

## Base Petawawa, cadets receive historic Freedom of the County

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PETAWAWA - Marching to the beat of drums and bagpipes, a contingent of soldiers from CFB Petawawa arrived at the Pembroke and Area Airport Friday to receive a prestigious honour.

In the centre piece of the second day of Expo 150, the Freedom of the County was granted to not only the base, but for the first time in Canadian history to an assembly of cadet corps.

It was the first time in Base Petawawa's 106-year history that they have been granted the Freedom of the County - the ceremonial honour, dating back to Roman times, that is bestowed upon a military formation and that allows them to march into a city or community with drums beating, colours flying and bayonets fixed.

Over 200 soldiers and 50 cadets from nine area corps formed up at the airport where base commander Lt.-Col. Keith Rudderham drew his sword and approached Renfrew County warden Bob Sweet to ask for the Freedom of the County, a tradition that goes back to when the garrison commander would knock on the city gates to seek permission for his force to enter.

After a brief inspection, in which he was accompanied by Provost Celia Lawson, of Renfrewshire, retired major general Bob Meating and Maj.-Gen. Al Howard, assistant Chief of the Land Staff, Warden Sweet spoke of the proud legacy left by the past and present members of the Canadian Forces.

"Granting the freedom of the county is the greatest tribute of respect that any municipality has to offer," said Warden Sweet. "You have indeed earned this privilege. We are proud of the reputation you have created."

Remarking that there have been made freedoms of the city awarded to Petawawa military units, Lt.-Col Rudderham said this is a honour that pays tribute to one of Canada's largest bases.

"This is a most welcome development because it shows recognition to all units regardless of their size," said Lt.-Col. Rudderham. "Over the past 106 years the county and the base have generated closer ties."

Maj.-Gen. Meating, a former Petawawa base commander, said Renfrew County has become home to many soldiers who have chosen to retire here after leaving the armed forces. He also praised the cadet program for promoting leadership, physical fitness and awareness of the Canadian Forces.

"They are the future of this great country," said Maj.-Gen. Meating. "They will move off to join the forces or become stalwart members of the County of Renfrew."

After the formal presentation of freedom scrolls, the contingent, led by the 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group Pipes and Drums, marched down Len Hopkins drive past the Expo 150 site.

Later in the day, the SkyHawks Parachute Team thrilled crowds with a spectacular drop on the airport. Base Petawawa will continue its five-acre exhibit of vehicles today and tomorrow at Expo 150. Amongst the equipment on display are a Coyote reconnaissance vehicle, a Leopard Tank, a Bison, and a LAV III (light armoured vehicle). The 3rd Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment will demonstrate small arms, while the 2nd Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery will show an M777 howitzer artillery. A variety of engineering equipment, courtesy of the 2 Combat Engineer Regiment, is also on the site.

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