

Extensions to the Lesson

DOCUMENT 3

Nelson Cancels Draft Dodger Memorial

A memorial honouring the courage of American Vietnam war draft dodgers planned for the town of Nelson, B.C., has been cancelled after a chorus of complaint caused the city of Nelson to reconsider.

The bronze statue was to feature two naked American draft dodgers being greeted and welcomed to Canada by a similarly naked Canadian. In the artist's concept of the statue, the Americans appear to be weak and lost while the Canadian bravely holds out his hand to show them the way.

The group of American expatriates behind the statue had initially proposed to unveil it in Nelson during a reunion of draft dodgers and their supporters. The 2006 reunion was meant to honour the "courageous legacy" of the draft dodgers with a concert, a play and a series of lectures.

Shortly after the reunion and memorial were announced however, a storm of negative media descended upon the little B.C. mountain town.

Leading the charge against the memorial was the U.S. Veterans of Foreign Wars. These ex-soldiers, partly comprised of Vietnam veterans, said the memorial was an "abomination."

Media across the United States joined in, proclaiming the memorial was a bad idea and suggesting that the tribute would dis-honour the men who served in Vietnam.

It didn't take long for Nelson city officials to realize the memorial and the criticism attending it wouldn't be good for the community. Claiming that the project was

"highly divisive in nature" and that it lacked "widespread community support" the city officially denied the memorial funding and the use of city land.

The group planning the memorial has decided to look for other venues.

SOURCE:

Ottawa, The Royal Canadian Legion, Legion Magazine, Jan/Feb. 2005

<http://www.legionmagazine.com/francais/>