

Ray Stapleton: I find it rather ironic that the Liberals are co-funding a monument in Ottawa while denying the Never Forgotten National Memorial Foundation , which was raising its own funds, the same opportunity in Cape Breton to honour the 114 000 fallen Veterans who never made it "Home".

After 4 years of support and encouragement by Parks Canada, and the endorsement of the Environment and Veterans Affairs Ministry you reneged on the Government's promise. Did you even meet with the NFNM Foundation or Mark Eyking our local MP? Have you ever been to the site? Did the hundreds of postcards sent to you by the families of the Veterans resonate with you at all? Did the 10 petitions in support of the Veterans Memorial mean anything to you? Did you contact our Memorial support group in Cape Breton (the answer to that one is -no)?

On behalf of our group, I sent a comprehensive package of information which your office admits receiving but there was no further response. Were you too busy consulting (AKA as photo ops) with other groups to consult with the local community? Does not our local opinion count? In your collegial decision making much touted by the Prime Minister did you consult with the employment, families, health, small business, and heritage and veterans ministries? Have you read the CB Highlands Park Management Plan which mandates that the cultural heritage of this part of the Park has to be preserved and presented? Did Nik Lapoukine's endorsement of your candidacy come with any strings attached? Will you come to a town hall meeting in Ingonish and give a full explanation of your decision? And don't tell us it was a Parks Canada decision.

Parks Canada stonewalled the NFNM Foundation for 4 years cornering them in a "Catch 22" situation wherein the Foundation couldn't raise large amounts of funding because they were not ensured of the site at Green Cove- then you used the funding issue to say you could no longer support the proposal. The timing of construction completion should not be an issue. Many major Centennial Year projects directly or co-funded by our Government did not meet their deadlines in 1967 either: MacKenzie King monument (1968), Ontario Science Centre and National Arts Centre (1969), Manitoba Museum and the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts (1970) and the latest 1976 the monument to Louis St. Laurent.

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