

Ministre
des Anciens Combattants



Minister
of Veterans Affairs

Dear Mr. High:

Thank you for your correspondence expressing your concerns about the construction of a residential condo complex near Juno Beach in Courseulles-sur-Mer, France.

The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that the outstanding contributions of our Veterans and the fallen are never forgotten. D-Day and the Battle of Normandy are considered some of Canada's most important military engagements of the Second World War. There is no question of the immense historical significance of the D-Day landing sites, and certainly of Juno Beach, the 10-kilometre stretch of shore along the Normandy coast where the Canadians landed on June 6, 1944, and where so many Canadians made the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of France.

The Allied assault on occupied Europe was a concerted multinational campaign for freedom. Many thousands of Canadian soldiers, sailors from the Royal Canadian Navy and aircrew from the Royal Canadian Air Force participated in the D-Day invasion. Among the Canadians who went into action on June 6, 1944, more than 1,000 were injured, and 359 lost their lives. Most of the Canadians killed on D-Day and the days following are honoured and memorialized at the Bény-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery. At the Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery, a little south of Caen in France, are buried most of the Canadians killed during the Battle of Normandy up until the Falaise Gap.

The Juno Beach Centre Museum tells the story of the heroic Canadians who landed that fateful day on Juno Beach and who fought through Normandy to help liberate France.

The Government of Canada remains committed to the Juno Beach Centre and the vitally important work they do to remember the contributions Canadians made to liberate Europe during the Second World War. Since 2015, we have contributed \$5M to help with operations at the Juno Beach Centre, including \$500K in additional support during the pandemic to make up for their lost revenues from tourism.

In April, I visited Juno Beach to see first-hand the impacts the proposed condominium project would have upon the Juno Beach Centre. While there, I was pleased to meet with members of the Juno Beach Centre Association, the Mayor of Courseulles-sur-Mer, Les amis du Centre Juno Beach, and officials representing Canada in France. During our discussions, it was clear that we share the goal of finding a solution to the condominium development situation in a way that will commemorate our shared history moving forward.

I then met with the Minister Delegate to the Minister for the Armed Forces in charge of Remembrance and Veterans in the French Government. The Minister and I agreed on the importance for Canada and France to honour the sacrifice of Canadian soldiers who fell at Juno Beach in 1944 to return freedom and democracy to Europe. She and I resolved to work together

to seek a favourable outcome to resolve the neighbouring dispute that could negatively impact the operations of the Juno Beach Centre and to protect this historic site.

Furthermore, in May, the Prime Minister spoke with the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, and discussed the significance of Juno Beach to the people of both nations. The leaders committed to protecting the important landmark so that future generations will remember the sacrifices made there on D-Day.

While the disagreement between the Juno Beach Centre and the real estate developer is a private matter currently in mediation, I will continue to work closely with the Juno Beach Centre and the Canadian Embassy in Paris to encourage the French government to assist in this situation. I am informed that discussions toward scheduling further meetings have already taken place among representatives of the various levels of government within France.

As the most important monument and museum outside of Canada dedicated to Canadians who served during the Second World War, the Juno Beach Centre is a beacon proudly highlighting their sacrifices and achievements, and our Government will act to ensure that the integrity and solemnity of the Juno Beach landing site are respected for generations to come.

Again, thank you for writing and for your interest in preserving the legacy of Canada's Veterans.

Sincerely,

Lawrence MacAulay, PC, MP
Minister of Veterans Affairs

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