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Ceremony of Remembrance for Ontario?s Police Officers

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On May 1, I had the opportunity to attend the 17th Annual Ceremony of Remembrance at Queen's Park alongside my Leader MPP Patrick Brown and my colleague MPP Rick Nicholls, who is the critic for Community Safety and Correctional Services for the PC Caucus.

Every year on the first Sunday of May, the Ontario Police Memorial Foundation holds their annual Ceremony of Remembrance to pay tribute to the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their communities.

Hundreds of police officers gathered from across the province to attend the ceremony to pay their respects to the police officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

This year's ceremony went back in history to honour the lives of three Ontario police officers, County Constable Samuel James Vanstone of Ontario County, who was killed on October 12, 1928; County Constable John Morrison of Russell County who was killed on June 27, 1880; and County Constable William Lorenzo Pickard of Kent County who was killed on April 17, 1922.

As part of the ceremony, their names are added to the Wall of Honour as part of the Ontario Police Memorial at Queen's Park.

The Ontario Police Memorial was unveiled on May 7, 2000 to honour our province's police officers who lost their lives in the line of duty.

The Memorial consists of two bronze statues depicting a male officer in duty dress and a female officer in modern duty dress, in addition to eight walls that are inscribed with the names of Ontario's fallen police officers.

It is one of many ways we show our support and recognition to the courageous men and women that sacrificed their lives to keep our communities safe.

Attending the Ceremony of Remembrance, listening to the stories of how these three police officers died so many years ago while serving their communities, reminds us all of the important role our police offices have in our community. It is a role that few of us choose, and yet is so critically important for us to operate in a safe and democratic society. While the weapons have changed since the early 1900s, clearly the need for our police offices to be willing and prepared to defend our safety is no less important today.

Heroes in life.