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Chair

Mr. Greg Kerr

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● (0845)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Greg Kerr (West Nova, CPC)): Okay, folks, we're at the magic time.

We have three sets of witnesses today, and we also have a business session of 30.... We'll go through the first four questioners—NDP, Conservative, Liberal, Conservative—plus the introductory time of the guests. That takes the 30 minutes...pretty much there, if everybody's in agreement.

You can work out amongst yourselves who's going to ask the questions; the next will be the same; and the last will be the same. Then we'll go into business.

I want to start by saying good morning and welcome, gentlemen. It's nice to have you here.

We're starting the first round with our Brigadier Barry Le Grys....

Yes, Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): On a point of order, Mr. Chair, just in the spirit of collegiality, we have two outstanding members over there on the member of Parliament's soccer team, Mr. Daniel and Mr. Lizon.

Mr. Lizon scored two goals against team Ukraine and became the most valuable player of our team. I just thought we should give it up for Mr. Lizon. He had a great game for us.

Thank you very much.

[*Applause*]

The Chair: The good news for the government side is that this comes off his time.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stoffer.

To the witnesses, you can already get the gist that we're a collegial group here.

I started to welcome you, Brigadier Le Grys. We'll start with your presentation, if you wouldn't mind.

The way we do this, gentlemen, is that we give a half-hour session for each. We start with your ten-minute presentation and then we go to the questions from the members.

Thank you for coming this morning. Please go ahead.

Brigadier Barry Le Grys (Defence Adviser, British High Commission): Okay.

I'm not 100% sure I've got the exam question totally right, but I think you're after commemorative activities in the 21st century for veterans.

The Chair: Yes, that's pretty accurate.

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: Okay, good. Then I have the right things to say, I hope.

I'd better give you a general overview. Obviously, as defence adviser I'm more a master of the general than the details. I couldn't really go into specific technical details, but I hope I can give you a good overview.

The mainstay in terms of commemorative celebrations for us are hinged around November 11, Remembrance Day, and usually the closest Sunday. There'll be events all over the country, centred upon memorials usually, and from community to national level.

The Royal British Legion and regimental associations are more often than not the key enablers at all of these events. Indeed, the Royal British Legion is the nation's custodian of remembrance.

London usually provides the premier events, such as a Saturday evening event on the memorial weekend in the Royal Albert Hall; on November 11 itself, services at the cenotaph and silence in Trafalgar Square; and cathedral services on the Sunday in cathedral and abbey.

Outside of Remembrance Day commemorations themselves is what we call Armed Forces Day. It's a relatively new event in the last three years. A different city hosts this day each year. It was Edinburgh this year, and it'll be Plymouth next year. It's a day of remembering and recognizing the armed forces of past and present. It's supported across the country by similar local events on the same day with the same theme. But there is a particular city designated to be the flagship for it.

Throughout the year, we have what we would term our all-year-round centre of remembrance, which is our National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. This is a memorial site. It has many memorials within it, and events are sponsored there by charities, institutions, and organizations at will throughout the year. The theme there is very much one of remembrance.

Surrounding all of that, the services, ships, regiments, units, bases, are at will to commemorate specific battles or honours as their traditions advocate. I would rarely put these on a national celebration level, although you might place the Royal Air Force remembrance of the Battle of Britain at Westminster Abbey, for example, as counting as a national-level commemoration.

But indeed, we had our last official bespoke remembrance of the D-Day landing, for example, at a national level with MOD sponsorship, so anything that is done there is done very much at an independent organization or community level.

The conceptual underpinning for commemorating the work of the armed forces in the U.K. is the Armed Forces Covenant. I have brought a copy along with me, for you. It's been refreshed by the current government as recently as May this year, and it's an understanding of responsibilities between the people of the United Kingdom, the government, and the armed forces, and that's armed forces past and present.

The armed forces community within that covenant is defined as “serving personnel, families, veterans, and bereaved”; and “recognition”, as a term, lies within the scope of the covenant and is very much a key goal. The armed forces community is entitled to appropriate recognition for the unique service given and the unlimited liability of the service person and what they assume. In return and in addition to that unlimited liability in the armed forces, the armed forces personnel themselves have responsibilities to fulfill—for example, upholding the standards and values of their respective services, as laid down in the covenant as well.

● (0850)

The Secretary of State for Defence reports against the covenant every year to Parliament, and supporting the covenant will be a number of actions the government wishes to advocate, that it wishes to achieve in the forthcoming year as part of it. One specific step, for example, following from the covenant this year, has been the community covenant grant scheme, the aim of which is to support projects financially at the local level, which strengthens the ties between the civilian community and that wider armed forces community that I talked of earlier.

That really ends my introduction. What I've done there is described to you the covenant, which is the underpinning conceptual piece for recognition and our mainstay commemorative events at a national level.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We're not used to witnesses coming in under time quite like that, so we have to scramble now.

I'll go to the NDP, and I understand Ms. Mathyssen wants to start.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Yes, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for your presentation.

I was particularly interested in your reference to the covenant that you have in regard to not just veterans of the past, but to, I assume, modern-day veterans who have been on various missions and to those who are currently serving, and the fact that the community of veterans or of service personnel are entitled to recognition and unlimited liability.

Some of the concerns we have here in regard to how we serve our veterans and CF personnel have to do with the services that they receive. Under your covenant, do you have responsibility to make sure that there's appropriate medical care, that there are no homeless veterans, for example, or veterans forced into using food banks? That's one of the real problems we have here, and I'm very concerned about that.

So what does your covenant entail? Are there problems? If not, how do you make sure that veterans or service personnel don't run into the kinds of problems we have here in Canada?

● (0855)

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: A key principle of the covenant is that the armed forces community should not be at a disadvantage to the civilian community, but nor does it place them in a position of advantage, either.

For veterans, if you take the example of medical care, that is provided by the National Health Service. They should receive the same service as everybody else in the civilian community.

Where their need for the National Health Service is a direct result of their military service, then indeed there may be some form of prioritization and particular attention to making sure they get that care—ahead of the queue, if necessary, perhaps. But there isn't, if you like, any intent behind the covenant to place veterans at a specific advantage at all. It's to make sure that everybody's treated equally, but veterans recognized for their service given.

Veterans, for example, would receive recognition and gratitude, positive measures to prevent disadvantage, and indeed whatever financial packages by way of pensions or disability pensions and so forth that they may be entitled to.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: Thank you.

Are there instances of veterans who are homeless or who are dependent on food banks that you know of?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: Yes, unfortunately, and we work very hard; both the Ministry of Defence and charities such as the Royal British Legion, Combat Stress, and others look particularly at the homeless in London, for example. We work with those, as does the Soldiers' Charity, again, to try to negate those difficulties.

But to say that those problems don't exist would be wrong, because they do, I'm afraid.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: So it's a universal situation that we simply must address.

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: Yes.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: What role does the monarchy play in remembrance?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: It's twofold, I suppose. Many of them are veterans. The Duke of Edinburgh is a prime example. Also, they are the figurehead of the state and the state's recognition of service. Their physical presence will be there at key memorial events, without doubt. Indeed, some of them are serving. There's another point there where, again, their presence is particularly important.

The Chair: You're pretty close to your time, Ms. Mathyssen. If you have a real snapper, you can go.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: Actually, we're good.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll turn to Mr. Lobb for five minutes, thank you.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Thank you.

I have two questions.

First, with the two recent conflicts that Britain's been involved in, have you experienced an increase in the public's participation in remembrance and commemoration?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: Yes. I think that's fair to say.

It's not just in terms of commemoration events around November 11, but also around repatriation ceremonies at what is now Royal Wootton Bassett, for example, and Armed Forces Day, which is the event that has come into being over the last three years, as I mentioned earlier. I would say the public's engagement and appreciation have gone up considerably in recent years as a result of ongoing conflicts.

● (0900)

Mr. Ben Lobb: In this world now of Facebook and Twitter and everything else for the world's youth, how has that changed the way in which commemoration and remembrance have evolved in Great Britain?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: Organizations and charities such as the Royal British Legion use that social media to get their message across. They promote schools' familiarization and learning packages and within that they'll use certain aspects of social media to attract youngsters. It's another way of moving messages around.

I think those engaged in supporting veterans and promoting veterans affairs are fully aware of modern social media. Whether that social media has had a specific impact other than perhaps the way they spread their messages, I'm not so sure. Nothing comes to mind as an example.

Mr. Ben Lobb: In your world travels and in talking with colleagues from other countries and comparing notes and best practices, is there any one thing that you think Great Britain does that sets itself apart from what the rest of the world does as far as remembrance and commemoration are concerned? Obviously in this committee we're trying to find best practices or innovative ideas, so if you have any, we'd appreciate hearing about them.

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: The conflicts of the past ten years have made us learn, or relearn, perhaps, that you have to look after your people in service and in transition out of service when that time comes. Whether that's as a result of a life-changing injury or just natural retirement, many of the needs are similar. There's life beyond that, where support may be required too.

I think we're much more aware now of how demanding that "through transition and beyond" piece can be, and how in this modern age it has to be tailored in a manner that we would not have thought of doing 20 or 25 years ago.

In that sense, our approach to seeing people transition through different stages in life is a lot more comprehensive than it was. We still have more to do, I suspect, but we're far more fully aware now than we were.

Mr. Ben Lobb: I wonder if you can tell the committee a little more about Armed Forces Day. I can't remember if you mentioned the date it is held, but just give a little more about how it came to be, the number of people who participate, and how long the lead-up is to Armed Forces Day.

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: It came about four years ago. The first was in Chatham, then it went to Cardiff, then to Edinburgh, and it will be in Plymouth next year. It's normally on a weekend in June, and normally centred on the Saturday.

Whether it's in the flagship city or any other community that wishes to support Armed Forces Day, there tends to be more of a remembrance theme in the morning, and then in the afternoon there's more of a celebratory theme. There are displays, events for charity, parades, services, fly-pasts, and parties in the evening put on in a large stadium. There's sort of a tournament tattoo-type feel. That's normally the way the day pans out.

It's a good opportunity for charities to fundraise. It's a good opportunity to get a message across to the public about what service people, past and present, do and have done.

I wouldn't say there's a lot of lead-up to it. It's very much centred on the day, but obviously there is promotion of events and use of the day to work up messages to gather maximum engagement on the day. Sunday follows with some more solemn events to round off the weekend.

● (0905)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We ran over a bit there, but I certainly didn't want to cut you off.

Now we'll go to Mr. Casey for five minutes.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Good morning.

I've read that in both the United States and Great Britain, a decision has been made at the highest level to exempt veterans from the budget cuts that the governments need to make in order to balance their budgets. Do I have that right?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: No, I don't think so. I'm trying to think what it is, as a stand-alone piece in budgetary terms, that one would look to cut in terms of U.K. veterans.

But, please, I think you wanted to continue your question.

Mr. Sean Casey: Well, no, if the premise is wrong, I'll leave it at that. I am aware that the United States has decided that in their budget balancing exercise they're not going to cut veterans. I thought a similar pronouncement had come out of Great Britain, but if I'm mistaken, that's fine.

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: I think we're probably in a different place. We have our National Health Service that provides for all of the community. Their pensions, disability allowances, and so forth will remain. Whether there are changes to those in the future, one cannot forecast. We're having quite a thorough overhaul of pensions and allowances in the U.K. for all of the public sector. There may be a change in the future, but what's in place now will be protected.

We do tend to be, because of our welfare state, in a different place to where the United States is. So I would say the intention would be to protect their current pensions, allowances, and so forth, but I'm not aware of a full statement or identification of specific pieces to be protected.

Mr. Sean Casey: Okay.

Specifically on commemoration, I heard you say that the idea of an Armed Forces Day is fairly new. Aside from that one example, has commemoration changed significantly in recent years? Do you feel that it's being well done or that there are challenges going forward?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: I think there has been an increase in recent years. For example, communities and cities are far more inclined to say they have a local regiment, it has freedom of the city, and they'd like a freedom parade. Whether that's when they return from Afghanistan or some other point that seems worthy of commemoration, that parade takes place. We're seeing far more of those being sought than perhaps we would have seen 10 years ago. So yes, there's definitely an increase in awareness.

Are things being done better? I think the armed forces and local communities are better aware of how they lock into one another and how they work with one another to coordinate such things. That's really come about by this growth in awareness and civilian recognition being more universal.

Mr. Sean Casey: Are you currently stationed in Canada?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: Yes, I'm based at the British High Commission.

Mr. Sean Casey: And how long has that been?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: It's been just over a year, but I've been in and out of Canada for many years.

Mr. Sean Casey: If you've been in and out of Canada for many years, you would have some experience and some appreciation for the manner in which we commemorate veterans.

● (0910)

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: Yes.

Mr. Sean Casey: I guess this is a bit of a different twist on Mr. Lobb's question. Given what you've seen of what we do and what you know of what you do, what can we learn from you?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: That's a good question.

Mr. Sean Casey: It's okay to be brutally frank and critical.

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: We've been in partnership by virtue of the likes of Afghanistan, for example. Regarding what I mentioned earlier about this need to support our service people's transition to civilian life, we've been working quite closely with allies on how that's done, trying to work out what people do and what their practices are.

That dialogue over the last few years has been tremendously helpful, I think, to both sides. Although templates don't necessarily cross the Atlantic, the thought processes and some of the thinking and first principles are very helpful in designing how we make these transitions better.

There are a couple of examples of things that are perhaps distinct. For example, you've had the policy of taking bereaved families to Kandahar, if they wished to go, following the loss of one of their own. We don't do that, and there are reasons why we don't.

That's one example of a good practice that everybody speaks very highly of here in Canada. Although we don't think that template would necessarily fit for the U.K., it has influenced our thinking in terms of the way we support the bereaved, outside of that. That's a good example of how we've taken something, thought about its principles, haven't actually done the same thing, but we've learned from it.

Mr. Sean Casey: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Again, we've gone over time, but it is interesting information and we certainly didn't want to cut it short.

For the last round then, we'll go to Mr. Daniel.

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Thank you for appearing here. I appreciate that.

One of the things that's happening in Canada for sure is that the demise of some of our veterans from the two great wars is increasing daily. The end result is that I think we do not have any veterans left from World War I.

This question is kind of a general one. Have you have changed your value or the intent of how you're going to commemorate World War I now that virtually nobody who participated in it is around?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: Yes. A good example of that, as I mentioned earlier, is the D-Day landing commemoration. We have done some extremely large events at appropriate periods—the 50th, for example, and so on—involving royalty, the Queen notably at the 50th. We are no longer going to do those things, because there are not the veterans to take across the channel in numbers for us to deem it right to put taxpayers' money into it, and for the Minister of Defence to sponsor it.

In a way, we've sort of moved on. Of course, you collect new conflicts and new aspects to commemoration as you go forward, which we're trying to roll in as we move forward.

So yes, I think we will look at the likes of the First World War. We're now getting to that stage in the Second World War, too. We're getting to the point where there are very few Battle of Britain pilots left, for example. That will be the next piece that we move on.

"Official closure" is not quite the right term, but with official sponsorship there will be a different approach. It will become very much one of pure remembrance and less of the physical engagement and any aspect of...a recognition of achievement, perhaps; more remembrance, more solemn.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Right.

Changing the subject a little bit, I'm just looking to see how you are integrating the commemoration of veterans with some of the youth that are around. The youth don't seem to have the same respect for some of the commemorative sites, etc., that exist.

I'm just wondering how you engage the youth or younger people in commemoration.

● (0915)

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: In a bit of an ad hoc way, perhaps in appearance it would seem. The Royal British Legion, as mentioned earlier, does have an engagement program to get into schools. The way we found it works quite well is that if you present the schools with a product that suits part of their curriculum, then they will use it. It's a two-way prospering there. Many other charitable organizations do similar things.

We try to get veterans into schools. With youth, it works well with young veterans and younger serving soldiers. So there are a number of policies for that.

At the moment, one of the government's covenant goals more recently has been what we call Troops to Teachers, which is trying to get retired military personnel to become teachers, and to make that process more flexible so that they can get qualified and become teachers. The government is of the view that these people can bring a set of values and standards that the youth of today may well prosper from.

So that's a tangible example of something that's fallen under the covenant in terms of trying to engage youth.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Right.

You mentioned "products". Can you explain what you mean by that?

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: In terms of school programs?

Mr. Joe Daniel: Yes.

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: If there's an item on the curriculum that's an aspect of history, the First World War being a good example there, and the Royal British Legion can produce some tools that would help school children get through that part of the curriculum on the subject of the First World War, then the tools will be taken and put to good use.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

On behalf of the committee, I certainly want to thank you very much, Brigadier, for joining us today.

I hope, if we have any additional information, you wouldn't mind some questions perhaps going your way before the committee wraps up its work.

Thank you very much on behalf of the committee for being here this morning.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: Do you want me to leave?

The Chair: You're free to stay or leave, that's your choice.

Brigadier Barry Le Grys: I'll leave, if you don't mind. I have another appointment.

The Chair: We appreciate you coming. Thank you.

We're going to move directly into our next round.

I want to say welcome to Mr. Bradley Hall. He is here on behalf of the Canadian Agency of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and is certainly familiar with what we do here.

It's a pleasure to have you here. I believe you know the routine. We'd like you to do an opening presentation and be prepared to take questions.

Mr. Bradley Hall (Secretary-General, Canadian Agency of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission): Certainly. Thanks very much.

First of all, to reintroduce myself, my name is Brad Hall. I'm the secretary-general of the Canadian Agency of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It's a title that perhaps suggests a large staff and a large salary to match. I want to assure you that neither is true.

At any rate, I'm here to talk about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The commission has a very clear mandate, which was set out when it was established by royal charter in the First World War.

Our duties are to mark and maintain the graves of the members of the forces of the Commonwealth who died during the two world wars; to build and maintain memorials to the dead whose graves are unknown; and to keep records and registers. This cost is shared by the partner governments—Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and South Africa—in proportions based on the numbers of their graves.

The war periods are very clearly defined: August 4, 1914, to August 31, 1921, and September 3, 1939, to December 31, 1947. They were developed by agreement and are based on the start dates of the two world wars, the official end dates of the wars—versus the armistice in World War I, November 11, for example—and a period that recognizes the long demobilization periods of the participating governments' vast armed forces as well as later deaths due to service.

The commission's work is based on a few fundamental principles. They are that each of the dead should be commemorated individually by name, either on the headstone over the grave or by an inscription on a memorial; that the headstones and memorials should be permanent; that the headstones should be uniform; and that there should be no distinction made on account of military or civil rank, race, or creed.

While these principles might seem obvious now, it is important to realize that before World War I there was a very strong social distinction in the manner of commemorating casualties of the then British Empire, and these principles recognized the common sacrifice of all who died regardless of their background.

These principles are also the fundamental reason why Canada, along with its Commonwealth partners, adopted the non-repatriation policy of its war dead—a policy Canada continued to follow, even for its peacetime casualties and indeed their dependants, until the 1970s. And finally, it's a principle the commission asked Canada to reaffirm when Canada made its request to the commission to repatriate the remains of an unknown soldier, and Canada did in fact do that in 2000.

The commission is financed in the main through annual grants from the participating governments, as I've said. Canada is the second-largest contributor, with an annual contribution of about 10%, or about $9.4 million for the present fiscal year.

For that, Canada's 110,000 war dead are interred in 73 countries in some 6,500 cemeteries, of the 1.7 million Commonwealth war dead in 150 countries in 23,000 cemeteries, for which my organization is responsible. This dollar amount equates to a cost of some $85 per war dead commemorated to a standard that draws appreciative reviews from a varied constituency.

How long will the organization last? Our royal charter establishes us in perpetuity, and I would find it difficult, certainly in my lifetime, to believe that any government might put up its hand and be the first one to say, "We don't want to do this any more." Commission employees consider our work to be a debt of honour, and I know that the vast majority of Canadians would agree that this is the right thing to do.

The commission is organized for operational purposes into areas or agencies, each of which reports to the commission's head office in Maidenhead, just west of London, in the United Kingdom. The cemeteries and memorials are truly Commonwealth. They are not national. A national title within the cemetery name does not confirm a national responsibility or ownership.

To take two famous examples from a Canadian context, Beny-sur-Mer and Holten Canadian War Cemetery, for example, are commission cemeteries. Their maintenance and security of tenure with the host countries of France and the Netherlands respectively are with the commission, not with Canada. The responsibility for their upkeep rests with the commission.

Interestingly, from a Canadian point of view, there are only two commission cemeteries where only Canadians are buried—Agira, Sicily; and a small cemetery, Sunken Road, in Contalmaison, France.

In addition to our charter work, we do what we call "agency services", which is basically contracting. Those are the tasks that we perform for the partner governments outside of our two world war charter tasks.

● (0920)

Again, from a Canadian perspective, for example, we do the routine maintenance of Vimy, Beaumont-Hamel, and other Canadian and Newfoundland World War I battlefield memorial sites in France and Belgium.

We also maintain some post-war graves of Canadian servicemen and dependants who were buried overseas when the Canadian non-repatriation policy was still in effect. This also includes some early UN casualties.

We have also been refurbishing for the Government of Canada Canadian graves located in South Africa, resultant from the South African or Boer War. We don't do Korea. We do, however, care for Commonwealth casualties of that war who died in Japan and are buried in Yokohama war cemetery.

Finally, under a contract with Veterans Affairs Canada, my office assists in the maintenance in Canada of some 205,000 graves of veterans who were buried or whose headstones were provided by the Government of Canada. I will talk a little bit more about this later.

Although we're strictly speaking a marking and maintenance organization, we are always involved to a small degree in the identification-of-remains cases from all of our participating governments. Again, within the context of Canada, the lead departments for such cases are the directorate of history and heritage in National Defence and the VAC's Canada Remembers division.

I should again stress that along with them, our policy remains constant: no exhumation for the purposes of identification or repatriation of remains is permitted.

As the secretary-general of the Canadian agency, my aim is to carry out the commission's charter within North, Central and South America, some 16,400 war graves in 3,400 burial grounds in 32 countries. I run essentially a small business that equates more closely to a not-for-profit type of organization rather than a government department. Of course, we are all employees of the commission, not the Government of Canada. I employ eight permanent staff, and have a network of supervisors and contractors throughout these countries.

I'll give you some quick interesting facts related to Canada and Canadians in particular. Within Canada, my mandate encompasses the commemoration of some 18,000 war dead in 2,800 cemeteries and on five major memorials. One of these major memorials is on Sussex Drive, just opposite DFAIT or Old City Hall. It's the air force's memorial. You might want to have a look at that the next time you walk by.

We have one stone of remembrance in the Winnipeg Brookside Cemetery, as well as 26 crosses of sacrifice. These two structures are common to all war cemeteries overseas.

There are Commonwealth war dead in all U.S. states but three, Arkansas, Delaware, and Nevada; and all our provinces and the Yukon. They are mostly Canadian, but there are a significant number of other Commonwealth burials especially from World War II, the British Commonwealth air training plan, and the U.S. Arnold plan, plus American citizens who served with the Canadian Forces.

Why are there burials here even though there was a non-repatriation policy in effect? Disease, training accidents, and death subsequent to return but within the war years all contributed to the toll. There are more Canadian war dead in Canada than in Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, and Hong Kong combined. I often refer to members of my staff as caring for the hidden cost of war.

We answer a significant number of enquiries from members of the public. Again, you may be interested to know that, within my complement of staff, we have over 120 years of military service, which is quite useful when providing context to anyone who contacts us.

I mentioned earlier that as an agency service, we conduct maintenance to veterans' graves here in Canada under a formal agreement with VAC. Since January 1, 2004, we have been conducting a veterans' graves inventory throughout the country on their behalf. We have just signed a five-year renewal of that contract to conduct 12-year cyclical inspections of veterans' graves, to conduct maintenance within the wherewithal provided by department, and to continue our inventory of smaller cemeteries throughout Canada. To date we have found, photographed, and entered into a VAC database some 205,000 veterans graves in 6,500 cemeteries.

Finally, I guess it's worth mentioning that National Defence, VAC, Beechwood Cemetery, and my office link all our activities at what is now simply called the National Military Cemetery here in Ottawa.

To quickly summarize, the commission is not some sort of foreign body. In terms of policy of the war dead of the two world wars, the commission is Canada and Canada is the commission. It is a cooperative of like-minded countries that agreed to an approach towards equal treatment and commemoration of the war dead of the two world wars.

It's an organization with several oversights. There is a board consisting of the high commissioners of the participating governments resident in London, plus a distinguished group of folks appointed by royal warrant for fixed terms. The U.K. Ministry of Defence which is our largest contributor, conducts audits, as does our own U.K.-based private audit firm.

● (0925)

Finally, from a uniquely Canadian perspective, there is VAC, through whose votes the commission receives its funding. VAC staff scrutinize estimates and expenditures, and participate in our annual financial screening process.

Canada receives value for money. In addition to the $85-per-grave cost I talked about earlier, because of our worldwide organization and staff in place we're able to assist VAC in other non-charter tasks, such as those I mentioned, plus one-off projects that VAC might like to do. These include such things as grounds work at L'Abbaye d'Ardennes in France, the Green Park memorial in London, and indeed the Vimy restoration project, where we seconded a technician, provided advice, and trained those re-inscribing the names on that memorial.

Basically, my office and the rest of the commission seek to assist VAC in any manner the department thinks might be helpful. We are now seeking ways whereby we can complement the work being done by Veterans Affairs Canada for the commemorative period 2014-2018, the 100th anniversary of the First World War.

We are in continual contact with Canadians who seek information, and we provide a variety of pamphlets, information sheets, and web-based information—all in both of Canada's official languages. Increasingly, we are also speaking with members of the public whose relatives or friends survived the war but were subsequently buried at the expense of Canada for any number of reasons.

Our annual report is circulated in November. I will make sure all of you get a copy of this year's. I have brought a couple of samples and left them with the clerk.

When people ask me what the commission does, I tell them that my organization is the guardian of a significant piece of Canada's heritage—its military heritage, and I am very proud to be a part of it.

● (0930)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hall.

We will now go to the NDP, to Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Sir, thank you very much.

For those who've had the opportunity to visit the war graves around the world, I have to say that you folks do an outstanding job there. They truly are remarkable. When you go there, there's not a speck of garbage anywhere. The grass is always cut. The flowers are trimmed. Someone described it once as having the feel of a British country garden. It's a truly remarkable opportunity to reflect upon what happened. You folks do a great job, and I thank you for that.

I have a couple of questions. Canada's first VC winner, Dunn, is buried, if I'm not mistaken, in Eritrea, and he's by himself. For years and years, the grave was left unmarked and unknown, and I guess was more or less looked after by passing people.

If I'm not mistaken, an engineer group, either from Canada or Britain, discovered it and fixed it up. There has been a lot of talk about how he died. Was it actual service, or was it outside the service?

A fair number of us have repeatedly asked over the years to have him repatriated to Canada—because he's all by himself—to honour our first VC winner in Canada. You were saying there's no repatriation allowed.

Is that the commission's decision or would that be a decision of the Government of Canada?

Mr. Bradley Hall: First of all, let me go back to the non-repatriation policy that was given to the commission by the participating governments. It covers only the First World War and the Second World War. What Canada might wish to do, outside of this two-war period, is entirely up to Canada as a sovereign nation.

Dunn is a very interesting case. The commission, and indeed Canada, commemorates by uniform, not by citizenship. Dunn, in fact, won his VC and is commemorated as a British officer, not a Canadian, so you have a problem there. Is he a Brit or a Canadian, even though he's from Toronto?

The second thing is that from time to time, because the commission has staff there, we have gone in at the request of Canada and provided advice on that particular grave. I am also aware of the Canadian engineer group that went in and did the work some years ago.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: May I ask why the commission is not part of the Korean gravesites? I know it was a UN police action at the start, but many Commonwealth nations participated in that action.

Mr. Bradley Hall: They did indeed. I assume it's because, as a UN action, there were some countries that weren't particularly well disposed towards the Commonwealth as a group. Therefore, they set up their own independent organization for that cemetery, which is in Busan.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Annick or Irene, any questions?

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: Yes, thank you.

Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Hall.

You said that the commission receives its funding through VAC and that the VAC staff scrutinize estimates and expenditures in regard to that annual funding. I wonder, are you looking for savings? Are you compelled to find savings in that funding due to the government's debt reduction program?

Mr. Bradley Hall: We are. We're very sensitive to the pressures upon which governments are finding themselves.

Of course, although Canada provides 10% of the overall budget, the United Kingdom provides 79%, and it comes from the department that Brigadier Le Grys represents.

We recognize that as a general principle there's no more extra money. We have enjoyed ten years of gradual increases over time, and at present the screening meetings are going on with representatives of the various departments of the governments.

I think basically what we are going to get is a flat-line budget, but they will allow for exchange and inflation. So we will maintain a constant-state budget.

Yes, we are finding efficiencies. You might be interested to note that our newly appointed chief executive officer in the U.K., although he spent ten years in the Royal Engineers, spent 20 years in very high-profile banking and audit positions with very high-profile firms, Coopers and Lybrand, etc., in the U.K.

So we are very busy trying to find out how we're going to do more with the constant state of funding.

● (0935)

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: You don't anticipate shortages or financial problems?

Mr. Bradley Hall: No, we do not.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We now go to Mr. Lizon for five minutes.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, and thank you very much for coming here this morning.

First, it's great work that you do. I don't think there's any question about it.

Have all the burial places been identified? Are there any that we are not aware of, or we are still trying to find where are the remains of Canadian soldiers?

Mr. Bradley Hall: I very briefly glossed over the statistics. I talked about the 1.7 million Commonwealth war dead from the two world wars, for which we are responsible. Fully 700,000 of that 1.7 million are named on memorials.

That means their actual grave was never found or it is deemed to be unmaintainable for whatever reason. That's a huge number. You get these cases every year. The most recent example is Private Johnston, who was just re-interred in northern France. There's a building site going on. Remains are unearthed or people are walking along the Somme, they trip over a set of remains. It happens all the time.

When I said that we get involved with these things, it’s because the commission is so well known in Europe and we have our offices there. Normally we get initial custody of whatever remains occur—if they're easily identifiable as war remains, be it through a badge or something like that. We then contact the appropriate government, and then that particular government takes whatever action they feel is necessary to go through the identification process.

Canada has been very aggressive, through their directorate of history and heritage at National Defence, in doing forensic audits to try to identify through bits of DNA, etc., for this to occur.

But there is no active program like the Americans have, for example, to go out and find or search for them, no.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: What would you say are the greatest challenges you face in the work you do?

Mr. Bradley Hall: Well, I think the greatest challenge is really time and space. We have 1,200 employees worldwide. We work in 150 countries. In any given time, there are some places you can't go to. I've just come back from a couple of years in the United Kingdom, where I was called another great title, “director of outer area” in the United Kingdom, which basically consisted of all the war graves in eastern Africa, the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, the Far East, and the Caribbean. I went to Iraq. There are 40,000 people on a memorial in Iraq. We have several war cemeteries there.

In the U.K., we were under some pressure, as it was felt that some progress was being made in Iraq, to go and do something about these graves. I went to Baghdad. I went to Fallujah, and we did a little bit of very rudimentary maintenance to make sure that at least the outline of these cemeteries were still there. Obviously we're quite aware of optics and everything else. We're not going to go into a war-torn country, rebuild the walls, and put in irrigation and everything else while the people just outside of it are starving.

But wars, disease—if you can think of the kind of work that you put into making sure that grubs don't come on your own lawns wherever you happen to live, you can imagine what we do around the world. It's natural hazards like that, and aging structures. I mean, many of our structures were built by the pre-eminent architects of the day just after the First World War; the Menin Gate for example, if you've ever been there, and Thiepval, which is the largest one in the world, on the Somme—they require constant maintenance.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Is there participation and cooperation by the respective countries where these cemeteries are located?

Mr. Bradley Hall: Oh, absolutely.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: That would include maintaining them and also financial assistance.

Mr. Bradley Hall: Well, the financial assistance comes from grants from the participating governments. But we also are left, quite frankly, legacies from people from time to time, especially in the U. K., where there is a charitable status for donations to the commission.

But as for the countries themselves, occasionally there's something.... Before I got into the business, I put no thought into it, quite frankly. As a soldier, I'd go over somewhere and say, well, isn't France doing a good job, or isn't Canada doing a good job, or something like that. But every one of these other organizations where we operate often has its own war graves association. In Norway, for example, there's a little bit of quid pro quo. It's the same with the Dutch and the Germans.

So they help that way, but not necessarily with financial assistance.

● (0940)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Hall.

We're now going to Mr. Casey.

Mr. Sean Casey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning.

We know that the budget at the Department of Veterans Affairs has been decreased by over $200 million. The only witness who was allowed to testify told us that this isn't going to come from veterans. But it has to come from somewhere.

Do you know whether your envelope is going to be affected by this reduction in the DVA budget?

Mr. Bradley Hall: It will not be affected to the extent that...to what I spoke about earlier. We're talking flatline requests plus inflation plus exchange rates. That is all we are asking for.

In fact, our new CEO came over; we met with the deputy minister about three weeks ago. She certainly indicated that there would be no effect with that.

Veterans Affairs has been a very strong supporter of the commission. The funding formula in the percentage with the war graves was in fact proposed by Sir Robert Borden at the Imperial War Conference in 1917, and it has remained constant that way.

Mr. Sean Casey: Over and above that $226-million reduction, the department, along with all federal government departments, is now going through a process where they have to submit a 5% plan and a 10% plan.

What indications have you received from the department as to whether you will be impacted by the strategic operating review that's presently under way?

Mr. Bradley Hall: None.

Mr. Sean Casey: You received no indication that you will or will not be affected.

Mr. Bradley Hall: No, I'm sorry, I misspoke. We have received no indication that we will be affected.

As I say, we just came back from the deputy minister. We're going through the screening process of funding now. We expect the budget that we submit to the participating governments to be approved this year.

Mr. Sean Casey: I understand that they're multiple funding partners. If your expectations aren't met—and the direction is that your commission is no different from the CBC or any other department that has to share the burden of the deficit—what will it mean to the other funding partners and to the work you do?

Mr. Bradley Hall: My short answer for the first part is that I don't know.

In the past, we've had years when one particular government maybe was not quite ready to ante up, and there was a lot of back and forth and everything else. Eventually we'd come to an agreement as to what was feasible from all the various partners. I don't expect that to change this year.

Mr. Sean Casey: All right.

In your opening remarks and in the material provided, there's a reference to a five-year renewal that tasks you to conduct 12-year cyclical inspections.

Is this five-year renewal a binding contract that includes dollar amounts?

Mr. Bradley Hall: It is. Again just to clarify, cyclical inspections are how we do our job. We have these war graves in all these different cemeteries all over the place. We have a simple matrix set up to make sure that every five or six years we go around and make sure they're okay.

Veterans Affairs has provided us with a contract that is fixed at $700,000 Canadian per year for the next...it's now four years, since we're coming up to the end of the first year. From that money we have been tasked to do three things: conduct cyclical inspections of the veterans' graves that we have found and update the database, conduct maintenance of those graves within the envelope of that $700,000 that's been provided, and continue our research into other cemeteries around the country that might have veterans.

Mr. Stoffer might be interested to know that we just came back from a tour in Nova Scotia last year, to little cemeteries all over, and we found something like 400 veterans' headstones in little single cemeteries in the woods, behind somebody's house, or something like that.

When we did this project, we concentrated on the big ones in urban centres, then moved into the medium-sized places, and now we're into the smaller communities around the country.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Hear, hear.

● (0945)

The Chair: Very briefly, Mr. Casey.

Mr. Sean Casey: How would a 10% cut in that $700,000 a year affect your work on that project?

Mr. Bradley Hall: We would not be able to take care of those graves. I would probably sacrifice the maintenance versus the continuation of the checking on the status to make sure they're still there. So it would affect our ability to maintain those veterans' graves.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Hall.

Now we're over to Mr. Daniel.

Mr. Joe Daniel: Thank you very much.

Thanks for coming.

My question is on a different tack. As we're approaching the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 and the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I, are there any special measures your organization is taking to commemorate these milestones?

Mr. Bradley Hall: Absolutely. Perhaps I can separate them first, though. We have no mandate for the War of 1812; it's outside our charter. But we are using the period 2014-2018 as an outreach and educational focus for our commemorative activities during that period. Incidentally, of course, within that time will fall the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the commission.

It's a matter of scale. Remember that the commission is a marking and maintenance organization, and we are tasked to do that. That is our major commemorative activity. We have five people in our head office in the U.K., and I have one guy who does 25% of his work in outreach here to do commemorative things outside that charter.

Veterans Affairs, for example, in their Canada Remembers division, I think has 50-plus people, or something like that. So there's no way we're going to duplicate the work that Canada does for a Canadian audience.

Interestingly enough—Brigadier Le Grys was here—we do a lot of de facto or default work for the Government of the United Kingdom, because 78% of our funding comes from them. Some of those educational activities we do include producing a cricket video, for example—I don't know if you're a cricket player—for incorporating cricket figures who were successful and who died in the wars and are buried overseas.

We did a thing called *One Boy*, which follows one 16-year-old from Leeds and his experiences in the First World War until his death.

We have done one for South Africa called *Some Go Early*. We're doing one now for Canada. We're in the process of clustering our sites and producing almost like a map of those cemeteries related to battles that occurred around the Battle of Arras, which of course was where Vimy occurred. Then you can see the various things, including where we exhumed the Unknown Soldier.

We have storyboards. We're on Twitter. We're on Facebook. We have commission newsletters. We have all sorts of things. The only gap in our coverage from a Canadian context is that the lingua franca of the commission is English, because we work in 150 countries, but my office tries to pick up the gap from the commission point of view for the francophone audience, the Quebeckers, the Franco-Ontarians, etc., here in Canada. Veterans Affairs Canada of course is established to do all this commemorative stuff in Canada's two official languages.

So we don't want to duplicate the work. Is that...?

Mr. Joe Daniel: Yes.

The Chair: I understand you're going to share your last minute with Ms. Adams. We just have over a minute left.

Ms. Eve Adams (Mississauga—Brampton South, CPC): Thanks very much.

Thank you very much for your presentation and for your great work. Our graves, as Mr. Stoffer mentions, really are impressive. We get wonderful feedback from anyone who's visiting overseas.

Could you expand a little bit upon the charitable status that Britain extends to your organization?

Mr. Bradley Hall: I am not an expert on that by any means, but the term our lawyers use is “tax relief”. So they get some kind of tax relief in the U.K. when contributing money to the commission.

We're often approached by Canadians who might want to do the same thing, and we don't have the same status here in Canada, nor have we sought it. I think we might have checked into it many years ago, but the basic answer, as I recall, was that because we're funded by the federal government, you can't really get a tax relief for funding an institution of the federal government.

● (0950)

Ms. Eve Adams: Well, we fund a number of charities, and we'll provide different grants to charitable organizations, and yet they can also still go out and solicit private donations.

Do you have any idea how much money Britain is taking in?

Mr. Bradley Hall: No, I don't.

Ms. Eve Adams: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Hall. That does conclude our time presented. As I said to our previous witness, if there are some follow-up questions I hope you wouldn't mind sending them along if we send them from the committee to you.

Mr. Bradley Hall: Sure. I left a bunch of business cards there, so there you go.

The Chair: We appreciate all you do. It's a great service you provide.

Thank you.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: I want to remind the committee members that we are on a pretty tight schedule. We know the vote is pending. There's a suggestion there could be a vote coming, so I use the word pending with caution.

We're going to keep to the tight timetable on the question and answer. Of course, when that's done we will move into the business section.

We're very pleased to have with us today Mr. Terence Whitty, executive director of the Army Cadet League of Canada. He does a great service for Canada.

We appreciate you being here today. I think you know the routine. We're giving you approximately ten minutes to do an opening and then'll we go to the committee for questions.

Welcome.

Mr. Terence Whitty (Executive Director, Army Cadet League of Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

I thank you for the opportunity to brief you on remembrance by cadets in Canada, and specifically the army cadets. I'll do all that in ten minutes by speaking really quickly.

On a note of introduction, I am and always have been more civilian than military. I had two years' service with the regular army in the 1960s and another 30 with reserves and cadets. Mostly, though, I was the owner and operator of businesses in both Montreal and Ottawa until about 2001, when I retired for the third time and took this job. We'll talk about that later.

The army cadet movement in 2011 is national in scope, alongside the other two elements, sea and air cadets. The army has about 18,000 kids in the program, the navy 8,200, and the air 24,300, for a total of about 50,600 Canadian teenagers in the program and 1,123 cadet corps across the country.

Army cadets has a presence in almost 300 Canadian communities. It traces a history from about 1861. In many communities in Canada, the cadet corps represents the only visible footprint of the Canadian Forces.

For a variety of complicated reasons, the cadet program represents to many teenagers their only available positive social activity, especially in disadvantaged regions of Canada. There's no cost to join or to participate.

It's important to be aware that although the cadet movement is organized on a military model and provides a structure to kids, it is definitely not a military organization. It's not the army.

The leagues—the Navy League, the Army Cadet League, which I represent, and the Air Cadet League—form the civilian oversight and the support of cadet programs, mainly with additional funding. We go out and raise money. This is mostly spent on accommodation—that is, a training area and offices for the cadet corps—and funding for some optional or complementary cadet activities.

The leagues are represented at every level—municipal, provincial, territorial, and national—and there's a vast array of almost 15,000 volunteers across the country serving at all these levels.

If I can talk about the cadet approach to remembrance, my understanding today is that this committee is studying the challenge and the means going forward into the 21st century in preserving the memory of the past events that formed our country. This is in sync with the stated goals of the Army Cadet League. We do the same thing.

Army cadets assist the Royal Canadian Legion in the annual poppy campaign in aid of veterans, old and new. As a matter of fact, cadets figured prominently at Rideau Hall last Wednesday, October 26, when the Governor General kicked off the 2011 campaign. Every year cadets actively take part in Remembrance Day ceremonies at their schools and in support of Legion branches all across Canada.

A good example of our remembrance activities was the successful establishment in 2010 of a national commemoration of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Canada's success at Vimy and the horrendous costs faced by ordinary Canadians going up that ridge still resonate today as a defining moment for Canada and Canadianism. In his book *Leadership*, General Rick Hillier made mention of this as the “Vimy effect”. Vimy still remains a symbol to Canadians even after almost a century. This translates into national pride and a powerful example to many teenagers. There's a reference in the handbook that I provided here today.

Each cadet corps in Canada forms an affiliation or an alignment with a regular or reserve army unit or regiment. The cadets wear the uniform, the accoutrements—the cap badge, the shoulder titles, etc.—of that unit, and they pretty well adopt the unit. As a result, they relate closely with the men and women who serve in these regimental families. The cadets then become very interested in their family history. Since virtually every Canadian army unit was present at Vimy Ridge, they become very interested in what happened there.

The kickoff of the commemoration of Vimy Ridge in Ottawa in April 2010 was not without its challenges, I can assure you. We had tapped into the community engagement partnership fund. However, in the final analysis, the major contributor to the success of the ceremony and the national events that followed and the cadet vigil at the National War Memorial was the partnership we formed with Veterans Affairs Canada, and particularly Suzanne Tining, Peter Mills, and Ian Burgess

If I may throw compliments today, I cannot say enough about the positive attitude and the common sense solutions these fine public servants brought to the Vimy commemoration in Ottawa. I sincerely mean that.

● (0955)

This emphasized that success in remembrance is dominated by the commitment and participation of individual Canadians. This approach was validated by Minister Blaney's appearance here in Ottawa at the Maple Ridge elementary school with Master Corporal Bernard Tessier, as well as the “I Am A Veteran” TV commercials. That's exactly the way to go.

The audience for remembrance is the youth of Canada. If we want our message to reach them, we have to package it so they will listen to it. The 21st century belongs to our youth, and that approach is critical. Old guys like me already know the history—and if we don't, we should.

When we embark on remembrance, we need to be aware that many of today's youth may probably have missed the background message. Remembrance has to be presented in a way that ensures young people get the point. The Army Cadet League has found that the best way to do that is to highlight individual Canadians within the framework of larger events they helped form.

In other words, we paint a picture around an ordinary Canadian who rose to meet terrific challenges, some of whom paid with their lives, and some of whom silently faded back into the background of home and family. It is these people we need to remember, and it is people who teenagers most readily relate to, not events. Events are boring; people are interesting.

In the movie *Passchendaele*, for instance, one of the main characters remarks, “We're going to attack. It seems that the Canadians are the only ones who can get anything done around here.” Well, it was only a movie, but that one little remark struck a chord with a lot of people.

Another example is that at the army cadets summer training centre in Vernon, British Columbia, there's a Japanese artillery piece at the main gate right now. Traditionally, the piece was vandalized every summer as a rite of passage. The master warrant officer from combat engineers took it upon himself to inform the cadets out there about how the gun was seized by Canadian engineers during World War Two at Sitka, why there was a Canadian presence up there, and how the engineers transported the gun back to Vernon camp as a memento.

The cadets had simply never realized this. They hadn't known.

Today the cadets clean this gun every summer and maintain a shine on its brass all summer long. It has an honoured place at the main gate in memory of those engineers.

The kids had just not been told about the gun before that history lecture. Before that, it was just an enemy gun that was traditionally vandalized.

In the same vein, there are two brothers from Buckingham, Quebec, just down the road here, just downriver, named Olivier and Wilfred Chenier. Brad might have spoken about Cabaret-Rouge cemetery, where they are right now. I mentioned them in the power-point presentation I dropped off to you.

Olivier and Wilfred Chenier joined the Royal Canadian Regiment together. Their regimental numbers end in 813 and 814. They fought together, they died together at Vimy Ridge, and now they lie together in Cabaret-Rouge British cemetery, north of Arras, France, on Highway D937, just outside of Souchez. I mention that because they don't get many visitors. They deserve to be remembered.

I'd like to comment on Don Meredith's and Mrs. Davidson's comments in the evidence record of October 4, 2011, regarding the attitudes of members of the Canadian Forces, and how it translates into our Canadian kids.

It's very true that the only thing that members of the Canadian Forces care about is whether their comrades will stand beside them in a tough situation. That's the only way they judge them. They measure a comrade not by race, not religion, not anything else, for that matter. This attitude cascades down into the cadet movement in a very healthy manner. The old prejudices are generally of no consequence to teenagers today as they relate to their friends and peers. I suppose we could look on this social development as one of the successes of our own generation, but today's teens simply do not see these things in the same way we did, nor do they carry the baggage that people of my age carry around.

This was brought home to me when we celebrated the 125th anniversary of army cadets in Canada. The Army Cadet League formed a choir here in Ottawa of local army cadets. We sang the history of the army cadets in Canada in song. We chose one of the songs from each hit parade of a certain year, about 12 different songs, from 1961 to 2010.

One of those was *Hymn to Freedom*, written by Oscar Peterson. He wrote it in the 1960s, and I got the impression at rehearsals that the cadets' hearts were really not into it, they were just mouthing the words, and we realized that they had no understanding of the struggles that led to Oscar Peterson writing this piece.

At a later rehearsal, we ran a CBC documentary where Mr. Peterson explained the mood of the time and why he wrote the piece. The film was interspersed—this part of it anyway—with images of the Birmingham riots, police dogs chasing and attacking blacks, fire hoses aimed and used on the crowd, and general mayhem.

● (1000)

The cadets, who were, I might add, an ethnically diverse group, if I can use that term, were almost in a state of shock. They had no idea of these events. However, after they got the picture, they sang that song with a lot more gusto. I think they even remember it to this day.

Remembrance in the 21st century: it's an interesting challenge. But I can assure you that the Canadian cadet movement, all three elements, are prepared to engage in it, particularly the army cadets.

For clarification, remembrance is not part of the mandate of our partners in the Canadian Forces in their delivery of the mandatory part of the program. Remembrance is the turf of the three leagues and their volunteers. The leagues have the desire, the commitment, and the energy to engage, and we're uniquely positioned to do so. We don't have to follow some of the regulations that the Canadian Forces are burdened with.

The future is being formed today, even as we talk here. The twelve-ish awkward preteen in middle school is the adult who will call the shots for the first half of this century, and their children and grandchildren will wrap it up in the latter half. In my mind, what we give to the present-day teens will affect 21st century Canada in ways we cannot even imagine. They will continue the ideals of our nation if we can get the message of history to them.

In 2050, the average Afghanistan veteran will be almost 65 years old and hopefully looking to retirement. Today's 12-year-olds will be 51 and running the country—whether they want to or not. It's never too early to start the work, and I think we're all making good progress.

Thank you for listening to me. The cadet program is a big world with many different levels to it, and not easily understood in ten minutes, I can assure you. I've been working at this for ten years, and I still don't understand most of it. So I could only scratch the surface here, but I do hope that I have done justice to the potential of growing remembrance in Canada among our youth, and the enthusiasm cadets have for the subject.

Thank you again.

● (1005)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Whitty. We would not have cut you off, because that was way too interesting. We hope you'll learn right along with us today.

We'll go to Mr. Stoffer for about four minutes.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: I don't really have a question for you, sir. I just want to say that I had the honour and privilege of speaking at a cadet mess dinner at the Juno Tower the other day in Halifax, and all the members there were so proud of the work they do with the cadets.

When I look at the Musquodoboit Harbour cadet group, the Sackville cadet group in my riding, and see the pride in the parents when they see their kids doing stuff they never thought they could do, I want to congratulate your organization for what you do. There are 50,000 kids and their families out there who are benefiting from your wisdom and the wisdom of all the people who are part of that. It is truly a remarkable program for young people, and I just want to thank you for that.

Mr. Terence Whitty: Thank you, sir. I'll pass that on.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Irene, go ahead.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: Actually, I was just thinking about some of the cadet groups in London. We have a naval cadet group who makes a point of inviting MPs and allowing us to participate in their program. I must say that one of the things I hear most often, in terms of the parents, is how beneficial the program is and how it has helped kids who were shy, or who didn't do well at school, to find a sense of themselves and abilities they had no idea they possessed.

So I would like to echo Mr. Stoffer and say thank you for the work you do. London has a significant and wonderful group of young people who are ready to serve their country in many ways that I think are yet to be discovered.

Mr. Terence Whitty: The movement doesn't appeal to all teenagers, but for some it can be a life-changing experience. Not that many kids go into the armed forces. They go into business and the professions. It's a good mix.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

You have a question?

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): I just want to know how the cadets help the Legion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Terence Whitty: My French is quite poor.

In Canada, every cadet corps is in a community that has a branch of the Legion.

[*English*]

There's a local connection. Sometimes the Legion will sponsor a cadet corps and provide money to them, or the cadets will take part in some of the ceremonial events of remembrance that a Canadian Legion is connected to. We're a local community-based organization.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Annick Papillon: For example, for the commemorative ceremonies that take place on Remembrance Day, that is on November 11th , will Cadets always work hand in hand with the local population?

[*English*]

Mr. Terence Whitty: Yes, all across Canada; cadets from all three elements will be participating in events all across the country with Legion branches.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Annick Papillon: Do you have examples of the type of collaboration between them on that day?

Mr. Terence Whitty: In Buckingham, the army still has a cadet corps. They will participate in every parade

[*English*]

at the cenotaph ceremony in Buckingham. There will be a contingent of cadets here in Ottawa at the national war museum. They will also be doing a commemoration at the Beechwood Cemetery. In Winnipeg, Manitoba, there's a war memorial there where a large contingent of cadets will parade, as well as in Regina, Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, and

[*Translation*]

in every Canadian town and village.

Ms. Annick Papillon: Very good. Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Very briefly, Mr. Genest.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Genest (Shefford, NDP): As you know, in Quebec, the sovereignist movement has caused cadet corps to practically disappear. A few remain, but they are rare. There is only one corps in my riding.

Which group or which movement could encourage the establishment of other cadet corps? Could the Legion help us in this matter?

This is unfortunate because this activity provides young people who wish to excel themselves with an exceptional opportunity to do so.

● (1010)

Mr. Terence Whitty: Yes.

Each Quebec region is different. The Army Cadet Corps are supported mainly by service clubs, such as the Kiwanis or Optimist clubs. Clubs such as these support the cadet corps, not the Legion.

[*English*]

I don't think they're in danger of disappearing.

[*Translation*]

For example, in Chicoutimi, there is a high school that...

[*English*]

I'm going to stick to English. It will be simpler for everyone.

Mr. Réjean Genest: Yes, you can speak in English.

Mr. Terence Whitty: There's an *école secondaire* up there that wants to do a program, in the same way that they have sports programs in some schools in Quebec where they'll play hockey in the afternoon and do their studies in the morning, where they'll do classical studies in the morning and then cadet subjects of expedition, drill, and all this kind of stuff with the kids in the afternoon.

Quebec has a mix of different attitudes in different regions. It's hard to say this is going to happen or that's going to happen. It's different in each unit.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Whitty.

We'll now go to Ms. Adams.

Ms. Eve Adams: Thank you very much for your wonderful passion and for the great work the cadets do. In fact, in Mississauga they're incredibly active. We've got the Avro Arrows down in southern Mississauga. We've got some wonderful young women who are very active there. We've got the Streetsville cadets, and they're terribly active. They'll come out to all sorts of community events, and they're just wonderful go-getters.

Parents do come forward to speak to all of us to say how meaningful the cadet program is and how revolutionary it really is in these young lives. It teaches these kids leadership, brings them out of their shells, and encourages them to bond.

The work you and your entire team do is just so appreciated throughout our community, so thank you.

Thank you, also, for your passion for Oscar Peterson, who is from Mississauga. He is a wonderful....

He absolutely is, Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: No, he's a great pianist.

Ms. Eve Adams: We are terribly proud of him. He's a wonderful Canadian treasure.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: We are not worthy

Ms. Eve Adams: We are so honoured to have had him in Mississauga, and we certainly pay tribute to his wonderful accomplishments.

I'd like to ask you, though, if there's any special commemoration amongst cadets that you have in mind as the centennial of the First World War approaches, and if there's anything that you could recommend to us, as the federal government, as to what we might be doing.

Mr. Terence Whitty: Frankly, I haven't thought that far ahead, myself.

The commemoration of the War of 1812 is coming up very quickly, and there are events all over southern Ontario.

We were concentrating on getting this commemoration of the Battle of Vimy Ridge going, because it's something that the army cadets can latch onto. The air cadets commemorate the Battle of Britain and the sea cadets commemorate the Battle of the Atlantic, but up until this point, the army cadets really had nothing in that regard. Now we have this Battle of Vimy Ridge, and we're kind of concentrating on that. But we are aware, in the background, that the anniversary of 1914 is coming up and we will do something, but we haven't made any plans yet.

The Chair: Just to interject, we're going to confirm that those are actually the bells calling. It would be rather early because the House has just started.

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Chair, they're 30-minute bells. We only have 10 minutes of questioning left. If it's the will of the committee—and we need unanimous consent—perhaps we could at least finish our 10 minutes with Mr. Whitty.

The Chair: Actually they are 30-minute bells, and they have started.

Is it the will of the committee to stay on for a few more minutes to finish off with the witness?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: That's fine.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Stoffer.

Ms. Adams, you have another minute or so.

Ms. Eve Adams: You are probably very experienced in reaching out to youth through social media. Could you tell us what you have found to be successful and that we might be able to replicate, as we encourage Canadians across the country to commemorate the great service of our veterans going into the 21st century?

Mr. Terence Whitty: You have to develop programs that can flow out on all media. There is no one media. We use Facebook, but we also realize that teenagers use it as a social entity; it's more of a gossip column than anything else. Twitter is not bad. Websites are old stuff. But there are different types of kids and adults who monitor each of these different types of media, so you have to hit them all.

● (1015)

Ms. Eve Adams: Do you promote events through those media?

Mr. Terence Whitty: Yes, we do. We put everything up on Facebook, Twitter, websites—as much as we can. We hit them all.

Ms. Eve Adams: What about our newer veterans, those who have fought in Afghanistan and so on? What more could we be doing to honour their service?

Mr. Terence Whitty: I think a lot of them are being honoured. I'll be seeing some of them over the weekend. The word I get from these young fellows and gals is that they're getting a little embarrassed.

If I were going to honour their service, I think I'd look at the individuals. Yes, they went into a dangerous situation and they put their lives on the line over there; they could have been hit by a rocket at any moment in time. I think that's a big, big thing for Canada, but I think everything we're doing right now is sufficient. I don't think we can do more.

I think that later on—20 years from now—we should not forget them. Somebody should put a message on Outlook 20 years from today to have another look at them, because other issues may start popping up when they're in the 40 to years age bracket.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Whitty.

We'll go to Mr. Casey.

Mr. Sean Casey: Thank you.

Mr. Whitty, I very much appreciated your presentation and the straightforward manner in which you delivered it.

I want to go back to the answer you just gave when you indicated that some of our modern-day veterans are embarrassed. What do you mean by that? Are we fawning too much over them, is that it?

Mr. Terence Whitty: Yes. They have a sense of service, and surprisingly even some of the people who did very heroic things don't see themselves as heroes. They're just ordinary Canadians, in the same way that ordinary Canadians took Vimy Ridge. It's the same case with the two Chenier brothers from Buckingham. They don't see themselves as heroes.

Mr. Sean Casey: This is a huge organization. Your literature indicates you are 200,000-strong. How are you funded?

Mr. Terence Whitty: DND provides funding to the Canadian Forces for delivery of the program. It's about $198 million per year. I get a grant of about $400,000 to run my office.

Mr. Sean Casey: This is through the Department of National Defence, not Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Terence Whitty: Correct; it's through DND.

Mr. Sean Casey: As you know, there's a move across government departments—I presume DND is not exempt—to find savings. It's a strategic operating review, where 5% and 10% plans have been submitted. Has your organization had to participate in that process?

Mr. Terence Whitty: I'm on the periphery of that. My office has a grant agreement that's going to go on until about 2016, so there's a commitment from the federal government to preserve that funding. However, from what I can understand, and from being in some of the meetings, the Canadian Forces folks are a little worried that their funding may be cut back. They're also aware that through the vice chief's office—we report to the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff—there's a tremendous effort going on to preserve the program across Canada as is, without cutting any funding.

They realize how important the cadet movement has become in 1,100 communities across the country. It's a big deal.

Mr. Sean Casey: You have a funding agreement to 2016.

Mr. Terence Whitty: I believe it's 2016.

Mr. Sean Casey: What does that cover?

Mr. Terence Whitty: It covers my operating budget—$380,000 direct from the department and a top-up from the Director of Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers of another $40,000, in round figures. That's a discretionary top-up.

Mr. Sean Casey: My final question is this. You have the ear of several members of the government and a dozen parliamentarians here. I think universally we all have a high regard for your organization and what you do. What else can we do?

Mr. Terence Whitty: You can add support to anything you hear about the cadet movements in Canada. We had a strong lobbying push that ended about two years ago, after going on for about five years, to obtain funding for our branches. I'm the only office in the country that gets any funding, but the real work is done in Quebec and Ontario and Saskatchewan. We have branch offices in those provinces, and they're not funded. They have to do their work through donated funds.

It's very difficult in this day and age to accomplish that, especially in the north. We have three branches in the north. The travel costs are horrendous. They're trying to communicate with the leaders of these cadet programs across the north by e-mail or telephone.

You can't build relationships by e-mail. You have to get out and meet people and shake hands, and they don't have the funds to do that.

Mr. Sean Casey: Thank you, sir.

● (1020)

The Chair: Mr. Storseth.

Mr. Brian Storseth: I want to thank you for coming. We had great witnesses here today. I found your testimony to be particularly enlightening as we talk about youth. That's so important as we talk about commemoration, understanding, and making sure that we pass on that knowledge.

You talked about the story of the Japanese weapon, and that strikes home with me. I had a World War II veteran in my home community that I used to prepare the cenotaph with before November 11 every year. From him I heard stories and traditions to pass on to children. I think it's important what you're talking about. It should encompass all of us; we should try to pass on these traditions and remain aware of them, particularly as parliamentarians.

At the Legion's official website, I note that traditionally the poppy is worn during the remembrance period from the last Friday in October to the end of November 11. That's something that many people don't realize. The poppy is to be worn on the left breast closest to the heart. When wearing standard Legion dress, the lapel poppy is worn on the left lapel immediately above the Legion lapel badge, so that it's always above any other badges or symbols.

Many people ask whether they can attach a poppy to clothing with another type of pin. It is the position of the Legion that the poppy is a sacred symbol of remembrance and should not be defaced in any way. No other pin, therefore, should be used to attach it to clothing.

It's interesting to know that. Even in our own committee, as they look around to make sure they're doing it right...and I notice Mr. Casey is defacing his poppy as we speak.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Brian Storseth: It's important to note that the understanding needs to be there for everybody so that we can pass it on. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about how we can ensure that the cadets are able to pass on the knowledge and the traditions of their units and our veterans. The next generation isn't going to have the veterans of World War I, World War II, and Korea to pass on the traditions.

How do you see that?

Mr. Terence Whitty: You have to make it personal. One of the ways that this might be explained—the tradition of the poppy—is that in the soil of Flanders, when bodies became buried in the middle of the battles, when shells would blow earth up into the air, people could tell where a body was because poppies would come up. The decomposing flesh worked with the soil and the chalk in that area. This is why the soldiers adopted it.

When you point that out to teenagers in those terms, they make the connection between a poppy and what it really means.

Remembrance has to be personal. What can we do for our veterans? We can listen. Just be there. Show up at an event, buy a veteran a Pepsi, and just stand there.

An hon. member: With rum in it, maybe.

The Chair: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...with a mixer. I know where you're coming from.

Mr. Terence Whitty: Okay, then, a Coke.

Just listen to what they want to say. Everyone here at this table is considered a VIP by a veteran. Many of the veterans will be tongue-tied. But just wait and it will come out.

I learned the history of my regiment by playing golf with the old veterans and giving them two martinis; then they began to talk. Otherwise, I would never have known what had happened.

● (1025)

Mr. Brian Storseth: I do want to just get a quick question in on your response. You mentioned 20 years down the road, and one of the things that comes up in my riding, which is a military riding, is Cold War veterans and how we can best remember them and ensure that we can remember them.

Do you have any comments on that and on how we could essentially help to recognize the great sacrifice that many Cold War veterans made as well?

Mr. Terence Whitty: The Cold War wasn't as cold as people think it was. There was the Congo and Cyprus, and all sorts of things happened.

Some of our folks went to these peacekeeping operations and were forced to stand by and do nothing and observe horrendous things that went on, so there is an element of remembrance for them that is hard to enunciate. It's hard to enunciate, but again, in greeting people like that, if you ask where they served they'll tell you a little story. Their medals will tell you a little story. In the army our medals are a CV of where you've been—just that kind of personal recognition.

The peacekeeping associations that are now popping up all over the country bear witness to this. The peacekeeping monument here in Ottawa was a good step forward. Two of my friends are on that particular monument. But to actually go out and recognize them in some large manner, I can't think of a way to do that. I'd really have to study that one.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Whitty. That will conclude our time as far as questions go, and I do think you hit the nail on the head. It's a personal thing that we all have to do to make the contact with the veterans and show appreciation.

Thank you very much, not only for what you do and for being here today, but we know what you're going to continue to do in the future. We really appreciate your being here today.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: I just want to say, committee members, that we missed our business portion. We'll try to tack it on, but be aware that we're bringing back...[*Technical difficulty—Editor*]...Vimy, Juno, and...[*Technical difficulty—Editor*]...and hopefully time to do business.

I encourage all to get their lists of future studies in to us...[*Technical difficulty—Editor*]...as we go along. Please make sure they're ready for the end of...[*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

Thank you very much...[*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

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