

Wall honours 'mass murder' victims

BY ROBERT MATAS VANCOUVER

Eddie Madon vividly remembers the good times with his father, jumping around the red fire truck in the Ceperley Meadow playground in Stanley Park.

More than two decades later, Mr. Madon returned to the area of his childhood yesterday. But it was a bittersweet visit. He came for an unveiling of a memorial to commemorate the Air India disaster, located a stone's throw from the fire truck. His father, Sam Madon, was one of 331 people killed in the twin terrorist bombings on June 23, 1985.

"As long as I can remember from my early childhood days, until the day he was taken from us, we used to come here," said Mr. Madon, who was eight years old at the time of the Air India bombing. "This is a very special spot."

Mr. Madon was pleased with the understated stone memorial, overlooking the glistening waters of English Bay. "It is really important for the public to have a constant reminder of tragedy in some form or another, and this is one way to achieve that," he said in an interview. "This was a Canadian tragedy, perpetuated in Vancouver and it is extremely important that people not forget the victims of the tragedy."

The memorial wall rises from the ground in an arc and ends abruptly, representing the trajectory of the flight. The names of the passengers are etched in the stone cap that runs along the top of the wall. The lawn adjacent to the wall has 331 stones to commemorate each victim (the total includes the deaths of two baggage handlers killed in a related bombing at Japan's Narita Airport).

The memorial was placed next to a playground to draw attention to the 82 children who were on the flight. The memorial in Stanley Park is part of a national effort to have memorial sites in four cities: Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Vancouver.

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF AIR INDIA FLIGHT 182

A daughter's pain



Natasha Madon, who was five years old when her father, Sam, perished in the 1985 Air India disaster, touches his name engraved on the memorial wall in Ceperley Meadow Playground. The site honours the 329 passengers and crew aboard the doomed Air India flight and the two baggage handlers who died in a related bombing at Japan's Narita Airport. See story, S2 LAURA LEYSHON/THE GLOBE AND MAIL