



Kathleen Raftice &lt;kathleen.raftice@capeelizabeth.org&gt;

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**Proposal for the Fort Williams Park Committee's Consideration**

3 messages

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**James Rowe** <jamesscottrowe@icloud.com>  
To: Kathleen Raftice <kathleen.raftice@capeelizabeth.org>

Tue, Jul 20, 2021 at 11:19 AM

Good morning Fort Williams Park Committee:

I hope this finds everybody well and "getting back to normal." The Park looks great. It's wonderful to see visitors once again enjoying our beautiful treasure!

As you know, I share your fondness for Fort Williams/Fort Williams Park...especially (in my case) a fondness for its rich history. The Museum at Portland Head Light, the interpretive display at Battery Blair, the bronze plaques explaining several of the historic sites around the Fort, as well as the monument to the USS Eagle do a really nice job of teaching elements of its story.

There is one piece of "The Fort Williams Story" which I think has been largely overlooked, and which I think is deserving of recognition in some small way. The story was brought to my attention a couple of years ago by historian Peter Benoit (former Cape Elizabeth resident, currently living in Wasilla, AK). It was reinforced by the recent donation of Mr. Benoit's research to the Cape Elizabeth Historical Preservation Society.

On March 23, 1917, just two weeks before America's "official" entry into World War One, a 22-year-old sentry, Private John William Poor, was mortally wounded by two intruders on the grounds of Fort Williams. While the intruders escaped into the night and were never apprehended, it is believed that they were either German spies or sympathizers, sent to sabotage one or more of the shoreline artillery batteries.

Why is this important?

Private John William Poor, of the 3rd Company, Coast Artillery, was the only soldier in the 90-year history of Fort Williams to have been killed by suspected enemy action.

I think this is worthy of some sort of local public recognition. Pvt. Poor's name was given to an American Legion Post in his home town, but unfortunately the post has ceased operation.

History is more than a litany of dates and events. It is about people...those in "high places" certainly, but also those who are simply doing their duty and, and in Pvt. Poor's case, paying the ultimate price.

Please know that I am very sensitive to "sign clutter" at Fort Williams Park. What I am proposing is a very "low impact" recognition of Pvt. Poor's sacrifice...possibly the naming of a roadway or pathway, or some other existing site in his memory. I think this could be done tastefully and would acknowledge this meaningful event in an instructive way.

I would welcome the opportunity to offer a brief presentation of my proposal to the Committee.

Thank you for your consideration, and especially for the great job you do in providing guidance in the supervision of Fort Williams Park!

Warm regards,

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**Kathleen Raftice** <kathleen.raftice@capeelizabeth.org>  
To: James Rowe <jamesscottrowe@icloud.com>

Tue, Jul 27, 2021 at 9:50 AM

Good morning Jim,