

# **THE ATLANTIC MEMORIAL PARK (AMPHEROES.CA)**

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The AMP Society, a not for profit organization, is seeking the development of an Atlantic Memorial Park on the East Coast of Canada. The following text describes the proposal. A letter of endorsement for the project was received from the Nova Scotia/Nunavet Command Executive following a presentation made to their convention in Bridgewater Nova Scotia. An excellent drone video about the Park can also be seen on the website. Currently the plan for the first phase of the project has been completed and implementation efforts are underway.

The goal is to provide visitors with an educational experience similar to visiting the famous Vimy Memorial located in France and the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. The Park will educate visitors about Canada's war time engagements and how these engagements have supported the evolution of Canada as a democratic and independent nation. This goal is central to the mandate of the Royal Canadian Legion. The Legion magazine is a great source of education about Canada's military history and its stories will be retold in the Park.

## **B. THE OPPORTUNITY**

Located at the entrance to Sydney Harbour, Nova Scotia, the Atlantic Memorial Park will provide Canada with a unique historical site to honour our military contributions, both overseas and at home.

The Canadian Government has recognized the value in meeting this educational need. Currently Heritage Canada and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) operate major commemorative programs attempting to reach a broad Canadian audience. Many historians have stressed the value of educating Canadians about its military heritage and there are a number of prominent historians who have called for even greater attempts at educational programming.

And that effort has been paying off as witnessed by the growing interest in Remembrance Day events and the burgeoning attendance at the Canadian War Museum, the pre-eminent location for military education in Canada. Some 500,000 visitors annually willingly pay a significant entrance fee to visit the museum, far surpassing original projections of 300,000 annual visitors. This underscores the attraction of providing the overseas military educational experience in Canada itself. The Atlantic Memorial Park will augment the Museum by providing a unique educational experience on the East Coast of Canada

There are some 7500 military monuments across Canada and these play a key role in Remembrance Day activities. Also there are numerous monuments throughout Europe and in Italy and the Far East, and now Afghanistan. However these monuments do not, and were not intended to, provide a broad and deep education about Canada's wartime history. In addition, Few Canadians are fortunate to see the overseas sites and most Canadians obtain only media reported glimpses of the overseas engagements on significant anniversary dates and on Remembrance Day.

As one striking example, attendance at the Vimy Memorial averages about 1,000,000 visitors annually. Based on VAC estimates only 14,000 Canadians signed the visitor registry in 2016. The Atlantic Memorial Park will provide a unique educational experience by providing a walking tour through Canada's military history in a breath taking ocean side setting. The park will bring Canada's overseas history home

### **C. WHY SYDNEY HARBOUR?**

Going back hundreds of years, the Sydney Harbour area has a rich military and civilian wartime history as documented in a number of historical references. An excellent source is the book "Guardian of the Gulf Sydney, Cape Breton and the Atlantic Wars" by Brian Tennyson and Roger Sarty, 2001. They open with the following statement "One of the great untold military stories revolves around the eastern seaport of Sydney Nova Scotia".

During the Battle of the Atlantic, the Harbour was constantly under threat from enemy U boats. Submarine nets were deployed and a network of 7 fortifications around the Harbour guarded the convoys and the region's strategic steel and coal assets, which represented one third of Canada's production at the time. Over 7500 ships assembled in convoys in Sydney Harbour during WW2.

A United States air force base was established in North Sydney about 5 kilometres (3 miles) from the park as part of the WW2 defence preparations

### **D. THE SITE**

The site consists of 120 Acres of publicly owned land on the west side of Sydney Harbour. The crescent shaped site will include :

- A monument and historic themes area on the 40 acre Princess Mine Plateau (Phase 4, the final phase, of the project). The Plateau provides stunning ocean vistas and is where a 25 metre feature monument looking eastward across the Atlantic will be constructed. It will be seen from ferries, cruise ships and other vessels. The feature monument design will impart an image consistent with the world famous Vimy memorial in northern France. The plateau will also be populated with visible displays, signage and, smaller monuments depicting significant Canadian wartime contributions including the contributions made in the historic Sydney Harbour area.
- The 11 acre Chapel Point Battery site on a cliff directly across the beach from the monument plateau ( Phase 1 of the project). This coastal fortification is unique in Canada and is a registered

historic place. It consists of a battery command post, gun emplacements and an extensive underground system housing magazines and other areas restricted during war time.

- A large pond directly below the plateau around which there will be a family park with a walking path, park benches, tables, children's playground and other amenities (Phase 2 of the project).
- A beautiful, user friendly, large ocean beach stretching for one mile directly in front of the family park area
- A multi acre woodland setting astride Chapel Point and the beach. The woodland gently slopes upward from the beach and will be the setting for the authentic replica First Nations encampment, an annual veterans pow-wow and interesting displays and signage (Phase 3 of the project).

## E. THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Upon exiting the parking lot visitors will be welcomed to the Princess Mine Plateau site through a large archway- **The Arch of Remembrance** – around which will be displayed the coats of arms of Canada's provinces and territories.
- Visitors will proceed onwards to the **Visitor Education Centre** which will include the following:
  - A reception and tour guide area
  - Displays and information kiosks explaining the Park features
  - Connections via brochures and the internet to other sites of interest (e.g Canadian War - Museum/Louisbourg/Bell Museums/Cape Breton Fossil Museum/Glace Bay Miners Museum etc.)
  - Interactive educational displays linking to overseas battle sites and parks
  - Gift shops and craft displays including 1<sup>st</sup> nations offerings
  - Theatre and story-telling capacity
- **Provincial Books of Sacrifice** containing the names of all persons lost in service to Canada will be displayed in the Visitor Education Centre
- Upon exiting the Centre, guests may use the large **Donor Pathway** which will lead directly to the feature monument at the edge of the Plateau, overlooking the Harbour.
- Pathway stones and the monument pedestal will be inscribed with the names of donors to the Park. On both sides of the donor pathway commemoration walking trails will be available.

- The **Canada Remembers Trail** will curve outward from the Visitor Education Centre to the left of the donor pathway and lead visitors past monuments and commemorative displays educating Canadians about famous military battles from Ypres to Afghanistan. **This trek through military history will be unique in Canada.** The Canada Remembers trail will end at the feature monument.
- Curving outward to the right of the Visitor center will be the **Historic Sydney Harbour Trail** which will take visitors through the history of the mining and steel industry and the role played by immigrants, the merchant navy and First Nations and others in the military history of the region. It will also lead visitors to the feature monument.
- There will be benches, rest areas and spectacular look offs throughout the Park. Boardwalks, trails and support vehicles will allow visitors to exit the plateau and to explore the remainder of the Park (Playground/Beach/First Nations encampment/ Historic Chapel Point Battery). **The combination of features in the 120 acre park will be unique and attract thousands of visitors.**