

Atlantic Memorial Park Project

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, Nova Scotia has a rich military history, and it is important to celebrate this history and to educate Canadians about our contributions during wartime. An initiative to establish the Atlantic Memorial Park on the northern shores of the Sydney Harbour aspires to do just that, through a unique commemorative experience.

The proposed Atlantic Memorial Park will be located on 120 acres of land on the former Princess Colliery mining site in Sydney Mines where my father-in-law Bill Cordy worked as a coal miner. The land provides an ideal vantage of the Sydney Harbour, with views out to the Atlantic Ocean. For this reason, the land was also used during wartime as a home to battery instalments, providing harbour defense during World War I and World War II.

During the Battle of the Atlantic, Sydney Harbour was constantly under threat from the German U-boats. Submarine nets were deployed, and a network of seven fortifications around Sydney 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 7,500 ships assembled in convoys in Sydney Harbour during World War II.

The harbour was also home to a United States naval air base during World War I, on Kelly's Beach, now known as Munro Park, in North Sydney, about five kilometres from the proposed park. During World War II, the air base was recommissioned by the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Historically, Sydney Harbour has played an integral role in Canada's war effort. To quote the book *Guardian of the Gulf: Sydney, Cape Breton, and the Atlantic Wars* by Brian Tennyson and Roger Sarty, "One of the great untold military stories revolves around the eastern seaport of Sydney, Nova Scotia."

When the Princess Colliery mining site closed, the question of what to do with the land became an important topic of conversation. For the Sydney Mines Tourism Development Society, it was important that the area retain its historical significance.

The idea of the Atlantic Memorial Park came out of these conversations, and the site was considered perfect because of its rich history and beautiful scenery. The Atlantic Memorial Park Society was established by a group of dedicated residents to help shepherd this project to completion. Their mission is to create a seaside journey of remembrance that will bring Canada's military history home. The project is scheduled to be completed in three phases over a five-year span. It will refurbish existing historic sites and create new attractions.

The planning for the first phase, to restore a World War II fortification that is a designated historic site known as the Chapel Point Battery, is now complete. They hope to finish the construction of this phase in 2019.

Phase 2 will include the establishment of a new family park and walking trails. By offering a variety of activities, all Canadians, regardless of age, will have the ability to experience the

Atlantic Memorial Park. One of the most important new features of this phase will be an authentic replica First Nations encampment, with plans to hold an annual veteran powwow on the site. Throughout the site, information will be displayed about both the history of Sydney and the Canadian military.

Phase 3 will be the development of a feature monument area on the 40-acre plateau on top of the former Princess mine. At approximately 25 metres in height, the main monument will be visible from Sydney Harbour and to traffic passing through the harbour.

The monument is expected to have features similar to the Vimy Ridge Memorial and will face toward Vimy. It will act as a reminder of Canada's wartime contributions and the sacrifices of so many Canadians overseas. The park will educate Canadians, bring tourism to Sydney and repurpose the Princess Colliery mining site. I Am very excited to see this project come to fruition, and I look forward to visiting it when it is complete. Thank you