

**JUNO
BEACH
CENTRE®**



Press Release

May 8, 2012

It is with extreme sadness that the Board of Directors of the Juno Beach Centre Association announces the passing of a true Canadian hero, our President, Garth S. Webb.

Mr. Webb passed away peacefully on the morning of May 8, 2012 at the age of 93. Symbolically, May 8 happens to be the 68th anniversary of VE day (Victory in Europe).

While Mr. Webb was most famously known as the founder and one of the driving forces behind the creation of the Juno Beach Centre he was also a devoted father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Our sympathies are with all of his extended family and friends.

Lieutenant Garth Webb landed on Juno Beach, Normandy France with the Canadian 14th Field Regiment (Royal Canadian Artillery) on the morning of D-Day, June 6 1944, as part of the Allied forces. His unit experienced significant casualties shortly after leaving the beach, but continued their advance that fateful day to begin the liberation of Europe.

After the war, Garth returned home to Canada and resumed his studies at Queen's University in Kingston. Upon graduation he embarked on a successful career as a real estate broker and appraiser.

In June 1994, for the 50th anniversary of D-Day, he returned to the beaches of Normandy with many of the veterans from his unit. It was at this point that they realized there was not very much there for their children and grandchildren to see in commemoration of the Canadian involvement in World War II.

As a result, Garth Webb and his partner Lise Cooper spearheaded an initiative of Canadian Second World War veterans, widows and children of veterans keen to perpetuate the memory of the wartime operations that were a credit to Canada. The initiative also worked to boost awareness of the role that their country as a whole had played in the conflict. Thus, the Juno Beach Centre was born and established.

Mr. Webb and the Association worked tirelessly to promote this worthy cause and raise funds for the building of the Centre. After years of unrelenting work and on the 59th anniversary of D-Day the Juno Beach Centre opened in Courseulles-sur-Mer, France. The Canadian Prime Minister at the time, Jean Chrétien and France's Prime Minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, were there, along with hundreds of Mr. Webb's fellow D-Day veterans for the official opening and unveiling of this amazing accomplishment - a lasting tribute to the efforts and sacrifices of all Canadians during the Second World War.

After the opening of the Centre, Mr. Webb continued to serve on the Board of Directors as President of the Association and was actively involved in all aspects of the day to day operation and strategic planning. Up until his passing Mr. Webb worked tirelessly as the only President the Juno Beach Centre Association ever had.

Among his many commendations and military medals from the Second World War Mr. Webb was also the recipient of the Meritorious Service Cross. It was presented to him in 2003 by the Governor General of Canada for his part in the creation of the Juno Beach Centre. This prestigious award recognizes a deed or an activity that has been performed in an outstandingly professional manner, or with uncommonly high standards; the activity is often innovative, sets an example for others to follow, improves the quality of life of a community and brings considerable benefit or honour to Canada.

Mr. Webb was also honoured by the French government in 2005 with the Legion of Honour medal. The National Order of the Legion of Honour is the highest decoration in France. Membership in the Legion of Honour is usually restricted to French nationals. Foreign nationals who have served France or the ideals it upholds, as Garth Webb has, may however, receive a distinction of the Legion of Honour.

Mr. Webb was also very proud to have found out earlier this year that a new school, opening in the fall of 2012 in Halton Region, had been named after him and his many incredible accomplishments.

To the Board of Directors he will always be remembered as our mentor and friend and we thank him for his immense part in the lasting legacy of the Juno Beach Centre.

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For more information please contact:

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The Juno Beach Centre is a museum and cultural centre, which opened at Courseulles-sur-Mer, France on June 6, 2003. The Centre presents the war effort made by all Canadians, civilian and military alike, both at home and on the various fronts during the Second World War, as well as the manifold faces of contemporary Canadian society.

The Juno Beach Centre was established in Canada as a non-profit organization. A Board of Directors based in Burlington, Ontario runs the Association. The Minister of Canadian Heritage has designated the Juno Beach landing site to be a site of national historic significance to Canada.