

Recognize Remembrance Day with a special presentation at the Shelburne Public Library

Shannon McGrady, CEO of the Shelburne Public Library, knows all too well the sacrifices made by members of our Canadian Armed Forces and their families.

Shannon's brother, Cpl. Matthew McCully, was killed in action while on duty in Afghanistan.

McCully was a member of Canada's elite Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT), responsible for training the Afghan National Forces. On May 25, 2007, while conducting a joint Afghan-Canadian foot patrol near a village west of Kandahar city, McCully stepped on an improvised explosive device.

"As the sister of a fallen soldier, I know deeply how important it is to remember all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. As a librarian, I believe we learn best through stories. It is through stories that we stay connected and develop empathy for the lived experiences of others; it is through stories that we remember," said Shannon.

The Shelburne Public Library invites you to remember with a special presentation on Thursday, Oct. 29 at 7 p.m. Lieutenant Colonel RA (Ron) Alkema CD will share the stories behind the names engraved on the Dufferin County Memorial to the Fallen (located in Orangeville). Alkema will also share the local history and significance of the memorial.

Ron Alkema was raised in Brampton and Toronto and enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces in 1980 as a private soldier. He served in the regular army with the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the Royal Canadian Regiment and in the Army Reserve with the 48th Highlanders of Canada.

Ron has a wealth of operational experience, having served overseas in Germany, Cyprus, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan. He was awarded the Chief of Defence Staff Commendation for his work as a military advisor to the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces. He has also deployed domestically on sovereignty operations in the Northwest Territories and Northern Ontario.

Ron served 26 years as a non-commissioned officer and 16 years as an officer. He commanded the 48th Highlanders from 2018 to 2021 and retired from the Canadian Armed Forces in 2022 after completing 42 and a half years of service.

Over the past two years, Ron has been researching two separate but interconnected projects: the history of the 164th Battalion (Halton & Dufferin) Canadian Expeditionary Force, and the stories of the soldiers, sailors and airmen whose names are inscribed on the Dufferin County Memorial.