



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **INDIGENOUS VETERANS: FROM MEMORIES OF INJUSTICE TO LASTING RECOGNITION**

**Report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs**

**Neil R. Ellis, Chair**

**FEBRUARY 2019  
42<sup>nd</sup> PARLIAMENT, 1<sup>st</sup> SESSION**

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**Neil R. Ellis  
Chair**

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## **NOTICE TO READER**

### **Reports from committee presented to the House of Commons**

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**

has the honour to present its

## **ELEVENTH REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied the Needs and Issues Specific to Indigenous Veterans and has agreed to report the following:





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# LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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*As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.*

## **Recommendation 1**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada commit to continuing to hire Indigenous staff, with the intention of reaching a number that is at least proportional to the number of Indigenous veterans who are served by the Department..... 16**

## **Recommendation 2**

**That the Canadian Armed Forces delegate to each Canadian Ranger Patrol Group sufficient financial authority to ensure that the group can quickly reimburse Canadian Rangers for personal equipment that is broken while they are using it on duty. .... 26**

## **Recommendation 3**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada produce a pamphlet outlining its main programs and services in the most common Indigenous languages, and that this pamphlet be distributed to all Canadian Ranger patrols. .... 28**

## **Recommendation 4**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada incorporate in all its communications to the general public, and in all its program outreach efforts, a message or a question like “Have you worn the uniform?” or “Have you served?” so that veterans can easily identify themselves as veterans. .... 33**

## **Recommendation 5**

**That Service Canada add services provided by Veterans Affairs Canada to the list of services it promotes when its representatives travel to meet with communities in remote areas..... 33**

**Recommendation 6**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada work with the territorial governments so that territorial service officers working in Northern communities are able to offer local direct access to Veterans Affairs Canada programs..... 35**

**Recommendation 7**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs pursue an agreement to ensure better coordination of programs and services available to Indigenous veterans and their families who served in the Canadian Armed Forces and now reside in the United States, and Indigenous veterans and their families who served in the United States' Armed Forces and now reside in Canada, including access to the Military Family Resource Centres. .... 38**

**Recommendation 8**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada and Indigenous Services Canada ensure that the funding parameters for services provided to Indigenous veterans living on reserve do not create a disadvantage for them in comparison to other veterans..... 41**

**Recommendation 9**

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**Recommendation 10**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada continue working with Métis and Métis organizations to ensure that Métis veterans and their families have access to all benefits and settlements to which they are entitled, and to ensure the access as soon as possible. .... 43**

**Recommendation 11**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada take steps to bring together representatives from associations representing Indigenous veterans so that it can share information about its programs and help create an environment where they can regularly communicate their various concerns..... 45**

**Recommendation 12**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada review the eligibility criteria of its programs that provide funding for war memorials so that remote communities wanting to honour the memory of their veterans are better able to do so. .... 46**





# INDIGENOUS VETERANS: FROM MEMORIES OF INJUSTICE TO LASTING RECOGNITION

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## INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the resolution adopted at its 9 November 2017 meeting, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (the Committee) undertook “a study on the services offered to Indigenous veterans with a focus on the specific needs and issues faced by this population.” This is the Committee’s first study on Indigenous veterans.

According to Lloyd Bishop, a Métis whom the Committee met during its trip to Beauval, Saskatchewan, the decision by Indigenous people to enlist in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is the best evidence of their commitment to being full members of Canadian society. To maintain the strength of that commitment, the Government of Canada, in return, must make sure that veterans can rely on its support when problems resulting from that military service arise.

To supplement the evidence gathered in the nine public meetings in Ottawa, the Committee travelled to Millbrook, N.S., Halifax, N.S., Six Nations of the Grand River, Ont., Beauval, Sask., and Victoria, B.C., for meetings and visits between 27 May and 1 June 2018.<sup>1</sup> It also travelled to Yellowknife and Behchoko, N.W.T., from 21 to 24 October 2018.<sup>2</sup>

Topics covered by witnesses who appeared during this study included the following:

- support offered to Indigenous veterans by their communities during the transition process;
- quality of services offered to Indigenous veterans by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC);
- specific needs of Indigenous veterans living in remote areas;

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1 See the Trip Report in Appendix 1. The delegation was composed of Committee Chair Neil Ellis, Robert Kitchen, Bob Bratina, Scott Duvall, Colin Fraser, Darrell Samson and Cathay Wagantall.

2 The delegation was composed of Committee Chair Neil Ellis, Second Vice-Chair Gord Johns and Bob Bratina, Shaun Chen, Doug Eyolfson, Robert Kitchen and Cathay Wagantall.



- specific issues affecting:
  - First Nations veterans (on reserve and off reserve),
  - Métis veterans,
  - Inuit veterans,
  - modern-day Indigenous veterans, and
  - Indigenous reservists;
- treatment of Indigenous veterans who served in the First World War, the Second World War and the Korean War;
- issues concerning veterans who served with the Canadian Rangers; and
- services offered by Veterans Affairs Canada to Indigenous veterans who served with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

This report is divided into five parts:

- a. The first part describes participation by Indigenous people in both world wars and the Korean War, highlighting how they were treated differently despite their eagerness to enlist. The injustices were well documented by First Nations veterans, who received compensation from the government in the early 2000s. Métis veterans are now seeking similar compensation. The remoteness of Inuit communities limited their participation in major conflicts. Some enlisted in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in the First World War, but it is difficult to estimate how many participated.
- b. The second part analyzes the current participation rate of Indigenous peoples in the CAF and focuses on the measures that the CAF has put in place to encourage recruitment. A special section covers the Canadian Rangers – a reserve force of 5,000 people, many of whom are members of Indigenous communities – who provide a military presence in remote areas of Canada.
- c. The third part describes the main challenge most Indigenous veterans face: geographic isolation, which limits Veterans Affairs Canada’s ability to provide services, particularly health care, at a level comparable to what is available in the rest of Canada. Various strategies are outlined that would



address the negative effects of this isolation while ensuring that communities are able to maintain their resiliency.

- d. The fourth part analyzes the specific cultural elements that VAC must consider when offering programs and services tailored to Indigenous veterans.
- e. The fifth part outlines three themes that VAC should consider examining more closely in the years ahead: better recognition of Indigenous veterans in the Department's commemorative programming, the difficulty younger Indigenous veterans face integrating into Indigenous veterans' organizations; and the importance of bringing Indigenous veterans' organizations together in order to build stronger ties between VAC and the communities that Indigenous veterans live in.

## INJUSTICES OF THE PAST

As noted by H el ene Robichaud of VAC,

Canada's Indigenous peoples have a proud tradition of military service. While exact numbers are difficult to determine, the rate of Indigenous participation in Canada's military has been significant. It is estimated that more than 12,000 Indigenous people from Canada served in the two world wars, the Korean War and in more recent international peace support efforts, with at least 500 of them losing their lives.<sup>3</sup>

In the past, First Nations people, Inuit and M etis were subjected to injustices by the Government of Canada simply because they belonged to an Indigenous community. If the wounds associated with these injustices are to be healed, both sides must take the crucial first step of acknowledging the objective truth of the past prejudice against Indigenous veterans and the broken promises that even today undermine Indigenous veterans' trust in the Government of Canada.

We know that proportionately more Indigenous people enlisted voluntarily than other Canadians. According to Robert Thibeau, of the organization Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones,

The reason for enrolment may have been as simple as getting three meals a day, a pair of boots, or a bed to sleep in. I tend to think the main reason was to show that Indigenous people were willing to once again prove their steadfastness to Canada, while

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3 [H el ene Robichaud \(Director General, Commemoration Division, Strategic Policy and Commemoration, Department of Veterans Affairs\), Evidence, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1115.](#)



at the same time hoping that by serving, things would change and become better back home. In other words, it meant my service in exchange for the country recognizing my rights and respecting me as an equal.<sup>4</sup>

Fortunately, a great deal of work has been done in the last few decades to document both the remarkable contribution made by Indigenous people to Canada's war effort during the major conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the unfair treatment they received after they became veterans. This section provides a brief overview of those facts. Unfortunately, documentation for Métis and Inuit veterans is very limited, and only very general observations can be made.

## 1. First World War

During the First World War, the Government of Canada's official policy was to not recruit Status Indians. There were fears about the enemy's reaction to their presence, in view of their traditional association with scalping, which was deemed incompatible with the Geneva Convention: "Germans might refuse to extend to them the privileges of civilized warfare."<sup>5</sup>

In practice, that policy was not applied consistently, especially from 1916 on, as voluntary recruitment was dwindling and large numbers of recruits were needed to offset losses on the European front. It is estimated in official sources that, of the total contingent of about 600,000 in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, there were some 4,000 First Nations members. That was 35% of military-age residents of reserves. In Atlantic Canada, the proportion was 50%. According to the [Canadian Encyclopedia](#), however, those figures included only Status Indians and not Métis or non-Status Indians. The total, then, was likely closer to about 6,000.

The largest number of recruits came from the Iroquois reserves of Six Nations around Brantford, Ontario, and Tyendinaga near the Bay of Quinte. One unnamed prominent figure even tried to fund the creation of a battalion composed solely of members of the Six Nations reserve.<sup>6</sup> The federal government refused, since the Six Nations chiefs wanted to be sent a formal request, which would have been akin to a "nation-to-nation" negotiation.

What made this First Nations contribution during the First World War so remarkable was its voluntary nature. Most Indigenous communities were against compulsory military

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4 [Robert Thibeau \(President, Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1105.

5 Official Government of Canada document, cited in P. Whitney Lackenbauer *et al.*, [A Commemorative History of Aboriginal People in the Canadian Military](#), Department of National Defence, 2010, p. 119.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

service during conscription in 1917.<sup>7</sup> Since they did not have full citizenship or the right to vote, they did not understand why they were being compelled to serve. The government accepted their arguments and passed an order-in-council on 17 January 1918 exempting them from the *Military Service Act*.

Conversely, under the *Military Voters Act*, all Status Indians deployed overseas, as well as women who served as nurses, were granted the right to vote in the federal election of 17 December 1917.

Few Inuit, who numbered about 3,000 in Canada at the time, served in the conflict. Of those who did, most served with the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, which was not part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

During the First World War, 300 First Nations people lost their lives, including 88 volunteers from the Six Nations reserve alone.<sup>8</sup>

- Total population of Canada in 1921: 8.8 million
- Total First Nations population: 110,814
- Total Inuit population: 3,269
- Total Métis population: Unknown
- Indigenous members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force: 4,000–6,000

[Source: 1921 Census.]

## 2. Between the Wars

After they returned to civilian life in 1918, First Nations veterans did not enjoy the same benefits as other Canadian veterans. The Canadian government's view was that, as Status Indians, they were already receiving government support not available to other Canadians, and that it would be unfair for them to receive the additional support provided to other veterans.

This meant that First Nations veterans were not eligible for farmland made available under *An Act to assist Returned Soldiers in Settling upon the Land* (*Soldier Settlement Act*), assented to on 29 August 1917 and amended in the version that came into force on 1 January 1919. Not only were Indigenous veterans unable to acquire land under the

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7        *Ibid.*, p. 127.

8        *Ibid.*, p. 130.



Act, but also, in order to make land available to other veterans, the federal government, according to various estimates, acquired between 35,000 and 75,000 hectares of “Indian lands.” In reaction to that injustice, one veteran, Lieutenant Frederick Ogilvie Loft, a Mohawk from the Six Nations of the Grand River, founded the League of Indians of Canada, one of the earliest First Nations rights organizations.

### 3. Second World War and Korean War

Slightly fewer Indigenous people volunteered at the outbreak of the Second World War than had for the First World War. According to official federal government figures, of the 125,946 Status Indians enumerated in the census, 3,090 enlisted.<sup>9</sup> According to Professor Scott Sheffield, the actual figure was probably closer to 4,200 for Status Indians alone.<sup>10</sup> He also said that, regarding the Korean War, the data were much more fragmentary, and the best that could be said is that Indigenous soldiers “probably would number in the hundreds.”

For non-Status Indians, Métis and Inuit, it is difficult to come up with even an estimate. For Indigenous women, the only credible reference is a 1950 federal government document indicating that 72 Status Indian women served in the two world wars.<sup>11</sup>

On the west coast, about 15,000 British Columbians and Yukoners, most of them Indigenous, enlisted in the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers to patrol the coast, report any enemy troop movements, and guide forces serving along the coastline.<sup>12</sup>

The vast majority of Indigenous recruits served in the army, and according to the [\*Canadian Encyclopedia\*](#), “the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) required volunteers [to] be ‘of pure European descent and of the white race,’ until 1942 and 1943 respectively.” The federal government’s resistance to Indigenous peoples enlisting was also linked to the fact that, during the First World War, Indigenous people had proved to be much more vulnerable to infectious diseases such as tuberculosis.<sup>13</sup>

However, the need for recruits overcame any resistance. In September 1940, conscription for domestic service was brought in with the *National Resources Mobilization Act*, but this

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9 Ibid., p. 139, Table 1.

10 [\*Scott Sheffield \(Associate Professor, Department of History, University of the Fraser Valley, as an individual\), Evidence, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1100.\*](#)

11 P. Whitney Lackenbauer *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

12 Ibid., p. 142-143.

13 Ibid., p. 137.

time, Status Indians were not exempted. Still deprived of their civil rights, First Nations people protested, despite government assurances that they would not be sent overseas.<sup>14</sup> In April 1942, when conscription was extended to overseas service if needed, there were clashes with police in Caughnawaga (Quebec). In remote areas, conscription was virtually impossible to enforce. In December 1944, exemption from conscription was granted to about 20% of First Nations people covered by treaties that prohibit compulsory military service (Treaties 3, 6, 8 and 11). In practice, very little effort was made to find First Nations members who did not report to register for conscription. Of the 2,500 conscripts who served overseas, very few were Indigenous.

#### 4. The Post-war Period

As Professor Sheffield from the University of the Fraser Valley put it, “for most Indigenous people, military service “was a powerful egalitarian experience, and for many of them, sadly, the first and maybe the last time in their lives they felt respected, and honoured for their character and capacity.”<sup>15</sup>

Although Indigenous veterans were, in principle, eligible for the benefits and services provided to other veterans under post-war legislation collectively known as the “Veterans Charter,” their applications were not handled fairly. It was not until the late 1990s that First Nations rights organizations managed to convince the government that their complaints were well-founded.

[T]he Veterans Charter benefits were predicated on cultural assumptions of settler society.

...

[S]uccessfully accessing the *Veterans' Land Act* required previous agricultural experience and was enhanced if you already possessed land. Similarly, one of the third-tier benefits was guaranteed access to your old job if the employer and the job still existed. Well, that was great—if you were employed before you were enlisted. Also, if you wanted to access university training, you needed to have finished your matriculation and have completed high school in order to qualify.

...

Given the marginalized economic and social spaces occupied by Indigenous peoples in those interwar years, combined with widespread Indigenous land insufficiency and a

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14     ibid., p. 144.

15     [Scott Sheffield \(Associate Professor, Department of History, University of the Fraser Valley, as an individual\), Evidence, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1100.](#)



generally poor access to both education and health care, many first nations and Métis veterans lacked some or all of that pre-war foundation to build on.<sup>16</sup>

In 1999–2000, First Nations veterans’ associations, the Assembly of First Nations and the three federal departments involved (Indian and Northern Affairs, Veterans Affairs and National Defence) agreed to form the National Roundtable on First Nations Veterans’ Issues. In order to come up with a common and objective reference document, the Roundtable commissioned a report, which was published in April 2001.<sup>17</sup>

That report detailed the differential treatment that First Nations veterans received when they applied for financial benefits and compensation. Those differences were clearly documented in the following cases: appropriation of allowances by “Indian agents,” access to Government of Canada information about programs to which Indigenous veterans may have been entitled, and inequitable distribution of grants and loans for the development of agricultural land.

With regard to the first problem, allowances provided to the spouses of Indigenous soldiers on active duty were sometimes paid to “Indian agents” rather than to the individuals, and there was no way to determine whether the money actually reached the families themselves. In general, as noted by Professor Sheffield, the Department of Indian Affairs interfered directly in the administration of the programs to which Status Indian veterans were entitled:

In the handling of these veterans’ personal case files they were disrupted and negatively affected by the role of Indian Affairs and Indian agents in what developed as a sort of separate parallel system of administration for these veterans.

This came in different forms. At its most basic it was an extra layer of bureaucracy between the veteran and their re-establishment benefits. That created delays and frustration for many veterans. Some even gave up in despair after years of effort or settled for less than was their due.

Sadly, the influence of the Indian Affairs branch was much more pervasive and problematic. This agency and its personnel were not neutral agents in their dealings with veterans. They brought a peculiar corporate culture, a potent assimilationist *raison d’être* that sometimes warped the intent of veterans’ benefits and hurt veterans’ re-establishment.

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16 [Scott Sheffield \(Associate Professor, Department of History, University of the Fraser Valley, as an individual\), Evidence, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1105.](#)

17 R. Scott Sheffield, *A Search for Equity. A Study of the Treatment Accorded to First Nations Veterans and Dependents of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict*, National Round Table on First Nations Veterans’ Issues, April 2001.

...

Indian agents, instead of telling veterans what their options were, told them what they thought they should do or what they thought they were capable of, and given the negative prejudices in that era, that often was a very low bar.<sup>18</sup>

In some situations described by Professor Sheffield, Indian agents diverted the grants intended for veterans' re-establishment to make up for the Indian Affairs department's inadequate resources for on-reserve housing:

In the Maritimes, for instance, Indian Affairs had a program of concentration in this time period, trying to move all Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia to two reserves: Shubenacadie and Eskasoni. They would only allow Mi'kmaq veterans to apply for a VLA grant if they agreed to move to one of these two reserves. In this sense the veterans' benefits became a tool, a stick for Indian Affairs to coerce abiding by this policy of concentration.<sup>19</sup>

The second problem arose from the fact that, after the war, services and financial benefits paid to veterans were normally the responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs. For First Nations veterans, however, responsibility for administering those benefits was assigned to Indian agents. As Professor Sheffield explained to the Committee:

[T]hey were told to return to their reserve and get information from their Indian agent instead of going to a Veterans Affairs office. Basically what that did is shift the onus for that veteran's re-establishment from the veteran to Indian Affairs. It was a different circumstance for regular veterans. This meant that information about government re-establishment programs, publicized in the media of major cities, never made it to First Nations members who had returned to the reserves.<sup>20</sup>

The third issue is the one whose injustices had the greatest financial repercussions for Indigenous veterans. Farm property development grants and loans provided under the *Veterans' Land Act* were treated differently depending on whether the land was on reserve or off reserve. Veterans were entitled to loans of up to \$6,000, which had to be repaid over 25 years. If repayments were made on time, the government would forgive about \$2,320 of the original loan, which was the equivalent to a grant of that amount.

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18 [Scott Sheffield \(Associate Professor, Department of History, University of the Fraser Valley, as an individual\), Evidence, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1110.](#)

19 [Scott Sheffield \(Associate Professor, Department of History, University of the Fraser Valley, as an individual\), Evidence, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1110.](#)

20 [Scott Sheffield \(Associate Professor, Department of History, University of the Fraser Valley, as an individual\), Evidence, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1105.](#)



First Nations veterans had little access to loans if they wanted to stay on reserve, but they were entitled to grants of \$2,320 under stricter conditions. They had to choose: they could either give up their Indian status and get the loan, or they could get the grant to farm some land on the reserve, but the land would remain under the First Nation's control and equipment purchased with the grant would remain under the Indian agent's control for 10 years. That deprived them of the capital needed to develop farms comparable to those that other veterans were able to cultivate.<sup>21</sup> Since the land was located on reserve, it could not, of course, be bequeathed to family members.<sup>22</sup> The banks were reluctant to provide loans for agricultural operations on reserve land, because they could not foreclose or seize property on that land in the event of loan default.<sup>23</sup> Non-Indigenous veterans, on the other hand, received prime, unencumbered land.<sup>24</sup>

In the early 2000s, on the basis of an estimate of the average value of the farms they could have developed had they had the same access to loans as other veterans, lost spousal allowances, and arrears for unclaimed financial benefits, First Nations veterans requested "financial compensation in the amount of \$425,000 for each veteran, widow, spouse, dependant or estate."<sup>25</sup> According to a representative of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations who testified before the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs in December 2001, the government's estimate of the losses was \$125,000.<sup>26</sup> However, the government had already decided that the compensation to be paid to members of the merchant marine who had been excluded from veterans programs would be between \$20,000 and \$24,000. This amount served as a benchmark for the government.

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21 R. Scott Sheffield, *A Search for Equity*, pp. 43-49.

22 [Steven Ross \(Grand Chief, Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1210; *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1215.

23 [Scott Sheffield \(Associate Professor, Department of History, University of the Fraser Valley, as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1105.

24 [Phillip Ledoux \(Vice-President, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 5 June 2018, 1205.

25 Senate, Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *Evidence*, 5 December 2001, p. 3:10 (Perry Bellegarde, Chief, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and Vice-Chief, Assembly of First Nations).

26 Senate, Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *Evidence*, 5 December 2001, p. 3:24 (Paulette Tremblay, National Liaison for the Chiefs of Saskatchewan, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations).



Some 800 veterans and 1,000 family members were identified as potential compensation recipients.<sup>27</sup>

On [21 June 2002](#), the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Honourable Rey Pagtakhan announced to the House of Commons that “the Government of Canada on compassionate grounds has set aside \$39 million to help in the resolution of this issue, with up to \$20,000 per living First Nations veteran, or their spouse, who returned to the reserves after the wars.”

In 2003–2004, 1,298 applicants were identified as legitimate recipients of that compensation package.<sup>28</sup> Similar requests had been made to resolve analogous situations involving Métis and non-Status Indian veterans, but they have not resulted in settlements (see section 5.2).

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES TODAY

According to [information compiled by the CAF](#), in June 2015, 2,294 members of the Regular Force and the Primary Reserve self-identified as Indigenous. That is about 2.5% of the CAF’s total strength.<sup>29</sup> The CAF’s long-term employment equity goal for Indigenous peoples is 3.5%.<sup>30</sup>

However, these recruitment objectives do not take into account the Canadian Rangers, as explained by Professor Lackenbauer of St. Jerome’s University:

[This] has the dual effect of treating the rangers as if they’re not real reservists, which is unfair and untrue, and of devaluing the rangers as performing a unique form of military service that has proven highly attractive to many Indigenous peoples in northern and isolated coastal communities. I’d also like to highlight that at least 21% of Canadian rangers across Canada are women, so this is much closer to the CAF’s one-quarter goal than the regular force or primary reserves. It’s quite a success story.<sup>31</sup>

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27 Senate, Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, Evidence, 5 December 2001, p. 3:13 (Howard Anderson, Chair, First Nations Veterans Roundtable, and Grand Chief, First Nations Veterans).

28 Veterans Affairs Canada, *2003-04 Performance Report*, p. 20.

29 Unfortunately, the Committee was unable to study the role of Indigenous members within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). According to the RCMP website, of roughly 30,000 employees, approximately 2,000 self-identified as Indigenous, or 6.7%.

30 [Brigadier-General J.J.M.J. Paul \(Chief of Staff, Canadian Forces Intelligence Command, Department of National Defence\)](#), Evidence, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1210.

31 [Whitney Lackenbauer \(Professor, Department of History, St. Jerome’s University, as an individual\)](#), Evidence, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1205.



It is difficult to say how many of the roughly 5,000 CRs are Indigenous. A conservative estimate puts the proportion at approximately 40%.<sup>32</sup> If these members were included in the calculation of the representation of Indigenous peoples in the CAF, that number would nearly double. However, it is important to note that the 3.5% recruitment objective established by the CAF is intended to ensure better representation of Indigenous peoples within the Regular Force and the Primary Reserves.

VAC data is also very fragmented when it comes to identifying the proportion of its clients who are Indigenous veterans: “We know that in the three Territories, the estimated number of veterans is 1,900. What we do not know is how many of these veterans are Indigenous.”<sup>33</sup> The number of VAC employees who are Indigenous veterans is also unknown. To encourage the Department to compile more complete data and to better reflect the proportion of veterans who are Indigenous, the Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 1**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada commit to continuing to hire Indigenous staff, with the intention of reaching a number that is at least proportional to the number of Indigenous veterans who are served by the Department.**

CAF provides services to the families of CAF members and veterans through the network of Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs). When they travelled to Yellowknife, Committee members had the opportunity to speak with staff at the one centre that provides services for all three territories. It has two social workers: one provides services on site, and the other provides outreach services. They mostly provide referral services and help coordinate services provided by other organizations. The Centre’s governance structure was modeled after the services provided to families of CAF members deployed abroad. As a result, it does not have a board of directors like other MFRCs do. The Centre is overseen by the Executive Director, Rose Jasmin, who works with a consultative committee whose members are primarily from families of CAF members. During the Committee’s visit to Yellowknife, Noha Elhakeem, a social worker at the Centre, explained that service recipients are primarily people whose spouse was posted to

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32 This estimate is lower than the one Canadian Armed Forces gave the Committee during its trip to Yellowknife, which took into account only the number of Indigenous peoples within the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Ranger Patrol Group. This group of 1,500 Rangers is responsible for the three territories, and it is reasonable to believe that the proportion of Indigenous people is higher than in the other Patrol Groups responsible for remote communities in the provinces.

33 [Maryse Savoie \(Acting Director General Field Operations, Service Delivery Branch, Department of Veterans Affairs\), Evidence, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1155.](#)

Northern Canada for a few years. Therefore, few Indigenous members from Northern communities seek their services.

## 1. Recruitment

During their visit to Victoria, British Columbia, Committee members spoke with Sergeant Farid Karmali, a recruiter at Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre – Victoria, about the specific features of the programs to persuade Indigenous people to join the CAF.

There have been various programs since 1971. Since 2002, the main program has been the Canadian Forces Aboriginal Entry Program (CFAEP). Its objective is to provide interested candidates with an opportunity to experience the reality of a military career. This helps them make an informed decision about whether they are really interested in pursuing such a career. Ninety-seven percent of the participants decide to join the Regular Force.

Offered for the first time in 2008 at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario, the Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year (ALOY) is for Indigenous people who want to take officer cadet training.<sup>34</sup> It is similar to a program available to other recruits, but for one year, second-language training is replaced with an Indigenous culture module.

There are three summer training programs for Indigenous people: Bold Eagle (Wainwright, Alberta), Raven (Esquimalt, British Columbia) and Black Bear (Oromocto, New Brunswick). The six-week programs give participants the opportunity to familiarize themselves with military training with no prior commitment to join the CAF. Participants are paid \$3,500, the same as a soldier's base salary for six weeks. According to Master Warrant Officer Grant Greyeyes, the popularity of the summer programs is growing, while the ALOY and the CFAEP are intended for people who are already interested in a military career:

For the summer programs, Bold Eagle is jumping from 110 to 150 this summer. For Black Bear and Raven, we're trying to populate them up to 60 personnel attending. For the Canadian Armed Forces aboriginal entry program, they have an allocation of 30 positions. However, they have not been able to populate those programs to full capacity.<sup>35</sup>

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34 Brigadier-General J.J.M.J. Paul (Chief of Staff, Canadian Forces Intelligence Command, Department of National Defence), *Evidence*, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1210.

35 [Master Warrant Officer Grant Greyeyes \(Aboriginal Advisor to Commander, Canadian Army, Department of National Defence\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1240.



Wally Sinclair, a board member of the National Association of Friendship Centres, had very positive things to say about the lasting impact of the Bold Eagle program, which brings generations closer together. He spoke about how the program has a ripple effect in the lives of everyone who knows the young people who participate in the program:

...I'm in uniform with my colleagues—and asking them about forward thinking. We live a day at a time in our traditional ways of how we pray or how we think.

...

[T]he parents are there. The guardians and grandmothers are attending all of these graduations. That's your conversation right there. You get more from talking to the kokums and the mushums, the grandmothers and grandfathers, and the extended family than from the young man or woman. They're so proud to be there and proud to be receiving an award or something—no question. Out of respect, I always let them know I'm going to speak to grandma a little bit, and how are you doing?<sup>36</sup>

To bolster these recruitment efforts and foster the integration of Indigenous people in the CAF, the Forces have developed an Indigenous culture awareness program, which Master Warrant Officer Greyeyes described for the Committee:

The reason they do this training is to create awareness for leadership to learn about the Indigenous cultures within Canada. The other reason is for all instructors or personnel who work with the programs that were described by General Paul—Bold Eagle, Raven, Black Bear, ALOY, CFAEP—to have to participate in aboriginal awareness training so they are more culturally aware of the candidates on the program. It is very important that they do that so they know who they're talking to, and in some cases how to talk to the personnel they're teaching or working with.

...

Current serving members within the Canadian Armed Forces, and within DND—the civilian aspect of the defence team—come in, and they have no outreach to the communities. However, they create within the Canadian Armed Forces bases a conduit to the culture for them. The defence aboriginal advisory group will provide links to the community, or right inside the DAG itself will help with teachings and create the cultural awareness that's required for members, and for families if required.<sup>37</sup>

Given the demographics of Indigenous communities, which tend to have a higher proportion of young people than other Canadian communities, and given the growing

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36 [Wally Sinclair \(Board Member, National Association of Friendship Centres\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 27 September 2018, 1620.

37 [Master Warrant Officer Grant Greyeyes \(Aboriginal Advisor to Commander, Canadian Army, Department of National Defence\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1215.

strategic importance of Northern Canada, it can be expected that the representation of Indigenous peoples within the CAF will increase in years to come.

## 2. Rangers

### 2.1. Overview of the Canadian Rangers Program and the Junior Canadian Rangers Program

According to the Canadian [Rangers section of the CAF website](#), the 5,000 Canadian Rangers (CRs) are part of the Reserve Force and are divided into 186 patrols within five Patrol Groups. Patrols consist of between 10 and 35 Rangers, and each patrol elects its patrol leader and sergeants annually. Fewer than 5% of CRs are active full time. Their work is a separate military occupation that involves monitoring Canadian sovereignty, collecting local strategic data for the CAF and reporting unusual activities or phenomena. They may also be called upon to participate in search-and-rescue operations or respond to natural disasters. As Professor Whitney Lackenbauer of St. Jerome's University explained,

[The Canadian Rangers] are reservists in military units that conduct national security and public safety missions in sparsely settled northern, coastal, and isolated areas of Canada that cannot conveniently or economically be covered by other parts of the military.<sup>38</sup>

According to the *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives* [DAOD 2020-2, Canadian Rangers](#), the tasks of CRs are to:

- a) *Conduct and provide support to sovereignty operations:*
  - i) *Conduct and provide support to surveillance and sovereignty patrols, including training in Canada.*
  - ii) *Conduct North Warning System site patrols.*
  - iii) *Report suspicious and unusual activities.*
  - iv) *Collect local information of military significance.*
- b) *Conduct and provide assistance to CAF domestic operations:*
  - i) *Conduct surveillance of Canadian territory.*

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38 [Whitney Lackenbauer \(Professor, Department of History, St. Jerome's University, as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1205.



- ii) *Provide local knowledge and CR expertise (i.e. advice and guides).*
  - iii) *Participate in search and rescue operations.*
  - iv) *Provide support in response to natural or man-made disasters and support in humanitarian operations.*
  - v) *Provide assistance to federal, provincial, territorial or municipal government authorities.*
- c) *Maintain a CAF presence in the local community:*
- i) *Instruct, mentor and supervise junior Canadian rangers.*
  - ii) *Participate in and support events in the local community (e.g. Yukon Quest, Canada Day, Remembrance Day, etc.).*

CR activities are restricted to Canadian soil. CRs cannot be deployed abroad. Pursuant to section 4.2 of DAOD 2020-2, CRs cannot be assigned the following tasks:

- i) *undertaking tactical military training;*
- ii) *performing immediate local defence tasks, such as containing or observing small enemy detachments pending the arrival of other forces;*
- iii) *providing vital point security (e.g. dams, mines, oil pipelines, etc.);*
- iv) *assisting federal, provincial, territorial or local police in the discovery, reporting and apprehension of enemy agents, saboteurs, criminals or terrorists; and*
- v) *servicing in aid of the civil power.*

Rangers are not subject to the principle of universality of service.<sup>39</sup> They are excluded from combat operations and, even if they must prove themselves physically fit to accomplish their tasks when they first enlist, they are not required to undergo subsequent medical examinations.<sup>40</sup> As Lieutenant-Colonel Timothy Halfkenny,

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39 See [DAOD 5023-1, Minimum Operational Standards Related to Universality of Service](#).

40 [Gary Walbourne \(Ombudsman, National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman\), Evidence, ACVA, 16 October 2018, 1540.](#)

Commanding Officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (CRPG) when the Committee visited Yellowknife, said, “Canadian Rangers are members of the Canadian Armed Forces, but they are not soldiers.” There is no mandatory retirement age, so Rangers can carry on their activities as long as they are able to do so.

The working conditions and pay for Rangers, just like for other reservists, are based on the number of consecutive days spent on operations. Most Rangers are Class A reservists, which means that their activities are limited to 12 consecutive days. If the nature of the operation exceeds this period, they are moved to Class B, which includes full-time reservists on contract for up to six months. Rangers cannot be Class C reservists, as this category is for those who are usually deployed full-time within a Regular Force unit on operations that Rangers are excluded from. The time that Rangers must spend on their operations varies significantly between patrol groups, but the budget for the 1<sup>st</sup> CRPG is based on an average of 12 days of activities per year per Ranger.

According to Lieutenant-Colonel Halfkenny and Chief Warrant Officer Derek Millard, Sergeant Major of the 1<sup>st</sup> CRPG, patrols are sent out on independent missions for at least 72 hours. CAF issues them a uniform, a rifle and 200 rounds of ammunition, and they get \$200 a day for using their personal vehicle. Since the new C-19 rifle was introduced,<sup>41</sup> background checks have gotten tighter. Some members have been let go as a result, but this move has helped to better define the conduct requirements that apply to Rangers.

The five Patrol Groups are divided up along geographical lines:

- a. The first Group consists of about 1,800 Rangers in 60 patrols serving the entire area of Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Yukon.
- b. The second Group is made up of about 30 patrols serving isolated communities in northern Quebec.
- c. The third Group consists of 22 patrols providing a military presence in Northern Ontario communities.
- d. The fourth Group is composed of 42 patrols serving the northern parts of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

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41 The [C-19 rifle](#) was introduced specifically for CRs. It is based on Finland Sako’s Tikka T3, and will be manufactured by Colt Canada.



- e. The fifth Group is made up of 20 patrols serving the island of Newfoundland and 12 patrols serving Labrador.

In addition to the CR program, there is also the Junior Canadian Ranger program, described by Colonel T.E.C. Mackay as follows: “It’s not exclusive to Indigenous cultures, but certainly a good percentage of the participants are Indigenous. It’s very similar to cadets. It is a youth program, and there is a cultural component to it.”<sup>42</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Halfkenny said the JCR program reinforces traditional cultures and ways of life for young people in Canada’s remote and isolated communities.

There are approximately 1,300 JCRs in the 1<sup>st</sup> CRPG, and while the proportion of women in the CR is 23%, the proportion of women in the JCR is more than 40%. JCR training is based on three groups of skills:

- a. Ranger skills: first aid, map and compass, navigation and GPS, firearms safety and military exercises (drills);
- b. Traditional skills: hunting and fishing, cooking and sewing, sculpting, drumming, tanning leather and building igloos;
- c. Life skills: [PHASE program](#) (Preventing Harassment and Abuse through Successful Education), public speaking, anger management, nutrition and hygiene.

Master Corporal Alice Mantla, who is in charge of the Junior Canadian Rangers in Behchoko, described the structuring effect the program has had on young people’s behaviour. The possibility to participate in survival exercises in the woods and learning to use a rifle is a big incentive. Those who want to join the patrol must show good behaviour and not have a criminal record. The whole community looks up to CRs. Members of the various patrols are recruited on the recommendation of community members to 1<sup>st</sup> CRPG leaders.

The beneficial effect for communities was also highlighted by Gary Walbourne, the National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman:

First, there is no doubt that the Canadian rangers organization and the junior Canadian rangers program have a positive impact on northern and remote communities. The transfer of traditional knowledge from elders to youth is embedded, valued and relied upon for mission success. The structure from enrolment to promotions and beyond is

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42 [Colonel T.E.C. Mackay \(Director, Army Reserve, Department of National Defence\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1230.



decided upon by that community. The model binds the Canadian rangers organization and the junior Canadian rangers program in core principles of honesty, integrity, learning and purpose.<sup>43</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> CRPG headquarters has 70 staff, 40 of whom are part of the Regular Force, divided among 60 CR patrols and 44 JCR patrols. According to Lieutenant-Colonel Halfkenny, instructors are assigned to patrols for three years. They coordinate all operational, administrative and logistics activities. The goal is to have one instructor for every four communities, but the current ratio is approximately one instructor for every six communities for CRs, and one instructor for every seven communities for JCRs. Maintaining contact with the various patrols requires inspectors to be away from home about 100 days a year.

When he appeared before the Committee, Mr. Walbourne criticized the large administrative burdens placed on CR instructors.<sup>44</sup> He said that there is one instructor for 183 Rangers. The burden is the heaviest in the 1<sup>st</sup> CRPG, with a ratio of one inspector for 239 Rangers.<sup>45</sup> The need to alleviate this burden was the key message Mr. Walbourne wanted to share with the Committee:

Let's give the ranger instructors the resources they need so that they can go and do what needs to be done on the ground—spending time with their patrols, educating their patrols, and helping them if there should be an illness or injury. It's critical. Just bringing more rangers into the system and not increasing those who manage and oversee that group I think is going to be a grave error.<sup>46</sup>

Lieutenant-Colonel Halfkenny acknowledged the problem, but said that the number of support staff for the Rangers, not only the number of Rangers per instructor should be taken into account as well. The figures he presented to Committee members showed there was a ratio of one full-time employee (including instructors) for 56 Rangers, compared to a comparable ratio of 1:25 in the CAF. In his view, easing the burden for instructors is desirable, but the instructor-Ranger ratio is not a serious problem at this time.

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43 [Gary Walbourne \(Ombudsman, National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 16 October 2018, 1540.

44 [Gary Walbourne \(Ombudsman, National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 16 October 2018, 1545.

45 [Gary Walbourne \(Ombudsman, National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 16 October 2018, 1545.

46 [Gary Walbourne \(Ombudsman, National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 16 October 2018, 1630.



## 2.2 Canadian Rangers and Defending the North

When they visited Yellowknife, Committee members gained a better understanding of the strategic importance of the Rangers, who provide a CAF presence in Northern Canada. With Brigadier-General Patrick Carpentier, Commander of Joint Task Force North (JTF-N), and a dozen other members of the Force in attendance, Helen Vaughan Barrieau, Intergovernmental Relations and Indigenous Affairs Advisor for the JTF-N, gave a comprehensive overview of the various components of Canada's defence strategy in the North, including joint operations with American forces as part of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). The region of responsibility, which includes Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, covers an area nearly as large as the United States, but has only 113,600 inhabitants. Various components of the Canadian Armed Forces provide a military presence in Northern Canada: the 300 JTF-N members, the 1,500 members of the 1<sup>st</sup> CRPG, the 440<sup>th</sup> "Vampire" Transport Squadron, the Area Support Unit (North), and the C-Company Reserve Force unit (Yellowknife) of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment.

One of the key issues that the JTF-N must address is increased marine traffic as a result of melting ice in the Northwest Passage. According to Brigadier-General Carpentier, the passage is still years away from being used commercially, unlike northern routes in Europe, which are easier to navigate. However, this timeline has not prevented some companies or people from venturing into the region without the necessary precautions, which increases security risks. The Canadian Rangers are of course the first to be able to identify these risks and intervene if needed.

To improve the response to this increase in activity in the Northwest Passage, the Royal Canadian Navy will launch the first patrol ship in the Arctic, the HMCS *Harry DeWolf*, as soon as a refuelling station is operational.

Brigadier-General Carpentier cautioned Committee members that the service model used in the rest of Canada should not be replicated in the North. In his view, providing more public services could create a dependence on these services, which would jeopardize the biggest strength of those who live in the North: their resilience, which was born out of the necessity of finding creative solutions to difficult living conditions.

## 2.3. Adapting Veterans Affairs Canada Programs to the Needs of Canadian Rangers

In his [September 2017 report on the CRs](#), Mr. Walbourne, the NDCAFO, identified three challenges that impact CR access to health care and financial benefits through DND or

VAC: “geographical location, level of awareness of entitlements, and the current practice in tracking and reporting Canadian Ranger illnesses and injuries.”

The problem of geographic location in a remote area affects CRs and Indigenous veterans more than other veterans, but it is also an issue for all Canadian veterans who live outside major urban centres, whether they were members of the Regular Force or some component of the Reserve Force. Mr. Walbourne gave an eloquent example of how it can affect CRs: “Try issuing a cheque to a Canadian ranger in a community where there is no bank, or ask someone to fill out a form online when the nearest Wi-Fi hot spot is 1,000 kilometres away. That ranger, by the way, may not speak, read, or write English or French.”<sup>47</sup> This is a problem linked to Canada’s geography. Given how much it affects Indigenous veterans, the next section of the report focuses on this issue.

When they visited Behchoko, Committee members met with a dozen members of the Rangers patrol in the community. Four of them had 25 or more years of service, but none of them knew that they were eligible for VAC compensation programs if they were injured or became ill as a result of their service. Of the Rangers the NDCAFO surveyed, 89% did not know that they were eligible for benefits through VAC.<sup>48</sup>

Since there is no mandatory retirement age and CRs are not subject to universality-of-service requirements, very few of them apply to VAC, even though they would be eligible, for example, for compensation for a service-related disability that does not prevent them from continuing to work as Rangers. In addition, very few of them identify themselves as “veterans.” According to Professor Lackenbauer,

[T]here have been rangers who have served in uniform well into their 80s and 90s. I’ll be at the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Ranger Patrol Group change-of-command parade tomorrow in Yellowknife, where two rangers will be getting their CD4s:<sup>49</sup> Ranger Ookookoo Quaraq of the Pond Inlet Patrol, for 52 years of continuous service, and Ranger Ilkoo Angutikjuak, a member of the Clyde River Patrol, who has been serving continuously for the last 53 years. Continuing to serve rather than voluntarily releasing obviously impacts their access to some Veterans Affairs benefits and services.<sup>50</sup>

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47 [Gary Walbourne \(Ombudsman, National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 16 October 2018, 1540.

48 [Gary Walbourne \(Ombudsman, National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 16 October 2018, 1540.

49 “CD” is the “Canadian Forces’ Decoration.” It is awarded after 12 years of service. For every additional decade, a number is added (CD1 for 22 years, etc.).

50 [Whitney Lackenbauer \(Professor, Department of History, St. Jerome’s University, as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1210.



The Committee has recommended a number of times that contacts be established with VAC upon enlistment so that relevant information can be shared in the event of requests for services in the future and so that serving members can be kept informed of VAC programs. If this recommendation was acted on as soon as a recruit became a Ranger, a number of problems identified by the NDCFO would be easier to address.

The only criticism by the patrol was expressed on behalf of the group by Sergeant Frank Beaulieu, who has 33 years of service in the patrol. The complaint was not specific to VAC programs: it was with regard to how slowly claims are processed, a problem that VAC is all too familiar with. Sergeant Beaulieu's comments were about processing claims for damage caused to Rangers' personal vehicles. Lieutenant-Colonel Halfkenny, Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> CRPG, confirmed that the process was slow and involved each claim being sent to Ottawa for analysis. It is not uncommon for six months or more to go by between when a claim is submitted and when the Ranger is reimbursed. Therefore, the Committee recommends:

## **Recommendation 2**

**That the Canadian Armed Forces delegate to each Canadian Ranger Patrol Group sufficient financial authority to ensure that the group can quickly reimburse Canadian Rangers for personal equipment that is broken while they are using it on duty.**

CRs are eligible for the same programs as other part-time reservists. However, because of the nature of their activities, there can be uncertainty about when a CR is actually on duty. Consider the example of a CR who is travelling while not on duty; the CR observes some unusual situations that could be of interest to the CAF, and decides to gather information about those situations as if on patrol. If the CR is injured while gathering information, that person may not be eligible for CAF health care or VAC benefits, not having been officially on duty. To be considered on duty, he would have to have been sent out on patrol or received authorization in some way from his superiors to proceed with information-gathering, or the activity would have to have been designated retroactively by DND as a military operation.<sup>51</sup>

Professor Lackenbauer noted a few uncertainties that could arise as a result of the CRs' special status, particularly as regards CR admissibility to VAC programs:

I'm not sure if the CAF income support applies to rangers or if former rangers have access to the veterans emergency fund, which is designed to deal with veterans'

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51 National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman, *Canadian Rangers: A Systemic Investigation of the Factors That Impact Health Care Entitlements and Related Benefits of the Rangers*, Report to the Minister of National Defence, September 2017, p. 13.

homelessness. Furthermore, I have no idea if veterans education and training benefits are available to ranger veterans.<sup>52</sup>

One of the eligibility criteria for many VAC programs is to have been released from the CAF. However, for Rangers, as for other Class A reservists, the release process can be very informal. Since Rangers do not receive medical follow-up, it can be difficult to keep a documented record of the incidents or conditions that could ensure that Rangers, either during or after their service, would benefit from some VAC programs. It is also important to take into account that Rangers may be understandably reluctant to make their medical condition known if they believe they may be removed from duty. Mr. Walbourne confirmed this reluctance to come forward:

If they're sick or injured, they can't perform on a patrol group and they may miss that opportunity. The thought of leaving the rangers—and you will notice this very clearly when you start talking to some of the rangers, the pride in what they do. Being part of the rangers is vitally important to them, so anything that may impact their not being able to participate is a cause for them not to come forward.

...

Usually [access to health care] means they have to come out of their community, travel thousands of kilometres and be gone for long periods of time, away from their support group, away from their families. There's some reticence to approach the Canadian Armed Forces because of that.<sup>53</sup>

The NDCFO's investigation revealed that "Canadian Ranger illnesses and injuries are not being consistently reported or adequately tracked." (p. 5) According to Professor Lackenbauer, "this may complicate efforts to discern what are service-related injuries or illnesses rather than pre-existing ones. This could affect career impact allowances, critical injury benefits, or disability benefits and pensions."<sup>54</sup>

The procedure for documenting and reporting an injury or illness is the same as in other CAF units and is far simpler when a [Form CF 98](#) is properly completed. However, the NDCFO notes that the necessary papers were not completed in half the cases where an on-duty

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52 [Whitney Lackenbauer \(Professor, Department of History, St. Jerome's University, as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1210.

53 [Gary Walbourne \(Ombudsman, National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 16 October 2018, 1600.

54 [Whitney Lackenbauer \(Professor, Department of History, St. Jerome's University, as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1210.



injury was reported, and that even when a Form CF 98 was completed, it was not sent to the Director of Casualty Support Management in almost a third of the cases.<sup>55</sup>

The NDCFO recommended that DND and the CAF “ensure compliance with the existing illness and injury reporting process so that Canadian Rangers are not inadvertently barred from accessing their health care entitlements and related benefits.” In his response to the report, the Minister of National Defence stated that he supported the recommendation.<sup>56</sup>

According to Professor Lackenbauer, another issue is the difficulty sharing information on government programs in communities whose primary language is an Indigenous language. The RCs the Committee met with in Behchoko agreed that language was a barrier, as did the Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> CRPG and the National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman. The Ombudsman pointed out that his report on Canadian Rangers was translated into the most common Indigenous languages. Therefore, the Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 3**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada produce a pamphlet outlining its main programs and services in the most common Indigenous languages, and that this pamphlet be distributed to all Canadian Ranger patrols.**

What one can say in general about the unique nature of the work of the CRs is that, as Professor Lackenbauer so clearly put it,

trying to fit the rangers into “normal” program delivery of Veterans Affairs services will be limited, given that the rangers live in isolated communities for the most part. Therefore, the notion that you could just seamlessly deliver services akin to those delivered to other former reservists or regular force members in southern parts of Canada is not going to happen.

Whether you consider having a specific category of rangers or situate this more broadly within your considerations of what should be done to ensure that people living in remote areas get access to services, again, I leave that to the committee to decide, but I

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55 National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman, *Canadian Rangers: A Systemic Investigation of the Factors That Impact Health Care Entitlements and Related Benefits of the Rangers*, Report to the Minister of National Defence, September 2017, p. 16-17.

56 The Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, Minister of National Defence, “Response from the Minister,” 31 October 2017, included as Appendix F in the report of the National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman, *Canadian Rangers: A Systemic Investigation of the Factors That Impact Health Care Entitlements and Related Benefits of the Rangers*, Report to the Minister of National Defence, September 2017, p. 31.

do think the fact that many rangers are serving far beyond what would be a compulsory release date in the primary reserves or regular force should be factored in when looking at what benefit entitlements are available to them.<sup>57</sup>

## REACHING INDIGENOUS VETERANS LIVING IN REMOTE AREAS

Access to health care, and to government services in general, for people living in remote areas is a difficult problem, but it can be a critical one for veterans in remote communities. The CAF is responsible for providing health care for members of the Regular Force and for reservists serving full time. Like members serving part time in Reserve units or the Canadian Rangers, veterans living in isolated areas depend on local medical clinics for health care services. Access to specialized care, including mental health services, is difficult. According to Mr. Thibeau of Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones, “[t]hat’s the major point, the distance between [Indigenous veterans] and where that office is. Once they get to the office, then they’re like anybody else. They walk in the door and they sit with somebody and go through the process. It’s getting to the door.”<sup>58</sup> VAC officials who testified before the Committee acknowledge the problem:

Although we are determined to provide veterans and their family with the support they need, when they need it, where they are, access to services in remote regions can sometimes be a challenge, not due to a lack of willingness on the department’s part. The fact remains that the community and provincial resources to which VAC can direct its clients are sometimes limited.<sup>59</sup>

When it was in Yellowknife, the Committee heard a number of comments about how difficult it was for veterans to travel to Edmonton for VAC services. Peter Pilgrim, an RCMP Inspector who works in Northern Indigenous communities, spoke highly of the services provided by the VAC operational stress injuries clinic in Edmonton, but said that it was very difficult to access them. Wayne Norris, a 26-year veteran with the RCMP, agreed. According to Merle Carpenter, an RCMP veteran the Committee met with in Yellowknife, VAC does nothing to reach out to RCMP veterans in the North. Floyd Powder, whom the Committee met on its trip to Yellowknife, said that the issue relates less to being Indigenous, and more to living in a remote region.

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57 [Whitney Lackenbauer \(Professor, Department of History, St. Jerome’s University, as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1255.

58 [Robert Thibeau \(President, Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1150.

59 [Maryse Savoie \(Acting Director General Field Operations, Service Delivery Branch, Department of Veterans Affairs\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1110.



Since there are no VAC offices in the North, the Department has made a commitment to boost its education and information efforts by having representatives visit the territories and the northern parts of Labrador and Quebec 12 times a year.<sup>60</sup> There are an estimated 1,900 veterans in the territories, but no one knows how many of them are Indigenous. VAC currently has 515 clients in the territories, 90 of whom are receiving case management services.<sup>61</sup>

Since August 2016, we have also expanded our presence with veterans living in northern Canada. Front-line employees regularly travel to Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Iqaluit to meet veterans and their family, as well as partners and local service providers. These meetings enable us to establish and build solid relationships with these partners and to provide veterans living in those communities with information on our programs and services.

...

All veterans can nevertheless count on the extensive network of VAC service locations and the extended network of Service Canada service centres, which provide information on VAC programs and services in over 558 locations in virtually every community in Canada.

Regardless of where they live, veterans who need them can count on home visits by nurses, occupational therapists and their case manager.<sup>62</sup>

It is more difficult to assess VAC's ability to reach Indigenous veterans in remote parts of the provinces. There are some offices, but on the basis of the information gathered during the Committee's first trip, the time and money it takes to get to an office are obstacles for many Indigenous veterans. Mr. Thibeau used the example of Beauval, a Métis community in Saskatchewan visited by the Committee, to illustrate this problem:

In Beauval, Saskatchewan, where you'll be visiting, there's a major problem with.... I won't say a "major" problem because they'll give you an insight on what the problem is. They don't have the ability.... It costs them money to go from Beauval to Saskatoon to the Veterans Affairs department.

My suggestion would have been that if you've upped your workers within Veterans Affairs, why can't they go and visit these communities? Establish some sort of a network where they can go, because I've been told—they can verify it for you—that Veterans

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60 [Maryse Savoie \(Acting Director General Field Operations, Service Delivery Branch, Department of Veterans Affairs\), Evidence, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1125.](#)

61 [Maryse Savoie \(Acting Director General Field Operations, Service Delivery Branch, Department of Veterans Affairs\), Evidence, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1125.](#)

62 [Maryse Savoie \(Acting Director General Field Operations, Service Delivery Branch, Department of Veterans Affairs\), Evidence, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1105.](#)



Affairs won't pay for the people to travel from Beauval to Saskatoon and back. If that's the case, that's not right, because you're dealing with a veteran who has a problem. If it's a mental health problem, you're in deeper water, because this mental health thing is not going away any time soon.<sup>63</sup>

Danny Lafontaine of the Association des vétérans autochtones du Québec described a similar situation that seems to exist in various parts of Canada:

The problem we're having is more like with the satellite reserves right now up north where they don't even have access most of the time to Internet or phones. They go into the forces and they come back, especially the Rangers and all that, and then they have to go through the council band to get any information, and most of these council bands don't even have any info from VAC at all. This is what we're talking about. We have zero coordination between health services on reserves and VAC. I've been talking to a lot of the chief bands right now, and what they're doing is they're taking care of their own vets and everything and basically they don't know what to do.<sup>64</sup>

For veterans living on reserves, this access problem is sometimes aggravated by the lack of connections between band councils and the Department. Mr. Lafontaine was critical of some band councils, because he said they are preventing VAC from providing any assistance:

In the northern part, there's no transition at all, because they don't actually have contacts with VAC, and this is where we're trying to get into it but we're being blocked. All these guys on the ground right now, we're being blocked by the chief reserves, basically. They didn't want to hear about it. They just keep it cool.... Some of the money is going back to the reserve instead of to the veterans.<sup>65</sup>

His words were echoed by Émile Highway of the Saskatchewan First Nations Veterans Association in his testimony: "I don't know if I should say it's not their fault, but they're certainly not aware of the sacrifices and ordeals that we went through as soldiers. With the northern chiefs, there's absolutely no support."<sup>66</sup>

The key is to take the first step. According to Aurel Dubé, when VAC took the initiative and contacted the veterans, it made that first step much easier:

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63 [Robert Thibeau \(President, Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1135.

64 [Danny Lafontaine \(Public Relations Officer, Association des Vétérans Autochtones du Québec\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1120.

65 [Danny Lafontaine \(Public Relations Officer, Association des Vétérans Autochtones du Québec\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1125.

66 [Emile Highway \(President, Prince Albert Branch, Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1225.



Veterans Affairs has been doing well lately. They are just about to start or have already started a trip to show they are there to help. Sometimes it's hard to find out where to get help, but when people from Veterans Affairs go to those places, people will go because the word will be passed on. I know they are about to go down east, and most of the people who need help are aware of that, so for sure they will be there.

It's communication. When we have good communication, we know they will be there. People will go to meet these people, and at least the first connection will be done that way.<sup>67</sup>

Mr. Lafontaine made the same point:

When we bring them through the system, they become a normal person like everybody else—they become a vet. We're saying a vet is a vet, basically. It's just getting that vet in there. It's not being aboriginal or not, it's getting them out of the reserve. To do that, though, you have to go into that reserve to get these guys.<sup>68</sup>

For Professor Sheffield, the efforts made by the Department to reach Indigenous veterans are the key to helping them get better access to its services: "I think part of the problem with Veterans Affairs is this assumption that if you build it, they will come. In this case, you have to go to them. I think that is a real change of mindset in order to more successfully deliver programs and to maybe build some bridges of trust."<sup>69</sup> According to Mr. Thibeau, for similar reasons, the new programs introduced by VAC in recent years are likely to be underused by Indigenous veterans.<sup>70</sup>

One of the issues the Committee learned of when it visited Yellowknife involved people indentifying as "veterans." Of the dozen or so veterans who met with the Committee members at the Royal Canadian Legion, many said that they had long thought that the term "veteran" applied only to those who had served in the Second World War and the Korean War. Service Canada representatives in Yellowknife said that sometimes when people seek services through their offices, it comes to light at a later date that those people are in fact veterans. VAC has launched a number of awareness campaigns so that people know what programs it delivers. However, before people who may benefit from these services will pay attention to these campaigns, they need to consider themselves veterans. To get around this problem, agencies that help homeless veterans, including VETS Canada, will ask "Have you ever worn the uniform?" instead of asking if the person

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67 [Aurel Dubé \(as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 24 May 2018, 1245.

68 [Danny Lafontaine \(Public Relations Officer, Association des Vétérans Autochtones du Québec\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1150.

69 [Scott Sheffield \(Associate Professor, Department of History, University of the Fraser Valley, as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1155.

70 [Robert Thibeau \(President, Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1110.

is a veteran. The Department has taken steps in that direction, but Committee members would like to see these steps taken more systematically, and therefore they recommend:

#### **Recommendation 4**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada incorporate in all its communications to the general public, and in all its program outreach efforts, a message or a question like “Have you worn the uniform?” or “Have you served?” so that veterans can easily identify themselves as veterans.**

Committee members had the opportunity to meet with representatives working in the Service Canada offices in Yellowknife, who have to overcome, daily, the challenges of providing services in remote regions. Muepu Fox Kabuya, the Area Director, explained the frontline role the five service centres play in the Northwest Territories (NWT), and how that role applies specifically to the needs of veterans. For example, Service Canada lets VAC case managers use its offices when they travel to meet with the Department’s 90 clients who benefit from its case management services in the territories. In addition, people who self-identify as veterans when they visit Service Canada centres are given priority access—they will be served by the first available representative.

These Service Canada workers were given training so they can help people fill out forms requesting benefits or services through VAC. However, they do not have the knowledge required to determine what services or benefits a person may be entitled to. According to Cecile Gareau, service manager, when people are looking for specific information on program contents, they are referred to VAC’s 1-800 number.

Lastly, Service Canada representatives regularly visit communities after announcing their schedule ahead of time so that they can provide a variety of services to those who come in person. However, VAC services were not on the list of services usually provided. In order to ensure Service Canada has a better understanding of VAC programs so that it can tell members in isolated communities about them, the Committee recommends:

#### **Recommendation 5**

**That Service Canada add services provided by Veterans Affairs Canada to the list of services it promotes when its representatives travel to meet with communities in remote areas.**

There is no denying that efforts must be made to better reach veterans who live in remote areas, many of whom are Indigenous veterans. The challenge is identifying the best way to achieve this end without simply reproducing the methods and approaches used in the rest



of Canada. The unique way of life in the North is sought out because things are done differently than in the rest of the country, where people connect with public services on a more individual level. The remoteness creates a stronger sense of community than is needed in the rest of the country. The remoteness and community involvement contribute to the resilience and resourcefulness of Northern communities that was mentioned by everyone the Committee met during its trip to Yellowknife and Behchoko.

That is why any changes to the way federal services are delivered in the North must be made cautiously. Service Canada's model is based on grouping general federal programs—those that affect all Canadians (passports, income tax) or those that many people are eligible for based on demographic characteristics that can be applied automatically (Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, financial support for families, etc.). The pool of possible clients is very large, and nearly all Canadians are directly affected in some way by at least one of these programs. However, programs for veterans are a different matter. Specific criteria must be met before a person can be eligible for the programs. The fact that Service Canada is a point of service for programs for the general population could be used to identify veterans in communities where Service Canada's visiting mobile units are the only points of contact with the federal government.

However, these mobile units will not be able to provide tailored services to the veterans in remote communities who need them. Tailored services often involve referring veterans to specialized health and rehabilitation resources that are available only in urban centres. Even if there were a VAC office in every Northern community, it would not address the key issue in remote communities: travelling to access specialized resources.

Mr. Powder, whom the Committee met during its trip to Yellowknife, suggested adapting the one-stop-shop model used by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Under this model, a service officer is already working in more than 20 communities. That person is usually from the community and speaks the Indigenous language used there. Instead of having a VAC employee working out of Yellowknife who must go to meet with communities one after the other to raise awareness of the Department's programs for a day or two every six months, the territorial service officers could receive training and serve as a go-between for veterans who live in the community and VAC programs. In return, VAC could reimburse the NWT government for the time its territorial service officers spend on veterans' files. Given the flexibility of this community-based model, the Committee recommends:

## Recommendation 6

**That Veterans Affairs Canada work with the territorial governments so that territorial service officers working in Northern communities are able to offer local direct access to Veterans Affairs Canada programs.**

## **TAILORING PROGRAMS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

The issues associated with the specific cultural context of Indigenous veterans obviously take different forms depending on whether the veterans are Inuit, Métis or First Nations people. This section provides an overview of some issues specific to these groups that were brought to the Committee's attention during this study.

### **1. First Nations**

#### **1.1 Attraction to the U.S. Army**

According to a number of First Nations, the Jay Treaty of 1794, concluded by the United States and Great Britain to address certain consequences of American independence, gives them the right to travel freely between the United States and Canada. However, both American and Canadian courts have ruled that the Jay Treaty was nullified by the War of 1812. American courts have nevertheless recognized the inherent right of Indigenous people not to be impeded by the border. That right was entrenched in American legislation in 1952, allowing Indigenous people from Canada to freely enter the United States.<sup>71</sup>

The same right has not been entrenched in Canadian legislation, and according to an interpretation repeated multiple times by the courts, First Nations members entering Canada through the United States are subject to the same requirements as any other individuals.<sup>72</sup> Hence, Indigenous people's right of free passage from Canada to the

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71 United States Code, 2011 Edition, Title 8 – Aliens and Nationality, Chapter 12 – Immigration and Nationality, Subchapter II – Immigration, Part IX – Miscellaneous, [Sec. 1359 – Application to American Indians born in Canada](#):

Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to affect the right of American Indians born in Canada to pass the borders of the United States, but such right shall extend only to persons who possess at least 50 per centum of blood of the American Indian race.

(June 27, 1952, ch. 477, title II, ch. 9, §289, 66 Stat. 234.)

72 See *Francis v. R.*, [1956] SCR 618. See also the report of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, [Border Crossing Issues and the Jay Treaty](#), June 2016.



United States is not matched by a reciprocal right to travel freely from the United States to Canada.

With regard to veterans, as a result of this imbalance, many Indigenous people living in Canada have been able and have chosen to enlist in the U.S. Army, whereas the reverse has been less common. In fact, a number of veterans that the Committee met during its first trip were veterans of the U.S. Army who had retired in Canada. In Millbrook, Nova Scotia, Committee members met with Allan Knockwood, James Stevens and Nolan Martin, all U.S. Army veterans. Mr. Knockwood said he made that choice simply because several other members of his family had done so in the past, while Mr. Stevens and Mr. Martin, who joined the Marines, did not cite any particular reasons other than the generous enlistment bonus they were offered.

According to Tim Bernard, Director of History and Culture at the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, one of First Nations members' key motivations for joining the U.S. Army was the GI Bill, which, through a bonus, provides a guarantee of 36 months of financial support for post-service education.

According to Randi Gage of Unified Veterans of Manitoba, one of the U.S. Army's main attractions for Indigenous people is its more militaristic dimension:

[T]o join the U.S. Army, you become a soldier. You become a soldier who picks up a gun and shoots people. You go out there and you kick butt. Remember, the door swung both ways.... We had the guys in the States running like crazy to get up here, and the guys up here running like crazy to get down there.

This was very much a country of peacekeepers. This was very much a country of "Yes, dears." Down there it's "Get the hell out of my way. I'm going through." I think for a lot of them who came down to fight – the ones I knew, because there were quite a few where I was working – that was their whole thing. They came down and they wanted to get into the fight.<sup>73</sup>

It is this image of strength that influenced Marwood White, a U.S. Army veteran whom the Committee met on the Six Nations reserve and who is now a member of the local police forces.

First Nations members who have dual citizenship are in a special situation since the government of the country for which they fought is responsible for services. Hence, Indigenous Vietnam War veterans who live in Canada have to contact the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to obtain their benefits and services.

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73 [Randi Gage \(Chair, Unified Veterans of Manitoba\), Evidence, ACVA, 14 June 2018, 1155.](#)

According to Bruce Patterson, First Vice-President of the Six Nations Veterans Association, whom the Committee met during its trip, there may be some agreements under which the U.S. government reimburses the provincial administration or Veterans Affairs Canada for services provided in Canada to Vietnam War veterans. For example, Nolan Martin, a Millbrook veteran who served in the Marines, needed a back operation for a problem associated with his military service, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reached an agreement with a Halifax hospital to have the operation performed there. Nevertheless, such agreements seem to be ad hoc arrangements initiated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs so that it can provide treatment to veterans for whom it is responsible.

According to Ms. Savoie of VAC, “[W]e have reciprocal agreements with many countries, the U.S. being one of them. We have some with South Africa, Australia, and the U.K., and we do provide services to allied veterans or veterans who have served in other countries.”<sup>74</sup> However, those agreements seem to be confined to Allied veterans of the Second World War and the Korean War.

Veronica Morin, who returned to Canada after her husband died while serving in the U.S. Army, was surprised by how little support she received in Canada: “I didn’t expect free child care in Saskatchewan when I moved home, but hoped for access to benefits the Canadian military might offer their widows and their dependants, so I tried to apply for a subsidy for daycare. Because of my non-Canadian income, I did not qualify for this.”<sup>75</sup>

Mr. Thibeau of Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones told the Committee that one of the main irritants of this lack of coordination between Canada and the United States had to do with transportation expenses:

I was informed four years ago by Chief Percy Joe from the Shackan Indian Band, a remote reserve near Merritt, B.C., that veterans had to pay out of their pockets the expenses to get from their community to the border; then they would be covered. I asked at that time whether there was a possibility of an agreement between DVA and VAC to address and resolve the issue of travel, in other words, whether there was a way that Veterans Affairs could pay that travel and be reimbursed by DVA, that is, through cross-border talks.<sup>76</sup>

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74 [Maryse Savoie \(Acting Director General Field Operations, Service Delivery Branch, Department of Veterans Affairs\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1125.

75 [Veronica Morin \(as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 5 June 2018, 1215.

76 [Robert Thibeau \(President, Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1115. See also [Veronica Morin \(as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 5 June 2018, 1245.



To address these administrative irritants, the Committee recommends:

### Recommendation 7

**That Veterans Affairs Canada and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs pursue an agreement to ensure better coordination of programs and services available to Indigenous veterans and their families who served in the Canadian Armed Forces and now reside in the United States, and Indigenous veterans and their families who served in the United States' Armed Forces and now reside in Canada, including access to the Military Family Resource Centres.**

## 1.2. Cultural and Spiritual Context

Recent studies by the Committee frequently considered the loss of identity that many veterans cope with in their transition from military to civilian life. For Indigenous veterans, this risk of identity loss is compounded by the risk associated with the loss of identity within their community when they return after a career in the CAF. Wallace Bona, President of the Aboriginal Veterans Society of Alberta, provided a clear description of this tension:

I was certainly aware that the ancestry was native, that's for sure. I grew up with bannock and tea. I thought every family grew up with bannock and tea. My mom was like, "If you don't want it, that's okay." My father was like, "Oh, no, you've got to have that card. It could help you out later in life." I ended up taking the card. Talking to my friends, I was like, "Hey, check it out. I have a status card." I don't know; mixed reactions to it over the years.<sup>77</sup>

According to Aurel Dubé, Elders hold the key to this twofold transition and making VAC programs more attuned to the needs of Indigenous veterans:

I know it is already being done, but it's to get the word from the elders. An elder is someone aboriginal people respect a lot. Whatever those people think, we need to think about what they are telling us to do. If we're there, and we listen to our elders, they will help us to do what is better for our veterans.<sup>78</sup>

Victor Sanderson had the same idea, but he expanded it to include recognition of the importance of the whole spiritual and cultural context:

Our spirituality is our life. When we fall apart, when we fall down from being away from home and being situated in another diverse ethnic group such as white people, we

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77 [Wallace J. Bona \(President, Aboriginal Veterans Society of Alberta\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 5 June 2018, 1120.

78 [Aurel Dubé \(as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 24 May 2018, 1245.



spend so much time with you that sometimes our spirit will tell us we're having a hard time, so we have to go home.

...

We listen to our elders and the Creator through our ceremonies. Our ceremonies are great for us. They help us and they benefit us, but they also tell us that we have a long way to go, that nothing is just taken care of right away.<sup>79</sup>

Debbie Eisan, whom the Committee met during its visit to Halifax, is a former chief warrant officer who served in the CAF for 26 years. She was chosen by her community to serve as an Elder. She pointed out the importance of tailoring programs and services, particularly mental health care, to their cultural context. For example, without excluding psychotherapy and modern medicine, allowing a First Nations veteran to return to his or her community's land and meet with the spiritual leaders can significantly promote healing.

Ms. Eisan gave the example of the sweat lodge, whose complex ritual encourages the individual to give meaning to difficulties by linking them to the individual's personal past and to the family's and the community's past with the support of the spiritual leaders and by helping the individual make a connection between that heritage, the present difficulties and the ways of learning from those experiences to open up a future that the individual may have felt was closed off.

In the last few years, VAC has been trying to foster better communication by bringing Indigenous community representatives into ministerial advisory groups. According to VAC's Faith McIntyre,

Currently, there are six ministerial advisory groups that provide advice and guidance on a variety of topics to the minister and the department. Each of the groups includes an Indigenous member, which ensures that the groups consider the unique needs of Canada's Indigenous veterans when addressing issues such as outreach to veterans, the complexity of application processes, access to services, and cultural differences, to name a few.<sup>80</sup>

The members of the Committee were pleased to hear that VAC is already working with a network of spiritual leaders from various Indigenous communities across the country. The Department is able to consult with these resource persons when a situation

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79 [Victor Sanderson \(as an individual\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 14 June 2018, 1250.

80 [Faith McIntyre \(Director General, Policy and Research Division, Strategic Policy and Commemoration, Department of Veterans Affairs\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1110.



demands particular cultural sensitivity. However, VAC's ministerial advisory groups have no Métis members.<sup>81</sup>

### 1.3. Health Care on Reserves

Health services budgets on reserves are determined by the federal government and are not controlled by provincial health care systems. VAC's health care programs were developed to supplement the services provided by the provinces and territories, much like health care plans for workers who have group insurance programs. Hence, there are agreements with the provinces and territories for all veterans who do not live on reserves, but there have not been any equivalent agreements between VAC and the department responsible for Indigenous services to supplement services provided to Indigenous veterans on reserves. Mr. Thibeau of Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones raised this issue during his testimony:

[I]n the case of first nations, the health care budgets on reserves are limited, and they cannot be expected to add care for our veterans without a direct and positive influence by the Government of Canada and in particular by Veterans Affairs. I can also say that the same issues exist in smaller communities where other Indigenous veterans reside.... In other words, assuring care for entitled veterans should not become a financial burden on any community from the money received for the health of the community. Veterans Affairs must establish the same and equal support as for mainstream veterans, including any costs associated with that support.<sup>82</sup>

According to Phillip Ledoux of the Saskatchewan First Nations Veterans Association, this difference in levels of service is compounded by the fact that most reserves are far from major centres:

Veterans Affairs assumes that access to services on reserve is the same as off-reserve urban centres. This is absolutely not the case. Where no services exist on reserve, veterans have two choices. They either go without or they absorb the personal costs to access services off reserve. First nations' veterans need a specific claim process that considers the proximity and access to services needed.<sup>83</sup>

Given the risk that services may not be equitable due to the remoteness of reserves and the lack of specific agreements on delivering services, the Committee recommends:

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81 [Tanya Davoren \(Director of Health and Sport, Director of Veterans, Métis Nation British Columbia\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 14 June 2018, 1220.

82 [Robert Thibeau \(President, Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 22 May 2018, 1110.

83 [Phillip Ledoux \(Vice-President, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1220.

## Recommendation 8

**That Veterans Affairs Canada and Indigenous Services Canada ensure that the funding parameters for services provided to Indigenous veterans living on reserve do not create a disadvantage for them in comparison to other veterans.**

## 2. Métis

Unlike First Nations veterans, Métis veterans did not receive any compensation for the treatment they experienced after the Second World War and the Korean War. Brian Black of the Métis Nation of Ontario expressed regret at the lack of progress on Métis veterans' demands:

Last year we heard that there was going to be a reconciliation for Métis World War II veterans. I'll ask what is going on with that. We heard this announcement, and then we heard nothing—crickets. Our World War II veterans are not getting any younger. What are we waiting for?

I understand there may have been some talks with Veterans Affairs and our Métis National Council, but nothing from this has been translated down to the Métis provincial council, veteran councils, or committees. This matter needs a second engagement and discussion with the provincial Métis veteran councils and committees—not the national council, which does not know all the needs of our veterans.<sup>84</sup>

According to Jimmy Durocher and Maxime Morin, with whom the Committee met during its visit to Beauval, Saskatchewan, Métis veterans are the forgotten among the forgotten. Though they did not live on reserves administered by the Department of Indian Affairs, they were still considered to be Indigenous people, and they suffered the same injustices as other Indigenous people, yet they were not entitled to compensation.<sup>85</sup> In a [document](#) submitted to the Committee by Alex Maurice, the Saskatchewan Chapter of the National Aboriginal Veterans Association, presented the Government of Canada with a proposal for compensation similar to the package received by First Nations veterans.

During his appearance before the Committee, David Chartrand of the Métis National Council said he was hopeful that a settlement would be made soon so that Métis veterans would receive compensation similar to that offered to First Nations veterans.<sup>86</sup>

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84 [Brian Black \(Chair and Vice-President, Métis Nation of Ontario\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 14 June 2018, 1115.

85 See also [Danny Lafontaine \(Public Relations Officer, Association des Vétérans Autochtones du Québec\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1125.

86 [David Chartrand \(Minister of Veteran Affairs, Métis National Council\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 20 September 2018, 1535.



Throughout this study, the key demand by Métis veterans was for compensation equivalent to that paid to First Nations veterans.

According to Dave Armitt of the Métis Nation British Columbia, whom the Committee met during its visit to Victoria, the first step in this reconciliation process would be for the federal government to fund an initiative to identify Métis veterans.

The key difficulty involving compensation for Métis veterans is the fact that a comparison with First Nations veterans is difficult to establish. The amounts First Nations veterans were given were intended to compensate for the fact that veterans living on reserve did not have access to the loans and grants offered to other veterans to establish farms. However, as Métis veterans did not live on reserve, they had access to these grants and loans along with all the other veterans. The difficulty, in their case, was the remoteness of their communities and how hard it was to find out about these programs. According to Mr. Chartrand, some Métis veterans did not have access to the grants and loans provided by the Government of Canada: “This was the case for Alberta and Saskatchewan Métis who wanted to take up veteran land grants and were instead told to move into collectively held Métis settlements or Métis farms.”<sup>87</sup> Injustice is more difficult to document for Métis veterans because they did not live on reserve and therefore were not “Status,” which would have made them more easily identifiable. Mr. Chartrand added that organizations representing Métis veterans were not given access to files that would have allowed them to prove that systemic discrimination had taken place.

Given that Committee members do not have enough information to make an informed judgment on the reasons that prevented the government from settling with Métis veterans, the Committee recommends:

### **Recommendation 9**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs with an explanation of the reasons that a settlement agreement was not reached to compensate Métis veterans of World War II and their families.**

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87 [David Chartrand \(Minister of Veteran Affairs, Métis National Council\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 20 September 2018, 1545.

## Recommendation 10

**That Veterans Affairs Canada continue working with Métis and Métis organizations to ensure that Métis veterans and their families have access to all benefits and settlements to which they are entitled, and to ensure the access as soon as possible.**

## 3. Inuit

Given their remoteness, few Inuit participated in the major conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, we remember the exploits of John Shiwak, a World War I sniper who died in action in 1917 and who had joined the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in 1915. Today, Inuits are a key component of the Canadian Rangers. According to the [brief](#) submitted to the Committee by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), remoteness “substantially hinders the accessibility of benefits and services for Veterans across Inuit Nunangat, as opposed to other Veterans.” The lack of specialized public health services is a direct result of this remoteness, and it is the primary challenge Inuit veterans face.

According to a [CBC report](#) cited by ITK, 49 Rangers died between 2011 and 2015. Only one death was service related. Because Canadian Rangers have no retirement age and no follow-up medical care, and the average life expectancy is lower in the North, the number of non-combat deaths within the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Rangers Patrol Group is higher than within other units of the CAF. Other concerns expressed by ITK aligned with the National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman’s recommendations in his report on the Canadian Rangers.<sup>88</sup>

## OTHER MATTERS

### 1. Reaching the New Generation of Indigenous Veterans

VAC does not compile statistics on the number of Indigenous veterans in Canada or the number of Indigenous clients it has. In addition, the Department has no way of knowing how many of its own employees are Indigenous veterans.<sup>89</sup> As a result, it is difficult to get a realistic picture of the extent to which its services are used by Indigenous veterans in comparison with other veterans, and how satisfied they are with those services. Steven Ross, Grand Chief of the Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association,

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88 The ombudsman’s findings and recommendations are listed in section 2 of the report.

89 [Maryse Savoie \(Acting Director General Field Operations, Service Delivery Branch, Department of Veterans Affairs\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 12 June 2018, 1135.



confirmed the lack of information: “Regarding the quality of services received by Indigenous veterans, the services may be there, and may be utilized by Indigenous veterans, but we are unaware of the percentage of veterans accessing these services and the types of services being requested and provided.”<sup>90</sup>

Hence, the Committee has no choice but to rely on anecdotal evidence. For example, during the Committee’s trips, it was striking how few young veterans attended the meetings or were members of the Indigenous veterans’ associations with which the Committee met.

Ellwood Froman, for example, is a Vietnam War veteran who returned to the Six Nations reserve to be closer to his family. In his view, many young people who have left the reserve to enlist in the American or Canadian military will want to return to their families when they are older. Few of them attend Remembrance Day ceremonies, and it is difficult to get a clear picture of the status of those veterans of more recent conflicts such as Afghanistan. According to Helen Miller, a member of the Six Nations Band Council, activities for veterans are limited. Between 40 and 50 people take part in the commemorative ceremonies on the third Sunday in October, but few young people attend. The same observation was made a number of times about the younger generation of veterans, who seem to have little interest in joining traditional veterans associations.

## 2. Supporting the Representation of Indigenous Veterans

Throughout this study, Committee members saw that the representation of Indigenous veterans in Canada is somewhat fragmented. During the Committee’s visit to the Six Nations reserve, for example, one of the conclusions arising from the discussions was that connections between local Indigenous veterans associations and the provincial or national associations were weak and needed improvement. The lack of contact between VAC and First Nations veterans living on reserves also emerged as a problem, which could be remedied quite easily if VAC made a greater effort to provide the communities with information about its programs.

Joe Thorne, Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones (AVA) director for British Columbia, whom the Committee met during its visit to Victoria, said he would like to unite the associations that represent Indigenous veterans in Canada. Other organizations, such as the Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association, have requested federal government

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90 [Steven Ross \(Grand Chief, Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1210; *Evidence*, ACVA, 8 May 2018, 1215.

assistance in achieving greater consolidation of the network of associations supporting Indigenous veterans.<sup>91</sup>

A number of organizations representing Métis veterans have made similar requests. For example, according to Tanya Davoren, Métis Nation British Columbia receives no funding:

It's a 10-person committee made up of veterans from across the province of B.C. The full MVBC committee only meets twice a year. There is no funding for regional meetings, so they can't reach out within their seven regions to work, connect, or make any face-to-face contact with veterans.

Our proposed solution is that MVBC receive funding from Veterans Affairs Canada to carry out the work of the veteran committee, which, as Chair Black from Métis Nation Ontario has said, is to do the face-to-face veteran work and veteran engagement.<sup>92</sup>

However, there appear to be some obstacles impeding the consolidation of associations representing Indigenous veterans. During their visit to Victoria, Committee members noted that, unfortunately, there were some significant differences of opinion between some organizations. Ms. Davoren mentioned others in her testimony:

Métis Nation B.C. is concerned about the rogue Métis and aboriginal veteran groups that claim to represent all aboriginal veterans across Canada. MNBC does not support Métis Veterans of Canada or the Canadian Aboriginal Veterans and Serving Members Association. Métis Nation B.C. and our MVBC committee enjoy and support a friendly relationship only with the Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones, or AVA, organization.<sup>93</sup>

## **Recommendation 11**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada take steps to bring together representatives from associations representing Indigenous veterans so that it can share information about its programs and help create an environment where they can regularly communicate their various concerns.**

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91 [Phillip Ledoux \(Vice-President, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 5 June 2018, 1210.

92 Tanya Davoren (Director of Health and Sport, Director of Veterans, Métis Nation British Columbia), *Evidence*, ACVA, 14 June 2018, 1220.

93 Tanya Davoren (Director of Health and Sport, Director of Veterans, Métis Nation British Columbia), *Evidence*, ACVA, 14 June 2018, 1220.



### 3. Commemoration

In the course of this study, a debate arose regarding the appropriateness of commemorating the service of Indigenous veterans on the same day as other veterans, 11 November, or officially recognizing 8 November as National Indigenous Veterans Day, as the City of Winnipeg and the Government of Manitoba have done. According to Randi Gage, the aim is not to compete with Remembrance Day:

What they came up with was that it was a good time to be able to get their uniforms out and get them dry cleaned, to polish up everything that needed to be polished up, to get their feet working in the right direction as far as marching and remembering things was concerned, and to meet with their community – be within their community, save their history there, be with their children and grandchildren, share what was happening. They figured that gave them enough time to get all spruced up and ready to go wherever they had to go on November 11.<sup>94</sup>

For Mr. Black of the Métis Nation of Ontario, the separate date contains an element of protest: “Indigenous people enlisted, and all of a sudden they had a good job and three meals. They were treated just like one of the normal people; they were contributing and everyone was working together. There was no separation. When they came home, that’s when that disconnect happened. This is celebrating both.”<sup>95</sup> Métis organizations also called for better representation at commemoration ceremonies and in various museums funded by the Government of Canada, such as the Juno Beach Centre in Normandy.

The other demand, expressed by some witnesses and some Indigenous veterans whom the Committee met during its first trip, concerns the lack of funding to establish war memorials in the communities. According to a number of witnesses, communities, whose members may be struggling financially, must come up with the funds themselves to erect monuments in memory of veterans who served Canada. Therefore, the Committee recommends:

#### **Recommendation 12**

**That Veterans Affairs Canada review the eligibility criteria of its programs that provide funding for war memorials so that remote communities wanting to honour the memory of their veterans are better able to do so.**

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94 Randi Gage (Chair, Unified Veterans of Manitoba), *Evidence*, ACVA, 14 June 2018, 1125.

95 [Brian Black \(Chair and Vice-President, Métis Nation of Ontario\)](#), *Evidence*, ACVA, 14 June 2018, 1130.



## CONCLUSION

During the great conflicts of the 20th century, Indigenous people voluntarily enlisted at a higher rate than other Canadians. This enthusiasm is well documented for First Nations people and reflected a clear desire to assert themselves as full-fledged citizens of Canada. Their sometimes difficult integration into the armed forces was nevertheless perceived as a sincere openness to recognize this equality of status on both sides. In the case of the Métis, the fragmentary data suggest similar enthusiasm, while for Inuit, the data are almost non-existent. For some Indigenous leaders who wanted to insist on maintaining a nation-to-nation relationship, their community's unwavering support for the Canadian war effort was a clear indication of their commitment as allies of the Crown.

However, the differential treatment of Indigenous veterans once peace returned has made them question the sincerity of Canada's openness to their full social and political participation. It was not until the early 2000s that the injustices suffered by First Nations veterans during the Second World War and the Korean War were recognized and compensated. The Government of Canada has not offered comparable compensation to Métis veterans, despite their repeated requests. The reasons for this distinction remain unclear and therefore the Committee members have asked the Government of Canada to clearly explain the reasons for this distinction.

Today, approximately 2,300 Regular Force and Primary Reserve members have identified themselves as Indigenous, representing 2.5% of the total. The objective of the CAF is to increase this percentage to 3.5% to more equitably represent the proportion of Indigenous people in the Canadian population. Several recruitment programs have been developed and are very successful with young people. As for Veterans Affairs Canada, the proportion of its clients who are Indigenous is unknown.

Among the other reserve forces, Indigenous people occupy an important place among the 5,000 Canadian Rangers. The role of the Rangers in protecting Canada's sovereignty in the North was one of the Committee members' most important revelations of this study. The circumstances of their military service make them a unique group and most of the criteria that define the transition from military to civilian life for veterans are difficult to apply to Rangers.

During their visit to Behchoko, Northwest Territories, Committee members also noted that the Canadian Rangers were unaware of VAC programs and did not consider themselves veterans when they left the force, thus confirming the findings of the National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman. For this reason, the Committee recommends that VAC make much more sustained efforts to promote its programs to



the Rangers, and that similar initiatives be implemented to reach all Veterans living in remote areas, many of whom are Indigenous.

These awareness efforts must obviously be adapted to the cultural contexts of Indigenous people. For example, in the case of First Nations veterans, VAC will have to take into account the fact that, because of the right to travel from Canada to the United States enjoyed by First Nations, many of them served in the United States military before returning to their communities. In the case of mental health care, VAC must also take into account the supportive role played by community members, particularly spiritual leaders, in the transition and recovery process. The inclusion of First Nations representatives in VAC's advisory groups is a constructive step forward in this regard.

For Métis veterans, the consideration of cultural dimensions seems more difficult to implement, since the official confirmation of their Indigenous status is more recent and is not traditionally as directly linked to the grouping of Métis people on designated territories, as was the case with Indian reserves. That is why, in their case, the first step is to properly document the historical dimension of their participation in the World Wars and the Korean War. This will allow, if necessary, to correct past injustices and then move on to clarify the parameters under which a new basis for collaboration can be established and can guide VAC's interventions with veterans in these communities.

Finally, VAC needs to do more to reach younger generations of Indigenous veterans. These efforts must first involve a more sustained exchange between VAC and organizations representing Indigenous veterans, which also involves facilitating exchanges between these organizations themselves. One avenue to consider would be to provide better financial support for remembrance initiatives in Indigenous communities. The commemoration of past sacrifices is an irreplaceable unifying force that can open paths to easing disagreements, sincerely and mutually recognizing injustices, and committing to healing them. It is also through such memories, through the solidarity of past sorrows, that the foundations of a deeper friendship can be laid, so that all can look to the future and be ready to fight side by side if, one day, the blessed delights of peace should become more uncertain. Confidence that equality in combat will be followed by equal recognition in concord will be a powerful sign that reconciliation between Indigenous people and other Canadians has truly been accomplished.

## APPENDIX A TRAVEL REPORT: MILLBROOK, N.S.; HALIFAX, N.S.; SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER, ONT.; BEAUVAL, SASK.; AND VICTORIA, B.C. – 27 MAY TO 1 JUNE 2018

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The House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs wishes to acknowledge the remarkable life and achievements of Freeman Douglas Knockwood, who passed away on 16 June 2018 in Indian Brook, Nova Scotia. A respected Mi'kmaq spiritual leader, Elder Douglas Knockwood was a veteran of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery and a much-valued counsellor whose ideas influenced many rehabilitation programs for people fighting addictions. Doug was 88 years old. An overview of his unique life can be found at: <http://www.mikmaweydebert.ca/home/2015/06/honouring-elder-douglas-knockwood/>.



Doug Knockwood (right) with Don Julien at the Acadia University Convocation, where he received an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities (Photo credit: Acadia University, with permission).

## **INTRODUCTION**

As part of its study on the needs and issues specific to Indigenous veterans, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs travelled to Millbrook, N.S., Halifax, N.S., Six Nations on the Grand River, Ont., Beauval, Sask. and Victoria, B.C., for meetings and visits between 27 May and 1 June 2018. The delegation consisted of Committee Chair Neil R. Ellis, Robert Kitchen, Bob Bratina, Scott Duvall, Colin Fraser, Darrell Samson and Cathay Wagantall. The delegation was accompanied by House of Commons staff members Karine Parenteau and Nathalie Clairoux, as well as Library of Parliament Analyst Jean-Rodrigue Paré.

The contents of this travel report will enrich the Committee's study. It will be appended to the Final Report of the study, which is scheduled for tabling in the fall of 2018.

## **28 MAY: MILLBROOK AND HALIFAX**

### **A. Morning: Millbrook, Nova Scotia**

The [Millbrook First Nation](#) is a Mi'kmaq community of about 1,800 people. Half of the community's members reside on reserve lands in and around the town of Truro. The Millbrook First Nation developed the Millbrook Power Centre, which consists of 80 acres of commercial land located along Highway 102.

About thirty members of the Millbrook First Nation participated in the First World War, the Second World War and the Korean War. Many more served in more recent operations, and some, taking advantage of their dual citizenship, served in the armed forces of the United States. A cenotaph was erected at Millbrook in 1999.

Donald Julien, a veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces who participated in the United Nations Mission in Cyprus, welcomed the delegation. Mr. Julien is a member of the Order of Canada and was named Honorary Colonel for the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division Training Centre (Gagetown) in 2016. He was accompanied by Allan Knockwood, Joseph Francis, James Stevens, Nolan Martin and Tim Bernard.

Mr. Julien recalled the injustices suffered by Indigenous veterans during the two world wars and the Korean War. He particularly insisted on the undue importance given to "Indian agents," whose role was to keep the First Nations under supervision until such time as the efforts to assimilate children, orchestrated by the bureaucratic director of the Department of Indian Affairs, Duncan C. Scott, hopefully bore fruit. This treatment of

Indigenous people as “pupils of the State” under the Department’s authority was used to justify their ineligibility for the programs that were available to other veterans.

According to Mr. Julien, 83 members of Nova Scotia First Nations participated in World War One, and 10 of them lost their lives. During the Second World War, 126 served and five paid the ultimate price. As well, 26 members of Nova Scotia First Nations participated in the Korean War, including one who was killed.

Allan Knockwood served as a medic in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War, and he briefly served in the Canadian Reserve Force at Gagetown. His primary reason for joining the United States military was simply that many members of his family had done so in the past. He also recalled the injustices suffered by Indigenous veterans of past conflicts. Lastly, he was critical of the difficulties stemming from the shortage of health care professionals capable of understanding the specific nature of the problems and ailments plaguing veterans.

James Stevens served in the United States Marine Corps from 2000 to 2004. He stated that he had never experienced any racial tensions while serving as an Indigenous person in the American Army. He said he was pleased that, despite his service injuries, he managed to pull through all right and has been able to share his most painful experiences with other veterans; this is in marked contrast to his parents and grandparents, whose generations he felt had used alcohol to suppress their memories.

Nolan Martin also served in the U.S. Marines, but he did experience a few instances of racism. He chose the American armed forces after he was offered a recruitment bonus. When he subsequently needed a back operation due to a problem related to his military service, the American Department of Veterans Affairs made arrangements with a hospital in Halifax for him to have his operation.

Tim Bernard is Director of the Culture and History Program of the Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq. He explained that, since the War in Vietnam, one of the main reasons First Nations members joined the U.S. armed forces was the *GI Bill* which, in exchange for the payment of a premium, guaranteed 36 months of financial support toward a formal education after military service. He also recalled certain injustices suffered by Indigenous veterans of the two world wars and the Korean War. According to him, instead of the higher amounts paid to other veterans so they could set up farms, Indigenous veterans received \$2,850 so they could buy a boat and a fishing licence.

At Millbrook, during Remembrance Week, 25 banners are put on display along the municipality’s main roads. Each represents a veteran, either deceased or still living, that the municipality wishes to honour. The delegation members stated that they would like

to see a similar initiative spread to as many communities as possible, whether Indigenous or not.

## **B. Afternoon: Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, Halifax**

The delegation was welcomed to the Centre by Debbie Eisan, a former Chief Warrant Officer who served 26 years in the Canadian Armed Forces. Under her direction, the members of the delegation participated in a smudging ceremony.

Ms. Eisan pointed out the importance of adapting mental health care service offerings to the Indigenous cultural context. For instance, without excluding the use of psychotherapy and medical treatment, the simple fact of allowing an Indigenous veteran to return to his or her community's land and meet with the Elders can greatly facilitate healing. Ms. Eisan cited the sweat lodge as an example; the complex sweat lodge ritual encourages people to find meaning in their difficulties by linking them to their own individual past, the community's past, and their family's past through the support of Elders, and by leading individuals to establish a link between this heritage, their present-day problems and the ways of learning from these experiences in order to open up a future that may have otherwise seemed blocked and out of reach.

The delegation members were pleased to learn that Veterans Affairs Canada already had access to a network of Elders from various First Nations throughout the country. The Department can refer to these resource persons whenever a situation calls for enhanced cultural awareness.

Access to services in remote communities was a hot topic of discussion here, as it is among most of those heard by the Committee during the course of this study. This is particularly true of health care services – a difficult issue that affects all Canadians, but may grow to critical proportions for veterans in remote communities.

## **29 MAY: SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER, OHSWEKEN, ONTARIO**

Six Nations of the Grand River is the largest First Nation in Canada. Five of the member nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca and Onondaga) belonged to the Iroquois Confederacy in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; they were subsequently joined by the Tuscarora Nation

in the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Six Nations of the Grand River comprises more than 27,000 registered members, approximately 12,000 of whom live on reserves.<sup>1</sup>

The Six Nations contributed 300 recruits during the First World War, the largest number of recruits among all First Nations. They even tried to finance the creation of a battalion made up entirely of their members. The federal government refused, since the chiefs of the Six Nations wanted to receive an official request, which would have been tantamount to negotiating on a “Nation to Nation” basis. Eighty-eight Six Nations volunteers lost their lives during the First World War.

In reaction to the unfair treatment received by Indigenous veterans after World War One, Lieutenant Frederick Ogilvie Loft, a Six Nations Mohawk, founded the League of Indians of Canada, one of the earliest First Nations rights advocacy organizations.

The Six Nations also contributed a large number of recruits during the Second World War and the Korean War, but the exact figures are not known. Several members of the Six Nations also served with the American military during the Vietnam War.

### **A. 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.: Six Nations Veterans Association**

The delegation was welcomed to the premises of the Six Nations Veterans Association by the Association’s Executive Vice-President, Bruce Patterson. He was accompanied by Korean War veteran Ed English, Marwood White Jr., Ellwood Froman and Vera Monture. Discussions focused primarily on relations between veterans and the community, particularly veterans of more-recent conflicts, as well as on what could have motivated young people to join the American military rather than the Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. Patterson is a Vietnam War veteran. He was drafted in 1968, when he was living in Detroit. Like many other members of his community who joined the American military, he stated that he had moved back to the reserve in order to be closer to his relatives. Mr. Froman, also an American Vietnam War veteran, returned for the same reasons. He benefitted greatly from his return, overcoming a dependency on drugs that had been prescribed to him for operational stress injuries. In his view, many of the young people who left the reserve to join the American or Canadian military will want to come home to their relatives when they get older. They do not participate much in Remembrance ceremonies, and it is difficult to gauge the situations of these veterans of more-recent conflicts, such as the war in Afghanistan.

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1 These data must be considered without prejudice, since they have not been validated by Statistics Canada. Six Nations members do not usually participate in the Census.

Remembrance ceremonies are held annually at Six Nations of the Grand River on the third Sunday in October. According to Ms. Monture, this day was chosen because it allows veterans to subsequently attend ceremonies in November in the United States.

First Nations members with dual citizenship have unusual status in that the responsibility for delivery of their veterans' services rests with the government of the country for which they fought. Hence, Vietnam War veterans living in Canada must contact the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to obtain benefits and services. Veterans Affairs Canada offers services to allied veterans, but these programs are limited to Second World War and Korean War veterans. According to Mr. Patterson, it seems that some agreements might have been reached to have the American government reimburse provincial services or Veterans Affairs Canada for services provided in Canada to Vietnam War veterans.

Mr. White joined the U.S. Army in the 1990s, and subsequently returned to Six Nations to join the local police force. His primary motivation for joining the U.S. Army was the aura of strength and power it projected. In addition, the military references made within the community are essentially references to the American Army. The education programs being offered (e.g., the *GI Bill*) also played a role in this decision.

According to Mr. Patterson, the Canadian Armed forces (CAF) have the advantage of being able to conduct recruitment campaigns on the reserve, whereas the American armed forces are not allowed to do so. However, there is no way of knowing precisely how many community members joined the CAF in comparison with the number who joined the American military.

Given the preponderance of references to the American army, Six Nations members have little knowledge of the programs being offered by Veterans Affairs Canada, and they are not very familiar with the national organizations that look after Canadian veterans, be they Indigenous or not. Given the history of tensions with the Royal Canadian Legion, which up until the 1950s could refuse to admit Indigenous members, a certain amount of distrust still persists. Mr. English, a veteran of the Korean War, joined the Legion about a dozen years after returning in-country. Mr. Froman said that his own experience with the Legion had not been good.

Discussions ended on the need to foster improved ties between local Indigenous veterans associations and provincial or national associations. Veterans Affairs Canada must also do more in the way of efforts to publicize its programs among these communities.



## **B. 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.: Visit to Veterans' Park and the Reserve**

The delegation visited Veterans' Park, where monuments commemorate the sacrifice of the Six Nations members who served in the first and second world wars, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. After touring the town with Mr. Patterson, the delegation visited the offices of the Band Council.

## **C. 2:00 to 2:30 p.m.: Six Nations Band Council**

The delegation was received at the Band Council offices by councillors Carl Hill and Helen Miller and by the Band Council's Senior Administrative Officer, Dale Bomberry. Fran Henry and Paul General were also present. They expressed regret at the death the previous year of Councillor Robert Johnson, who was very active with Six Nations veterans.

According to Ms. Miller, the Band Council's activities for veterans are limited. The Band Council supports the Six Nations Veterans Association and maintains Veterans' Park. Between 40 and 50 people take part in the ceremonies on the third Sunday in October, but few young people attend. The care provided to veterans is arranged primarily with the families. The discussions concluded with the observation that greater cooperation was needed between the Band Council, the Six Nations Veterans Association and Veterans Affairs Canada to provide more information about the programs for which the community's veterans might be eligible.

## **MAY 30: BEAUVAL, SASKATCHEWAN**

The village of Beauval (population 756) is located on the west bank of the Beaver River, and the La Plonge 192 Reserve of the Dene First Nation (148 residents) is located on the east bank. About 150 members of these communities claim Cree, Michif or Dene as their mother tongue.

In 1905, the year Saskatchewan and Alberta joined Confederation, the Oblate Fathers built a school in the "beautiful valley" they named Beauval. It became a residential school for First Nations children, while Métis children attended the neighbouring school in Île-à-la-Crosse, built in the 1860s. In fact, Métis and First Nations children attended both schools. Initially, there were about 40 children of Dene and Métis descent, and later, more than 100. The Grey Nuns of Montréal were responsible for education. Both English and French were taught at the school. In 1927, the school's 19 boys died in a fire. Sister Lea, who was responsible for the boys' dormitory, also perished. The school was

rebuilt and remained in operation until 1983. It was demolished in 1995 by the residential school's former students.

An estimated 2,000 Métis from Saskatchewan served in the First World War, the Second World War and the Korean War.

### **A. 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.: Visit to the Commemorative Monument**

The delegation was welcomed by Alex Maurice, a veteran of United Nations peacekeeping missions and a recipient of the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation in 2009. After a smudge ceremony, Committee Chair Neil Ellis laid a wreath at the foot of the monument erected in honour of the community's veterans, in the company of Mr. Maurice and Lawrence and Maxime Morin, whose father, Vital Morin, was a veteran of the Second World War. The delegation also had a conversation with the Mayor of Beauval, Nick Daigneault, who described the community's development projects, which focus on tourism.

### **B. 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.: Meeting at the Beauval Community Centre**

Thanks to the remarkable efforts of Mr. Maurice and other community leaders, about 50 people, veterans and members of veterans' families, attended the meeting. A snack and lunch were served by the students of a tourism and hotel management program.

Mr. Maurice opened the meeting by thanking those in attendance and noting the presence of Duane Favel, mayor of the neighbouring municipality of Île-à-la-Crosse. Jimmy Durocher recited a prayer, and Jason and Marcy Lafleur performed a smudge ceremony. Mervin "Tex" Bouvier, of the Métis Nation Saskatchewan, welcomed the participants and presented the delegation members with Métis sashes.

The participants then acknowledged the presence of Louis Roy, a 98-year-old Second World War veteran. Like a number of other Beauval residents, including Alex Malbeuf, Prosper Larivière, Joe Malbeuf, Vital Morin, Léon Bélanger, JB Maurice and Cyprien Corrigan, Mr. Roy walked more than 160 km to enlist.

In his speech, Mr. Durocher asked the delegation members to have the courage to do everything in their power to right the wrongs done to the members of his community, noting in particular the suffering caused by the residential schools. The Métis veterans were the forgotten among the forgotten. Though they did not live on reserves administered by the Department of Indian Affairs but were nevertheless regarded as

Indigenous people, they suffered the same injustices as other Indigenous people, yet they were not entitled to the partial compensation that the government gave to First Nations veterans.

Ray Campbell then traced the history of the treatment of Indigenous veterans since the First World War, pointing out that the wounds of the past, especially those associated with the Métis residential schools and Indigenous residential schools, still lead to suspicion of anything that comes from the government.

As President of the National Aboriginal Veterans Association (NAVA) for Saskatchewan, Mr. Maurice read a document containing information that had been compiled on the basis of responses by the members of his organization to a series of questions.<sup>2</sup> The document's conclusion reads as follows:

The parliamentary committee is making its first visit, which is excellent news for the veterans of the modern era. There is still time to correct the mistakes of the past for the Indigenous veterans who are still with us. Their last days may be better with assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Indigenous veterans who have left us MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN. Their contribution must be recognized in the form of compensation to Métis veterans. Unlike First Nations veterans, Newfoundland loggers, members of the Merchant Marine and Asians interned during the Second World War, Métis veterans have received no compensation. The Saskatchewan chapter of the National Aboriginal Veterans Association has submitted a compensation proposal to the offices of ministers O'Regan and Bennett. We hope that the surviving veterans and their families will receive some recognition of the value of their military service. Treating the Newfoundland loggers, members of the Merchant Marine, First Nations and Asians interned during the Second World War as more important than our MÉTIS VETERANS would be the ultimate insult.

In his speech, Maxime Morin suggested that a section on Métis veterans be added to the Juno Beach Museum in Normandy. He also repeated the sentence that has been a recurring theme throughout this study: "During the war, we were all equal; after the war, we weren't equal anymore." He also believes that the government should offer Métis veterans the same compensation as was given to First Nations veterans of the Second World War and the Korean War in the early 2000s.

Mervin Bouvier said he was happy to see that a parliamentary committee was interested in the issue of Indigenous veterans, but he remains concerned about any real action and follow-up on the commitments made by the Committee and the government.

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2 The document was submitted to the Committee as a brief and can be viewed at <http://www.noscommunes.ca/Content/Committee/421/ACVA/Brief/BR9990221/br-external/NationalAboriginalVeteransAssociation-9851650-f.pdf> [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY].

According to Lloyd Bishop, the decision by Métis and other Indigenous people to enlist in the Canadian Armed Forces is the best evidence of their commitment to being full members of Canadian society. When veterans come back broken and cannot rely on their government's support, that commitment is directly undermined.

Mr. Maurice took the floor again to point out that there is definitely still racism in the Canadian Armed Forces, but the people who engage in racist behaviour no longer do so out in the open, which shows that the chain of command will no longer tolerate the behaviour.

Master Warrant Officer Belanger lamented the fact that his mother, the widow of a Second World War veteran, had received no support from Veterans Affairs Canada despite her advanced age. He said that hundreds of widows of Indigenous veterans were in the same situation.

Dave Bona, a veteran of Somalia who was in the Airborne Regiment, wanted to inform those present of the dangers associated with mefloquine, an antimalarial drug administered to soldiers deployed to malaria risk areas which was associated with certain psychiatric disorders. He introduced Marjorie Matchee, wife of Clayton Matchee, who was accused of murdering a Somali prisoner in 1992. Ms. Matchee stated that mefloquine was responsible for her husband's actions and that the drug was still affecting the mental health of many veterans. She said that mefloquine-related problems were misdiagnosed because their symptoms resembled those of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Mr. Maurice concluded the discussions by criticizing the federal government for inviting Métis politicians instead of Métis veterans to go abroad for commemoration ceremonies.

The delegation then made a second visit to the commemorative monument in the company of community members who were unable to be present for the morning visit. Committee Chair Neil Ellis thanked those present for their warm welcome.

## **MAY 31: CANADIAN FORCES BASE ESQUIMALT, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

### **A. 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.: Meeting with Indigenous Veterans**

A dozen people met with the delegation at the CFB Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum. After the customary introductions, Joe Thorne, Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones (AVA) representative for British Columbia, recalled the injustices suffered

by Indigenous veterans during the great conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He commended the federal government for its willingness to acknowledge certain wrongs by giving First Nations veterans token compensation of \$20,000 in the early 2000s, but he criticized the absence of a similar arrangement for Métis veterans, who had to endure the same injustices. Reiterating the additional challenges faced by Indigenous veterans when they were living in remote areas, Mr. Thorne said he would like to see the associations representing Canada's Indigenous veterans merge. He also requested financial support from the federal government to achieve that goal.

There appear to be some obstacles to that merger, and they emerged during the meeting. When Richard Blackwolf, President of the Canadian Aboriginal and Serving Members Association, took the floor, the AVA representatives insisted that they did not recognize that organization's right to speak on behalf of Canada's Indigenous veterans.

Kelly White described the situation of various family members of veterans who experienced mental health and homelessness problems.

Dave Armitt, of the Metis Nation of British Columbia, asked the federal government to fund an initiative to identify Métis veterans so that they could be offered compensation comparable to that received by First Nations veterans. According to Mr. Armitt, since the Supreme Court's April 2016 decision in the case of *Daniels v. Canada (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)*, Métis veterans are entitled to demand that they be included in Veterans Affairs Canada advisory groups.

Mr. Blackwolf then read a document that had been submitted to the Committee as a brief.<sup>3</sup> The document dealt with his organization's concerns about prescriptions for post-traumatic stress disorder, government investment in shelters for homeless veterans, and the unacceptable length of time it takes Veterans Affairs Canada to process applications for compensation.

Clifford Rose, of the Royal Canadian Legion, confirmed the anecdotal report that processing times for compensation applications had increased. He said that because of the many legislative changes made in recent years, Veterans Affairs Canada staff are inundated with applications. This problem affects all veterans.

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3 The document can be viewed at <http://www.noscommunes.ca/Content/Committee/421/ACVA/Brief/BR9990129/br-external/CanadianAboriginalVeteransAndServingMemberAssociation-9854306-f.pdf>.

## **B. 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.: Informal Lunch at the Officers' Mess**

The delegation received a warm welcome for lunch at the CFB Esquimalt Officers' Mess from Rear Admiral Art McDonald, Commander of Maritime Forces Pacific and the Joint Task Force (Pacific). Informal discussions were held along with Chief of Staff Captain Brian Costello, Base Commander Captain Jason Boyd, Captain Martin Drews, Commander, Naval Personnel Training Group, and three members of the Defence Aboriginal Advisory Group: Master Corporal Brendan Ryan-Lewis, Leading Seaman Brandon Stracevic and Petty Officer Second Class Marielle Audet.

## **C. 1:15 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.: Meeting on Indigenous Recruitment Programs**

The delegation members had a discussion with Sergeant Farid Karmali, a recruiter at Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre – Victoria. There have been various programs since 1971. Since 2002, the main program has been the Canadian Forces Aboriginal Entry Program. Its objective is to provide interested candidates with an opportunity to experience the reality of a military career. This helps them make an informed decision as to whether they are really interested in pursuing such a career. 97% of the participants decide to join the regular Forces.

The Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year is intended for Indigenous people who want to take officer cadet training. It is similar to a program available to other recruits, but for one year, second-language training is replaced with an Indigenous culture module.

There are three summer training programs for Indigenous people: Bold Eagle (Wainwright, Alberta), Raven (Esquimalt, British Columbia) and Black Bear (Oromocto, New Brunswick). The six-week programs give participants the opportunity to familiarize themselves with military training with no prior commitment to join the Canadian Armed Forces afterward. Participants are paid \$3,500, the same as a soldier's salary.

All these programs are separate from what the Rangers do, as they take care of their own recruiting. According to Mr. Karmali, one of the issues in recruiting is the competition from the United States for Indigenous people who have dual citizenship. Since the initial requirements are higher in Canada, it may seem more appealing to join the U.S. forces.

#### **D. 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.: Visit to Esquimalt's Naval Base Facilities**

During this visit, the delegation members enjoyed the engaging conversation and detailed knowledge of Senior Protocol Officer Jamie Webb.

#### **E. 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.: Meeting with the Staff of the Integrated Personnel Support Centre**

The delegation members met with the staff of CFB Esquimalt's Integrated Personnel Support Centre (IPSC) Capt Mike Dailey, Capt(N) Clive Butler, John Murphy, Sasha Gutierrez, Bob Witteveen, and Lt(N) John Wentworth – IPSC Esquimalt Platoon Commander. The meeting took place in a room adjacent to the one occupied by the Veterans Affairs Canada employees attached to the IPSC. Despite the Committee's requests, no Veterans Affairs Canada representatives attended the meeting.

Very constructive discussions helped the delegation members understand the realities of the day-to-day work done at the IPSC. This IPSC is one of the 31 centres that together form the Joint Personnel Support Unit (JPSU). The members were happy to be able to confirm the conclusions of their latest report on transition, which were that wounded members of the military who are assigned to the JPSU receive outstanding service and personalized follow-up. However, the level of service provided to CAF members transitioning out whose needs are less complex remains difficult to determine. About 300 CAF members are discharged at Esquimalt, Comox and Vancouver each year, 100 of them for medical reasons. Of the latter, 30 are assigned to the JPSU. In other words, 10% of CAF members transitioning out of the military are receiving comprehensive follow-up services.





## APPENDIX B LIST OF WITNESSES

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The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the Committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the Committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

| Organizations and Individuals  | Date       | Meeting |
|--|------------|---------|
| <b>As an individual</b><br>Scott Sheffield, Associate Professor<br>Department of History, University of the Fraser Valley  | 2018/05/08 | 86      |
| <b>Association des Vétérans Autochtones du Québec</b><br>Danny Lafontaine, Public Relations Officer  | 2018/05/08 | 86      |
| <b>Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association</b><br>Emile Highway, President<br>Prince Albert Branch<br>Steven Ross, Grand Chief  | 2018/05/08 | 86      |
| <b>Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones</b><br>Robert Thibeau, President  | 2018/05/22 | 87      |
| <b>Congress of Aboriginal Peoples</b><br>Robert Bertrand, National Chief   | 2018/05/22 | 87      |
| <b>Department of National Defence</b><br>MWO Grant Greyeyes, Aboriginal Advisor to Commander<br>Canadian Army<br>Col T.E.C. Mackay, Director Army Reserve<br>BGen J.J.M.J. Paul, Chief of Staff<br>Canadian Forces Intelligence Command<br>WO Moogly Tetrault-Hamel, Indigenous Advisor to the<br>Chaplain General | 2018/05/22 | 87      |
| <b>As an individual</b><br>Aurel Dubé  | 2018/05/24 | 88      |
| <b>True Patriot Love Foundation</b><br>Namita Joshi, Head of Granting and Strategic Partnerships   | 2018/05/24 | 88      |

| <b>Organizations and Individuals</b>  | <b>Date</b> | <b>Meeting</b> |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Aboriginal Veterans Society of Alberta</b><br>Wallace J. Bona, President   | 2018/06/05  | 89             |
| <b>As an individual</b><br>Veronica Morin   | 2018/06/05  | 89             |
| <b>Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association</b><br>Phillip Ledoux, Vice-President<br>Prince Albert  | 2018/06/05  | 89             |
| <b>As an individual</b><br>Whitney Lackenbauer, Professor<br>Department of History, St. Jerome's University, University<br>of Waterloo  | 2018/06/12  | 91             |
| <b>Department of Veterans Affairs</b><br>Faith McIntyre, Director General<br>Policy and Research Division, Strategic Policy and<br>Commemoration<br>Hélène Robichaud, Director General<br>Commemoration Division, Strategic Policy and<br>Commemoration<br>Maryse Savoie, Acting Director General Field Operations<br>Service Delivery Branch | 2018/06/12  | 91             |
| <b>Saskatchewan First Nation Veterans Association</b><br>Phillip Ledoux, Vice-President<br>Prince Albert  | 2018/06/12  | 91             |
| <b>As an individual</b><br>Victor Sanderson   | 2018/06/14  | 92             |
| <b>Métis Nation British Columbia</b><br>Tanya Davoren, Director of Health and Sport, Director of<br>Veterans<br>Lissa Smith, Vice-President and Minister for Veterans   | 2018/06/14  | 92             |
| <b>Métis Nation of Ontario</b><br>Brian Black, Chair and Vice-President<br>Shelly Claus, Women's Representative   | 2018/06/14  | 92             |
| <b>Unified Veterans of Manitoba</b><br>Randi Gage, Chair  | 2018/06/14  | 92             |

| <b>Organizations and Individuals</b>  | <b>Date</b> | <b>Meeting</b> |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Manitoba Metis Federation</b><br>Al Benoit, Chief of Staff   | 2018/09/20  | 94             |
| <b>Métis National Council</b><br>David Chartrand, Minister of Veteran Affairs   | 2018/09/20  | 94             |
| <b>National Association of Friendship Centres</b><br>Ruston Fellows<br>Leland MacLeod<br>Wally Sinclair, Board Member   | 2018/09/27  | 95             |
| <b>National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman</b><br>Amanda Hansen-Reeder, Acting Director<br>Systemic Investigations<br>Robyn Hynes, Director General of Operations<br>Gary Walbourne, Ombudsman | 2018/10/16  | 97             |



## APPENDIX C LIST OF BRIEFS

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The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the Committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the Committee's [webpage for this study](#).

**Canadian Aboriginal Veterans and Serving Members Association**

**Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami**

**Métis Nation British Columbia**

**National Aboriginal Veterans Association (Saskatchewan Chapter)**

**National Association of Friendship Centres**



## APPENDIX D

# TRAVEL TO YELLOWKNIFE AND BEHCHOKO FROM OCTOBER 21–24, 2018

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| Organizations and Individuals  | Date       | Location    |
|--|------------|-------------|
| <p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (CRPG), Department of National Defence</b></p> <p>LCol Timothy S. Halfkenny, Commanding Officer, 1 CPRG</p> <p>Captain Waheed Johnson, Officer Commanding “C” Company, 1 CRPG Junior Canadian Rangers</p> <p>Captain Dave McEachern, Officer Commanding “A” Company, 1 CRPG Canadian Rangers</p> <p>CWO Derek Millard, Group Sergeant Major, 1 CRPG</p> <p>MWO Carrasqueira Royer, Company Sergeant Major, “A” Company, 1 CRPG Canadian Rangers</p>  | 2018/10/22 | Yellowknife |
| <p><b>Joint Task Force North, Department of National Defence</b></p> <p>BGen Patrick Carpentier, Commander Joint Task Force (North)</p> <p>LCol Sylvie Gilbert, Commanding Officer, Area Support Unit (North)</p> <p>LCol Yves Soulard, Commanding Officer, JTFN HQ / DCOS Corporate</p> <p>LCdr Melissa Syer for Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations and Plans</p> <p>Major Jim Quinn, Deputy Commanding Officer, 440 (T), SGN</p> <p>Captain (N) Sylvain Bélair, Deputy Commander, Joint Task Force (North)</p> <p>Captain Alexander Gawel, Executive Assistant to Commander Joint Task Force (North)</p> <p>Captain Simon Kassissia, Loyal Edmonton Regiment</p> <p>CWO Sherri Forward, JTFN, Formation Chief Warrant Officer</p> <p>MWO David Shears, Sgn Warrant Officer, 440 (T), SGN</p> <p>CPO 2 Fred Mossman, Headquarters Sergeant Major, Joint Task Force (North)</p> <p>Helen Vaughan Barrieau, Intergovernmental and Indigenous Affairs Advisor, Joint Task Force (North)</p> | 2018/10/22 | Yellowknife |

| <b>Organizations and Individuals</b>  | <b>Date</b> | <b>Location</b> |
|---|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>Military Family Resources Centre (MFRC)</b><br>Rose Jasmin, Executive Director, MFRC, North of 60<br>Noha Elhakeem, Social Worker, MFRC, North of 60<br>Sergeant Major Kevin Cromwell, Area Support Unit   | 2018/10/22  | Yellowknife     |
| <b>Service Canada</b><br>Pat Chabba, Director General, WT Region<br>Muepu (Fox) Kabuya, Area Director, WT Region<br>Lisa Gibbins, Executive Director, Business Expertise, WT Region<br>Cecile Gareau, Service Manager<br>Jessica Newcombe, Team Leader, WT Region<br>Jessie Wilson, Citizen Service Specialist, WT Region | 2018/10/22  | Yellowknife     |
| <b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</b><br>Insp. Peter Pilgrim, Administration & Personnel Officer,<br>"G" Division  | 2018/10/22  | Yellowknife     |
| <b>As individuals</b><br>Éric Duhamel<br>Bryan Manson<br>Kevin McLeod<br>Blair Neatby<br>Floyd Powder<br>Bud Rhyndress<br>Glenn Sunderland<br>Roger Thuroo<br>Hugh Wetmore<br>Jim White   | 2018/10/22  | Yellowknife     |



| <b>Organizations and Individuals</b>   | <b>Date</b> | <b>Location</b> |
|--|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>Canadian Rangers, Behchoko, Department of National Defence</b>              | 2018/10/23  | Behchoko        |
| Sgt Frank Beaulieu   |             |                 |
| MCpl Henri Mantla  |             |                 |
| Cpl Daniel Black   |             |                 |
| Cpl Michael Camille  |             |                 |
| JCR MCpl Alice Mantla  |             |                 |
| RGR Samuel Lamouelle   |             |                 |
| <b>Canadian Rangers, Fort Providence, Department of National Defence</b>       | 2018/10/23  | Behchoko        |
| MCpl Eric Nadli  |             |                 |
| Cpl Ernest Nadli   |             |                 |
| RGR Stewart Nadli  |             |                 |
| <b>1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (CRPG), Department of National Defence</b> | 2018/10/23  | Behchoko        |
| LCol Timothy S. Halfkenny, Commanding Officer, 1 CPRG                          |             |                 |
| CWO Derek Millard  |             |                 |
| CWO Joel Pedersen  |             |                 |
| WO Trever ONell  |             |                 |
| <b>As individuals</b>  | 2018/10/23  | Yellowknife     |
| François Davignon  |             |                 |
| Merle Carpenter  |             |                 |
| Wayne Norris   |             |                 |
| Floyd Powder   |             |                 |
| Glenn Sibbestion   |             |                 |



## REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 86 to 89, 91, 92, 94, 95, 97, 104, and 105](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil R. Ellis  
Chair

