

Township of
Langley



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NEWS RELEASE

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MURRAYVILLE CENOTAPH RESTORED FOR CONTINUED REMEMBRANCE

A historic monument that has stood in the Murrayville Cemetery for almost a century has been restored so that the memory of Langley residents who made the ultimate sacrifice for their community and country can live on.

In 1921, a cenotaph was erected by Langley citizens in the Murrayville Cemetery at 21405 – 44 Avenue to honour local soldiers who lost their lives in the First World War and were buried overseas. The memorial, which features a granite Celtic cross and lists the men who were killed in action and those who died after armistice, has since also been dedicated to the memory of those who served in the Second World War.

“The cenotaph is a character-defining element of this historic cemetery,” said Township of Langley Heritage Planner Elaine Horricks, “and a monument of national importance that is included on the National Inventory of Canadian Military Memorials.”

However, the passing of time and water and frost damage have taken their toll on the structure. The concrete pedestal stairs that make up its base, support the granite structure, and serve as a place where people can lay commemorative wreaths, were crumbling, cracking, and breaking off at the corners.

To conserve the monument and preserve it for the future, the Township applied for a federal grant from Veterans Affairs Canada through their Commemorative Partnership Program, and a partnership was undertaken to replicate and replace the base.

“In order to address the requirements of the cenotaph’s conservation plan, municipal staff met with a specialized company that has extensive skill and experience when it comes to working with monuments,” said Mike Wall, Township Parks Infrastructure Superintendent.

The cenotaph was shored up and braced with plywood, the old base removed, and new concrete stairs poured all the way around. The project was completed at the end of July.

“The contractors did a great job,” Wall said. “They were very sensitive to the fact that this was a monument of significance and treated it with the utmost care. They were also respectful about working in the graveyard and stopped working when visitors came onsite.”

An identical cenotaph honouring those who lost their lives in conflict was also erected in the Fort Langley Cemetery in 1921. Every Remembrance Day, at 11:00am on November 11, a public ceremony is held at the Fort Langley cenotaph, and although no formal service is held in Murrayville, residents often come to the cenotaph to pay their respects.

Horricks noted that members of the community have recently expressed an interest in organizing a Remembrance Day gathering at the Murrayville Cemetery in November, where the newly restored cenotaph would serve as a focal point. Anyone interested in holding a formal event within the Township’s cemeteries is asked to contact Parks Infrastructure Superintendent Mike Wall at mwall@tol.ca.

For more information, contact Heritage Planner Elaine Horricks at ehorricks@tol.ca or 604.533.6176 or Parks Infrastructure Superintendent Mike Wall at mwall@tol.ca or 604.532.7563.