognize veterans are in line with the actions taken by other municipalities of similar size.


### **Financial Impact**

None.

### **Conclusion**

World War II veterans living within Richmond are recognized through a number of initiatives, most notably the Cenotaph, the Poppy Street Signs and the well-attended Remembrance Day Ceremonies. The City values the contributions of individuals who have served in the military and support initiatives which actively celebrate and honour veterans through programs and activities.

Current efforts by the City to recognize veterans are in line with municipalities of similar size.

  
Rebecca Clarke  
Manager, Museum and Heritage Services  
(604-247-8330)

Att. 1: Recognition of World War II Richmond Veterans - Photos

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Recognition of World War II Richmond Veterans – Photos



Richmond Cenotaph, Credit: City of Richmond



Poppy Street Signs, Credit: City of Richmond



Veterans at the 2018 Remembrance Day Parade, Credit: Richmond News