

The Niagara Military Museum

Our Story

The Armoury

The Niagara Falls Armoury was constructed in 1911 and designed by government military architect T.W. Fuller. It was one of 11 armouries built during the 1896-1911 Canadian Militia Reform and Expansion. The armoury functioned as a training and recruitment centre during World War 1 and later for World War II and the Korean War. It also served as the Department of Defence Armoury for the Lincoln and Welland Regiment, the 56th Field Artillery Regiment and the Army Reserve for many years.

In June of 1998, the Niagara Falls Armoury was designated as a place of history and architectural significance under the regulations of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Current Ownership

The City of Niagara Falls bought the Armoury from the Department of National Defence for \$2.00 and took over formal ownership of the building in 2005.

Comments from the City Staff and Councillors of the day were as follows:

- “Turning the Armoury into a Museum is a good way to celebrate military in the City. It is always good when heritage is preserved”
- “We should be recognizing our military heritage”
- “A museum is part of what we do. We think this is an appropriate fill for the building. It preserves its history and its culture as well as the dedication that the men and women made for our country!”

The City's Position and the Future

Under the City of Niagara Falls 2025 Asset Management Plan, the Armoury is under the Recreation, Culture, Cemeteries and Facilities line of Governance. Asset Management is about delivering value in a structured, predictable way that aligns with the community's needs and priorities.

Also called Levels of Service, it defines the quality, reliability and availability of public services and is measured in three ways.

1. Community feedback.
2. How well an asset performs as it is meant to.
3. The activities that support those assets and services.

Given the foregoing Levels of Service, it is the strong opinion of the 10 User Groups, the Volunteers and the Board of Niagara Military Museum that each of those considerations has been satisfactorily achieved and delivered in all areas.

The bottom line, and after meetings and discussions with the City CAO Jason Burgess and staff from the Recreation and Culture Departments in January and April was as follows:

Unless the Volunteers that oversee the operations of the Niagara Military Museum buy the Armoury for \$1.00 and assume the full operational costs of the Museum of approximately \$50,000.00 per year, the Armoury would be repurposed for:

A. A Homeless Shelter or B. Affordable Housing

That request and recommendation would be submitted to the City of Niagara Falls Council for deliberation and decision-making during budget negotiations in the Fall of 2025.

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The Volunteers of the Niagara Military Museum, after 12 years of dedication and commitment to the Armoury and to protecting the cherished memories of

Canada's proud military past, respectfully declined the City's offer!

WHY- BECAUSE WE ARE JUST THAT – VOLUNTEERS!

If the primary consideration is reducing costs and taxpayer overhead and if the Armoury were eliminated tomorrow, based on the City's annual operating budget of approximately \$148,000,000, the resulting savings for the taxpayer would be

\$50,000.00 ~ \$148,000,000

=.00033784%

The real question becomes

- Preserving a Historical Armoury and Ontario Heritage Site, a remarkable Military Museum and tribute to Canada's proud Military past, and a community hub that supports Military, Cultural and Educational Organizations.

OR

A Taxpayer Savings of

.00033784%

The solution.....

- If the City of Niagara Falls wants to build a Homeless Shelter or Affordable Housing, then those should be "Greenfield Projects", designed and built from the ground up for the purposes intended!
- Destroying an iconic Armoury, a Military Museum, and an irreplaceable part of our Heritage and our History is not the answer!

Who Are We?

Created 12 years ago shortly after the City acquired the Armoury the Niagara Military Museum is a registered non–profit charitable organization. It is staffed by President Jim Doherty and a dedicated group of volunteers and young students working towards Community hours.

Inside this Armoury you will find amazing rooms and displays to the Army, the Navy and the Air Force containing thousands upon thousands of stories, pictures, models, artifacts and personal memorabilia, a true legacy of our Military past!

These rooms tell a powerful and proud story of Canada's Military past and of our sacrifice during World War 1 and 11, Korea and Afghanistan.

Large displays that showcase the War of 1812, the Fenian Raids through pictures and artifacts, and the support and sacrifice of our Indigenous allies.

Throughout the corridors you will find the proud history of the Boy Scouts of Canada an organization that gave back to our youth and Canada.

In 2020, Canada's War Museum in Ottawa borrowed the outstanding displays, stories and history of Black Military Veterans which was the work of Kathy Doherty, the late Wilma Morrison and the late Donna Ford. This display will be a substantial part of the national traveling exhibit as produced by Canada's War Museum in the Fall of 2025.

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What you will find within the walls of this Armoury is a true and complete collection of Canada's proud Military history- a tribute to who we are and where we have been as a country **Standing up for Democracy!**

You will also find a complete Military Library housing hundreds of books and a

Wall of Remembrance dedicated to those who served and many who did not return that will touch your soul!

A Community Hub

Beyond the Historical and Educational significance of the Armoury, it is estimated that between 9,000 to 10,000 individuals walk through its doors every year!

To the following groups and associations, it is home:

- Royal Canadian Naval Association – Niagara Region
- 56th Field Regiment (RCA) Museum
- Niagara Artillery Museum
- 2835 Cadet Corps, 56 Field Artillery Regiment
- Ontario Cadet League, Support Committee, 2835 Cadet Corps •
- Niagara Regional Police Pipes and Drums Band
- Scouting Museum of Niagara
- The Lundy's Lane Historical Society
- 2nd Lincoln Militia Re-enactment Team
- Niagara Military Museum Volunteers and Board
- Canadian Survivors MST

One of the most significant contributions that this Armoury gives back to our Society and our country is to the young men and women who graduate from the 2835 56th Field Artillery Regiment Cadet Corps.

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For the past 10 years, every Wednesday evening from 6-9 pm during September to June, approximately 40-50 young men and women of the 2835 Cadet Corp. train and drill, take marksmanship practice, organize supplies and study.

As per Mr. Tony Roystan, Support Chair of the 2835 Cadet Corp, stated:

“The Armoury is 110% the correct building and environment that you want to deliver this program in. It’s the history and the legacy of this building that possess so much strength and help establish the correct state of mind.”

As one Mother stated, “If it had not been for the Armoury and the Cadet Corps, I would have lost my son to the streets and drugs!” Today, that young man serves in a senior leadership role with the Canadian Armed Forces in Latvia.

The Niagara Military Museum Our Objectives

As the lease with the City expires in March of 2026, the Museum Board have requested a 25-year lease term renewable every 5 years based on performance, commitment and results.

WHY-

- To obtain long-term charitable funding via Ontario Trillium, New Horizons, Federal Development Ontario and others by demonstrating that the Armoury and the Niagara Military Museum have just that – **a long-term future!!**

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- The planned improvements included:

□ An elevator on the southwest corner of the building for enhanced

access for disabled citizens and visitors.

- ☐ Improvements to the window frames, seals, and glazing.
- ☐ Improvements to the lighting system that will reduce City costs by as much as 60%.
- ☐ Solar panels for further reductions in heating and lighting costs.
- ☐ Improvements to the outside of the Armoury as necessary

These planned changes and improvements to the Armoury will enhance the functionality and the general use of the Armoury for social events, receptions, meetings, weddings, celebration of life, award dinners, educational tours, catered events and many other types of functions.

Please stand with us and support the Armoury and the Niagara Military Museum!

Lest We Forget!