

LAV will bring ?appropriate? sense of history to Cenotaph

No matter which side of this issue anyone takes, I appreciate the fact that people care enough to voice their views out of respect for the men and women that cenotaphs are intended to honour.

It also does not escape me that the same type of hawk vs. dove arguments have been made before every war, which makes perfect sense.

Monuments take many forms as an expression of appreciation and remembrance, but I think it is worth considering that weapons of various kinds have always been a part of cenotaphs across our country.

Our national cenotaph in Ottawa depicts an incredibly powerful bronze statue of men pulling a canon, with rifles slung over their arms.

Armed soldiers stand at attention before the Unknown Soldier as well as countless small town and big city cenotaphs. Canons, tanks and planes are found in small parks across the country as an act of remembrance that our rights and freedoms have been paid for at a great price.

At the 2011 Mount Pleasant Cemetery re-dedication to one of the Commonwealth's most decorated armed servicemen, William Barker, VC, DSO & bar (among many other honours) there was a fly-by of both modern and world war one era planes as well as an honorary guard who gave a 21 gun salute.

The newly unveiled monument to Barker has a prop from a World War One plane as its focal point, which is strikingly powerful. As a student of history, I look with a degree of wonderment at anything that can bring history alive and the more context that can be given the better.

To go to the National War Museum in Ottawa and see the tangible evidence of what men and women have done on our collective behalf is something that I think every Canadian should do and to bring even a little piece of our history to be located beside a Cenotaph designed to make us remember is both fitting and appropriate from my perspective.

War is ugly which makes the sacrifices made even more meaningful, but any attempt to separate the loss from the history strikes me as missing the point.

Richard Johnson

Aurora