

1st Hussars Launch Fundraising Drive to Preserve WWII Sherman Tank Memorial

'HOLY ROLLER' is a valuable part of London's history. By preserving it, we honour the men and women whose efforts preserved the rights and freedoms Canadians hold dear.

London, ON - The 1st Hussars of London have launched a fundraising campaign to raise \$250,000 to preserve the World War II 'HOLLY ROLLER' Sherman Tank memorial located in Victoria Park. Funds will also go to an educational campaign to raise awareness of the historical significance of the tank and the 1st Hussars to London.

Holy Roller landed with the 1st Hussars at Juno Beach, France, on D-Day 6 June 1944 to assist in the Allies liberation of France, Belgium and Holland. Many sacrificed their lives to free innocent people living under Nazi occupation. The 1st Hussars were a tank regiment whose role was to punch through enemy positions, forcing them to surrender or withdraw and to provide direct heavy fire support to the infantry. The 1st Hussars who served during the campaign in North West Europe and their descendants have deep roots in the London area.

"London has local veterans and residents whose family members put themselves in harm's way during the war," said 1st Hussars Commanding Officer Lt. Col., Allan Finney. "By donating to the Holy Roller Memorial Preservation Project, Londoners can ensure future generations can visit the memorial to remember this piece of history and the people who were a part of it."

The tank, which has been on display in Victoria Park since 1956, has fallen into grave disrepair after sustained exposure to the elements and the passage of time. It is rusting from the inside out. Funds are needed to preserve the tank and fix the base. The renewed memorial will be unveiled during the 1st Hussars' 150th-anniversary celebrations, in the spring of 2022.

"The Holy Roller memorial will be a place where people can sit and reflect on this important part of our history. This project is not only about preserving the tank, it's about raising awareness of the contributions of London area residents during WWII."

Given current public health concerns, the 1st Hussars have opted for a digital campaign launch, with this [video](#) which they are hoping the media will post in news articles, on their websites and social media. In the weeks and months to come, the organization will keep the campaign in the public realm through digital channels. This will be achieved with the help of community leaders and London residents with stories, memories and perspectives to share, through video vignettes and other means.

The campaign will run until June 2022. Anyone looking to donate can visit: holyrollermemorial.ca or call (226) 926-7605.

"It's hard to put ourselves in the shoes of those who served; how frightened they were, missing their loved ones and uncertain about their own future," concluded Finney. "They

were motivated by ensuring safety and freedom for all. This campaign is our way to honour those who participated in the war effort.”

Contact: 1st Hussars Commanding Officer Lt. Col., Allan Finney at allan.finney@forces.gc.ca or call (226) 926-7605

*The Holy Roller Memorial Preservation Project is administered through the 1st Hussars Cavalry Fund, a registered charity. The **1st Hussars** is an armoured Primary Reserve regiment of the Canadian Forces, based in London and Sarnia.*

Holy Roller Restoration Plan

- In the summer of 2020, a technical inspection of the memorial confirmed the specific repairs and materials needed for the restoration.
- In 2021, Holy Roller Sherman Tank will be removed from its pad in Victoria Park and taken to a workshop where it will be carefully disassembled.
- Parts will be repaired or replaced as required. Once reassembled, the tank will be refinished using modern techniques to ensure it is preserved for another 50 years.
- While Holy Roller is in the workshop, the memorial base will be refurbished to include a new pad, gardens, benches, and a plaque identifying the towns and villages liberated by the 1st Hussars in WWII.