

NEWS RELEASE

Distributed August 15, 2014

Plaques mark 100th Anniversary of War Measures Act & First War Internment

Set to be unveiled on Friday, August 22, 2014

Summary

At its regular meeting held September 23, 2013, Council directed staff to work with the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association to install a plaque marking the 100th anniversary of the War Measures Act (enacted August 22, 1914) and the start of Canada's WWI internment operations.

Across Canada, 100 plaques will be installed in Ukrainian Canadian venues and centres associated with the German, Hungarian, Serbian, Croatian and Armenian communities, which were also harmed by the state-sanctioned censures imposed on "enemy aliens" during the First World War.

An unveiling ceremony for two plaques will take place at St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church at 4017 Victoria Avenue (off Norwell Drive) on Friday, August 22, 2014 at 10:45 am. Everyone is welcome. The unveiling forms part of a national unveiling event from coast to coast, one hundred years to the day on which the War Measures Act was announced. After the ceremony, one copy of the plaque will be installed on the church grounds at 4017 Victoria Avenue. A second plaque will be installed by the City on an existing memorial cairn erected in 1997 and located on the downtown waterfront walk (near the site of the internment camp that operated in Nanaimo from September 20, 1914 to September 17, 1915).

Strategic Link: Installation of a plaque marking the 100th Anniversary of the War Measures Act furthers the goals of the Cultural Vitality (Creativity, Diversity, Heritage and Innovation) pillar of the Strategic Plan.

Key Points

- August 22, 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of the enactment of the War Measures Act and the start of Canada's first interment operations of 1914-1920.
- An unveiling ceremony for two plaques will take place at the St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church at 4017 Victoria Avenue (off Norwell Drive – near Long Lake) on Friday, August 22, 2014 at 10:45 am. The public is invited to attend. Please see link for a detailed ceremony program.

Quotes

"City Council supports this initiative and the efforts of the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association to highlight the unjust nature of the national internment program put in place between 1914-1920."

John Ruttan
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- Between 1914 and 1920, over 8000 Ukrainian Canadians and other east Europeans were imprisoned in 24 interment camps across Canada (including one in Nanaimo), simply because of where they came from.
- Across Canada, 100 plaques will be installed in Ukrainian Canadian venues as well as in centres associated with the German, Hungarian, Serbian, Croatian and Armenian communities, which were also harmed by the state-sanctioned censures imposed on "enemy aliens" during the First World War.
- The purpose of the plaque is to raise awareness about the unjust national internment program and remind all Canadians of the need to remain vigilant in defence of human rights and civil liberties, particularly in times of domestic and international crisis.

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