



Welland Canal
Fallen Workers Memorial

A PLACE TO REMEMBER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Niagara memorial honours the work of 137 fallen workers

TASK FORCE CHAIR

Walter Sendzik
Mayor, St. Catharines

CAMPAIGN CHAIR

Greg Wight

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Canadian Canal Society

Welland Canals Foundation

Nov. 13, 2017, St. Catharines, Ont. - An 85-year-old promise to honour 137 men who died building one of the greatest engineering marvels in Canada was fulfilled with the unveiling of the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial in St. Catharines, Ont. on Sunday.

Construction of the fourth Welland Canal took place between 1913 and 1935 and the loss of life on the project is believed to be the largest of any federal government infrastructure project in Canadian history.

Held on Remembrance Day weekend, the unveiling ceremony was a special occasion for family members and descendants of the fallen workers to remember their loved ones. The 137 men who died building the Welland Canal included war veterans, fathers and sons and new immigrants to Canada from 16 different countries.

The fourth Welland Canal was built to expand shipping routes and connect the Great Lakes to eastern Canada, western New York and global trade routes. To this day the Welland Canal continues to serve as a major transportation corridor, contributing billions annually to the Canadian economy.

The unveiling of the memorial marks the completion of years of research and fundraising by the Niagara community, including elected representatives, historians, the marine industry, labour, local media and volunteers who were committed to fulfilling the 85-year-old promise to honour the fallen workers.

The Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial was designed by Dereck Revington Studio Inc. of Toronto through a national competition. The memorial features four elements - the Gates of Remembrance, the Veil, the Timeline and the Lock - all set within a contemplative grove. The memorial was constructed at Lock 3 of the Welland Canal to serve as a reminder of the fallen workers.

With a budget of \$1.2 million, the memorial has been made possible with funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Niagara Region, the City of St. Catharines and significant donations from the marine industry, local businesses and the labour community.



www.stcatharines.ca/CanalWorkersMemorial



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Construction of the memorial began August 2017. The memorial is now open to the public all year round at Lock 3 in St. Catharines, just north of the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre. Admission to the memorial is free.

Hosted by the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial Task Force, guests at the unveiling ceremony included descendants of the 137 fallen workers and donors from the marine and shipping industry, labour organizations, community supporters and elected officials from across Niagara, including MP Chris Bittle, Regional Chair Alan Caslin and Task Force Chair Mayor Walter Sendzik.

Quotes:

“The Government of Canada is pleased to invest in commemorative projects that highlight important milestones in the history of our communities. Canada 150 is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our past and appreciate our rich heritage in all its diversity, and to help create a lasting legacy for future generations. We are proud to have contributed to this project, which will serve as a poignant tribute to those that lost their lives in this tragic chapter of our history.” - The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage

“Our community is proud to fulfill a long-forgotten promise to honour the fallen workers– the fathers, brothers, sons, uncles, veterans and newcomers to Canada who died building the Welland Canal, a project that continues to shape our community and national economy. The memorial would not have been possible without the vision of the Task Force volunteers and fundraising chair, Greg Wight.” - Mayor Walter Sendzik, Chair of the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial Task Force.

“It was an honour to be present as the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial was unveiled for the first time. It is truly awe-inspiring. Until today, we have remembered the 137 men who died during the construction of the Canal through articles, books and family histories. I am pleased that we now have a physical monument that will act as a testament to our remembrance of these men. It is important to me that the federal government was able to contribute financially to the memorial’s construction in a meaningful way.” - Chris Bittle, Member of Parliament (St. Catharines)

“On behalf of Regional Council, I’d like to sincerely thank campaign members and all of the dedicated community partners who have come together to enrich our community through the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial. Respect for Niagara’s rich history and those who built and shaped it is critical to moving toward our future, and it is truly inspiring to see Niagara honour those who lost their lives creating one of Niagara’s defining and enduring features.” Alan Caslin
Niagara Regional Chair



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“This project helped inspire changes to labour laws to better protect workers from the kinds of fatal accidents and serious injuries that happened during construction of the Welland Canal. We know that every workplace fatality is preventable. It is the driving force behind the labour movement’s ‘Kill a Worker, Go to Jail’ campaign. The labour community is proud to have played a part in this memorial to the fallen workers and help generations to come, remember them and their ultimate sacrifices.” - Sid Ryan, Past President, Ontario Federation of Labour

“The Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial is the result of and a testament to the many donors and supporters of this project. I am very pleased and honoured to have been a part of this historic initiative, fulfilling a promise made to the families of the 137 fallen workers at the opening of the fourth Welland Canal in 1932.” - Greg Wight, Fundraising Chair, Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial Task Force

“The design of the memorial has been a moving journey into the lives of the 137 men who died building the canal; a struggle to give enduring expression to the value and significance of their lives in stone and steel, and a way of reflecting on life and death that gives consolation.” – Dereck Revington, Dereck Revington Studio Inc., designer

For more information visit www.stcatharines.ca/CanalWorkersMemorial.

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