

Press release

Families and loved ones of American, British and Canadian veterans against the D-day land project

May 27, 2022

As we near the anniversary of the June 1944 Normandy Landings, we the children, grandchildren and loved ones of the American, British and Canadian soldiers who faced the enemy fire, wish to register our firm opposition to the envisaged *Hommage aux Héros* theme park.

We are appalled that their memory should be treated as a tourist attraction ‘to keep the visitors for a day or two’, as Mr Morin, the regional president, has stated. The term ‘D-Day Land’, first used by Mr Lefranc, one-time chair of the *Comité du Débarquement*, reveals the moral bleakness of this project. The eagerness of the promoters for a ‘wow factor’ is absolutely objectionable.

Make no mistake. The passing on of memories is seen here as no more than a business opportunity, far removed from the searing memories of the drama which still haunt personal and family histories. To give this project the go-ahead would demean and devalue pain and sacrifice, and present our fallen loved ones as mere curiosities in a money-grubbing entertainment venture, worth no more than the cost of an entry ticket.

It is shameful enough that such a theme park should even be suggested, let alone proposed and developed. There is still time to take stock, to abandon this plan that was conceived in an unthinking moral vacuum.

Establishing this *D-Day Land* theme park would be a final and lasting insult.

Contact :

Bertrand Legendre : Legendre.bertrand@wanadoo.fr

Communiqué de presse

Des familles et des proches de vétérans américains, britanniques et canadiens contre le projet D-Day Land

27 mai 2022

A l'approche des commémorations du Débarquement du 6 juin 1944 en Normandie, nous, enfants, petits-enfants et proches de combattants américains, britanniques et canadiens ayant pris part aux combats du Jour -J et à la bataille de Normandie, nous voulons rappeler avec fermeté notre opposition au projet de parc "Hommage aux héros".

Nous refusons que la mémoire de nos morts serve aujourd'hui à « *retenir un jour ou deux de plus* » les touristes, comme le souhaite monsieur Morin, président de la Région. Le nom de « D-Day Land », employé initialement par monsieur Lefranc, alors président du Comité du Débarquement, est révélateur de l'égarement moral qui entoure ce projet : il n'est pas envisageable que la mémoire de nos morts devienne une simple attraction. Sur ce point, la volonté des promoteurs de rechercher un « effet waouh », comme le dit l'un d'eux, est proprement abjecte.

Nous ne nous y trompons pas : la transmission de la mémoire n'est ici qu'un prétexte au développement d'un business bien éloigné des drames encore très présents dans nos histoires personnelles et familiales. Accepter ce projet serait le signe que la valeur et la douleur des sacrifices ont été oubliées, que nos morts, réduits au rôle de figurants d'un spectacle, ne valent pas plus qu'un ticket d'entrée dans un parc à sensations.

La honte est déjà là, dans le fait qu'un tel projet ait pu être imaginé, proposé et défendu. Il est encore temps d'en prendre conscience, de faire comme si cela n'avait été qu'un moment d'égarement d'esprits avides.

Mais mettre en oeuvre ce prétendu « Hommage aux héros » serait nous faire définitivement injure.

Contact :

Bertrand Legendre : Legendre.bertrand@wanadoo.fr

Liste des 100 premiers signataires

Jerry ALFORD (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
George ALLISON (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Rusty ARMSTRONG (National 4th Infantry veteran)
Robert O. BABCOCK (President and Historian, National 4th Infantry Division Association, Athens, GA USA)
Peter BAIARDI (4th Infantry Division Association)
Ernest G BANASAU Jr (Major US Army)
Martin BARRETO (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Tom BARROWS (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
David BEATTIE (National 4th Infantry veteran)
Michael BELIS (DMOR 22nd Infantry Regiment, 22nd Infantry Regiment Society Historian, Webmaster 1st Battalion 22nd Infantry, SGT C 1/22 Infantry RVN 1970-71)
Roger W. BENCZE (Son of a U.S.Army veteran from Omaha Beach)
John BENFORD (Son of Charles Benford Ld'H, 49th West Riding Infantry Division, 2nd Essex Regiment Landed on D Day at Gold Beach)
Richard BLACKABY (4th IDA IVY Chapter, President)
Eugene BRUNELLE (associate member of the 4th Infantry Veterans Association, nephew of Paul Brunell, passed 2018, who fought with the 4th Division)
Ralph BUTCHER (22nd INF. BN, 4th INF DIV)
Jim BYWALEC (In Friendship Mr. James R. Bywalec, Member of The Fourth Infantry Association Veteran of E co, 1st battalion, 8th brigade, 4th Infantry)
Darrell CALVERT (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Joseph CARTER (National 4th Infantry veteran)
William R. CASH (1st Bde HHC)
David P. CIOSEK (Colonel, B Co. 2/8 INF (Mech) 4ID Vietnam U.S. Army, Retired)
Christopher CLARK (friend of a D-Day veteran)
Lorna CLARK (friend of a D-Day veteran)
Lorie COFFEY (Project 71; UK)
Terry COGSWELL (veteran, Charlie Company, 1/8 inf. 4th infantry division)
Susan CONN (Daughter-in-law of Harry Conn DDay veteran, founder of the 'Polar Bears Association', buried in Bayeux)
Sharon CONNOR (fille d'aviateur américain tombé en mer)
Elizabeth COSGROVE (veuve d'un officier britannique)
Robroy CROW (A 1/8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division)
Byron CURCIO (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Steven P. DELP (U. S. Army Colonel ; National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Michael DICKENS (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Dennis DIMOND (ex Royal Fusilier, Essex Regt, ex treasurer and secretary of UK Polar Bear Association)
Carol DONAHUE (daughter of SSGT Stephen J Donahue KIA June 12,1944 Buried Normandy American Cemetery)
Raymond H. DUNKEL (CSM USA retired, President N4IDA 2005/2006)
Jean EDWARDES (veuve de [William John Wilson Edwardes, D-Day veteran](#))
Albert William EKSTROM (U.S. Army, 4th Infantry Division, veteran)
DeRonda ELLIOTT (Daughter of Cpl Frank M Elliott Landed on Omaha Beach, 6/6/44, Buried in Normandy American Cemetery)
Linda EVERETT (fille et nièce de vétérans britanniques)

Steve FOSNESS (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
David H. GAINES (retired Lieutenant Colonel, US Army, 704th Maintenance Battalion, 4th Infantry Division 1976 – 1979)
Sue GASS (Husband served with 4ID 1967-68 ; Administrator, National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Barbara L. GEORGE (fille de Captain Malcolm L. GEORGE, inhumé à Colleville)
Diane GETZ (petite-nièce de Martin CERNEY, inhumé à Colleville)
Bruce GOODING (4th Infantry Division Association)
Keith GOUDY (National 4th Infantry Division Association ; father-in-law was with the 4th Infantry Division at D-Day)
William G. GRIEVE, Jr (Ret USA LtC)
Sylvie GUTH BERGGREN (grand daughter of Milton BERGGREN landed in Normandy, buried in the cemetery of Fort Shelling Minneapolis)
Bill HAMMACK (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Jeff HAMMOND (Major General, former commander for the United States Army 4th Infantry Division)
Bill HARVEY (son of Gunner W Y Harvey No 4 Commando)
Isabel HATCHER (daughter of John Travers Cosgrove, British army officer in the Royal Engineers, 244 Company attached to the 53rd Welsh Division)
Ian HOLMES ((Lt Col retired ; 43rd Wessex Heritage Trust)
William R HOLTGREVEN (Veteran 4thID)
George J. HOSSE (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Ross IRVIN (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Don KELBY (Executive Director National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Ken KILGAS (US Army veteran, MOS- Infantry Weapons Armorer)
Gary KRAFT (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Sarah KRAUSE (veteran tour coordinator)
Jacob and Robert KRIEGER (great grandsons of Major Robert A. Lane)
Kris E LAMONTAGNE (1/22nd Inf 4th Infantry Division)
Sandra LANE WALKER (daughter of Major Robert A. Lane)
Charles LAWRENCE (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Roger W. LAWSON (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Preston LEADERBRAND (National 4th Infantry (IVY) Division Association)
Richard J. LEISNER (National 4th Infantry (IVY) Division Association)
Ken LEMMON (National 4th Infantry (IVY) Division Association)
Dave MAHONEY (Veteran National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Harold MASSEY ((National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Terence McCUE (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
George I. MILLER (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Douglas MOODIE (Parachute regiment ret. Son of George Moodie, C company, 9th bn Parachute regiment, 6th Airborne division)
Margaret MOORE (daughter of Staff Sergeant J A Ross of 2nd Battalion of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders)
John PATELLA (Company C, 4th Engineers, 4th Infantry Division)
Janet PLINE (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Roy PLINE (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Diana Dwan POOLE (Veteran, Army Nurse Corps, 4th Infantry Association)
Gayne RANSELL ((nièce de Lt. Robert C. DIECKS, inhumé à Saint-James)
Scott A. RAYL (ETO Special Projects Director)
Bill REDMOND (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Alex RESNICK (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Fredric ROBINS (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Ray ROCHO (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Linda RODRIGUEZ (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
John R. ROSS (National 4th Infantry Division veteran)

Mary Ann ROSS (Spouse of John R. Ross)
William L. SALING, Jr. (1965-1967, 1st Bn 22nd Infantry, 4th Infantry Division)
Terry SANDERSON (Member 4th Infantry Division Association)
Maurice SAPP (veteran, National 4th Infantry Division)
Larry A. SCHAFFER (4th Infantry Division, 1/8th, B Co, CIB or service August 1967 – 1968, Honorable Discharge as Staff Sgt E-6)
Susan R. SCOTT (daughter of LTC Hal F Ryder, 4th Infantry Division)
Bill SHEA (supporter of the 4th Infantry Division)
Walt SHIPMAN (National 4th Infantry Division)
Scott A. SCHMIDT (LTC-R, US Army)
Julie SCHRODER (daughter of 9RTR Tank commander, Sgt. Richard Trevor Greenwood.)
John SCOTT (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
John SHAEFFER (1st Lt - Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division)
Laurence L. SMELSER (son of Major Harold C. Smelser, USAAF, First commander of the 91st BBG's 324th squadron. lost on a raid against the submarine pens of St. Nazaire on November 23, 1942.t)
Edmond SOLYMOSY (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Thomas SPANGLER (father wounded in the hedgerows and died of cancer that had settled in the area of his wounds fifty years later)
Sabrina SPRY (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Bruce SQUIERS (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Mike STEVENS (4th Infantry Division veteran)
Yves TARIEL (fils de prisonnier de guerre, membre d'honneur de la 82^e US Airborne Division Association, et de l'Association des Vétérans Américains)
GayLee TISCHBIREK (Franco-Américaine)
Darlene VAN BLARGAN (petite-nièce de Martin CERNY, inhumé à Colleville)
Marilyn, Beth and Allyson WALKER (granddaughters of Major Robert A. Lane)
Terry WEIBEL (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
Randy WERHOLZ (veteran Viet Nam 1967-1968 B company 2/8 4th infantry division)
Brandon WHEELER (4ID Relative)
John WHITAKER (Former Chairman 49th West Riding Inf Div Ass "The Polar Bears")
Bill WILLIAMS (National 4th Infantry Division Association)
William C. ZEMAN (4th Infantry Division veteran)