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COMMITTEE

ON

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Thursday, February 11, 2016

Legislative Committees Office

Pictou County Military Heritage Museum

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VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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Hon. David Wilson
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[David Wilton was replaced by Brendan Maguire.]

In Attendance:

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WITNESSES

Pictou County Military Heritage Museum

Vincent Joyce,
Founder/President

Wayne Vacheresse,
Director



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2016

STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

9:00 A.M.

CHAIR

Derek Mombourquette

VICE-CHAIR

Keith Irving

THE CHAIR: Good morning folks, thank you all for being here this morning. I'd like to call to order the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. My name is Derek Mombourquette and I'm the chairman of the committee. Today we'll be receiving a presentation regarding the Pictou County Military Heritage Museum.

First I want to start by introducing our two presenters today, Mr. Vincent Joyce, who is the founder and President - good morning, sir. The next, as well, with Mr. Joyce we have Mr. Wayne Vacheresse - is that correct?

WAYNE VACHERESSE: That's close enough.

THE CHAIR: As a Mombourquette, I appreciate your struggle sometimes.

Gentlemen, I'm happy to have you here today, as is the committee, and we look forward to your presentation. I'll start by asking committee members to introduce themselves. We'll start with Mr. David Wilson.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: Thank you, everyone. After your presentation, of course, you'll receive questions from the committee members, but before you reply I will indicate who will be speaking, just for the records for Hansard.

Our topic of course is the Pictou County Military Heritage Museum. Gentlemen, you have the floor. We'll hear your presentation and then we'll take some questions from the committee, so away you go.

VINCENT JOYCE: Good day ladies and gentlemen. My name is Vincent Joyce and I am the founder and President of the Pictou County Military Heritage Museum in Westville, Nova Scotia. With me of course is Mr. Wayne Vacheresse as a member of our Board of Directors.

In October 2005 a Board of Directors was formed which was made up of nine military and police personnel. We registered with the Registry of Joint Stocks of Nova Scotia and the Association of Nova Scotia Museums. Funds were raised and the location for the Pictou County Military Heritage Museum was found. It was the old police station in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

The Pictou County Military Heritage Museum opened its doors to the public in July 2006. It had two main purposes - first was to document, protect, and preserve all military artifacts and pictures as possible. Secondly, to honour and document as many military personnel as possible that served throughout the many years. We wanted to preserve the past for all future generations to see and learn.

The museum is collecting as many artifacts as possible that belong to the individual military personnel. These items were and are what our military personnel are so very proud of. Also, we wanted to keep our local military artifacts in our own Pictou County.

In the past 10 years, the museum has collected approximately 15,000 artifacts from all over the world. In two large rooms, our collection goes from the smallest military buttons to hat badges, medals, uniforms, weapons and fully dressed mannequins, et cetera - because there are so many to talk about. These artifacts start from the beginning of the armed conflicts right up to the present day.

The museum has three very important items that we are so very proud of. First we have documented over 2,000 military personnel profiles in our books of honour and remembrance. Each book contains a picture of the military personnel in uniform and his biography of the life that he had in the military. The biography is placed on old parchment paper surrounded by small military flags with the Canadian Coat of Arms at the top. These very special books were unveiled in 2011 by the Chief of the National Defence Staff, General Walter Natynczyk, Retired, and the Honourable Minister of National Defence, Peter MacKay, now retired.

A floor showcase was made to house these books, which are placed on a red velvet cloth. At the top of the showcase we had an artist paint a mural on a 2 inch by 10 inch pine board, 10 feet long. It depicts soldiers of the First World War and Second World War, the

Korean War, Peacekeeper conflicts and the Afghanistan war. Also painted ships, planes and tanks with artillery pieces painted on it.

We also have books of pictures from the War Brides of Canada, World War One and World War Two, the Korean War, Peacekeepers of Canada and the Afghanistan war, and many more books of respect.

Secondly, we have some very distinguished visitors to our military museum. Some of them were the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, His Excellency Brigadier-General J.J. Grant; Minister of Justice, Honourable Peter MacKay, retired; the Premier of Nova Scotia, Honourable Rodney MacDonald, retired; and many MPs and MLAs through the Maritime Provinces; plus General Rick Hillier and General Walter Natynczyk; and many Canadian veterans, just to name a few.

In the Fall of 2013, our very special guests were four members of the elite Devil's Brigade. They wanted to visit our museum because they heard how great it is and they wanted to donate some pictures. Hundreds of people showed up to give honour and respect to these four soldiers and to get pictures signed by them.

Also in the Fall of the same year, we had the complete Board of Directors of the Canadian War Museum from Ottawa, Ontario visit our museum. The tour lasted over three hours. They were so impressed with our museum that they made a monetary donation to purchase a floor showcase in their name. Also they stated - and I can elaborate on this later on if you want - that we had artifacts there that they did not have in Ottawa.

Thirdly I would like to mention the fact that we have one of the best collections of military challenge coins in the world. Mr. Rod McLeod of Calgary, Alberta - his company makes most of these coins - visited our museum and he liked our museum so much that he donated his complete collection. These coins are Canadian regular and reserve forces, Army, Navy and Air Force Cadet Corps, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Force units, the Afghanistan wars, forces and battles and the Wall of Remembrance of the military personnel who were killed in Afghanistan. This wall is now housed in the Parliament Building in Ottawa.

Just to elaborate on that a little, we have a mini-wall. His is also one of the only companies who has made the Queen Elizabeth II coin which we are so very proud to have in our collection.

Another of the many things that the Pictou County Military Heritage Museum has done to honour our veterans and military personnel was to make 15 military panels. These panels are two feet wide and six feet long and are made of all-season metal board. They are placed on a stainless steel stand so they will last for a very long time. Each panel tells a brief story of certain events throughout our Canadian history: the Boer War, the World

Wars, Women of War, Korean War, Canadian Merchant Navy, Canadian Peacekeepers and the Afghanistan War, just to mention a few.

The military museum was also able to procure one military vehicle and one large weapons artifact. Through our Canadian Government and in conjunction with the United States Government, we were able to receive a M113 armoured track personnel carrier. These carriers would carry up to 20 military personnel safely into a battle zone and drop them off. It also has lots of firepower for their protection.

The other is a C1 Howitzer 105mm cannon. This weapon was extensively used by the United States and Canada. These weapons have been modified a little to give them a longer range and larger firepower. They are still in use today.

One of our any achievements was to raise enough funds to place seven flagpoles with nylon flags in front of our museum. These flags are: the Canadian Maple Leaf, the Nova Scotia flag, the Red Ensign Army, the White Ensign Navy and the Royal Canadian Air Force, the United Nations Peacekeeper flag and the Canadian Forces flag.

The museum is very proud of the many uniforms that we have on display. Some of these uniforms are: General Rick Hillier, retired; General Walter Natynczyk; Vice-Admiral Dean McFadden; Major General Keith McDonald; Rear-Admiral Tyrone Pile; and Brigadier-General Greg Mattie just to mention a few. Some other special uniforms are those of the military padre Gary Tonks. These padre uniforms are very hard to come by because there were very few padres throughout the wars. In the military there were only two different types at that time; one for the Jewish religion and one for all other religions.

Other uniforms are those of the military nurses. The museum has one of the nursing sisters' blue uniforms that were used during World War I, right up until World War II. These nurses were usually called Blue Angels because when an injured soldier woke up in a hospital or an aid station, a nurse was standing over them and they were called an angel and because they were wearing blue - hence the Blue Angels.

We are also lucky to have one of the old white nurses' uniform with their cape and official bonnets, officer bonnets. These capes and officer bonnets are very rare because most nurses keep them. The military bonnet is special because it has the officer's rank in yellow around it to show all personnel her title.

In closing, I'd like to take the time to thank you very much for inviting us here to speak a little bit on our Pictou County Military Heritage Museum, one of the best-kept secrets in Nova Scotia, but we are trying very hard to get the word out there to all to visit - proud of our past, honouring our future. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Excellent. Thank you, Mr. Joyce. I'm going to open the floor to questions, we'll start with the PC caucus, Mr. MacLeod.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Thank you for your presentation, Vince. You can tell the passion in your voice about what you're doing here. Were you a former military person yourself?

VINCENT JOYCE: Yes, sir - Nova Scotia Highlander. I carry my challenge coin with me so don't challenge me. (Laughter)

ALFIE MACLEOD: No, that's why I wouldn't challenge you. You talk about all the work you're doing and there is an immense amount of work that has been done. I'm just curious about how you provide operating funds for your museum. Where do you get your operating fund?

VINCENT JOYCE: Well, the first thing we do is donations at the door. We do not charge at the door because sometimes you get a bigger donation than what you would charge and then of course, let's be truthful, we'd have to get into audits and all that stuff. So this way it's just a donation at the door because we also want children to come in, which we do have and if they want to give a dollar, a dollar is great to help us out. If they want to do nothing, it doesn't make any difference - that's what we're there for.

Secondly, we have a military awareness day every year and it's called the Canadian Veterans and Military Awareness Day across the street from our museum. That's where we set up tents and we take in tanks from the military, coyotes, light-armored vehicles and all that is put in a fenced-in area and of course we charge just a donation at the door.

Next we have a military musical night. If you ever see that in the paper, what it is - we get singers in like Mr. Dave Gunning and John Spyder Macdonald; a couple of old Navy guys and I tried to find their names - it's probably in the book - and they sing all military songs all night. It's really something to see.

Then of course we get private donations from military personnel who come in and see it and they stick out a \$100 bill or whatever.

Next we have, where our sustainability is, is that if I have five businessmen come in and two government men and I'm doing a tour and they ask about the showcases, I tell them what they cost, because we build them all. So if two of those said that they want a showcase purchase, I put my hands out and say, okay. That's just what makes us ahead of everybody else. We don't build the showcases and then try to get the money. You put the money in the hand and we build a showcase. Then we put a plaque on the showcase in gold with black lettering showing who donated our showcases.

Right now we have started a project on our military books. Where I said we had over 2,000 - well, we have two CDs made right now of the first set of books. We are selling them for \$25 for one and both CDs for \$40. Now what it is, there are 80 military personnel and profiles on that one CD along with 40 unit pictures of Air Force, Navy and Army, and

also 10 poems on each CD. So for \$40, it is a fundraiser; plus people wanted these because we had them in *The Advocate* every week in Pictou. We had it in "On Guard for Thee" and people have been calling - they wanted to get these. So we decided to put these on CD. That's how we raise our funds.

ALFIE MACLEOD: Wow. It's very ambitious and I congratulate you for doing that. How many people would be on your board of directors?

VINCENT JOYCE: We have 10 right now. We had two just pass away. We will fill them. We try to get the odd number so if there is a vote, the president/founder does have a vote. So we put that in our bylaws so we have that rule, so instead of saying the president usually or chairperson has the final vote, we decided that on a closed vote you wouldn't know who made the final decision.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Arab.

PATRICIA ARAB: That was fascinating. I have to say that your museum is the best-kept secret. I didn't know of its existence and I wish I had, particularly when I was teaching because I think it would have been a great resource - it is a great resource for kids. Have you ever partnered with any schools to do tours or to have classes come in to view the museum?

VINCENT JOYCE: Yes, we do, especially on Remembrance Day but throughout the year we have all Sea Cadet Corps, Army, Navy, Air Force, that come in to our museum with groups of 35 and 40. We have numerous schools and classes that come in, including the Nova Scotia Community College. One of their instructors takes his two carpentry classes in. We also have, as I said, school classes. We also do Cubs and Beavers and we have tours for them - it's amazing. Now a lot of people say well the little Beaver is 5 to 7 years old, they won't have interest. Well I'm going to tell you, it's everything to do to get them out, and I'll use just an example. I have what's called a great coat, the Second World War great coat. It weighs 20 pounds approximately, and that's dry, because it's pure wool. I'll take that down off the wall and hand it to one of these little fellows and boom, down to the floor they go. Well everybody now wants to pick it up.

We do constant tours and my left hand here as I call him, Wayne, he'll do tours with me. Sometimes our tours are so heavy that we have to divide them up into two groups; one group will go downstairs while the other goes to the upstairs room.

PATRICIA ARAB: That's great, I'm going to actually forward this on to the schools in my area because I think it partners really well with not just Remembrance Day activities but especially in the junior high there's a lot of different units that cover the World Wars and Canada's military involvement.

I'm wondering about artifacts. My Dad's best friend served in World War II and never really liked to talk about it much. When he passed away, we were cleaning out his house and we found tons of artifacts that his daughter really wasn't sure what to do with. I'm actually not sure what she did with them in the end. It was fascinating, there were little decks of cards that they would play, and the buttons from German officers' coats. I'm wondering if there's a process of donating artifacts, if there are things she still has and would be willing to give to the museum? What process would she follow to make that happen?

VINCENT JOYCE: When we registered with the Association of NS Museums and the Registry of Joint Stocks, the very first thing we had to do was make an artifact form to show any government official who comes in there who has the power, to say well we want to see who gave you that, what it is, and we have to put an acquisition number on it. That way they can keep control of everything that is going, for instance, like 50 calibre machine gun shells were missing out of one museum and they were live. I got a call like, do you have any 50 calibre machine guns. I said well I have them but there's a process you have to do with them. They said well they were stolen out of this museum and when found, this museum is going to be closed, so we have to document every artifact that is given to us.

From there, it's all numbered and put on paper, and we have to also make a second copy that's not in the museum and keep it out of the museum, in case of fire or anything, for insurance purposes. If a person wanted to donate things, they would come in, see me or whoever is on duty because my students get trained for that, too, and my workers. We would document everything, then it is signed, whether it is donated to the museum or put on loan; 90 per cent is put on as donated to the museum and the museum can do as they see fit.

We would then take those and off to my left here we have an item that we do, and artifacts that were filed together, we'd either put it there or in a shadowbox. Now it's then all labelled so that everybody knows what it is - if we don't know it, we research it. After that is all done, we put on a blue paper who donated it and where they're from. So if a person doesn't want a tour, they can walk around the museum and then they can read what it is for, but like I said, everything is labelled, documented and that's for everybody's purpose and protection.

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PATRICIA ARAB: I'm going to send her your way. I could talk to you all day, but I don't want the chairman to get mad at me.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Wilson.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Thank you for coming in. This committee appreciates hearing from those within Nova Scotia who are doing what you're doing - protecting and preserving our history. I know the generations ahead of us will appreciate the work that you do.

I have about four questions, and I'll try to get them in quick. You had a couple of students. Is it all volunteers or do you have any paid? Are you able to take advantage of summer student programs that are offered federally and provincially through the government?

VINCENT JOYCE: Yes, through the federal government we get two summer students - one for each room. All our people who work at the military museum are volunteers. The only one that gets paid a little bit of money is me. I get \$25 every two weeks for gas so you've eaten up my gas budget coming down here. (Laughter)

Basically, it's for the love of the museum. None of us want any money. We're always handed money because when we do a tour - well here's a tour for you. Now my students, if you come in and you put \$5 in our donation box and you handed our student, because she was so good, \$10, we will allow our student to take that even though she's getting paid, because she's promoting our museum. Most of them do not, but they have been handed money and they just say, no, put it in the box. That's basically - nobody gets paid. We're all there to teach our youth and you're welcome to come down to Pictou anytime and see our military museum. That's what it's all about. It's to honour these people who gave up years for their service.

I was just talking to a commissioner when I had to sign in, and he had many years in and everything. He's proud as a peacock about it and he wanted to talk about it and talk about it - that's what it's all about. What we do need is more recognition because you cannot - how would I say this? We started off with \$2,500 from the Honourable Charlie Parker to open the museum and seems like it's a scenario - I don't know, for 10 years now we have a chartered accountant that does our books, but he cuts it right in half because he makes that a donation to us.

It seems like at the end of every year we start the new year with that \$2,500. It's just the way it goes because when we get something like, say, a very rare artifact - 25th Battalion hat badge. They're quite costly. So what happens is that somebody may come along and say, we'll pay for that. So that's how we get that, because most people just don't give that hat badge away even though it's a military museum - unless it's Ottawa because then it's well protected and everything, and you get a better name.

We can't pay for the ads like in the Doers and Dreamers. We're in there, but it's just one line. The big ad is \$800, \$500. Well we can't afford to do that because, like I just said, we stay above water by making sure that we've got about \$2,500 to start the new year. Of course, it might build up to \$5,000, but then it starts to go down again with everything you have to buy for your office.

DAVID WILSON: I appreciate that. I had the opportunity to visit. I didn't make the list of distinguished visitors, I see. (Laughter) But I'm okay, you mentioned MLAs.

THE CHAIR: Is that one of your questions?

DAVID WILSON: How come I'm not in your speech? (Laughter) No, I had a great opportunity to be there in your old site and I'll guarantee you that I'll try to get down this summer to see the new site. Both my parents served in the Canadian Navy, so I appreciate what you're doing. You just have to start talking to someone who has served and you feel the passion and the commitment to that service.

I think you answered this but the biggest challenge you face, is it just making sure that you are able to have the \$2,500 every year? Is that the challenge?

VINCENT JOYCE: Yes, it is. What a lot of people don't realize is that if you buy to do this - you buy a cartridge, it's \$45, you go through 15 copies, as Kim would know. Not one is going to do, you're into two - that's \$90 just in one set of sheets and stuff. So that's what that \$2,500 is there for.

I don't know if I should say this here but I've always wished that I could get some funding. If every small museum could get some government funding, just to give a little kick-start every year, you could take that off your head. You'd have to have criteria of course, but all small, little museums if they got a little government funding to say, well here's a few bucks to get you started, it would really help out. Times are tough everywhere and we know that but we're always trying to find a way or a loophole to write into a government or one of the committees or something to get a few bucks.

I always say this, if I had 1,000 people come through that door and give me \$5, the museum is good for two years. Now we normally have approximately 500 to 750 people, and it's getting bigger all the time, but where you lose out on that - if I have a cadet corps come in, there's 35 of them but only one person signs the book and they put in \$40. All that helps out, but it is quite expensive to keep going. As far as we're concerned, we'll keep on going because my wife says - and it's usually women who say this - I'm very stingy with the money. I hold on to it and then I say well I can't spend any more, that's it, I want that \$2,500 to start every year. How's that?

THE CHAIR: Next we have Mr. Orrell.

EDDIE ORRELL: Thank you for your presentation, gentlemen, it's very interesting. You just answered part of one of my questions, how many people do you receive as visitors every year. I guess the second part of that one would be, how many of those are what I'd call school-age kids - junior high and younger? I've noticed going to Remembrance Day services in the last number of years that the numbers have increased and the numbers have increased more in the younger generations, which tells me that we're doing our job by getting that word out there for them to remember. Approximately how many of them would be school-age children?

VINCENT JOYCE: Half. Like you said, it's becoming more and more so when we're getting school classes in, cadet corps, Beaver units - Wayne, the elementary school, how many kids were there? There's an elementary school that came in and Wayne was in the downstairs, I think there were 70 kids, so the ratio is picking up.

Also, though, with our adults out of Nova Scotia, we're getting a lot of people from Upper Canada and the United States now coming into our museum and we expect a good year next year. I hate to say it, if the price stays down on the dollar and the gas stays down, that's when we get the Americans coming across the border. I've seen big semi rigs come in there with two families in it, through the summer from New York. Yes, we're holding our own.

EDDIE ORRELL: Most of your artifacts - are they local people's donations or do they come from all over? I know you said here that they come from all over, are most of them local? I guess this is a personal question, what's the most interesting or exciting or what's your favourite artifact?

VINCENT JOYCE: There's 15,000 artifacts. I'll use a little example that the wife says to me, every Canadian military personnel in the Second World War received what's called a CVSM and clasp - that's the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with a clasp on it. There's no name on it. The First World War medals at the bottom of the edge were all named and everything, but this one has no name on it or anything, and there were over 2 million given out. Every time I see that medal I get excited, and if the wife is there she'll say, why are you excited - you've seen that medal 100 times now. I said, it's not the medal, it's the person who earned the medal.

So these are our artifacts that keep coming in, we have hat badges and everything, but I guess - I didn't mention it, but I should have - we're the only museum in Canada right now, including all the Canadian military war museums throughout Canada that have Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean's complete uniform donated to us. You wouldn't believe how small she really is if you didn't meet her; and the general's uniforms.

We made ourselves special. This is what we tried to do. When I say, special, I mean the specialty went into collecting all the general's uniforms that we can get. Right now I have a letter into General Lawson, retired, to see if he's going to put his uniform in. We have nine Generals plus Michaëlle Jean's uniform. Then I went and mentioned the uniforms of the nursing sisters, which are very special - I love them. If I started now I would take up all your time because I think there are about 15,000 items that I love. Every item, by the way, is different in the two rooms. Even the medals are different.

Every item in there - I don't know if Wayne has a special one. We've had military personnel come in and we have items that even they've never seen. I could elaborate on them, like chain mail. That's only a Canadian officer in charge of the honour guard for the Queen when she was here the last time. They have to have fancy outfits on. So this is old

knight's chain mail put on the collar so it makes them look way different from anybody else. I've had colonels come in who have never seen that before. So to have a favorite - you come down to the military museum and you tell me. (Laughter) I'm always going to push that, people.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Irving.

KEITH IRVING: I want to thank you on behalf of all Nova Scotians for what you're doing - really, for all Canadians. It's exemplary what you've accomplished here in 10 short years. Certainly it will be on my to-do list the next time I'm heading up that end of the province.

You've certainly shown us how special this museum is. Are there other facilities in the country that are doing what you're doing?

VINCENT JOYCE: What is happening now is that the Canadian Forces - and we'll use Gagetown, Petawawa - you can go right across Canada. In their bases, they have their own military museums. As far as a public one like ours, there are very, very few and rare. You have to be in the military before military people will come to a military museum.

Like Mr. Belliveau just mentioned, his father was in for 11 years, but didn't speak too much about the war. But when they come to that military museum and see these things, they'll start telling stories. I do have a tape recorder and they'll talk and talk about it.

So through Nova Scotia, I would say probably, if I could name another one, it would be hard to do. It's mostly in military establishments. Citadel Hill - of course that's a military establishment, but they have their war museum in there. I think the only other place that's trying to open one - and they're coming up to get our pattern - is in Sydney, Nova Scotia. He's trying to see if he can get some funding to start one down there, so after you hit Halifax there's not too many military museums around.

KEITH IRVING: I know the Kentville Legion has a number of artifacts down in the basement. I know some of the Legions are struggling throughout Canada, in terms of membership and some I'm getting a sense are closing. Is your museum a possibility if Legions need to give up their collections, is your facility able to accommodate those? How big do you think you might get here, in terms of the artifacts that are out there that may find a home in your museum?

VINCENT JOYCE: What we're doing right now and I should have mentioned the Legions, they usually have a room, I just actually got a letter from the government, a complete room in the Stellarton Legion Branch 28. We made a military room in there because we're feasible.

What happens now at our military museum, we have to specialize in certain items. Rare items that come in that we do not have, we have to look at them because we've got in crates tons of, we'll say the Second World War wool khaki army uniforms. What we would do, if you took three of them in from your father, we would take all the good parts off and put it on one but the other two would then be, well we're not going to show all three of them. Now what would happen, you would say well throw them away because now you have all the good. No, what we do is put them away and we use them for traders. So Honourable Mr. Wilson comes in and he has a hat badge that we don't have at the museum but he is looking for a Second World War complete uniform, khaki, army. Now we don't worry about price, we just trade. That way we got what we wanted because we didn't have it and he got what he wanted.

Our museum right now in the two rooms, I call it shrinkage - if I've got a very rare hat badge I would find room in a showcase by shrinking it up. But as far as taking in other uniforms or other artifacts - which we would love to do - we are at full capacity right now. In some of the pictures over there you'll see what we have in our picture book. People still want to bring things in and I keep wanting to honour people because I know people who are firing things away because they can't give it out.

Right now if the Glace Bay Legion closed and wanted to give us their stuff, I would say I'd have to go through it, pick out the rare items that we do not have and then my advice to them would be to do whatever they want, because we can't house it. I'd love to add on a room, we were thinking about that, and going to ACOA to see if we could get funds to add on to the big room that we have now. We have it priced up and everything because we know within months we could fill that room with all different stuff yet again.

THE CHAIR: Mr. Belliveau.

HON. STERLING BELLIVEAU: It's certainly a pleasure to hear your presentation, Vincent. There's only three people who I know on this planet who actually can stretch a dollar and that is Mr. Parker, yourself and my mother.

VINCENT JOYCE: I am honoured - not with Mr. Parker, with your mother.

STERLING BELLIVEAU: I compliment you, and I know Mr. Parker very well and I want to compliment you on the success you have to now.

I think you may have answered part of my question - you said there were 80 profiles and at least 10 poems that had been documented. My question is, in a museum like this, especially World War II veterans, there are fewer and fewer each year, my question is, have there been any videos or tapings of discussions with these veterans and is this something that is part of your museum - videos, tapes, documents of some of these stories?

VINCENT JOYCE: One time we were thinking about it, but then the federal government came to me - and I can't remember the lady's name - but what they wanted to do was get me involved with taping, which they are doing now. I can't remember the name of it, but they are taping. They have the money to tape. What they did was they came into our area and I got people there that they would meet and do it. Since then, I was able to purchase a real good - one of those news media recorders. When a veteran sits down I will ask him if we can turn it on and he says yes, but as far as making things, our book of remembrance is what we do to honour the military personnel.

To get most of these military personnel, a lot of times we have to visit widows and/or relatives. So all the information - because we cannot go to the government position on the personnel records and get any record of anybody. It has to be said family member.

Saying that, they can come in and they can give it to us with a picture and that's how we're documenting them now because the committee that has the money to do that is doing a real excellent job because they go from town to place - all over Canada. You probably see some of them in the books.

THE CHAIR: Mr. MacLeod.

ALFIE MACLEOD: You're talking about two rooms in the building that you're in. I'm curious about how you operate that building on such a small budget. You're talking about heat, insurance - do you have to pay rent or is it an in kind from the municipality? I'm just curious about the building itself.

VINCENT JOYCE: We had a big room. It's an old school room and the police force is next door to us and the fire department is right next door to us, so we have great police protection and fire service. What happened is that the Town of Westville realized when we were in New Glasgow what this was for tourism. It's a long story short and I won't get into what happened, but anyway, Westville offered it. So it was a great big beautiful room.

I needed storage so up above the police department was the old council chambers. They said we could have that for storage. We can't go through the police station so we had to go out the door and up around, which is not far - people do it all the time. So then one day I asked, can I open it to the public? They said, it's your room, do what you want. So we built more showcases upstairs.

So what Westville has done - they charge us \$200 per month for the two rooms, \$100 per room. It's all heated and everything. That's what we pay, but we don't pay it out because they give us a grant or a bursary or whatever you want to call it for \$2,500. One day I walked in and said, now you owe me \$1,000 (Laughter) and they laugh, but that's where we look after that.

We have to pay our own insurance. We carry only \$35,000 on artifacts and \$2 million on liability, of course. The insurance man, when I said, we've got some things in here worth a lot of money, he said, it's no use getting more insurance because most of your artifacts in here you cannot purchase anymore so it would be just enough - all you need is enough to try to start the museum again. That's why we have that.

All other things are bought by the museum too. We get a donation and we may as well mention, Major Don Creighton came in one day and gave us \$5,000 - do with it what you want. So things like that - whoa, I can buy that now.

That's the only way we do things. We get no government funding or anything. We're a not-for-profit association, and we did that because we didn't think we needed the government's federal funding. We didn't want to go charitable because they give you money and then it becomes their museum, so you get money every year to start off but we didn't want that. This is a museum that belongs to us. I'm working with the government now - it's the same application as a charitable but what we're doing now is trying to say a not-for-profit with the same applications, have to follow the same rules, but if you wanted to give me \$5,000, you can't because you can't get a receipt for it to get your money back.

We want them to put the not-for-profits in that same category that if somebody writes us, like the Kiwanis or somebody writes us a big cheque, that we can make out a receipt where they can put it in because charitable - on the contract, if you look it up - a charitable organization can only give to a charitable organization. Well why the same application, 100 pages long?

We're trying to work that we don't want any of the government money but if the Lions Club wants to give us money, that we can write a receipt for them so they could put it in for tax purposes.

ALFIE MACLEOD: Just one final question, when you have your music night and you have Dave Gunning, what time does the challenge coin come out?

VINCENT JOYCE: Anytime at all. Does everybody know what a challenge coin is? Okay, I'm going to explain it to you. I'll use this one, this is General Natynczyk's challenge coin because when he gave me his and Hillier gave me his he said, mine is way better than Hillier's, so I'll use his. Now what happens is that you get this coin from either a General or a Commanding Officer of your unit, whether it's the Admiral down here, Vice-Admiral or the Captain of a ship, they are the only ones who can give it out.

Now if he moves away or is no longer in the military, nobody else can give out his coin, it only has to be him. Now you carry this coin on you and mine is for both the Generals, well the three Generals that I have here, they were given to me for the Award of Excellence for starting the military museum so it's quite an honour. I carry my own coin, the Nova Scotia Highlanders coin, with me.

What happens now is that - I may as well tell the story, it's on tape but I may as well tell it anyway - what happens now, wherever you're at, another military personnel can look at you and say, I challenge you, which means do you have your coin? If you did not have your coin, you buy the round for him. If he challenges you and you do have your coin, he buys it for you.

Now if you think that the military do not use that, if you are coming out of the bathroom after a shower, with your towel over your shoulder, you have your coin in your hand because you will be challenged. We'll just leave it at that.

THE CHAIR: That concludes our speakers' list. Gentlemen, I want to give you a few minutes to make some closing comments. Mr. Joyce, if you want to start, or Mr. Vacheresse.

VINCENT JOYCE: I have enjoyed myself immensely working with Kim to finally get me here. Kim, I think we went, what, a year and a half, because of some things I've had? I've always enjoyed talking to anybody about the Pictou County Military Heritage Museum, more so to committees like yours that do great work in putting things to government that help veterans or military museums or whatever it is.

You sit here and I just got to know you, some of you and some of you I've already met. It's so enjoyable when you ask these questions because I also see passion in you people, it's not just like okay, see you, it's nice to meet you and then go out the door and say, good, because I can see it and I can hear it - and I can tell by your questions.

So it has been a big honour for me to sit here, to come up here to talk about one of the greatest passions of my life - other than my wife and my two boys - and to sit here and to look at you people and your smiles and you say you're going to come down. I'll put that promotion in again - if you've got a few dollars we'll take it. (Laughter)

Anyway, I thank you very, very much and, again, it's an honour to be here.

WAYNE VACHERESSE: I just want to take this opportunity again - although I haven't said much and this is often the case with Vince. You have to get your foot in there. (Laughter) I've enjoyed being here. It has been a whole new experience for me and I thank the committee for the opportunity that I've had to come here.

I'm relatively new at this. I am on the board of directors, but I've only been there about a year or so. I volunteer at the museum every Wednesday afternoon, and that's my principal goal - to be an A-1 volunteer. I do whatever Vince asks me to do in relation - a jack of all trades, master of none idea.

I got interested because my dad and my mom were both in the military. Actually, they were married when they were in the military so I had that interest there and I searched

around Pictou County for something that was going on, other than the Legion. My dad, too, was a person that when he came back from the war, he was wounded quite badly in Italy. He wouldn't talk about the war or anything like that so I had to sort of dig and find things that related to him. I had to have his medals all re-issued because he got rid of them, done whatever with them and that.

So I looked for a place and I found Vince when he was at the original place above the fire station/police station and offered to do stuff there, and then sort of went away for a while and then came back, and have thoroughly enjoyed it.

One of our biggest challenges too, besides the monetary thing, is the fact that we need volunteers. Vince puts in a lot of hours simply because they aren't there to man doors so to speak. It's like most charitable places. I volunteer too at the Pictou County Sports Heritage Hall of Fame, and we find the same thing. It's very hard to get volunteers now to keep the place open and so on.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity, as I said, although I didn't say too much, I certainly welcomed the opportunity that you gave us here today.

VINCENT JOYCE: One other item I just want to mention quickly - over on the tables over here we have challenge coins if you want to look at them for 10 minutes before we have to leave. It tells the story.

We keep everything documented, and I would like to get a picture of you all because when you see my scrapbook over there, everything that we do becomes public. You would be amazed the number of people that will take that book and look at that book and say, oh look at these guys - you were at this meeting? I'd say, yes we were - they are the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs and they enjoyed it. So you'll want to get a chance to look at that and I do have some cards here if you want cards. You can email me or anything if you want to take them. Again, thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Gentlemen, on behalf of the committee, I love Veterans Affairs Committee. I think it's great to hear the stories of the work that people do across the province. I'll say to both of you, you make your county a better place, you make our province a better place in telling the history of Nova Scotia. So on behalf of the committee, thank you for being here today and I look forward to looking at some of the stuff.

We are going to take a few minutes recess so we can do that and then we'll get back to committee business. Thank you again very much.

[9:59 a.m. The committee recessed.]

[10:10 a.m. The committee reconvened.]

THE CHAIR: Thanks everyone. We'll reconvene the committee meeting. Moving to item No. 1, in committee business, which is agenda-setting. We have received proposed topics from each caucus and again, I want to reference the Government House Leader's letter setting out the procedure for committee agenda-setting, with three government topics, two Official Opposition topics and one Third Party topic.

For the NDP members here, is there a specific one that you want to put forward?
Mr. Wilson.

DAVID WILSON: Definitely, I'd love to move the Veterans Affairs Operational Stress Injury Clinic update. That clinic, from the release back towards the end of last year, was supposed to be up and running, or 45 employees hired by March 2016. That would be my first topic, if we are able to get them to commit to come. If not, then the new Veterans Legal Assistance Foundation that has been announced would be our second topic. Knowing that maybe where they are starting to get it up and running, they may not be available, I don't know.

THE CHAIR: Okay, so just for the sake of the motion then we'll go with the - sorry, which one was it again - the Operational Stress Injury Clinic updates. I'm going to look for a motion from the committee to set the agenda, based on the topics that were put forward by all three Parties.

So it is moved by Mr. Jessome. A seconder? Seconded by - oh, we don't need a seconder, that's right, my CBRM days. Any questions? Mr. Wilson.

DAVID WILSON: Just knowing that potentially they may not be able to, just because of the time crunch, knowing that they're trying to get operational, would it be okay to subsequently agree to our second choice? I wouldn't want to see not having a topic in front of the committee. Is that something we could agree to or do we need a motion on that?

THE CHAIR: I don't think we need a motion on that. I think that if that arises, of course approach me and I can approach staff and we could ask then but I don't think we need another motion on that right now. No other questions?

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried. Thank you very much.

Next we have correspondence. There's a bit of correspondence since we met last. Are there any questions on the correspondence that has been presented to the committee?

Next, seeing that there are no comments on the correspondence, we're moving on to item No. 3. So March 10th, initially there was an out-of-town caucus scheduled but

there's no longer an out-of-town caucus scheduled so March 10th is not an issue for Veterans Affairs Committee to meet.

We'll move right on to item No. 4 which is the committee meeting day. In the Fall we sent out a request based on essentially the media asking for a little more flexibility when it comes to what day of the week committees were meeting. We initially suggested, I believe, the third Tuesday afternoon of the month, so moving it from Thursday to the third Tuesday of the month, which would put us in the afternoon.

It would be good to clarify that today, if we can. Are there any concerns from any of the Parties about moving our committee from Thursdays to the third Tuesday afternoon of the month?

EDDIE ORRELL: Are there other committees that meet at that time?

THE CHAIR: Not at that time. So that would move us again from - oh, Mr. MacLeod.

ALFIE MACLEOD: I just wonder, if that be the case, and I have no problem with it being Tuesday afternoon, I just wonder if we could do it from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. instead of 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Again, for travelling purposes, it just makes it a little easier for the distance. (Interruptions)

THE CHAIR: Is the committee okay with looking at the recommendation to move it to the third Tuesday afternoon from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.?

Moved by Ms. Arab; seconded by Mr. MacLeod.

AN HON. MEMBER: No seconders.

THE CHAIR: That's right, I'll get it right one of these days. So no other discussion - oh, Mr. Jessome.

BEN JESSOME: With the consent of the committee, I just wanted to make a suggestion or a friendly motion that you write a letter to the folks at Tourism Nova Scotia, Mr. Chairman, highlighting what was presented here today and ask them to consider the presence of the Pictou County Military Heritage Museum when it comes to advertising in that area.

THE CHAIR: Before we approach that can we vote on the motion for the committee first?

Would all those in favour of the change please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Okay, thank you very much. Did you want to make . . .

BEN JESSOME: I don't know if we need a motion . . .

THE CHAIR: Mr. Jessome, I can send a letter on behalf of the committee to Tourism Nova Scotia.

BEN JESSOME: With the consent of the committee, yes.

ALFIE MACLEOD: What are we asking for - free advertising or bigger advertising?

BEN JESSOME: Just highlight their presence here. I think that it would be important to just recognize what they're doing down there. They refer to themselves as the best-kept secret so I think we can do our part to highlight that they're there and try to make them not so much a secret.

ALFIE MACLEOD: We could put information at the VIC centres, if we had them.

AN HON. MEMBER: You had to go there.

THE CHAIR: Do you have a comment, Mr. Orrell?

EDDIE ORRELL: Maybe we could copy that letter to the minister of veterans affairs here in the province, and federally as well - you never know.

THE CHAIR: Absolutely. Thank you very much.

That concludes our committee business. Thank you all for being here today. I appreciate all the questions and comments. That was a great presentation that we heard today.

We are adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 10:17 a.m.]