

The National Canadian Airborne Forces Monument - "Into Action"

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The "Into Action" statue which was located at the gate of CFB Petawawa since 1988 needed to be moved from that location. The statue, the property of CFB Petawawa, needed to be relocated so that the Base Commander could modify the entrance to the base to reflect the changes in organizations (ie, the inclusion of 2ASG). CAFA agreed to support the BComd in his wish and, in particular, to ensure that various Airborne Associations were informed and had a chance to voice their opinions. Although there was some resistance at first, all associations recognized that the BComd owned the statue and was free to move it at his pleasure; both BComds involved in the move proved to be very sensitive and cooperative with CAFA in this activity.



The work involved was quite demanding, as the statue had deteriorated significantly over the 20 years it stood at the gate. The granite base was stained beyond repair and the statue itself required a complete make over, including new patina. CAFA submitted a request to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) for financial assistance, and did receive 50% of the

cost of the new granite base, and CFB Petawawa covered all other costs. The Canadian Airborne Forces Museum (CAFM) provided a bridge loan to help CAFA while waiting for VAC reimbursement.

This represents phase 1 of this project, and phase 2 will include the establishment of walkways and the installation of flag poles. During the AGM, a number of issues dealing with further development of the memorial site came to light, and will require a phase 3. This phase, hopefully coordinated by CAFM, will include the issue of memorial plaques or other mementos that various AB groups or associations may want installed in the vicinity of the monument. Fund raising projects such as individually purchased memorial stones may also be included.

The amount of coordination work involved was quite onerous - this included close liaison with VAC, the base CE staff, the Almonte foundry, the firm who created the new granite base and the artist who provided the details on how to take down the statue and re-install it. Col (Ret'd) Gauthier, the sculptor who created the statue, was most helpful in providing critical advice for the physical move. The CAFA coordinator for all these activities was CWO (Ret'd) John Clarke. John worked tirelessly for a year on this project, including the coordination aspects of the final dedication ceremony and parade. There is no doubt in my mind that, without John's tremendous efforts, we would not be where we are today. I do have to mention however that John had a lot of local help: his was Sheila. She helped from the start in taking minutes of meetings and handling all manners of correspondence and other issues. CAFA, and the Airborne Brotherhood at large, owe a great deal to the efforts of John and Sheila - well done!



John Clarke