

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

STANDING COMMITTEE

ON

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Committee Room 1

Korean War Veterans - Canada

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VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Murray Scott (Chair)
Hon. Wayne Gaudet
Hon. Russell MacKinnon
Charles MacDonald
Frank Corbett
Peter Delefos
William Estabrooks
Gordon Balser
James DeWolfe

[Hon. Russell MacKinnon was replaced by Hyland Fraser.]
[Frank Corbett was replaced by Jerry Pye.]

In Attendance:

Darlene Henry
Legislative Committee Clerk

WITNESSES

Phillip Burke, Korean War veteran

Ralph Villeneuve, Korean War veteran



HALIFAX, THURSDAY, MAR. 11, 1999

STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

2:00 P.M.

CHAIR
Murray Scott

THE CHAIR: We have a quorum so we will get started. I would like to welcome you, Mr. Burke and Mr. Villeneuve to this committee. Generally what we do is go around the table and introduce ourselves and you will be given an opportunity to make a presentation. I understand you don't have a written presentation, it is going to be verbal.

PHILLIP BURKE: I have something here, yes.

THE CHAIR: Then we will open it to the members for questions and some dialogue.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: Again, welcome on behalf of the committee. So we will open the floor to yourselves and you can make your presentations.

PHILLIP BURKE: I suppose we will start at the beginning. The first thing, we would like to be recognized as Korean War veterans, not just as Korean veterans but Korean War veterans since Korea was a war and they have decided that at last they are going to call us war veterans. So we would like to get that changed here.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: If I may interject, Korea is K-o-r-e-a. That is what we are, Korea war veterans, not Korean war veterans. We are not Koreans.

PHILLIP BURKE: My second point was, Canada's veterans in the past have not been treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. If two minutes of silence on

November 11th is all that Ottawa or Nova Scotia feels towards the veterans, then they should bow their heads in shame for they have not kept the promise to help and look after the veterans in their time of need.

As you probably know, Veterans Memorial Gardens, the sod is going to be turned on May 5, 1999. There will be dignitaries from the federal government coming down, the Minister of National Defence, I understand. Unit 45 of the Korean Veterans Association is going to purchase two plaques for the Veterans Memorial Gardens. The street - a lot of you are probably not from this area - but one of our comrades, Don Allen, asked the City of Halifax to change the name of the lower part of Jubilee Road which runs from Robie Street down to the Wanderers Grounds and change it to be called Veterans Memorial Lane. That went through the council and it was approved. So on May 5th, also, when the ground-turning takes place at Camp Hill for the new grounds they are going to build there for the veterans, I don't know if any of you are familiar with it, but what it is going to consist of is a garden area with built-up areas for planting so that wheelchair patients can do a little puttering around in the garden, if you are used to it, you know, because it would be something nice for them. It is all going to be built with them in mind. There will be flowers and trees and everything. That parking lot up in back of there now is where they are going to build it. The street running from Robie Street, as I said, is going to be called Veterans Memorial Lane and that is going to be done on May 5th also in conjunction with the sod-turning.

Another thing that we have done, every year, the first year was last year, that we held a Korea Veterans Day and we sold tags. Now we only tried it on a trial basis last year and we only had five members out - and I was one of them - but we did collect almost \$1,000. What we did with that \$1,000 is - we don't keep any money, we donate everything to charity - we gave the \$1,000 to the Walter Callow for their bus. Now the money that we are going to collect this July - we are going to run another tag day - we are going to give to the Camp Hill Memorial Gardens. Any money that we collect, we will give to them to use to help fare the cost of the gardens.

Another point I brought up here too is, I would like to see the provincial government look into the Walter Callow buses. I know you are all familiar with them. They have been here since I was a boy. One of them is completely written off. The other one is falling to pieces, just held on with wire. This is the only means we have to take our veterans in wheelchairs to different functions. Every Legion in the Halifax/Dartmouth area, once a month, has a do where they bring the veterans from Camp Hill to their Legion, give them a meal, put on some entertainment for them, and give them some fruit or something, whatever they can eat, to take back to the hospital with them. This is the function that every Legion in this area does to help out with these veterans. However, if you had a look at the condition of the buses, you would be appalled.

Now what I suggest is, if it was possible, for the province to look into buying one of these buses - like they have in Calgary and out in B.C. - and on the side of the bus, in big letters would say, Nova Scotia cares about its veterans. What it would tell the people of the province is that we do care about our veterans and it is a shame that these buses have been allowed to deteriorate the way they have and it is not very good.

Another point I had here was Mr. Tom Waters, who is a Zone Commander for the Royal Canadian Legion in this zone, and Mrs. Shirley Robinson - her husband is in the Camp Hill Hospital as a veteran - both gave us an excellent presentation at our Korean Veterans meeting of where the Veterans Memorial Garden is and exactly where it is going to be located. They have books and stuff out. Mrs. Robinson's husband is a veteran at the Camp Hill Hospital and she stated that it would be a wonderful day when this project is completed so that veterans in wheelchairs will be able to spend quality time in an atmosphere that will add to the quality of their lives. I think we all agree with that, that when this project is completed, that it would be nice to see them out there in the summer or the spring or the fall, in the wheelchairs, maybe planting a flower or just sitting there watching the flowers because it is going to have nice trees and everything. It is going to be a nice project when it is completed.

The last thing, when I was down to Bangor, Maine - we had our convention down there last year - I took some pictures of their site down there and also there are some pictures here of the Korean Veterans War Memorial in Washington. I will hand them around and you can have a look at them. They are beautiful monuments and I will say one thing for the Americans - I don't say a lot of good things for them but I will say one thing about them - they do look after their veterans and they do look after their memorials. They are kept immaculate. It is something that we could take a lesson from. Once you look at those pictures, you can see that they have really gone into doing a wonderful job in doing this. Once again, it probably comes down to the almighty dollar but I look at it this way, if we are going to look after somebody who has defended our country, I think they deserve something a little honourable like that. This is why this project for Camp Hill, I am very pleased that it is going to take place.

I think that is all I have and I thank you very much for your time.

THE CHAIR: Now maybe Ralph would have something.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: I would like to say about the two minutes' silence, if you travel around the world and you go to England, London is a very big city. At 11:00 o'clock, everything stops and everybody has one minute of silence over there for all of their veterans. Now I would like you to think about that.

Another thing, we had a request from Ottawa, our head office, if we could find out if the cenotaphs in all the little towns and all the cities and villages and everything like that, have a bronze plaque to commemorate the Korean War. I understand that some little towns are against it but if they look around the neighbourhood, they will have one or two Korean War veterans there. If he is of African descent or if he is of Native descent or white descent, he will have somebody there. So we have tried to talk to the Legions on that and it is such a horrendous task, we only have, what is it, 35 or 40 in our group?

PHILLIP BURKE: We have 42 members.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: We have 42 members in our group and if we started going around all the little nooks and crannies that have them - I would like to see something done about it to make sure that there is a bronze plaque on it. If you know anything, get hold of us, we will get them made and we will go put them on.

My uncle had Alzheimer's, he is 86, his wife is 83. She has since passed away. There was no room in the inn, if you want to call it that way, to put this poor man. He held the boxing championship in 1934 for the Atlantic, when the Navy, before the two wars - and he has a plaque commemorated to him for swimming around the world a couple of times and everything like that, and there was no room in the inn. They sent him home for this lady, he was bigger than I am and she was just a little Mighty Mouse about this high but she couldn't handle him. There was no room in the inn. Eventually it got so bad that they had to put him in. They had to find something. This is what is happening with our veterans.

If you go back about six months, eight months, something like that, we had a conversation with the hospital up there because the food wasn't adequate for them. It is appalling, in some cases, when you go in there. I think my comrade here forgot to say that Premier Savage set July 29th as Veterans Day here in the province. We hold a parade and everything on that day to remember the veterans and that is the day, or around that day, when we go out and get donations from the . . .

PHILLIP BURKE: July 26th.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: July 26th this year but July 29th was the day that Premier Savage stated it was Veterans Day.

If there are any questions, that is my presentation.

THE CHAIR: Well, first of all, thank you very much for your presentation. It was very well done. I should have explained at first, this committee is an arm of the Legislature. It is made up of equal parts of the three Parties. I guess I would like to ask, before I begin with the members, the Walter Callow buses, who funds them today?

PHILLIP BURKE: I think it is funded, from what I know - I know their buses are parked up at Windsor Park, which has military status. Two buses are parked up there. Now I know the Legion has a lot to do with the Walter Callow buses. When we gave our cheque - I wasn't there when the cheque was given - the \$1,000, I don't know who they gave it to. I really couldn't tell you who looks after it. However, if you have the chance to look at the buses, you will know what I mean, how bad they are. They are really terrible. What I am scared of is that if both buses go kaput, what do we do with these veterans? Do we wheel them in wheelchairs up to different places, along the street and in the snow and ice? It would be such a wonderful gesture.

Now, another thing I was thinking of, actually at the time, too, would be to maybe approach some of these car dealerships and ask them if they would be interested in supporting something like this. It costs quite a bit of money for one of these buses, we are talking a few hundred thousand dollars from what I understand, with the elevator and everything on it for the wheelchairs. But I was just wondering if it was possible to say to them, okay, well, if you could help us out, maybe they could help the province out. I think if the province went and said to all the people in the province, look, how do you feel about helping these veterans out and getting a bus for them, I think you would find about 98 per cent of the people would certainly agree that we should do something.

I don't know where to go. Where do you go to start this thing. We gave \$1,000, Vimy Legion gave \$4,000 but that is only a drop in the bucket. However, it does show that we are interested in trying to do something. If it was in a committee like this and it was brought to a higher authority, even the Premier or something, and I know they are having a lot of problems in the province in the Cape Breton area, but then again we have to look after the veterans. This would be a one-shot deal. If we got a bus like that, we are talking maybe 20 years for the bus to last.

Look at how long those old buses have lasted. Those buses were around when I was a boy going to school at St. Pat's, because I remember them. Now, that's how old they are. One of them is held up with chicken wire. The part by the bumper was falling off and I was up to Windsor Park and we got some coat-hangers and tied them together to hold the bumper on. Now, this is bad. It is terrible when you think about it. Those people there should be treated with a little more dignity and respect than that. If these car companies can give vehicles to the nurses' association that goes around, they give them a free vehicle all the time, I don't think it would hurt them. Anyway, did you enjoy the pictures?

THE CHAIR: Mr. Pye.

JERRY PYE: We certainly did. Mr. Chairman, I do believe if you will reflect back in the minutes when we had Mr. Alan Moore and representatives of the Nova Scotia

Legion speaking before us that the Legion had indicated that they funded the Walter Callow buses for many years and the cost of a bus today is approximately \$280,000 to bring a bus on stream and that the Legion could no longer support the funding of that because they had difficulty increasing their membership, their membership was dwindling. Also, their fund-raising activities were dwindling as well and they needed money to maintain their facilities and so on. So they made basically the same presentation as you people have made.

Mr. Chairman, I am wondering if it wouldn't be appropriate to entertain a motion at some time, and I am not necessarily the one who wants to put that motion forward but I will, that we give the Chairman the responsibility of checking possibly with the Disabled Persons Association of Nova Scotia, Mr. Charlie MacDonald, as well as with any government agency provincially and federally with the opportunity to tap into grants or resources that might be available to assist the request about the Korea veterans and with respect to the Legion's presentations. Both have made excellent presentations with respect to funding for Callow buses.

I happen to be an individual who happened to have travelled on the Callow buses at one time because as disabled individuals before Access-a-Bus came into place and while we were in the Children's Hospital of Nova Scotia, the Callow buses used to come and pick up the disabled children and take them for rides to the Wanderers Grounds and other areas when activities and events were taking place. So I do want you to know that I understand and know the importance of having those Callow buses available.

As well, those Callow buses are used during the civic holidays in both Halifax and Dartmouth. They are used to take these individuals out to the parade routes and to set up and locate these individuals in a particular spot where they can view the parades that are going on. So, not only do they take individuals for the once-a-month Legion events, they do and they want to broaden their scope as well by taking them across the province.

Mr. Chairman, I am open and receptive to allowing you the opportunity to approach other avenues and bring back a report to this committee with respect to what can or cannot be done.

THE CHAIR: Is that a motion, My Pye?

JERRY PYE: I would so move that that be a motion.

JAMES DEWOLFE: I second the motion.

THE CHAIR: Any further comments?

RALPH VILLENEUVE: May I comment on your motion? I agree 100 per cent with him but not one of us has ever thought about what would happen if that bus broke a wheel going down a hill or lost its brakes. What a great advertisement it is, nobody looked after these buses and they are this old and everything like that. It is going to be a shame against the province, because it will be worldwide. You have to look at that avenue of accidents. The driver could be the soberest man, the best man in the world. You have driven these highways. Let's think about it.

THE CHAIR: You have heard the motion by Mr. Pye, seconded by Mr. DeWolfe in regard to myself as Chairman representing this committee to seek out opportunities through disabled or through government agencies with regard to replacing the Walter Callow buses. Is that right, Mr. Pye?

JERRY PYE: And bring a report back to the committee.

THE CHAIR: Is the committee ready for the question? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Any other questions of our guests from the members?

Mr. Balser.

GORDON BALSER: Mr. Chairman, you talked about having the Korean Conflict veterans recognized as being Korean War veterans, how would that happen, would it be done through the Department of Veteran Affairs federally?

RALPH VILLENEUVE: I believe it is funded by the Korea veterans themselves from the national. It costs about \$100 for a plaque to be made and they put on a little ceremony and they go down and put it on for them. They have different things like that. You see, there are two organizations, we are the Dominion Korea veterans and then they have the South Shore - or whatever they call themselves - Korea Veterans Association. One was the first start and the other one was another start and some of them just don't want to come together and make it one big association. But when we hold reunions, we are all together as Korea veterans.

GORDON BALSER: I am still not quite sure. The comment that you made was to have the people involved recognized as Korea veterans?

PHILLIP BURKE: Yes, because when you say Korean, what you are saying is they are Korean, we are not Korean.

GORDON BALSER: I guess what I am looking for is, what will we do? What changes does it require the Department of Veteran Affairs to issue some decree that says, henceforth veterans will be recognized, or is it simply a plaque somewhere? I don't know.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: Any literature that the government puts out, no matter whether it is this government or the Dominion government, if you read it right, they call us Korean War veterans and we are not Koreans. So, all you have to do is get the proofreader, when they see the 'n' at the end there, mark it off. If you are talking about the Korean War then you are talking about the Korean War. If you are talking about me, I am a Korea war veteran. That's the problem.

PHILLIP BURKE: It is just a small thing, it is not a great thing, but then again it is to us because like you say, it was the Korean War but we are Korea war veterans not Korean war veterans, because if you are saying that, you are saying we are Korean. It is just a matter of words, that's all.

GORDON BALSER: So, Mr. Chairman, to you, out of that, then what action should this committee take or should we take any? Should there be a letter drafted that raises this issue with the federal department? What do we do to ensure that something comes out of this request? They have indicated a desire to have this problem addressed. Would it be appropriate for this committee or you as the Chairman of the committee to write a letter to the federal minister highlighting this issue?

THE CHAIR: You are talking on a national level that the word Korean is always used in all literature and all correspondence any time they refer to you people as being veterans of that war, that they always refer to you as Korean war veterans.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: And we are not Koreans (Interruption)

PHILLIP BURKE: We are Canadians.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: If they are going to talk about the war, it is the Korean War.

THE CHAIR: My feeling would be that we don't need a motion to correspond, I wouldn't think, unless members feel it is necessary. If not, we can, on behalf of the committee, write, as Mr. Pye indicated, to the minister to ask for that recognition when they refer to you people, that it be Korea, not Korean.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: Also, whoever does the proofreading on any literature that goes out on the Korean War, to make that correction. It is easy to read over something, but after you have read it, you find out that you forgot to dot your i's.

[2:30 p.m.]

THE CHAIR: Mr. Delefes.

PETER DELEFES: I have two points, Mr. Chairman. First, I wanted to ask, is this the first time that this matter has come up? Have any overtures been made by the Legion to correct this oversight?

PHILLIP BURKE: No, we brought it up at our general meeting about three months ago, we discussed it at the time and we wanted to get it changed, because we weren't too happy with this. So we brought it up at our general meeting, like I said, and we thought, coming to this meeting here, that we would be able to explain our problem to you people, and perhaps you could, where you would be in a better position to advance to Ottawa, say that these people are veterans, but they don't want to be called Korean veterans, they want to be called Korea veterans. It is a simple request, and I don't think it requires a whole lot of changing to do anything. That is all we are asking for, is for them to look into it and see what they can do. We are not demanding it, we are just asking.

PETER DELEFES: It has been an oversight, obviously, for 50 years. It is a matter that should be dealt with.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: It is just a small little thing.

PETER DELEFES: Perhaps our chairman might take the initiative and write on our behalf and just make that concern known.

The second point I wanted to make is with reference to Mr. Callow. When I was a lad, those buses came onstream, and I was certainly aware of them as a child. Mr. Callow, of course, was a remarkable man. I think he was both blind and deaf, if I am not mistaken, terribly incapacitated and yet, somehow, he found the wherewithal to raise funds to get these buses established. Unfortunately, I think the younger generation has forgotten this remarkable Canadian, and I hope that somewhere along the line something is done to remind people of the remarkable accomplishments of this individual. Have you folks done anything or made any overtures in that respect?

PHILLIP BURKE: Whenever we get the opportunity. When we had our Tag Day last July, I was down at the new Superstore on Barrington Street and every person who approached me, I told them that the money we collected was going to the Walter Callow bus. At the time, probably a lot of those people didn't know who Walter Callow was or anything, however, I did mention the fact that they were buses that Walter Callow had started for helping veterans. We did extremely well for only having five people out. We collected almost \$1,000.

Any money that our organization collects, we don't keep; we give all of the money that we receive to charity. We don't keep any. We don't build up a big amount of money, we don't want to do that, we just keep a couple hundred dollars for correspondence and stuff, but the rest of it goes to charity. For instance, when we used the facilities at the Royal Canadian Legion in Scotia, we gave them a cheque for \$200 for using their facilities, which is the Legion. We hope this year to have more members out on Tag Day, and our prospects are probably looking for maybe \$3,000 or \$4,000 or \$5,000. If we do get that, then it all goes to the Camp Hill Memorial Fund.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Pye.

JERRY PYE: Just briefly, Mr. Chairman, I saw the article in the paper, February 9, 1999, and it says in the article, "Veteran battles to rename street", and it says, "A Korean War veteran . . .". What they are implying here is nationality, of a nation, and what these individuals are presenting to us is definition, the definition that they are Korea war veterans. I think we should draft that in the letter and indicate that there is difficulty with definition. That's the only important thing here.

There is another issue that I want to ask you about, and it came up as a second issue. You said, dignity and respect for veterans. What did you mean by dignity and respect? Do you receive the same benefits that any other veteran of the First World War or the Second World War receives from the Government of Canada?

PHILLIP BURKE: No.

JERRY PYE: So, therefore, you find that part of the dignity and respect . . .

PHILLIP BURKE: No, I wasn't so much referring to not getting the money and stuff, what I was referring to is the general public. I will give you an example of this. Our president got in touch with one of the principals - I won't name the school - and asked him if we could go and make a presentation to the students in Grades 5, 6 and 7 and tell them about the Korean War and what it was all about and I myself was going to go as one of the speakers. He contacted the school principal and the school principal never got back to him. I find this very bad because what it sends to the students, like, I have two grandchildren that go to Halifax West now, one is 16 and the other is 14, and they always say to me, granddad, how come you don't come out to our school around Remembrance Day and tell us about this war that we don't know about? Most of them don't even know about the Second World War never mind the Korean War.

What I am saying is, if we can get some input into these schools, during Remembrance Day week, to go in and explain to the students and tell them why and tell them how horrible war is and not to be going to war, we don't want to tell them that war is glorious, it isn't glorious, war is hell. A lot of my friends are dead and buried over

there. I want to tell these young people this, that war is a terrible thing. However, we do want to tell these students that, look, this is what happened. I was 16 years old when I went to Korea. We were young guys, we had no job. so we joined the Army. That's what it was. We didn't have any jobs here. I didn't have a job in Nova Scotia at the time so I joined the Army.

JERRY PYE: Just my final comment, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted you to know that when I served on Dartmouth City Council that you had a tremendous ally in an individual by the name of William Withers, Bill Withers.

PHILLIP BURKE: Yes, I knew Bill.

JERRY PYE: He did, in fact, recognize the Korea war veterans and also brought resolutions before council which were endorsed. So he is a great gentleman.

PHILLIP BURKE: Alan Moore is good over there too. Alan Moore from the Legion is good over there. But what I meant by that is that my mother and father brought me up to respect senior citizens, older people, if I was on a bus and I do it to this day, if an older person gets on, an old lady or something, I get up and give them my seat. You don't see this anymore. Young people aren't brought up that way anymore. I have been on a bus when old people were there and the schoolchildren were there and they had the bus crowded and I asked a young fellow, would you mind getting up and giving this lady a seat. He said, I am not giving it, I paid for this seat, it is my seat, which is right, it is his seat, but however, I said, don't you have a little respect for an older person. Why should I? She don't mean nothing to me.

So anyway, what I did, I went to the bus driver and I told the bus driver what was going on. She was quite an elderly lady. He stopped the bus and he went over and he told the young fellow, get up and give that lady a seat. He finally got the young fellow to get up and give her a seat. There, to me, was an example of the way some of the veterans are treated.

I will give you a prime example, which really killed me. When I belonged to Vimy Branch, I am a member of the Legion now for almost 50 years, every Remembrance Day I have been down at that Cenotaph for 25 years, rain, snow or hail, I have been there. I used to go up to Vimy Legion, the Vimy Legion would have a room, I don't know if you are familiar with Vimy Legion but they have big doors that they can pull across. All the aldermen from the city would go up there, they would close the doors and give them all drinks. All the veterans would be sitting on the other side with nothing. I brought this to the attention of the president and I said, this is not fair. These men are the men you should be honouring today not the aldermen. You should be honouring the veterans. It is a veterans day. Anyway, finally, after struggling for two years, they finally

opened the door and let the veterans in. But this wasn't taking place and this is what I mean once again, being treated with a little dignity and respect. That's all we're asking. We are just asking to be treated that way.

The greatest thing in my life is to stand by a veteran. In our Legion which I belong to, the Fairview Branch, we lost 22 members last year and two of them were prisoners of war in Hong Kong for six years. The federal government finally came through and gave them money. He's dead now. He is never going to see the money. His wife got the money but he died last year. He was five and one-half years in that Japanese concentration camp. We have two of our members up there who are prisoners of war from Germany. So when I see somebody like that, I feel proud. It makes me feel good to be able to sit alongside somebody like that and say, well, there is a man that did something. He fought for his country. I feel proud of that. I think our young people do not have that same respect and the reason is, they don't know about it.

You can see everything on TV but you never see anything about the veterans, what they did and how they helped Canada. Very rarely do you see a program like that on. I would like to see our schools start a program. I would be only too willing to go to any school and just say to the children, look, I am at the end of my time now but I want it instilled in you children that war is a terrible, bloody thing and it is not a good thing. It is not glory like you see in all the American movies where they are great heroes and everything. This is not true. It doesn't work that way and I would like to tell these children that but we don't get the opportunity to go into these schools and it is a shame.

THE CHAIR: Mr. DeWolfe.

JAMES DEWOLFE: You have just very eloquently addressed my question, actually. I heard just recently a ballplayer being referred to as a true hero - we know who that was - and that bothers me that a ballplayer or someone, just because they are good at sports, all of a sudden become heroes because to me, someone who served in a war is indeed a hero. Does that concern you?

PHILLIP BURKE: I feel like Michael Jordan, stuff like that, a billionaire, make all the money, all the young people think he is a hero. To me, I would think the lonely soldier or the sailor or the airman - a lot of guys go over, not all of them come back. The point that I made is if you are fortunate to go over and come back - and look today with our peacekeeping people, there is another part that is really sad. Nobody has respect for these poor young people who are going over and a lot of them are getting killed in these foreign countries, and they are only going over because, as you remember, it was brought up by Canada, Lester Pearson was the one who started the United Nations for Canada being in peacekeeping and we have been doing it for 30, 40, or 50 years now. We did it in Cypress, we did it in the Congo, we did it in Germany. I was one of the first soldiers,

when I came back from Korea, we were the first organization to send peace-time soldiers to Europe. I was stationed in a very familiar camp - I don't know if you are familiar with it - Belsen where they killed almost 500,000 Jews. I was stationed in Belsen when I came back from Korea. That is where I went, right to Germany, to Belsen.

I would like to see, like you said, if you are a sports hero, fine, sure you get a little glory but I think the poor guy who goes and defends or represents his country, deserves a hell of a lot more praise than all of these sports heroes.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: You go back to the First World War, my father was in it, when they brought out mustard gas. You went to the Second World War to finish it, atomic bomb. You take the kids who went to the Gulf War, what are doing to them? Gas, nerve gas or whatever they want to call it. They don't know what it is and they are trying to brush it off. Do you know what I mean? It is very hard to try to instill in our children, don't figure everything is easy because every time they ask mom for a nickel, mom gives them a nickel or dad gives them a nickel. These chaps over there, they are out to sea - like myself, I was in the Navy over in Korea - for weeks. I was out for two months, when the Iroquois got hit and three of my friends got killed. So we had to do our patrol, their patrol, our patrol and we finished up doing another patrol for them. So we went out and we came in and I ate tinned chicken for two weeks and homemade bread, there was no butter - chicken for dinner, chicken for supper, chicken for snacks and everything. We were out of food over there and we had homemade bread. So the first meal we got when we got in was steaks but none of the kids think about this.

We, ourselves, don't think about these chaps with these missiles that can go over and explode in the air and all of a sudden this gas comes down upon them. It is mind-boggling but nobody has respect for the guys who go over there. You could go over there today and you could be shot in the Congo like that group that was over there the other day. You don't have to do anything, you can be shot. If it wasn't for our peacekeepers being trained and looked after things and going over there to try to stop all of these atrocities going on in this world and we don't pay anything to them, why should they do it? Why should they protect us because we don't pay honour to them.

PHILLIP BURKE: One point, too, that I would like to bring up which is very disturbing to me and I think if you get a chance, if you want to see them, go up to the Forum, where they have the flea market. Do you know what they are selling up there? They are selling medals. They are selling veterans' medals. Somebody who died in a war, these guys are selling their medals for \$25 or \$30. I don't understand this, I really don't. I think this is a terrible thing. I said to the guy who was selling them, I said, you have a bloody nerve. He said, well, I do all right on them and some of the young fellows like to put them on to wear them. They don't know it is a federal offence. If you wear medals that you are not entitled to, it is a federal offence in the federal government. I explained

this to him. I said, you are letting these young people buy these medals and I have seen young people downtown with the medals on, 17 and 18 years old with Second World War medals on.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: They probably don't know anything about it.

PHILLIP BURKE: They don't but once again we come down to not being treated with dignity. That is all I am asking. I am not asking for anything special, I don't want anybody to blow the horn and say well, you are a hero. All I want is a little respect. That is all I am asking. I think that is all most veterans are asking.

THE CHAIR: It is not very much to ask for.

PHILLIP BURKE: No it isn't, really.

THE CHAIR: Mr. MacDonald.

CHARLES MACDONALD: I was just interested in the numbers who served in Korea. Do you have any idea . . .

PHILLIP BURKE: Yes. I don't have it here but I can tell you that on this monument, it just gives you an example here, I think it tells you on this one. Oh, here it is right here. This was the American. There were 54,246 died, 103,284 were wounded, 8,117 missing in action, 3,450 POWs were returned. There were 389 POWs unaccounted for. This is just on the American side. On our side, I think our total, we lost 490-something. If you figure that out for the rate that we lost, it is higher than the amount of soldiers in the Second World War, the amount of casualties that we had for the amount of people that were involved in it. So a lot of people thought that this was just a little fling, this Korea. They said, oh, well, it is not really a war but when you read this, and this was only Maine, I am not talking about the whole United States. There was something like 2 million Americans were either killed or wounded in Korea. Right there, it just goes to show you, there almost 200,000 right there in a small place like Maine. It is something that they waited so long.

Do you know I wish I had brought the letter with me. I got a letter from George Hees, five years ago, and it said that so many years, like 39 or 40 years is a long time to finally be recognized for what you did in Korea and I have the letter home and it is addressed to me. It is from the Minister of National Defence at the time, George Hees, and I saved the letter, but this is an example. Nobody did anything. I just said well, it is just another campaign, just don't worry about it but it was important to me and the reason that I felt it was important is because I said to myself, if I do get killed over there, at least my parents or my grandchildren, if I ever had any, could always say, well, he died serving his country and I don't think there is a nicer way to die. If a man has to die in

something like that, it would be an honour to die for your country. I feel that way and I was proud to be in the service and I always am proud. I am proud of the service today.

I have been in the Legion, it will be 50 years next year and whenever I see a young serviceman come into the Legion, I talk to him, I invite him to sit down, have a beer or talk with us and I am interested in what he is doing because I was the same way as he was 50 years ago. I was a kid and I wanted to give them some respect. That's why they like to go to the Legion and see the older people - the young servicemen today - because they get treated really good, the older men know how to treat them. They don't just laugh at them. Like nobody says to them, well, the Gulf War was nothing. Any war you are in, any campaign you are in where you can get killed is a serious thing. But you know how people say - well, we used to always say - the Korean War was nothing, you should have been in the Second World War and then again when you go back, well, you should have been in the First World War. But they are all the same, they are all terrible wars.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: That's right.

PHILLIP BURKE: But it is nice to see the young people today, the smartness of them, in bearing they look very impressive. I am really proud of our servicemen today, Navy, Army, Air Force, I am proud of them. We have a lot of females in the service and I am proud of that too. I think they look really good and they do a good job for their country. I think they deserve respect and if we don't have respect for the older veterans, well, we sure as hell are not going to have respect for the younger ones when they get older. So the only thing that I ask is a little respect and that's not much.

THE CHAIR: Mr. DeWolfe.

JAMES DEWOLFE: Mr. Chairman, I am just wondering if you could clarify something for me. You indicated that through your tag sales you will be supporting the Veterans Memorial Gardens and in my mind that's an excellent initiative to move forward with the gardens. I am wondering is Veteran Affairs putting up the money initially?

PHILLIP BURKE: They are going to put so much. Now, I think the Minister of National Defence is coming down, from what I understand, because that is a federal project. That is supposed to be run by the federal government, that hospital, whether they know it or not. But, however, another thing is too, what we will be doing on that tag day, we are going to be handing out a little book that they have . . .

RALPH VILLENEUVE: Brochure.

PHILLIP BURKE: Or a brochure, to show you where the hospital, where the grounds are going to be and everything and we will be handing that out too to the people

so they can say, well, here, you can see what you are giving your money for. Nobody says they have to give, we are not asking them to give, we will give them a tag, if they want to put something in a box, that's fine, they don't have to. We are not twisting their arms. If they want to donate fine, if they don't, they don't have to and that's the way it is. But we thought that this would be an ideal opportunity for us to help a worthy cause like that.

I have been in Vancouver and I have seen the one in Shaughnessy Hospital out in Vancouver where they had built the grounds like where the people in the wheelchairs can go out and putter around and plant a plant or something or just be there. It was wonderful to see their faces, how happy it made them rather than being in that bloody hospital all summer. You can imagine the summer here and what they have to do, they have to sit in that bloody hospital, they can't go anywhere. They can go outside in a wheelchair and sit out there, but if you have gardens for them, with flowers and stuff, it is going to be quite nice. I am looking forward to it, if I last, if I am here long enough. You see, I am going in the hospital at the end of this month, I have cancer of the bowel so I am going in for a cancer operation. So I am keeping my fingers crossed but it is pretty hard to kill us old buggers anyway. (Laughter) We hang on right to the end.

THE CHAIR: Any other questions?

HYLAND FRASER: Just briefly, and it is not really part of your presentation here, but I would like to just get your opinion on what is going on down in the United States. You said you were down there, the Vietnam veterans, you said they are being honoured now, they weren't when they first came back.

PHILLIP BURKE: They weren't, no. That was another forgotten war.

HYLAND FRASER: That has changed?

PHILLIP BURKE: It has changed. There is quite a change since they built that wall, the Wall of Remembrance, there has been a big change. If you look at any of the American politicians now, they have changed their tune. You see, it was a war that they didn't want to be involved in, of course most wars are like that, but it is nice to see them getting some recognition now and they are getting some stuff that they are allowed like veterans from the Second World War. They never got that. Now, they are entitled to them. It is nice to see them change their feelings.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: The Korean War was to stop red aggression. It really was. If you had seen the masses of Red Chinese coming over the hill and there are only 100 of you and about 2,000 of them, who is going to run first. I just read a book I forget who put it out, and it is really something to read. I think everybody here should sit down

and get a few of these books on the Korean War that are done by certain people, you would really get a good enjoyment reading it to understand the war.

In the book, and I forget the name of the author, he had 12 pages on leadership. I read books, I have been trained in leadership, I have everything but those 12 pages, if you sit down and analyze it, you will find out what leadership is all about and each one of us should try to read it.

PHILLIP BURKE: In Korea in 1951, I don't know if you people are familiar with this, I was with the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's, we were paratroopers, there was an American outfit that got stuck in a place called Kap-Yong and our outfit, our regiment along with the British and the Australians rescued this American unit from this area where they were trapped and they were going to be killed. The President of the United States at the time was Harry Truman; in Tokyo, he gave us the Unit Presidential Citation for our regiment, but I never ever saw anything in Canada about that - Nothing, never ever saw it. We received the Unit Presidential Citation from the President of the United States and - never saw a thing. It was funny about that.

I had a piece of paper that I happened to cut out the other day, I think I still have it here. This brings back a lot of memories to me because I was over there before this, it says, Canadians jubilant at orders to go to Korea. This is dated February 22, 1951. This tells you about the regiment that was relieving us, they were the Royal 22nd Regiment from Montreal. We were the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's and they were relieving us and this is a story about that and was in the Toronto Star, they have a publication that they put out every once and while, so it brought back a lot of memories to me.

So, I want to thank you gentlemen today for letting us mouth off and tell our story but all we are trying to do is to - like I said - bring to somebody's attention how we feel before it is too late. There aren't very many of us left anyway - we are dying pretty quickly.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: If you look in the obituaries in the last three months, I counted up 35 of my friends who have died. Out of the 35, I think there were about 25 of them who were over in Korea.

PHILLIP BURKE: We are losing a lot. Like I said, our branch in Fairview last year lost 23 veterans. These are Second World War veterans; two were Korean veterans but most of them were Second World War veterans. If you look at the Legion paper, it is 20 pages this month of deaths, so we are losing a lot. That's why Alan was saying to you about not being able to continue to support the Callow, this is the reason, we are losing so many members in the Legion, we don't have the membership like we used to have to continue to support all the functions.

The Legions do a lot of good jobs for youth and stuff like that, and I have been involved in it. I have been the Youth Chairman at the Fairview Branch for three years, helping the Air Cadets with their band and stuff. We gave them \$2,000 or \$3,000 to buy instruments for their band up there in Fairview. I mean it is good for youth and stuff, the Legions and everything like that but what we have to do with our children today, we have to come to them and say, look, there were wars and this is what happened and wars are terrible but you must remember those veterans are out there, give them a little respect when you see them. I don't think our schoolchildren, a lot of them, know that.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, gentlemen, very much for your presentation. I know for myself and I am sure it is the view of the rest of the committee that each group that appears here and shares stories, a lot of the time without documents, the information they give us, but it is truly from your heart. I want to assure you that on behalf of this committee, we will do all we can. What you have asked for today is not very much. You have heard what the recommendation of this committee will be and we will certainly keep you informed of what we have attempted to do on your behalf.

There will be annual report that this committee will do and your request will be included in that. As I say, we will ensure that you are kept aware of what we are doing on your behalf.

PHILLIP BURKE: Thank you very much.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: May I ask a question? A few of you are my age, in their 60's, where were you in 1952, New Year's Eve?

JERRY PYE: I was in the Children's Hospital, I can tell you where I was.

RALPH VILLENEUVE: I was in the Yellow Sea, sailing, and I got off watch at 12:00 a.m., midnight, and we rang the bell 16 times, I had a piece of homemade bread and I went to bed. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, very much.

[The committee adjourned at 3:01 p.m.]