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The Honourable Rob Moore

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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• (1200)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC)): Good afternoon, everybody. We have a little bit of upkeep for the committee. The first hour, when we were going to study our report, was cancelled. So we will be studying Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations on Thursday for two hours.

Our study today is pursuant to our study on the review of national protocol procedures. We have with us witnesses from the Royal Canadian Legion and the Department of National Defence. Welcome. This is going to be the last meeting where we're going to be hearing from witnesses. Then we'll move to drafting our report on the issue of national protocol procedures.

The way the committee works, gentlemen, is that each group has 10 minutes for opening comments. Then we move into a period of questions and answers.

We'll begin with the Royal Canadian Legion. We have Steven Clark, director, national Remembrance Day ceremony, and Steven Heiter, secretary, dominion ritual and awards committee. The floor is yours.

Mr. Steven Clark (Director, National Remembrance Day Ceremony, Royal Canadian Legion): Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the invitation to the Royal Canadian Legion to appear before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to speak on national protocol procedures. On behalf of our dominion president of the Royal Canadian Legion, Patricia Varga, it is our pleasure to be with you here today.

As the chairman said, my name is Steven Clark. I'm director of administration for the Royal Canadian Legion dominion command and director of Canada's national Remembrance Day ceremony. Joining me is Mr. Steven Heiter, who is with the dominion command ritual and awards committee.

As the guardian of remembrance in Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion works tirelessly to keep alive the memory of the 117,000 who have fallen in the military service of Canada. Commemorating is more than providing Canadians with the opportunity to stand in collective reminiscence of our fallen comrades on various occasions throughout the year.

Commemoration is an appreciation of the past, an understanding of how past actions in wars, missions, conflicts, and peacetime will affect future generations. We recall our moments of triumph and tragedy, of excitement and despair. It is this understanding and appreciation that enables us to remember and honour our veterans.

While there's no question about why we need to remember, we are often queried about how to do so properly. The Royal Canadian Legion recognizes the importance of and the need for established protocol procedures. While we will make specific reference to commemorations today, you can apply a more global application of our basic philosophy to other functions and ceremonial events. Functions may differ, but proper planning remains a constant.

Instrumental to effective commemoration is understanding the etiquette, formalities, and traditions that form a prescribed order of service. Respecting these customs and traditions is paramount, but so is achieving a positive result. That achievement is realized through expert advice and by following an established format that outlines correct or suggested procedures. It's natural for organizers to want to do things in an accepted way, because nobody wants to offend. Uncertainties can be reduced by providing guidance.

• (1205)

Mr. Steven Heiter (Secretary, Dominion Ritual and Awards Committee, Royal Canadian Legion):

The format for ceremonies and other occasions observed by the Royal Canadian Legion is outlined in our *Ritual and Insignia Manual*. This reference manual provides guidance on initiation and installation ceremonies, Remembrance Day ceremonies, dedication of a memorial, and order of divine service in the official opening of a Legion hall. It offers advice on the manner in which funeral and memorial services are conducted and have to properly pay homage to a departed comrade through a Legion tribute service. These protocols have been in place since the formation of our organization in 1926. A significant benefit of having such a reference is that it provides standardization and a procedural uniformity that can be implemented by every Legion branch, regardless of the location of the event.

A copy of this manual is provided to each of our more than 1,450 Legion branches across Canada, the United States, Europe, and Mexico. It is also available on our website.

As thorough as this reference is, it is impossible to account for every possible situation or address all potential variances. It is our position that protocol procedures cannot be overly rigid or narrow. It is essential that such procedures provide for a proper way to plan and conduct commemorations and events while still allowing for flexibility and adaptability as the situation warrants.

Mr. Steven Clark: For example, the central element of Remembrance Day ceremonies is the two minutes of silence. Also important are the traditions of wearing the poppy, the recitation of the act of remembrance, and the sounding of the *Last Post, Lament*, and *Rouse*. We unite to show our comrades they will never be forgotten. These traditions are sacrosanct and form part of every Remembrance Day ceremony, whether local, provincial, or national in scope.

There are also suggestions, like the suggested order of precedence for the placing of wreaths and the suggested order of march for the parade. We encourage Legion branches, where possible, to conform to the general format of the national Remembrance Day ceremony as they prepare for their local commemoration, while remaining cognizant, however, of the potential for adaptation.

Any procedural reference must also be mindful and respectful of format variances that are steeped in tradition that may exist between concerned organizations. For instance, in Remembrance Day ceremonies conducted by the Royal Canadian Legion, the *Rouse* follows the *Lament*. This order is reversed for ceremonies organized by our military partners. We acknowledge that over time social transformations or other reasons may necessitate amendments to practices and guidelines. While procedures may change, what remains most important is that those for whom we gather to honour, remember, and thank during Remembrance Day ceremonies remain constant.

Once developed, national protocol procedures become an education in communication activity. Without an awareness campaign and information flow, this resource would not be as effective as it could and should be. It is essential that individuals and organizations are provided with knowledge and guidance necessary to ensure ceremonies and other events are conducted in the most dignified manner possible.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Royal Canadian Legion extends its thanks to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for this opportunity to express our views on national protocol procedures.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

We will move to our second set of witnesses. From the Department of National Defence, we have Lieutenant-Colonel Marcel Beaudry, inspector of Canadian Forces colours and badges; Major Guy Turpin, directorate of history and heritage; and Chief Warrant Officer Alain Grenier, directorate of history and heritage.

Welcome to the three of you. The floor is yours.

Lieutenant-Colonel Marcel Beaudry (Inspector of Canadian Forces Colours and Badges, Department of National Defence): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee members.

[Translation]

My name is Lieutenant-Colonel Marcel Beaudry and I work at the Canadian Forces Directorate of History and Heritage. I'm joined here today by Major Guy Turpin and Chief Warrant Officer Alain Grenier, both from the Dress and Ceremonial section.

[English]

The directorate of history and heritage is maintained to preserve and communicate Canada's military history and to foster pride in a

Canadian military heritage. One active way of projecting this takes place when we conduct or participate in events such as military burials, commemorative ceremonies, or military ceremonies. Our sailors, soldiers, airmen, and airwomen are very cognizant and proud of the fact that we are highly visible and in the public eye, especially since we are in uniform at the time we participate in these activities.

● (1210)

[Translation]

Our main references for planning these events are: Canadian Forces Publication 200—The Heritage Structure of the Canadian Forces; Canada Forces Publication 201—Canadian Forces Manual of Drill and Ceremonial; and Canadian Forces Publication 265—Canadian Forces Dress Instructions.

These are updated on a regular basis, and we adjust to recommended changes where necessary. These publications are not available on the Internet, but all our regular partners possess hard copies so they can do their own research. We now have a plan for making these publications available shortly on the Internet.

We also have an outstanding team of historians in our arsenal and a section devoted to heritage that assists us in our research and planning. If they do not have the answer at their fingertips, they can access the in-house archives or conduct research at Library and Archives Canada.

[English]

Regarding commemorative ceremonies here in Canada and abroad, our main partner is Veterans Affairs Canada. We work very closely together and provide ceremonial advice and support. As an example, we recently provided support for the 95th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge in France, where we deployed a Canadian Forces contingent of approximately 100 personnel.

During all of these ceremonies, our Canadian Forces personnel across Canada provide direct support in the various regions.

[Translation]

For royal tours, funeral honours, state visits and ceremonies involving the national flag, our principal partner is Heritage Canada. We consult each other on a regular basis and share our knowledge and expertise. Our Canadian Forces publications are highly specific in identifying which dignitary is entitled to which honour, which makes things easier for the event planners.

We also work with the Royal Canadian Legion in planning the annual Remembrance Day ceremonies, including the main event here in Ottawa at the Canadian War Memorial.

[English]

Clearly, where there is established national protocol governed by, in most instances, the Department of Canadian Heritage, our job is to ensure that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces adhere to that protocol. Because we work overseas at times, especially with our partners in Veterans Affairs, we need as well to understand the protocols of other nations so that we can see to a harmonious marriage, if you will, of sometimes dissimilar practices.

Internally, within the Canadian Forces, we have our own protocols, which we usually describe as customs, traditions, and heritage, most of which are governed by our own internal regulations and orders, and at times we need to be careful to ensure that well-intentioned interventions by those outside the Canadian Forces do not conflict with time-honoured ways of doing this.

At this point, rather than speak to a myriad of disparate issues in a prepared talk, perhaps it is better to say that we are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Merci.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll move to our time for questions and answers. These are seven-minute rounds.

A reminder to members: that's seven minutes for the questions and for the answers. You're responsible for your own time.

Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Thank you.

And thank you again to the witnesses. I know this is your second attempt to be here, so I do appreciate it.

We've heard from a big cross-section of people. One of the things that we seem to consistently hear is that there's a divergence of opinion from those who are tasked to interpret protocol and those who are asked to carry out events based on protocol.

I'll start with the Legion. You have actually written down, using historical references, your suggested procedures. You also mentioned that there can be a great degree of flexibility. How much of an obstacle, if any, has this manual been in being flexible when it's required for you to be flexible? Does the manual get in the way of that?

• (1215)

Mr. Steven Clark: It does not get in the way of that. What it does is provide the guidance for those organizing the commemoration, what they need to follow. There may be instances, however, where things may be addressed or referenced in the manual that may not be applicable to a local ceremony. For example, for the national Remembrance Day ceremony we have representation by the Governor General. A local ceremony is not going to have that. Of course, when you're referencing the manual, you are going to be able to adjust your ceremony. It's the same thing with the Silver Cross mother. We have the national Silver Cross mother. In all of our locations across the country, it's not always the case where we have a Silver Cross mother present to place a wreath on behalf of the mothers of Canada, so a representative is designated on her behalf.

It provides the structure that those people in the local communities need, but it is not so restrictive that it would prevent the ceremony from taking place.

Mr. Paul Calandra: When you are looking at updates to your procedures or even to the manual, how do you go about consulting, and how do you ensure accuracy to a Canadian tradition or a Canadian standard, if that's an appropriate question?

Mr. Steven Heiter: We update this manual on a regular basis, usually right after our biannual convention. The information that comes back to us from convention, through resolutions, we apply to the revising of the manuals. We take input from any of our branches or members who have a comment about it, compile that information, and on a regular basis revise the manual to adjust it to ongoing changes in society, changes in need. We go back and look at things that we've done before, just in terms of trying to keep it up to date.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I think for the most part Canadians would assume—and probably correctly—that the armed forces are one of the biggest guardians of our traditions when it comes to ceremony and protocol.

How much of what you do is actually in manual form, and how do you make sure Canadian traditions are maintained?

LCol Marcel Beaudry: The military has to be seen as acting as one. A body of men and women has to act as one. Everything from basic drill to a more complex ceremony is written down, so that a pace is always 30 inches, cadence of march for quick march or for slow march doesn't change, and people have to be dressed the same, so we achieve the common look people expect of us. Necessarily, everything is written down, and traditions date back from the British Army and the Royal Navy.

Our *Manual of Drill and Ceremonial* covers everything from basic standing at attention and standing at ease to battalion ceremonial guards, sentries, escorts, freedom of the city, retreats, tattoos, sunset ceremonies, and street lining. This manual is about an inch and a half thick and it's in English and French. Right now it's in English and French in side-by-side columns, so we can't post it on the Internet. We have to separate out the English and the French and have graphics for each version, so we can put the English-only version on the English website and the French-only version on the French website. That's in progress.

This manual doesn't change very much. It will change when we change weapons, because the weapons drill we do is based on the safe handling of the weapons we currently use. When we change weapons, there will be some minor modifications to the weapons-handling aspects.

The other manual on heritage covers things that don't change very much—flags, colours. Badges and mottos will change to limited extents. Things like flag protocol and forms of address and royal and vice-royal dignitaries and heads of state come from Canadian Heritage. They don't change very much. This is another volume that is about an inch and a half thick.

The third volume is our dress manual, and it's a little less lengthy, but it changes a great deal, and every six months we have a meeting and there are changes that come out.

I hope that answers your question.

● (1220)

The Chair: Mr. Nantel.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank all of you for coming here today. No one is in a better position than you to tell us about protocol, with the possible exception of Ms. O'Brien, our principal clerk at the House of Commons, who has much to say on the subject. Lord knows it is all about protocol in that case.

My first question is addressed to Mr. Clark and Mr. Heiter, from the Royal Canadian Legion. In my riding of Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, I celebrated Remembrance Day with the people of Boucherville. It was the Sorel chapter of the Royal Legion that looked after organizing that magnificent event, which was certainly quite ceremonial.

I was wondering how we could maintain these traditions of honouring the memory of people who were involved in all these conflicts. Unless I'm mistaken, the Royal Legion has practically disappeared from the Longueuil region. How would you explain this decentralization? Does this not imperil ceremonial traditions of the legion?

[*English*]

Mr. Steven Clark: It's quite easy for those areas that have Legion branches to follow that format, but that's not always the case. As you brought up, there are situations when there are no Legion branches in a particular area. It's difficult to respond to how you would in fact conduct a proper commemorative ceremony, other than to say that you would have interested parties or other service organizations that would take on that leading role.

We have often assisted other service organizations that have contacted us, particularly closer to the remembrance period. They are looking for guidance on how to conduct a remembrance ceremony. We have members of the clergy, who are non-Legion members, who want to know what they should do on Remembrance Sunday and if they should do anything in particular or special.

Where we do not have a presence in a community, we try to offer guidance or suggestions when we're asked by organizations that may be concerned with that particular area in their community.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: My next question is addressed to the Department of National Defence. It has to do with comments we

have heard since we began to study the issue of protocol. Overall, I get the impression, as do several other people here, that things are going well. Communications between the various people responsible for protocol is quite good because they are all specialists. These are people who know what they are doing and speak to each other, achieving a good balance between adapting to different situations and established protocol.

However, last week, someone—the person who spoke the most—mentioned potential problems with protocol coordination. That person was alluding to funeral services for remains of soldiers that died in combat I believe. Did you feel any particular tensions around recent services?

LCol Marcel Beaudry: I did not have that impression.

Are you aware of anything?

Major Guy Turpin (Directorate of History and Heritage 3, Department of National Defence): In the fall of last year, we buried a First World War veteran, soldier Johnston. We were dealing with MacKinnon & Bowes, who had received the contract. It was a task-based contract. We have been working with MacKinnon & Bowes for many years now for all of the overseas funeral services. MacKinnon & Bowes is also the company that has the contract for all fatalities taking place overseas during operations. When remains are transported back to the country, MacKinnon & Bowes supplies the mortuary services.

● (1225)

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Mr. Turpin, has this company had the contract for a long time?

Maj Guy Turpin: If I'm not mistaken, the contract was signed towards the end of 2009-2010, for all deceased born before 1970.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Since 2009-2010, it has been a new company. There was another one beforehand, was there not?

Maj Guy Turpin: No. We were also dealing with MacKinnon & Bowes, but the contract had not been signed. It was done on an ad hoc basis.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: That's fine. So, since 2009, the contract has been given to the same company.

Obviously, your organization knows all about protocol, and that's all very well. How did you react when there was an issue about flags flown at half-mast, in 2006 I believe? There were too many people, brave soldiers, dying over there. It was decided that protocol would not be respected. What did you think of that situation? Were you already there? I suppose so.

LCol Marcel Beaudry: In our ceremonial manual, there are rules about flying flags at half-mast. Unless we receive special instructions, all flags must be flown at half-mast at all defence institutions as well as aboard ships as soon as the death is announced, and they remain so until sunset on the day of the funeral or memorial service if the deceased is the sovereign, the Governor General, the Prime Minister, a family member of the sovereign, a former governor general, a former prime minister, a Chief Justice of Canada, a member of the Canadian cabinet, a member of the Privy Council or a senator.

If the deceased is a military member of the Canadian armed forces sent to an area of operations on a mission, as in the case you mentioned, flags must be flown at half-mast as follows. All the flags of the operations force to which the member was assigned at the time of his or her decease must be flown at half-mast, from the day of the decease until sunset on the day of the funeral. All the flags of the regiment the member belonged to must be flown at half-mast, from the day of decease until sunset on the day of the funeral. All the flags of the service—sea, land or air—to which the member was assigned must be flown at half-mast but only on the day of the funeral, from sunrise to sunset, and all the flags at National Defence Headquarters at 101 Colonel By must be flown at half-mast, from the day of the decease until sunset the day of the funeral.

For us, that's fairly clear. As to what goes on on Parliament Hill, that is out of our jurisdiction. As you saw at the beginning, my comments on flying flags at half-mast have been fairly limited.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nantel.

Mr. Simms, please go ahead.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.): Thank you.

Thank you to our guests as well.

Just a quick question to start. I'm just glancing through this. I've seen snippets of this before—articles taken from it—but I've never seen it in full.

Have you sent these to all members of Parliament and senators?

Mr. Steven Clark: No, we have not.

Mr. Scott Simms: May I suggest to the MPs that every MP and senator should have one of these—at their own expense? The reason why I say that is because I get quite a few calls from groups that want to honour troops in Afghanistan—whether they've been to Libya or wherever it may be—but they don't know about protocol.

I have 195 towns in my riding, and some of them don't have a Legion. Most of them don't, so they call me, and we go through it on a piecemeal basis. But it would be ideal if we could get several of these. Actually, I find this quite good. It's quite descriptive and it's one of the best things I've seen.

It's just a humble suggestion.

• (1230)

Mr. Steven Clark: We'll certainly take that suggestion back. It will be updated following our convention this June, so anything that we would send would be delayed until the fall, but we can certainly look at that.

Mr. Scott Simms: I will be bold enough to say on behalf of us all that it would be quite appreciated if you could, because I do get a lot of calls, especially from a civilian perspective, on how to do things to respect the military but at the same time keep with protocols.

To me, this book is a great guideline. I think one of the things that we've talked about quite a bit in these hearings is that it's nice to have a general guideline as to protocols regarding flags, anthems, badges, insignias, and that sort of thing, especially from the civilian part of it. It would be nice to have one guide, and most people believe that it

should be Canadian Heritage that does it for the general public, for public ceremonies that are arranged by civilians not familiar with protocol. They want to implement the protocols that you have because they want to do it by the book. I mean, they're not rigid, but certainly they want to do it by the book.

You deal with Canadian Heritage on this. Is that correct? In what way do you deal with them now? Did you say that you have one section of your manual that deals with Canadian Heritage?

LCol Marcel Beaudry: Where there is Canadian protocol, for example, regarding flags or orders for national and provincial flags, and that sort of thing, they are the authority, and what we put in our book is what comes from Canadian Heritage. What else comes from Canadian Heritage? Flags, anthems, forms of address, and ceremonial information concerning matters for those who are royal, vice-regal, or heads of state. We look to them to be the authority on that.

So what we put in our manuals reflects accepted Canadian national protocol. The rest is internal to the CF.

Mr. Scott Simms: Yes, and I think a lot of people would say they'd like to have one book similar to this—obviously not designed just for the military—with protocols for things you mentioned, such as the symbols of this country. Would you care to share your opinion on that as well? How do you deal with Canadian Heritage and what they do with flags, or is this your own?

Mr. Steven Clark: This is our own. We've had some interesting discussions with our military partners in the past, if I can put it that way, because the traditions that we follow are the traditions that our members have dictated that we will.

For example, up until a few years ago, we used to dip all flags, including the Canadian flag. Whenever we were at ceremonies with our military partners this was a cause for concern, because the Canadian flag is not dipped. However, in our tradition it always was. Up until about the time of the convention in 2008, that was our process. In 2008, the members directed otherwise, so that's no longer part of our tradition. So there are certain things that might be unique to the Legion that would not be supported by the military partners or Canadian Heritage. There are these discrepancies that would still have to be observed. We follow the direction our members give us, as long as nothing is illegal.

Mr. Scott Simms: Yes, that's a point. I think a lot of people, especially from the civilian side, are very nervous about doing the wrong thing or offending anybody. We've always had a lot of our Remembrance Day ceremonies dictated by World War I and World War II veterans. The reason I say that is because our World War I and World War II veterans—I'm from Newfoundland—fought under the Union Jack, not under the Canadian flag. So sometimes there's a little bit of tension there.

Nonetheless, I do want to congratulate you on this, and I look forward to seeing the updated version.

•(1235)

Mr. Steven Clark: Excellent. Thank you.

If I may add, though, it is currently on our website at legion.ca under "Publications". You can find a full copy of that manual in English and French.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay, that's great.

That's good for me.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Simms.

Mr. Armstrong, go ahead for seven minutes.

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): I want to thank all our guests for being here. I want to thank you for your service to the Legion, and of course for your service to the country.

Mr. Clark, on the dipping of the flags, obviously you've had a change in the protocol over the last several years. How do you get that message out there to all your branches? What type of communication do you use to make a change like that?

Mr. Steven Clark: At our dominion convention, which happens every two years, the policies and procedures that the Legion will follow for the next two years are set. We have a report that goes to every branch. So it identifies all the resolutions and all the changes in policies and procedures that have happened. However, if you're looking at a manual, you may not go through it and pick up on that. So we have committees, such as the ritual and awards committee, that do address these issues specifically.

When major changes like this happen, we have a couple of ways to communicate those to all of our branches. We have all-branch distributions that go through Canada Post, so every single branch gets a copy of any policy change that's very important, that we need to draw their attention to. We also distribute things electronically so that information gets out. We use our partners, our provincial commands, to assist in getting the information to their branches as well. It does not take long for information to get disseminated to the local branches, particularly on issues like this that are important.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: If we as a government, or the Department of Heritage or some other department in government, were to do a national protocol, which of course would probably link to whatever website you had put up there, do you think that would be advantageous for you internally, as well as externally for the greater population?

Mr. Steven Clark: If I can speak about information for the Royal Canadian Legion, yes, it would be. We would still have to respect the protocols we have in place, but by all means—and in fact currently, in my role as director, I often visit the Canadian Heritage site to find out what the position of Canadian Heritage is on particular issues. For the public at large, it would be, absolutely, because in the case of the question from the second gentleman, there may not be Legion branches, there may not be military institutions, there may not be areas that look after these traditions that Canadians have come to honour and respect. So having a resource available to everyone, regardless of where you are, would be great.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Thank you very much.

I'm going to move on to the Department of National Defence.

We've heard some discussion over the last several days about the folding of flags. Does the Department of National Defence have a protocol for the way you fold flags at a funeral or in other circumstances?

Maj Guy Turpin: Absolutely. There's one set way. It will actually be updated in one of our publications when we get to that update. It's clearly established and clearly demonstrated. It's a visual. It's not only words.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: We've also heard some concerns that some flag materials are more difficult to fold than others. Are there any recommendations you have? Is there a certain type of material for the military's flags?

Maj Guy Turpin: Actually, last week we signed off on a sample of a new Canadian national flag to be put on caskets, specifically for burials of military personnel. We went through a process with our acquisitions folks, and it will be in the Canadian Forces supply system within the next couple of months.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: That's the way the Department of National Defence folds flags. Are you aware of other ways, such as in the police departments? What we're looking for is the Canadian way. If we followed what the Department of National Defence does and kind of made it the Canadian way, would you see that as stepping on anyone's toes? Would that cause problems for other organizations that have protocols you're aware of?

Maj Guy Turpin: The folding of the national flag policy was established hand in hand with the Department of Canadian Heritage. On matters of the national flag, everything is done in concurrence with Canadian Heritage.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: We could actually call that the Canadian method of folding flags for ceremonial purposes.

Maj Guy Turpin: That is my understanding.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: We already have one. It's just a matter now of making sure that it's communicated to everyone who will be performing some sort of ceremony with the flag.

In my riding, I've had several soldiers pass away in Afghanistan, and I've attended several ceremonies. We have several Silver Cross mothers. When a soldier passes away, one of the protocols I've been very impressed with is the support you give to the families, from the time of the passing right through to the ceremony. Is that something that's developed over time, or has that been a tradition in Canada for years?

•(1240)

LCol Marcel Beaudry: We have an organization, the director general of personnel and family support services. They're responsible for supporting military families. They're also responsible for non-public-fund activities, such as CANEX, and support to the troops overseas. This has certainly evolved over time, and it has become more important with the campaign in southwest Asia, that's for sure.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: There are several other protocols that I think the Department of National Defence does very well. When we have soldiers returning from overseas, they're often met by soldiers at the airport.

I was travelling with a couple of people from the United States who were very impressed by how we welcome soldiers home.

Are you aware of other countries that do this? Or is this more of a Canadian tradition of supporting our troops from home when they're returning home, whether they're alive or they've passed away?

Chief Warrant Officer Alain Grenier (Directorate of History and Heritage 3-2, Department of National Defence): I don't know any other country that does that. I know that we've been doing it since Afghanistan. As for other countries doing the same thing, I'm not sure.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: What led to that protocol being developed? I personally have been impressed by it. Not a lot of Canadians probably know about it until they see it.

What led to that being developed?

LCol Marcel Beaudry: I think it was simply a matter of the exercise of leadership. It was felt that we had to show appreciation for the sacrifices the troops made. It was impressed on all of the leadership, from the top down, that leaders at the appropriate level will be present when the troops come back home.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: I think involving some of those traditions and new protocols on some sort of national protocol website or a whole process would be advantageous. It would allow the Canadian military to show the good things they are doing in terms of supporting our troops.

Do you see any drawbacks in having some national protocols set by our government?

LCol Marcel Beaudry: There are some protocols available on the Canadian Heritage website, for example, on the treatment of the national flag and national symbols. How much further that should be expanded is really not for the Canadian Forces to say.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Armstrong.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Cash.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and my thanks to you all for being here.

It's an honour for us to hear of the work that you do, and we all feel that it is greatly important work, especially the Remembrance Day ceremonies, which are particularly moving, right across the country.

I wanted to clarify a couple of things about the flag folding. I think it was Major Turpin who said that there is an agreed way in which we fold the flag, a Canadian way.

Maj Guy Turpin: That's correct.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Was that established through a conversation between Defence and Canadian Heritage, or how was that arrived at?

Maj Guy Turpin: I'm not *au fait* with the background. But I understand that according to Canadian Heritage, the flag would be folded in a rectangular fashion.

Mr. Andrew Cash: I just want to make sure I understand this. You said the Canadian flag is the domain of Canadian Heritage; Defence takes it cue from Canadian Heritage in how the flag is folded. Is that right?

Maj Guy Turpin: We work in partnership, but ultimately the national flag belongs to Canadian Heritage.

Mr. Andrew Cash: For how long has this been established, this way of folding the flag?

• (1245)

Maj Guy Turpin: I don't know. I would have to look it up and get back to you.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Was it within the last year?

Maj Guy Turpin: Oh, no.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Has it been around for a long time?

Maj Guy Turpin: I would have to look up what we have in our files, but it's definitely more than a year.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Fair enough. So if someone was wanting to know how to fold the Canadian flag in the way the Government of Canada suggests, is that information available?

Maj Guy Turpin: It will be in one of our publications shortly. As for Canadian Heritage, I would have to see if they have something on their website.

Mr. Andrew Cash: It's a bit of a concern for us on this side. We've spent a considerable amount of time studying protocol, and there has been an assumption, or obfuscation, on the part of the government that we don't have a proper protocol for folding the flag. Today we're hearing that we already have one.

The problem is that when you go on the Heritage Canada website and you click on "Folding the National Flag", it only says "Directions for folding the National Flag of Canada are coming soon." But if we already have a way of folding the flag, why is that not simply put on the Heritage Canada website? I think that's something that you guys can send little notes back to your folks to work on.

That flows to one other question.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I have a point of order. Is it the member's supposition that we shouldn't be studying anything because it might not be on the website?

Mr. Andrew Cash: No.

Mr. Paul Calandra: That is his job and that's the job of the committee.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Is this debate or a point of order?

The Chair: No, it's not a point of order.

Mr. Andrew Cash: All right. Fair enough. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The government is talking about establishing some kind of national protocol handbook. How would it work if other jurisdictions were establishing protocol for your organization? Say the Canadian military was going to write the protocol for the Legion or vice versa, or let's say the protocol office in Parliament was going to write the protocol for everybody, how is that going to work? Would that be cool with you guys if someone else wrote your protocol?

Mr. Steven Clark: May I answer that?

Mr. Andrew Cash: Sure.

Mr. Steven Clark: No. We would appreciate the guidance that a reference would provide. However, we would still have to fall back on our own internal practices and policies if we had a specific question. It would be advantageous to have information available. But that information should still acknowledge that there may be uniquenesses, depending on the different concerns that organizations may have.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cash.

Next is Mr. Tilson.

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): To echo Mr. Simms, I think you've put out a wonderful book, and I agree that all members of Parliament should have it. I had a question last year from a constituent on how you dispose of a flag that's worn or not of any use, and we called the local Legion. I didn't know you dispose of it privately by burning, which is interesting, but that's the protocol. So the constituent was pleased to hear about that, and did that.

I also want to congratulate...I guess it's the Legion. We have a family cottage, and when I was a young boy we had a flag on a flag pole. At sunset and sunrise I had to raise the flag and lower it. Sun or pouring rain, I had to do that. I remember asking my dad, why do I have to do this in the pouring rain? He said, because that's the etiquette.

I'm glad to see that it's not contrary to etiquette to have the flag flying at night. I wish you had done that years ago.

I have a quick question about the schools. This would be to the Legion representatives. Everyone...well, not everyone, but people talk about educating the youth to appreciate what has gone on by our soldiers in past conflicts—it's not as much, but it happens. Many—and I'm speaking specifically of your Remembrance Day services—of the Remembrance Day services in my riding—and I don't have as many as Mr. Simms, but I have quite a few—are organized by Legions. Two in particular, in the towns of Orangeville and Shelburne, have outstanding ceremonies for anything they do, and I'm sure they have this book and follow it. Others are municipalities, service groups, and more particularly the schools. Schools individually have services.

My question is, do you encourage your members, the local Legions, to attend municipalities or schools and make suggestions as to what the appropriate protocol is to conduct a Remembrance Day service, or any other service for that matter?

•(1250)

Mr. Steven Clark: The Legion recognizes that the importance of educating youth on remembrance is paramount. We do a couple of things—and then I'll get back to your specific question.

The first one is a remembrance contest that we have every year. Every year we encourage Canadian students to show us what remembrance means to them. They can do this through a literary composition, a poem or an essay, or they can do it through artistic means, a black and white or a colour poster.

This has been going on since the early 1950s. For the last six years, anyway, we have had at least 100,000 students across the country who participate in this contest on an annual basis. We encourage our Legion branches in all the communities across the country to go into the schools to talk remembrance with the students, particularly around the remembrance period but not exclusively at that time—to talk about remembrance, what remembrance means to them, talk about the contest, and to also talk about remembrance ceremonies.

Quite often schools would like to have observances during the remembrance period but cannot take a full hour out of their schedule to hold a commemoration. How do they do that? The Legions are able to offer guidance on how to do that.

Another way we promote remembrance to youth is through our teachers' guide. Effective the first of May of this year, on our website at legion.ca, we have a new interactive multimedia teachers' reference, so that a teacher can go onto the site, and if they want to know how to commemorate properly or how they should do certain things, they're able to use this as a resource.

We also work closely with our partners in Veterans Affairs Canada in getting information out to all of our schools. We've been working with them for a number of years on promoting remembrance to students. Collectively, we realize this is an important issue, and we have undertaken these initiatives to achieve the goal of ensuring that remembrance is perpetuated.

Mr. David Tilson: Well done. That's good news.

Do I have any time left?

The Chair: You have 10 seconds.

Mr. David Tilson: Oh, have a nice day, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tilson.

Ms. Sitsabaiesan.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you to all of you for joining us today.

Last week we heard from a Calgary funeral director that when it comes to the funeral of a fallen Calgary police officer, the protocol is so tight that oftentimes they aren't able to accommodate the wants or wishes of the family.

When it comes to your protocol manuals, is there room to deviate from the manual that you currently follow to make room for accommodations for newer or different customs that the family may want? I'm thinking of newer Canadians, families who may be choosing cremation rather than burials. Do your manuals allow for the family's wishes?

LCol Marcel Beaudry: The *Manual of Drill and Ceremonial* has a chapter on funerals and religious services. For the funeral, it lays out exactly what is authorized according to the rank of the deceased. It does have a short section on cremation, but basically it is all built on the traditional coffin, with a service in the church or the chapel with the coffin present.

But you can always scale down from the full monty, if you wish. If the family wants to have a more simple service, it is very easy to scale down to meet the family's wishes, and in fact it is written into the manual that the family's wishes will be respected as much as possible.

● (1255)

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: I'm just thinking of someone who is perhaps a Hindu. We don't use chapels, so if your entire protocol is based on a chapel service or a church service...what do you mean by saying not allowing for the full monty or to water it down for someone who doesn't want that specific service? I would think that somebody who serves our country who is of the Hindu or Islamic or Bahá'í faith, or is Catholic or Christian or whatever it may be, that they've all paid the same price and the family should have the equal amount of respect or dues paid or honour paid to that person.

Is there leeway for the family's wishes?

LCol Marcel Beaudry: Absolutely. In the chaplaincy of the Canadian Forces, we currently have chaplains of the Muslim and Jewish faiths, as well as the Christian faiths. Beyond that, it's not really my area of expertise, but certainly we do turn to the chaplaincy to guide us. We will offer the family whatever we have in our ceremonial that appeals to them.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: That's really good to hear.

Mr. Beaudry, you also mentioned that you have a one-and-a-half-inch binder or a two-inch binder of protocol for this event and that type of event. You mentioned three different types of events. Does it make sense to have a national protocol manual that brings everything together?

Mr. Clark or Mr. Heiter, I don't remember who was reading it in your testimony, but I think you mentioned the *Lament* and the *Rouse* and how the order is different between the Legion's practices versus the military's practices. So if we were to bring together and create a national protocol manual, how would we know which to follow, and would that even make sense? Does it make sense to bring together all of the practices and traditions and protocol that all the different facets of the honours of our heritage have been practising over the years? Does it make sense to bring it together into one manual and say this is how we do it in Canada?

Mr. Steven Clark: I wouldn't say that it should be this is how we do it. This is how we suggest that perhaps you proceed, realizing that there are variances.

I did say with regard to the way we do the commemorations that it differs from the military. The military, on September 12, 2011, did put out a CANFORGEN, which did acknowledge that there are variances when it comes to the order of service, so that in certain circumstances you can have the *Lament* before the *Rouse* on the military side. So in fact they have recognized that, and I think any manual or any reference that Canadian Heritage does would also have to be cognizant of those variances that do exist.

There needs to be an established procedure, but that established procedure cannot be rigid. It has to allow for those variances that respect traditions but that also respect the conditions locally.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Sitsabaiesan.

That concludes our committee meeting. Thank you to our witnesses for appearing today. The input you gave us was most helpful for our study.

The committee is adjourned.

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