



British
High Commission
Ottawa

Ray Snook
Chief of Staff

BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION
80 Elgin Street BDL5 OTTAWA
OTTAWA ON NP1010
K1P 5K7 BFPO 487

Tel: (613) 364 6245
Cell: (613) 864 6245
Email: ray.snook@fcdo.gov.uk

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To our new-found friends at Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence, veterans, and the good people of Métis-sur-Mer on November 11, 2020:

We regret that we are not able to physically be there today to witness the inauguration of "The Torch Memorial". On the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the world is facing another crisis, one that has imposed travel and social restrictions that make it imprudent to venture far from home base.

However, we are very much with you in spirit and are delighted with the connection we have established with the veterans, Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence staff, and volunteers who make up the Monument Committee and the magnificent commemorative project that they have launched. One of the project's aims is to help us remember and honour the sacrifices of British airmen and others from the Commonwealth who died in preparing to 'fight for freedom' under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan – which U.S. President Roosevelt described as 'the aerodrome of democracy'. Royal Canadian Air Force Station No. 9, as an integral part of the training plan, was in Mont-Joli, close to where you stand now.

Eight men, from Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, lost their lives here on bombing training runs and constitute our fallen predecessors, who now have the privilege of resting eternally in this beautiful part of Canada. Their graves at the Metis Beach United Church Cemetery are maintained and tended each year by local volunteers from your community, and on behalf of their descendants, and us their successors, we are immensely grateful.

When we are able to manoeuvre more freely, we hope to make the journey there to solidify the friendship in person.

Original signed by

Commander (retired) Ray Snook
Royal Navy
Chief of Staff
British Defence Liaison Staff
British High Commission, Ottawa

Original signed by

Flight Lieutenant Lawrence Swift
Royal Air Force
Exchange Pilot
425 Squadron
CFB Bagotville, QC