

The Torch/Le Flambeau – Remembering Our Heroes

The importance of remembering our heroes led to the idea of a permanent memorial to be the focal point of November Remembrance activities, as well as a place to visit and contemplate year-round. We are grateful to Veterans Affairs Canada and the Ville de Métis-sur-Mer for partnering on a memorial to honour veterans and serving Canadian Forces members, past and present.

The memorial's name

The Métis-sur-Mer Community Memorial takes its name – The Torch/Le Flambeau – from the poem by Canadian doctor John McRae, *In Flanders Fields* (later translated as *Au champs d'honneur*):

*“To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.”*

It also echoes sentiments found on the Veterans Affairs Canada website:

Commémoration	Remembrance
Les vétérans souhaitent que les Canadiens comprennent le prix de la liberté. Ils passent le flambeau à la population du Canada, afin que le souvenir de leurs sacrifices se perpétue et que les valeurs pour lesquelles ils se sont battus vivent en chacun de nous.	Veterans want Canadians to understand the price of freedom. They are passing the torch to the people of Canada, so the memory of their sacrifices will continue, and the values they fought for will live on in all of us.

The meaning of the design

The memorial takes the form of a large Tribute Stone with commemorative plaque over which is a red poppy – a spark of colour and hope. Red poppies, which often grew over the mass graves after battles in Europe in the First World War, are the best-known symbol of remembrance. The colour of blood spilled, the poppy is also the principal emblem of the Royal Canadian Legion, two members of which are part of the memorial planning committee.

The Stone sits guarded by two protective wings of a Memory Wall, made of concrete sandbags. The sandbags symbolize the harsh conditions that the soldiers endured, whether in the trenches, on or under the seas, or in the skies. They also represent the bulwark of protection that the men and women of Canada's armed forces, as well as those who put themselves at risk as emergency responders and those who support them, offered and offer in providing for the safety of Canadians in good times and bad.



The memorial, to be created by artist Marc Bénard and Les Monuments B.M. Inc. on land provided by the Ville de Métis-sur-Mer, recognizes the contribution of those serving Canada and Canadians now, as well as the people who lived, summered and served in the Metis area in wartime. A good number still living in the area had family, or supported soldiers from the home front, in the First and Second World Wars and later; you can hear some of their voices on the Live Our Heritage page on www.heritagelsl.ca. You can also visit the United Church cemetery on Station Road to pay respects at the graves of soldiers from the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, men who died in accidents while training at the Mont Joli No. 9 Bombing and Gunnery School. As we tend these graves, so too are others looking after the tombs of many Canadians who died in conflicts in foreign lands.