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## Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

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EVIDENCE

**Tuesday, May 1, 2007**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Rob Anders**

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• (0905)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC)):** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I think it's worth mentioning that Mr. Stoffer moved a motion a while ago to officially designate this room as the veterans affairs room. After the official designation—we don't have the art up yet—you'll be the first veterans to appear in the officially designated veterans affairs room.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** I hope everybody had fun doing their taxes yesterday. And now, going on to better and brighter things, we are in consideration of Bill C-287, Mr. St. Denis' bill respecting a national peacekeepers' day.

We've invited our witnesses, and I'm glad we've had as many of you show up today as we have. It's great. We have Ron Griffis, who is the national president of the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping; Colonel (Retired) Donald S. Ethell, who is the honorary president of the Gulf War Veterans Association of Canada; Ray Kokkonen, the national vice-president of the Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association; Gerry Wharton, who is with the Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans in Canada Association; and both Jack Frost, dominion president, and Brad White, director of administration, for the Royal Canadian Legion.

Gentlemen, normally we do 20 minutes in total, but I think the way we've arranged it is that you can each take 10 minutes, if you see fit. I understand some of you will not be taking the full 10 minutes, and that's fine. You're allowed to take up to 10 minutes if you wish. After that, there will be questions from our members of Parliament.

The floor is yours.

**Mr. Ron Griffis (National President, Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping):** Good morning, Mr. Chairman, committee members, and guests. My name is Ron Griffis, and I'm the national president of the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping. On behalf of our association, I wish to thank you for giving us this opportunity to appear before this honourable committee, established in part to study Bill C-287, An Act respecting a National Peacekeepers' Day.

The proposed national peacekeepers' day act states that August 9 of each and every year shall be known as national peacekeepers' day. I appreciate that you are aware that the day of August 9 was chosen,

as on that day in 1974 nine Canadian Forces peacekeepers were killed when their plane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile while en route from Beirut to Damascus on a regular resupply mission. There were no survivors.

This does not take away from the fact that Canada's first casualty on a peacekeeping mission occurred in 1951, when Acting Brigadier H.H. Angle of Kamloops, B.C., died in a plane crash in Kashmir on the border between India and Pakistan.

The Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping supports Bill C-287. A national peacekeepers' day would in fact remember those who gave their lives while on peacekeeping missions, as sponsored by the Canadian government and the United Nations Council, but also to commemorate the brave deeds of peacekeepers and to recognize the well over 100,000 Canadians who have participated in United Nations missions, and also to thank their families and the Canadian people for their support.

Participants in United Nations missions include but are not limited to members of the Canadian Forces. They also include members of the municipal, provincial, and federal police forces, diplomats, and countless civilians who have become peacekeepers and assisted peacekeepers on their missions.

Canadians are recognized as the inventors of peacekeeping. It has brought our country one Nobel prize for peace and the share of a second when the United Nations peacekeepers were awarded the Nobel prize in 1988. To date, I have not heard anyone opposed to establishing a national peacekeepers' day.

Although we have Remembrance Day, November 11 of each year, and some cities and most provinces and territories have recognized August 9 as a day to remember and honour peacekeepers, a national peacekeepers' day would not take away from the importance of the two dates mentioned. In fact, it would complement the dates, taking into consideration why they are there and our present position on the world stage.

The Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal, established in 1997, is available to persons who have served on international peacekeeping missions. It is a relatively little known fact that the medal is available for those who may have served on any one of 114 peacekeeping missions. National peacekeepers' day is an opportunity to recognize and commemorate peacekeepers past, present, and future.

Canada's peacekeeping veterans have always sacrificed so much and given their best to ensure that our country remains strong, united, independent, and free. It would truly be an honour if the Canadian government announced that it would be taking another step to ensure that Canada is doing its best to recognize peacekeeping veterans.

Since receiving the invitation to appear before this honourable committee, and having shared the news with my colleagues in our association, I have received numerous messages of encouragement and hope that the national peacekeepers' day act would be passed. I have also received messages of excitement from the surviving relatives of those who were killed on August 9, 1974, in the hope that the sacrifices of their family members would be recognized on a national basis.

It is respectfully suggested that the terminology used in the French version of Bill C-287 be amended. To wit, the term "peacekeepers", as written, is *Casques bleus*. The words *Casques bleus* translate in English as "blue helmets" or "blue berets". It is suggested that the correct translation of "peacekeeper" in French is *gardien de la paix*. I understand, for those who speak French, *Casques bleus* is considered as a colloquial, unofficial, or a slang term.

● (0910)

It is probably a little-known fact that peacekeepers may wear a United Nations blue beret; a green beret from AMIS—that is, the African Union Mission in Sudan; an MFO orange beret, which would be the Multinational Force and Observers; or a EUFOR dark blue beret, from the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, just to mention a few.

If our association can be of assistance in any way to facilitate the passing of this bill, please do not hesitate to call upon me personally or upon any of our members.

In conclusion, if you have any questions or any areas you wish me to clarify, I'm prepared to be of assistance. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

You can just carry on.

**Colonel (Retired) Donald S. Ethell (Honorary President, Gulf War Veterans Association of Canada):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Don Ethell. I'm appearing here for the Gulf War Veterans Association of Canada as their honorary chairman, but I'm also a member of the CAVUNP as well as their past national president and current liaison officer. I've lived with this issue for the better part of 10 years.

Why am I the honorary chair? I didn't serve in the Persian Gulf, but I was in Tel Aviv and other places where the Scuds were landing, and the Gulf War association president said that since Jeff Bentley couldn't make it because of duty in Cold Lake, that was close enough and I was now their honorary president. That's why I'm here.

In the minds of many soldiers, as indicated by my colleague, this bill is extremely important to those of us who have worked diligently throughout the years for this day and look forward to the day this bill is passed in Parliament.

As Ron has said, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded in 1988. A selected multi-tour veteran who was not an officer, Master Corporal Docksey, represented the Canadian Forces at the ceremony in Norway.

Where did this peacekeepers' day initiative get started? To be quite frank, it started concurrently in Victoria, with members from the Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association, and in Calgary, with our association. We had this idea that there should be a designated day. To cut it short, in the case of Calgary, they convinced the Province of Alberta to recognize it, then the City of Calgary, the City of Victoria, the Province of British Columbia, and it spread across the country. Manitoba and Saskatchewan came on board, and other chapters in CPVA, in the case of New Brunswick.... Eventually all the provinces recognized this as peacekeepers' day, as did the cities of Halifax, Toronto, Montreal, Barrie, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and of course Calgary.

Now is the time for federal recognition.

As mentioned by my colleague, this is not to be confused with Remembrance Day. It's an indication of recognition. We're not looking for a federal holiday per se. It's recognition, and August 9 is stepped off from November 11 sufficiently to prevent any confusion in that regard.

In our opinion, peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations are part of peace support operations, which include peacekeeping, peace maintaining, peace restoring, humanitarian operations, reconstruction, and occasionally elections, so we use that term. The reason I mention it is that as far as we're concerned, on the Wall of Honour in a number of places in Canada the 168 names of the people who have been killed to date since Acting Brigadier Angle was killed in Kashmir in July of 1950 include the 54 people who have been killed in Afghanistan, and that's why we use that all-encompassing term. If you say it's not peacekeeping, it's war—well, in an undeclared war it's still in accordance initially with UN resolution 1707, and since December of last year, it's also in accordance with a United Nations resolution.

So as Ron has indicated, in our opinion, all those organizations—the ECMM, the MFO, the ICCS, for that matter, in Vietnam, the NATO peacekeepers in the Balkans, and our lads and ladies in Afghanistan—are included in that peace support operations definition. In our opinion, they are peacekeepers.

People say it's a war and it's not peacekeeping. I respectfully remind people that we've been involved in wars before, even though we've had blue berets on, in the Congo, in the Medak pocket in the Balkans, and when we fought the Turks for control of Nicosia airport after the Turkish invasion, taking casualties and suffering casualties on both sides. The Airborne Regiment in fact won that battle.

Why was August 9 chosen? As indicated by my colleague here, it was on August 9 that the aircraft was shot down. It had taken off from Ismailia and went up the coast of the Mediterranean; it had stopped at Beirut and was inbound and had clearance to land when three missiles struck it. The pilot was able to dodge the first missile. The second one hit an engine, and the third one took off the tail; obviously, they were all killed.

• (0915)

The Syrians wouldn't admit—and still don't admit—fault, because they thought it was an Israeli attack aircraft. It's a little awkward to buy that, but that was their interpretation.

In my time in the Middle East as the senior liaison officer for the UN between the Syrians and the Israelis, I got to know the senior Syrian Arab delegate officer very well and could never get an admission out of them that they had made a mistake. He said, "Well, the battery commander no longer is in command. He's gone to join his grandfather." You can picture what that means, at least in the Arabic world.

A number of us have been to the site. It was out of bounds for many years. Prior to the withdrawal of the Canadians from the Golan a year ago, the contingent had permission to go over and have a ceremony. I don't think any of the surviving relatives have had an opportunity to visit the site, just outside a little town called Dimashq.

The remains of those Canadians.... By the way, the two members of our Calgary chapter, retired Lieutenant Colonel—then Lieutenant—Rick Wright, was the signals officer and was on the net when they had dead air and they didn't know what had happened to the aircraft. Obviously, the Canadian movement control people in Damascus were able to finally pass the word back that the aircraft was missing. Another, a member of the Ottawa chapter, a sergeant retired, is Chief Warrant Officer Bruce Reid, who in fact assisted in the loading of the nine ammunition boxes onto the weekly resupply Here that came down from Germany to pick up those remains. So it's near and dear to our hearts, August 9.

I mentioned the proclamations. I have left with the clerk samples of some of the proclamations: Manitoba, New Brunswick, Calgary, of course, and a couple of others that you may want to look at. I'm sure somebody, if this bill is passed, will come up with a proclamation that's suitably written.

I'd be remiss if I didn't include mention of the Canadian National Peacekeeping Monument here in Ottawa. That was built by retired Colonel John Gardam, a grand old soul. It took a long time to convince the NCC, the National Capital Commission, and others to build it, and we had a massive parade there in the month of October, with contingents to honour all those who have passed. John, the curator, advises that if this bill is passed, or when this bill is passed, they're going to switch their anniversary parade from October to August 9.

As a little personal note on Calgary, I would like to mention that there are two parks in Calgary in one of the redevelopment locations of ex-Canadian Forces Base Calgary. In Garrison Green there's a Peacekeepers Park between Canada Lands Company, assisted annually from Veterans Affairs Canada and ourselves. We raised the \$1.6 million to construct this park, with a wall of honour listing

168 names. In fact, the last 22 are being engraved, now that the warm weather is here, in time for the ceremony in August. The second wall is the wall of all the missions, with the missions engraved. To the right is a larger-than-life bronze statue of an "armed"—and I emphasize that word—peacekeeper handing a little doll to a waif. That park was dedicated in 2004.

The second park was built about 400 metres away from this park, and it's called Buffalo Park. We scrounged a propeller from the air force. It was a non-serviceable propeller I think, and it was mounted on a pedestal. There's a pedestal there describing the incidents of August 9, 1974, and listing all of the relatives. We in fact raised the funds to fly in 38 surviving relatives, to pay for their accommodation and transportation. That park was dedicated by the then Minister of Veterans Affairs, Albina Guarnieri, who unfortunately had to stay here because Smokey Smith had to be received here. So we carried on without her. We're very proud of that park.

Secondly, the City of Calgary has renamed all 13 streets within the area after renowned peacekeepers, living and dead: Dallaire, MacKenzie, Tom Hope, and Corporal MacLean, who lost his two legs in an accident in the Sinai on his last day; he had his legs blown off. People like that. Bruce Henwood had his legs blown off in Kuwait. So that's quite an honour in regard to the peacekeepers.

• (0920)

I mentioned the ceremony in 2005. Last year, the current Minister of Veterans Affairs officiated, the Hon. Greg Thompson. Once again, we had the Buffalo aircraft from 442 Squadron in Comox fly over. In fact, we wanted nine parachutists from the Canadian parachute team; unfortunately, there was wind shear, so only four of them made it down...sorry, the other five didn't jump. Don't get me wrong here; there were four who came out in the first drop and then they had to stop. It was very spectacular, a very emotional day, as it is every year, particularly for the surviving relatives, not only of the Buffalo nine, as we call them, but the others who have lost families, not the least of which is Professor Goddard, who lives in Calgary, and others.

I have left sample copies of the programs we have there. I know this is sounding personal, when I'm talking about Calgary, but it's very near and dear to our heart.

To finish off, we, of the Gulf War Veterans Association of Canada, fully support this bill. To use a term we heard yesterday in another meeting, this certainly adds value in recognition of the veterans. I thank you.

**The Chair:** We have some other people.

I assume you folks want to say something.

**Mr. Ray Kokkonen (National Vice-President, Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association):** Mr. Chairman, respected committee members, guests, colleagues. I'm Ray Kokkonen, the national vice-president of the Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association, representing Tom Hoppe, our national president, who was unable to be here.

I regret not being able to wear my medals on such an important occasion; however, I was here in Ottawa on unrelated business, and there simply was insufficient time to get my medals from Trout Brook, New Brunswick, to here in two days.

In view of the very appropriate and comprehensive comments by my colleagues, I have only a very simple and short statement to make. The Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association fully and strongly supports the enactment of Bill C-287 and the proclamation of national peacekeepers' day.

Thank you.

• (0925)

**The Chair:** Mr. Wharton.

**Mr. Gerry Wharton (Honorary Dominion President, Army, Navy and Airforce Veterans in Canada):** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I'm the honorary Dominion President, of the Army, Navy, and Airforce Veterans in Canada. I'm representing John Thompson, our national president, who resides in Winnipeg and who was unable to be here today.

You heard in some detail the views of my compatriots of the peacekeeping associations, so I'll keep my words brief.

ANAVETS fully supports our comrades in the peacekeeping associations in their quest for a national peacekeepers' day. Over the past century, the thousands of Canadians who have served as peacekeepers, and their families, have, by their sacrifice, earned a gratitude, not only of Canadians but of the citizens of the countries to which they have sought to bring an end to conflict. We believe that 9 August, representing the darkest days in Canada's peacekeeping history, is most significant in honouring our peacekeepers, and we request that that day be declared national peacekeepers' day.

I wish to add that although I speak as a member of a veterans organization, peacekeepers' day should honour not only those in the military but also members of our diplomatic corps, police services, and the many others who have served, and continue to serve, the cause on peacekeeping missions.

**The Chair:** Now we'll hear from the Royal Canadian Legion.

**Mr. Jack Frost (Dominion President, Royal Canadian Legion):** Mr. Chairman, honourable members of Parliament, and comrades all, obviously you know who I am. I am Jack Frost, president of the Royal Canadian Legion. I have with me Brad White, who is the director of administration at our headquarters.

I likewise am only here to add support to the peacekeepers in their bid for this. So on behalf of the 400,000 members of the Royal Canadian Legion, we fully support the passage of Bill C-287 in respect of a national peacekeeping day.

This past June, in Calgary, our convention delegates passed the following resolution, which I would like to read:

WHEREAS the Legion wishes to represent all veterans and recognize the significant contributions that they have made to Canada;

WHEREAS the Legion has issued a definition of a veteran which encompasses traditional war veterans, Cold War veterans, U.N. Peacekeeping veterans, Gulf War veterans and all serving Military personnel;

WHEREAS the Legion acknowledges that the public often refers to these veterans regardless of their background and service affiliation as "Peacekeepers";

WHEREAS the Legion wishes to welcome and recognize all of these veterans as Ordinary members of the Legion;

WHEREAS the Legion acknowledges that the public wishes to recognize these veterans by the establishment of a "Peacekeeping Day"; and

WHEREAS the establishment of "Peacekeeping Day" would serve as a day of "Recognition" of the contribution and commitment of the Canadian Forces and not as a day of "Remembrance";

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Dominion Command petition the government of Canada to recognize all veterans as Peacekeepers and Peacemakers by declaring 9 August as a special "Peacekeeping Day".

That motion or resolution was passed unanimously in Calgary, and I don't really think I can add any more to support my colleagues in this bid for this bill.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for all of your presentations. You definitely put some meat on the bones in terms of your personal experiences and history. Now we're going to open it up to some of the questions.

Mr. St. Denis, you have the first seven minutes, sir.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all for your presentations and expressions of support. I am honoured to have the role of sponsor of this bill, and I'm very proud to be the sponsor of the bill. It's only by coincidence that I'm a member of this committee and that a bill of a member is in front of the same committee. It's a happy circumstance for me. I appreciate all the expressions of support.

I like to give credit where credit is due. Mention has already been made of the efforts made in years past, in Calgary and other areas that you mentioned, Mr. Ethell, which through their efforts have promoted the idea of a peacekeepers' day. We have, as you say, several provinces and municipalities that have done so.

It was a member of the Elliot Lake Legion branch in my riding who came to me and said, "Isn't it finally the time?" It's nice to see individual initiatives spawned by the efforts of large organizations. His name is Robert Manuel, from Elliot Lake, and he's a member of the Elliot Lake branch and a Korean veteran. He said, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could have a national day?" So I want to give credit to Robert Manuel for inspiring me to bring this bill forward.

It is essentially modelled after the Ontario version of the bill. If there were some minor tweaking that needed to be done, I'm sure if this bill goes forward, which I hope it does, the committee might entertain things. We can discuss the French translation, if necessary, of "peacekeeping", and the number, whether it's 164 or 160 or whether we should take it out. Minor tweaking wouldn't be a problem.

I'm very glad to hear, and there wouldn't be one of us as members of Parliament who wouldn't say it, that our involvement at veterans' events in our ridings are the highlights of our annual schedule. It takes nothing away from Remembrance Day and Remembrance Week to have other days through the year to help remind the public of the importance of remembrance.

To me, this is an example of how strong the remembrance movement has become. For that, we can thank the Legion, all of the other veterans associations across the country, and the local cadet organizations and volunteers who make sure that the public never forgets and that we remember how we got to where we are.

I may have time to deal with one question, the idea that there are others outside the military—the police, diplomats, and civilians were mentioned—and in the mind of the public and of those who organize local events. I would want to be careful, personally, about over-defining things, because in the mind of one person, such and such an activity might be peacekeeping and in the mind of another maybe not. I really wanted to avoid definitions in the bill, leaving it open to interpretation, so that the broader community would all feel comfortable.

Do any of you feel that it's necessary to mention civilians and diplomats, or, as simple as the bill is, are you able to interpret it as large enough to include the broader group of those who participate in peacekeeping? Is the simple version now sufficient?

• (0930)

**Mr. Gerry Wharton:** I would certainly bow to your experience on this, sir, and I would not make a strong case of my point.

**A witness:** I would be quite happy with what you've just said.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** Are there any other...?

**Mr. Ron Griffiths:** There's no problem with the national association either. That's a very good point. We have no problem.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** In other words, the less definition, the better?

**Mr. Ron Griffiths:** Yes.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** Okay. I think that moves the fences out far and makes the field large. Those who feel they are part of that community and part of that commemoration can easily come inside the fence.

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** The current RCMP in Afghanistan and those who worked with us in the Balkans and so forth are brothers in arms. And it would have been nice to have the municipal police; there are quite a few of them who have participated.

But your point is taken. Maybe it should be couched.... And there's the diplomat who was killed in Afghanistan on patrol with our lads. So maybe there could be a general statement, as you've indicated, sir, saying "those who have served on peacekeeping

operations", and just leave it at that, rather than trying to be too definitive.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** Okay.

And I assume that August 9 is the day used by all the participating provinces and municipalities now?

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** There's a caveat to that, because of scheduling and so forth. Calgary and a couple of other organizations go to the Sunday closest to August 9, because if it's a Tuesday in an urban area, it's awkward. Because of availability of ministers, and this year the Prime Minister, and so forth, it's moved, as I say, to the Sunday closest to August 9.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** So the date...notwithstanding local flexibility. I have at least one Legion branch that goes to the closest Sunday. They are a particularly elderly group and they go to the closest Sunday, indoors, because it accommodates their community.

Are you aware of any significant differences in the interpretation of a peacekeepers' day in the current circumstance, where we have a sort of mosaic or patchwork of commemorations? Is there anything obvious to you that is special or unique about a commemoration in, say, Queen's Park or in Montreal that is missed in a sort of generalized bill such as we have in front of us now?

• (0935)

**Mr. Ron Griffiths:** To the best of our knowledge at this time, the bill is all-encompassing. It's a very good bill.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** And the idea is that it would be the Peace Tower flag only at half-mast, that there would be no other half-masting at federal properties across the country, or even in the other buildings, as I understand it; it would simply be the Peace Tower.

In the case of Vimy Ridge Day, the Dominion Command, in their list of days when you put things at half-mast, has put April 9 as one of those days.

It would still be voluntary on the part of the Legion to do it, but it may be that local Legion branches or others might voluntarily do it.

In my case, as a member of Parliament, it gives me one more occasion to contact my schools and indicate to the children and the media that here is another important occasion for remembering how we got to where we are and the sacrifices it took to get here.

**Mr. Ron Griffiths:** There's no problem with us.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** Okay.

Well, I certainly want to give as much time as possible to my colleagues, so I will thank you very much for your support today.

**Mr. Ron Griffiths:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** All right. Thank you, Mr. St. Denis.

Now we go on to Monsieur Perron for seven minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For once, I will not be using all of my time. As we are almost 100% in agreement on the bill, I will be sharing my time with my friend Roger.

I would like to go back to what Don said earlier. Why do Quebecers refer to you as blue helmets? Well, it is because, in French, the term *gardien de la paix* is also used to refer to somebody who supervises children in a school yard or municipal park. However, when Quebecers hear the term blue helmets, they automatically think of you, gentlemen.

I have no problem with using the term peacekeeper. However, I would prefer to add “blue helmets” so that it is clear we are referring to peacekeepers in the English sense of the word. I am not comfortable with people associating you with school yard monitors. It is important to be clear. I do not mind whether you use the term “peacekeepers”, “peacekeeping” or whatever you see fit, but we need to add “blue helmets” because that is what you are to Quebecers.

I still have certain concerns regarding the date. I propose May 29. I will let my colleague, Roger, explain why we think this is the best idea. May 29 is the International Day of the United Nations Peacekeepers.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ):** Thank you.

Good morning, everybody.

Let us not get bogged down in semantics. I am not comfortable with choosing August 9, I would prefer May 29. It is not a matter of partisan politics, I just want to make sure that the leaders of all four political parties will be in Ottawa. They are usually in Ottawa in May, because Parliament sits until June.

August 9 falls in the middle of summer—people, including most peacekeepers and their families, will be on vacation. Local newspapers publish “light” issues during the vacation. Furthermore, as Mr. St. Denis said, it will not be discussed in schools, because the children will still be on vacation.

It is up to you, but I think that May 29 would lend the day additional patriotic value. We could have a ceremony in Ottawa and all members of Parliament could attend.

That is just my opinion, it is up to you to decide. I would like to hear what you have to say.

[English]

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** In regard to the first question, I'll yield to my colleague, if I may. It's one of his members, a francophone from Montreal, who brought up this observation. So I'll leave that to him.

Personally, I agree with you. Blue helmets have been synonymous with peacekeeping.

Having said that, going to the second point you make, sir, it's a laudable suggestion. But if you were to tie it to the United Nations peacekeeping day, that would eliminate all those peacekeepers who have participated in other missions—as articulated, the European Community monitoring mission in Yugoslavia, which I served on, or

the Multinational Force orange berets monitoring the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, in the Gulf of Aqaba and so forth. I served on that. It would eliminate that. It would eliminate those who served in Vietnam on the ICCS, the truce commission.

It would eliminate these people if it were tied to May 29. That's a very important day in the United Nations, but as we've indicated, we've had peacekeepers involved in all of those missions, plus the NATO people in the Balkans, in the Middle East.

So I hear you, sir, but I don't necessarily agree.

Ron.

● (0940)

**Mr. Ron Griffis:** With respect to *Casques bleus* as opposed to *gardiens de la paix*, our colleagues out of Montreal and out of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu brought this matter to my attention. They suggested that the changes be made. They look at it from the point of view that they want it to be correct, or correct in their opinion.

This was brought up by Karl Morel, our chapter president in Montreal, and our chapter in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and we supported that. We thought it was a good idea because there is an organization, a very small organization, called the Blue Helmets—they're not represented here today, perhaps they're with the NCVA—and it would maybe centre them out as being the only ones the peacekeepers' day was for.

As I've indicated, this was brought up by our Montreal and our Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu chapters.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** To your mind, what is the difference between the words “peacekeeper” and “peacekeeping”?

[English]

**Mr. Ron Griffis:** I don't know the answer to that question. I appreciate your point of view, that it could be with respect to the school crossing guard or to some parents who are guardians. By the same token, this is the term they suggested.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** I do not have my dictionary with me, but, as I understand it, the term “peacekeeper” refers to a particular event, while “peacekeeping” is used when talking about a vision. I think that peacekeeping refers to the act of preserving peace around the world, while a peacekeeper is involved in a particular event. That is what I understand to be the basic difference between “peacekeeping” and “peacekeeper”.

Based on my definition, do you prefer the term “peacekeeping” or “peacekeepers”?

[English]

**Mr. Ron Griffis:** We would prefer peacekeeping. And I know that term is going to grow, as we grow. It's going to grow into peacemaking in the elections and things of that nature.

We would prefer guardians of the peace, *gardiens de la paix*. That's what we would prefer.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Thank you, sir.



**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I would like to hear Jack's comments on my suggestion of May 29. I am not saying that your opinion is not valid.

I would like May 29 to be as important for the blue helmets as November 11, Remembrance Day, is for veterans. I am really not too concerned about whether we refer to “peacekeeping” or “peacekeepers”. What matters is that people remember what you did and pay homage to the memory of those who died in action.

August 9 would not work as well. It would not be the same as having the opportunity to mark it in the House of Commons and talk about it all across Canada.

That is my opinion, I would like to hear yours.

[English]

**Mr. Ray Kokkonen:** I would like to comment on both issues, in very short form.

From the sound of the discussion back and forth on the blue helmet term, I think perhaps that could go back for a little bit further study instead of trying to make a decision here. Obviously there are different opinions.

With regard to May 29, I do note that there is significant historical momentum for August 9 for Canada, including all of the preceding years when this was recognized throughout all of the provinces. To try to change that date now would be a bit questionable.

Thank you.

• (0945)

**Mr. Jack Frost:** I would like to add my comments on it, and I appreciate what you said, Roger. However, I would defer to Comrade Ethell's comments on particularly the 9th of August, being that it's a date that basically has already been recognized across Canada as a unique day to Canadian Forces personnel, a unique day to our Canadian Forces veterans.

As to the “blue helmets”, again I refer to Comrade Ron, because if we're going to keep this as generic as possible, then once you have “blue helmets” in there, you automatically associate that strictly to a military operation and you dissociate that with a diplomatic corps or with other personnel who've assisted in peace operations. So I would personally defer to both Don and Ron with their comments.

**Mr. Gerry Wharton:** I think, to keep it brief, Jack has expressed my views perfectly.

**The Chair:** Now we'll go to Mr. Stoffer for five minutes.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** We should have these gentlemen in question period; we'd get a lot more questions if we kept it brief.

First of all, gentlemen, thank you very much for appearing before us today on this important issue. Also, happy May Day to you, International Workers' Day.

This week, of course, as you know, there are week-long celebrations in the country of my birth, Holland, for the liberation on May 5. On May 4, in Halifax, we'll be having a commemoration of the over 5,700 Canadians buried on Dutch soil. So I thank you for that.

Last Wednesday I had the honour of being in Gagetown for the commemoration of the eight soldiers who were recently killed. I remember speaking to one reporter who was there, and he said, “You know, it's the greatest loss of life in one day since Korea”, and I reminded him, “No, there were others”, in this incident here, the nine. He had no idea about it.

So I want to thank you again for reiterating for the record, for people who read our comments, I guess, to know what happened on that fateful day on August 9, because we tend to forget that. This is why I think having this type of recognition on a national peacekeepers' day, or however you wish to word it, is important to pass on what happened, especially for the family members of these brave soldiers.

I have just a couple of questions for you. Were the remains of these individuals brought home?

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** Yes, they were, sir, and that was a little unusual at the time, because there are Canadian peacekeepers and those in the Second World War who are buried in the Commonwealth cemeteries in Kantara in the Sinai, and in the Gaza, and the cemetery in Beirut and Damascus, for that matter. But in this case, they were brought home. At that time, we didn't have ramp ceremonies. The remains were put on the back of a Herc and were brought home.

God bless what they do with our fallen in Afghanistan. That's great. But that didn't happen in our days and many others.

So they were brought home. There wasn't much left.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Thank you.

I guess my only other comment is that I want to thank all of you for your unanimous support for this particular initiative. We greatly appreciate that.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Stoffer.

Now we'll go to Mrs. Hinton for seven minutes.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Thank you.

I'm going to split my time with my colleague, Mr. Shipley.

First of all, I'd like to begin by thanking you, Mr. Griffis, for a piece of information today, regarding Kamloops having the first peacekeeper. That's new to me. I didn't realize that we had that honour, but I wanted to assure you that we carry on that tradition today, that we are still very, very heavily involved in peacekeeping.

You mentioned a lot of other things in your conversation today. I'm going to be having dinner with the Cold Lake boys next week, so I'll give your regards to all of them.

One of the things that I keep hearing over and over when you're having this conversation today is that you keep saying "peacekeeping" instead of "peacekeepers". It's actually a title I prefer, personally, because I think it's much more all-encompassing. I'm not sure if that has been accidental or if that's how you feel as well, but I think changing it from "peacekeepers' day" to "peacekeeping day" includes a lot more people, and some of those people are the kind of people we were mentioning earlier, men and women from Kamloops and all across this country who are in places of war, who are doing their absolute best for peacekeeping.

The other issue that came up, which I found rather interesting, is this date issue. May 29 is recognized as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. There are a number of points that were raised that I thought were very valid. I think it would be wonderful to be able to be here and actually participate in something, rather than have it in August, but of course that's just my personal view. I never even thought of it until it was raised by the Bloc members here.

The other concern I had is that I would like to make certain that we include diplomats and civilians. In the case of Glyn Berry, for example, who was killed in Afghanistan, I wouldn't want people who had lost their lives for the cause to be excluded from this either.

Those are just comments I wanted to make, and I'll pass the rest of my time on to my colleague, Bev Shipley.

• (0950)

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Thank you.

Again, I don't know that there are a lot of questions.

I want to thank Mr. St. Denis for bringing such a bill forward. It does recognize the need that has been out there for some time.

I also want to say to you that I experienced likely one of the most extraordinary times of my life at Vimy, as we recognized, in one particular incident, what the Canadian people, the veterans, had given, and partook in how Canada is recognized and acknowledged around the world for the work it does, not always in our homeland but for democracy and freedom. I just want to say thank you for those who were there, for those who were allowed to be at it. Mr. St. Denis was there, Mr. Perron, the chair, Mr. Anders, and myself had to the opportunity to be there.

I just wanted to mention that.

I have listened to you. I think what we're trying to do is make the bill as meaningful and as correct as we can. These, in some cases, are wordsmithing, but I also believe the word "peacekeeping" is inclusive of those who would be acknowledged in this bill, and I'm hearing the support from you for that.

Mrs. Hinton mentioned including diplomats and civilians. I wouldn't mind that we'd have included this in that first paragraph, after, "many members of the Canadian police services", "and diplomats and civilians". Would you have some comments about that? I'd like to hear your thoughts on it, please.

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** If I may, I'll start with the question you put, and Mrs. Hinton, in regard to the term "peacekeepers".

I agree with the term "peacekeepers". To be quite frank, there's been a lot of internal discussion, if not arguments, about whether it should be peacekeepers' memorial day, peacekeepers' day, peacekeeping day, and so forth. It was generally accepted, and is generally accepted, by the provinces and the various cities that they use the term "peacekeepers", which includes peacekeepers, peacekeeping, peace maintaining, etc., as we articulated. It's up to you to wordsmith it, but our organization would prefer "peacekeepers".

Secondly, on the dates, May 29 doesn't mean too much to the peacekeepers. Sure, it's a big thing in the UN, it's an important date, but it doesn't really mean much. There's no real link to what we've been doing. It's the same as when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded; there was no follow-up by the then Canadian government, there or on peacekeepers' day, as to what the peacekeepers should be noting and what they should glean out of those two days. It doesn't mean too much, from a grassroots level.

As for diplomats, Mr. Berry's name is in fact engraved on the Wall of Honour. Whether that's kosher or not, we don't care. He died. Dead is dead, and he was serving his country. So I think we should keep it a general term of those who have served, as we indicated from Mr. St. Denis' question and so forth, so you're not going to miss anybody who's dropping through the cracks.

• (0955)

**Mr. Ron Griffiths:** The difference between "peacekeeper" and "peacekeeping" I think is very minimal. To that extent, it encompasses what we would like, and that's the remembrance and the commemoration of those—well over 300,000 Canadians—who have served on peacekeeping missions.

**Mr. Gerry Wharton:** My knowledge of grammar is a bit shaky, but when one hears the word "peacekeeping", that seems to me to be honouring the act of keeping peace, whereas a "peacekeeper" honours the individual who's employed in that act. I believe the word "peacekeeper" is more meaningful and stronger.

**Mr. Jack Frost:** I would really hate to get hung up on the semantics of "peacekeeping" or "peacemaking". Each and every individual, and especially the veterans organizations, know what August 9 means, not only to the veteran group but to anybody who served Canada overseas in the mission of helping keep the peace. So I'd hate to see us get hung up on semantics here. I personally believe "peacekeepers" is the ideal word.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Thank you. I think I'm out of time.

**The Chair:** Just out of time.

Now on to Ms. Guarnieri for five minutes.

**Hon. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I know that the Department of Veterans Affairs has had some great partners, all of whom are around the table today as witnesses, but I must confess, the first bit of advice I received from Jack Stagg on the job in 2005 was to ask Don for advice. So you certainly command the greatest respect at Veterans Affairs, sir.

You all deserve our thanks for setting the standard for how our peacekeepers should be remembered and respected.

There was a reference made earlier that almost half a century ago, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson received the Nobel Peace Prize for his part in creating the modern United Nations peacekeeping role. He said at the time that “There can be no enduring and creative peace if people are unfree”. Since that time, Canadian peacekeepers have earned the gratitude of nations for putting their lives at risk to block the road to war, and that is exactly what our peacekeepers do. They are measured not by battles necessarily won but by battles prevented and lives spared.

So I simply want to congratulate my colleague Mr. Brent St. Denis for bringing forward an initiative that I think I predicted to you in one of my speeches, Don, is long overdue. Certainly, I hope it can garner the support of all the members for a speedy entrance back to Parliament to have it ratified.

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** If I may, Madame, I'm not a political person, but I know that when you were the minister, the idea of having a peacekeepers' day was on your agenda, on your radar screen. We almost made it work one year.

**Hon. Albina Guarnieri:** I just needed a little bit more time.

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** Sorry, that's out of my responsibility; it's way out of my league.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** Suffice it to say it has gone forward, and I thank you for your initiative, and of course the committee, and Mr. St. Denis for sponsoring the bill.

**Hon. Albina Guarnieri:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Now on to Monsieur Gaudet for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I prefer “peacekeeping”.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** You just carry on. We'll have to come back to the Liberals for a couple of minutes. It's okay; they'll figure it out. Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** I would like to comment on what my colleague from the Liberal Party said when I made my speech at the beginning of the House's study of my friend Brent's bill.

I said, and I would like to reiterate, that one of the founding fathers of the United Nations and the blue helmets was the then Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson. As I said earlier, I am 200% behind this bill. All that remains for us to do, colleagues, as a committee, is to decide on the date and the best term to use, in French, for “peacekeeper”, etc.

The members of the Bloc Québécois fully support the substantive elements of the bill.

• (1000)

[*English*]

**Mr. Ron Griffiths:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. All right. This is funky. So you're done.

Now we're going to head back over to the Liberals because Ms. Guarnieri wanted to pass on her surplus time. I'm guessing that Mr. Valley has about three minutes, roughly.

**Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This doesn't often happen. We usually guard our time very jealously on this committee.

I want to thank Mr. Brent St. Denis for bringing this forward. Thank you for coming today. We've heard what we need to hear I think and nothing less than we expected.

I do have to say I'm glad Mr. Ethell cleared up that one fact about the parachutists jumping out of the plane and only four landing, because I was pretty sure when you jumped out, like death and taxes, only one result was going to happen. Thank you for that.

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** It was a very big plane, I might add.

**Mr. Roger Valley:** On the May 29 issue, this goes back to my long involvement in Remembrance Day services and everything else. It was always something that was near and dear to my heart, and to my family; we attended the Remembrance Day services on November 11. I was quite shocked, actually, when I became a member of Parliament, to realize that I wouldn't be able to spend it in my home town. I had more than 40 years running that I'd been to that event. Now I have to move around. I have quite a few communities I go to.

For me, I would much sooner be in my riding on August 9, if that's the date. To be here in Ottawa is fine, but the Hill doesn't mean as much to me as it does to be in my riding. To celebrate it with the people in the riding would be the most important thing for me. For that reason, I think August 9 is a much better day.

So thank you for your efforts. We're going to get this done.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** All right. Everybody's being short and sweet here.

We'll now go to the real person who's sweet—Mr. Sweet, for five minutes.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'll echo what other people have said about Mr. St. Denis' efforts with this bill, you coming here today, and the service you've given to Canada and to veterans.

My concern on the bill is this. The building we're sitting in burned down during the First World War and was subsequently rebuilt. The tower front was called the Victoria Tower. Of course, everything around here is called "Victoria" because it was Queen Victoria who named this as the capital of Canada. The tower was rebuilt subsequent to the actual Centre Block.

At that time, we had sent 10% of our male population into battle. We always talk about punching above our weight, and we certainly did in the First World War. We sent 10% of our population into battle, and of course 10% of those, 1% of our entire male population, were killed in the First World War.

The Peace Tower was subsequently built as a memorial for peace, particularly for those who fell. Of course, there's Vimy, where we commemorated the 10,000 casualties and some 3,600 fatalities that happened.

From that, a tradition began where the flag would be lowered once a year to equally recognize every person who fell in the service of Canada. Traditions are the embodiment of life. They resonate down to the very core of the identity of a nation in this sense.

To me, changing a tradition is something that should be done very carefully, with great caution and with great forethought and reflection. Although I echo everything that was said here about the basic principles of this bill, my concern is it would change a tradition that's been going on for 80 years, where the flag comes down once a year to equally recognize every veteran.

I don't know if you agree with how I feel, but it's my concern. I want to get your input on that aspect of the bill too, please.

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** If I may, you make a very valid point, sir. On the Battle of the Atlantic Sunday, does the flag come down? On other days that are recognized in battles, the cessation of operations in Korea in June 1953, and so forth, does the flag come down? I doubt it, but I don't know for sure.

Personally, I don't think there's a problem in regard to the flag not coming down for peacekeepers' day, because we know full well that at the various walls, parks, and so forth, the groups are going to have their day, be it in a branch in the legion, the units, and so forth. We're all legionnaires, and we're all members of the ANAVETS too. Those flags are probably going to come down, but it's a local decision to be made.

Some of the provinces bring their flags down, including Alberta. They didn't have any choice. It's important to them.

I'm suggesting to you that, as Jack puts it, I wouldn't get wrapped up in semantics and so forth in this case. It's important, and it's nice to have, but it doesn't come down when people are killed in Afghanistan anymore. It doesn't come down on DND buildings when people are killed in Afghanistan, except on the day of the funeral. There is some flexibility, in other words, delegated to the local level.

I don't know. What do you think?

•(1005)

**Mr. Ron Griffis:** Don is absolutely correct. We're flexible to that extent. We're flexible with respect to "peacekeeper" as opposed to "peacekeeping", although we have a preference.

On the flag issue, we know the flap that was created with respect to the casualties coming home from Afghanistan, with respect to the press and the press not being there, and with respect to the families and their preferences as to what was going to take place. The same thing happened with respect to the flag on the Peace Tower.

We're flexible in that nature. We would hate to see the act not be passed because of the inflexibility with respect to that.

**Mr. Gerry Wharton:** You may have seen me smiling. The reason I was smiling was that for 18 years I was manager of ceremonial and protocol services for Public Works. It was my job to order all these flags down, so I went through the whole "haroosh" on Princess Diana, etc.

I have similar feelings to you. I feel very strongly about traditions. We've established the tradition, and it has come up recently with the discussion over Afghanistan casualties. I personally believe—and I hope I'm speaking for other vets when I say this—that by half-masting the flag on November 11, we are honouring all our war dead, including our peacekeepers who died for our country's cause.

I don't think it's necessary to half-mast the flag for that. We are honouring peacekeepers; we're not necessarily honouring dead peacekeepers. I think if we overly focus on those who have given their lives, then we may detract somewhat from the honour to those who still live. I would say that it is not a requirement.

**Mr. Ray Kokkonen:** Being fourth in line relegates you to a position where you're either going to think of something very clever or you're going to repeat what other people have said.

I think it was mentioned here earlier that it is a day to recognize peacekeepers, not necessarily a memorial day for the fallen. I think that is the main intent of the bill. I agree with you. We do have November 11, which recognizes all of our fallen.

**Mr. Jack Frost:** I can only add to what Gerry has said. Certainly the Legion's preference would be to not lower the flag. We feel that November 11 is the one and only day that should recognize all Canadian Forces veterans throughout time, be it in war or in peacekeeping duties. Our preference would be not to lower the flag.

Regarding the act itself, our interpretation was that it was to honour the living. Life is for the living. We have the men and women with us on that special day. We feel they should be honoured, as well as those who have laid down their lives.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Mr. Chair, after the comments, I would like to say that it is something I'm very passionate about and feel very strongly about. At 11 o'clock every day there's a special guard who turns the pages. That chamber is something that's very hallowed.

I want to say that this is a grave concern to me, and I want to communicate that, through you, to Mr. St. Denis.

Again, though, thank you for the bill and the principle of it.

• (1010)

**The Chair:** I understand. I think everything was said eloquently.

Now, we have a spot for another Conservative, but we will move to Mr. Stoffer, since he's the next one recognized.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Thank you very much.

I thank Mr. Sweet for bringing up what could be considered a fairly sensitive issue, but the vast majority of people in my riding of Shearwater would like to see the flag down, especially when those six people were killed in Afghanistan recently. You could be bringing it down just about every day, and then what meaning would it have? It's a good discussion to have, especially with those who have served and those family members who are left behind when their loved ones have made the ultimate sacrifice.

One of the concerns I've always raised is that the flag comes down for a member of Parliament when he or she passes on. I certainly wouldn't want the flag down if I passed away. Put it down for people who served the country in a more noble concern than I have.

The discussion will be ongoing, but I think Mr. Sweet's comments are fairly valid in that regard.

I want to thank you for bringing up the Battle of the Atlantic. This Sunday is the big day. I want to bring up the issue of the merchant mariners, as many of them will be there, and how they were forgotten for an awfully long time. But to leave the port of Halifax and a couple of hours later, boom, down you go.... They served just as much as anybody in the regular naval force. It does take a while sometimes to move something forward and to remember the cause, but I'm glad that error has been corrected. I hope this particular bill on this day of August 9 will reignite the passions of Canadians and they'll understand what happened.

It's not just in Afghanistan. We have people around the world right now serving in all kinds of countries, but we don't hear about it much. We had a fellow who was killed falling from a tower the other day. We didn't hear much about him, but he was the ninth person killed, fairly quickly after the other eight, and yet we didn't hear much about him. Anybody who serves I think should be remembered to the best of our ability. DVA's job is not only to be concerned with the health and welfare of those who are left behind, but also with the act of remembrance.

That's why I want to thank Madam Guarnieri very much for the previous government's efforts on the Book of Remembrance, the seventh book that's up in that room. Unfortunately, that's a book that will never close. It's not in alphabetical order, but every time a new name is added, it means one more great sacrifice by those who have paid the ultimate price.

Again, thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

**The Chair:** Over to Mr. St. Denis. I didn't see your name, but now it's there.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** It's not a problem, Mr. Chair.

If I could sum up, I really appreciate the intervention of my colleague, David Sweet, and the responses our witnesses gave. I can

assure you, on behalf of all members here, we do get along very well in spite of the need at times to be partisan. This committee has a great history of working together.

I certainly will not resist, in fact, I will support, removing that element of the bill with respect to the half-masting. I am convinced by what I've heard today, and if nothing else, this demonstrates how democracy can work.

On other points we listen carefully. It's my personal preference to keep the word "peacekeeper" as opposed to "peacekeeping", as it recognizes the people versus the operation or mission, as Mr. Wharton has said. I don't think there's any element of this that's going to prevent us from moving forward. That's the assurance I want to give you.

My colleague, Mr. Perron, said as much. He's made his point, as has Roger. We will sort this out and move forward. It will be amended to the extent that we can to reflect the excellent suggestions we heard today. I want to thank you very much for helping us significantly today.

I am the messenger and the sponsor. All of us and all of you really must work together to keep remembrance alive. If this adds a little piece to that mosaic of remembrance, that'll make me happy. Less important is what its final form will be.

I'll conclude with that. Unless there are any comments from the witnesses, or if my colleague Roger wants to jump in, I'm finished.

• (1015)

**The Chair:** Why don't we let the witnesses respond first, if they want to.

**Mr. Roger Valley:** I just want to clarify something for them, though. You're going to hear that there's a vote on this tomorrow night in the House of Commons. It's merely an extension, right?

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** Yes.

**Mr. Roger Valley:** So don't be confused by that. It's just an extension tomorrow night, so that we have time to deal with this issue.

I didn't want them to read in the paper that we had done something.

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** After the extension, when would it be voted on?

**Mr. Roger Valley:** We're hoping Thursday. We can deal with it at this meeting.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** As soon as possible, hopefully. But if the extension doesn't occur, it ties the hands of the committee, so we wanted to make certain there was an extension motion put in place, which will be voted on. Then we hope to have a conclusion very quickly. I think if you have listened to what's going on around the table, although there has been input and maybe some differences of opinion on some wording, overall everyone seems to be completely on side with this. I don't anticipate it taking a long time at all.

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** Thank you, Madam.

Having appeared before this committee a number of times, it's great for an outsider, a non-political animal, to listen to the various political parties. When it comes to veterans, you're all playing from the same sheet of music.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** Yes, once in a while we get it right.

**Col Donald S. Ethell:** Thank you.

**A voice:** If we give them enough time.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** You should try Public Accounts.

Now, the only person I have yet left to recognize is Monsieur Perron. Five minutes, if you wish.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** I will be brief. I would like to comment on what you said, Jack. You said that, on November 11, the flag is put at half-mast in memory of all the members of the armed forces who died in action.

In light of the new style of war we are witnessing today, do we consider the RCMP officers, the diplomats, and the civilian non-governmental organization workers who die in Afghanistan or on other missions as veterans?

I am not looking for an official response. I know it has nothing to do with today's discussion. I was just wondering.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jack Frost:** How about I send you a letter?

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Jack Frost:** Actually, this would include RCMP officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty, yes.

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** What about diplomatic people and civilians working for the Red Cross, or something like that, doing their job on that mission?

**Mr. Jack Frost:** I can only assume that a person's family could associate that. We've never tackled that specific issue as a veterans organization at the table. For me to sit here today and give you a definitive answer would be wrong because I would probably be crucified at the next meeting I'm going to. But you've brought up a good point, and I'll bring that forward to my people. I think probably the other veterans organizations will discuss that too. It's a good point. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Thank you, Jack.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** All right. I sense now that we've exhausted the questions that the committee members have for our witness panel today. We have 45 minutes left in committee, so I might suggest, if we have the time, to move to the consideration of the private member's bill. I think we can probably do that in 45 minutes.

I'd like to thank our witnesses very much for their presentations today.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** I'm going to allow for a five-minute break for people to make their transits out and hellos and goodbyes and all that type of stuff.

**Mr. Ron Griffith:** If I may take the liberty of speaking on behalf of my colleagues, I'd like to thank you for inviting us to speak today. Thank you very much for doing that. We appreciate it.

**The Chair:** We're glad you showed up. Thank you.

• (1015)

(Pause)

• (1025)

**The Chair:** We're back in session.

Mr. St. Denis.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I wonder if I could attempt to outline a consensus on the bill, and then we can debate it from there.

• (1030)

**The Chair:** That's fine.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I would offer this as a possible consensus, subject to people disagreeing, and I'm going to use Betty's notes. I personally would rather we kept it as "peacekeeper" as opposed to "peacekeeping", as was mentioned, to refer to the people rather than the missions.

As the sponsor, I'm okay with the idea of changing it from "peace support missions" to "peace support operations". I don't have any problem with that. And to include "diplomats and civilians" after the words "Canadian police services".

I'll do *les Casques bleus* at the end.

I will take as a friendly amendment the removal of clause 3 with respect to the flag at half-mast on the Peace Tower.

My sense is, on the notion of *les Casques bleus*, that we should use a technically correct encompassing definition. I understand the context in Quebec; it's a word in the vernacular. Everyone knows what *les Casques bleus* is, but in listening to the witnesses, I think nothing will be lost by making it technically correct.

[*Translation*]

I mean "peacekeepers".

[*English*]

That's what I think the consensus is, and I don't know if I've missed anything.

**The Chair:** I think that's a pretty fair consensus. The only issue I am wondering about—and we have some other people who wish to speak—is what some people may feel with regard to "peacekeepers" or "peacekeeping".

Monsieur Perron.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** I want to talk about the French version, but I might also make some remarks on the English version.

I think we should use the term “peacekeepers”, *gardiens de la paix* in French. However, I think we should add the words “Blue Helmets”, in brackets, after “peacekeeper”, because in Quebec, people automatically think of peacekeepers when they hear the term blue helmets. We have to word the bill so that Quebeckers understand it and know what we are talking about.

I completely agree with what Brent said about not putting the flag at half-mast. With regard to the date, I am happy to respect what the witnesses said. August will be fine. Why not?

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Stoffer.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** I support the efforts of Mr. St. Denis, and we thank the government and Betty very much for these recommendations; they're good.

I would maintain the use of “peacekeeper”, as that's what we've heard. I would also support “peace support operations”. I think that's a good term. Also, *les Casques bleus*, I like the idea of the “guardian of the peace” in the French translation. I think that is more encompassing.

The only one I had a concern with—but it's funny how your mind can change or soften—is the lowering of the flag. These folks were fairly unanimous that it didn't matter to them, but the reality is they would prefer to have it up instead of down on that day, and I would support the removal of that clause, as Mr. St. Denis' friendly amendment to keep the flag up, especially the one on the Peace Tower. What individual cities and provinces do is their own business, but in this case I would support the removal of that clause. Before I came here I was asking what's wrong with putting it down, but I've been convinced by these guys that it would be better if it stayed up.

**The Chair:** Just before I recognize Mr. St. Denis and then see if there's any government reaction, I sense that what we've got now is a consensus to go with the word “peacekeeper” as opposed to “peacekeeping”.

I think Mr. Perron's suggestion to have *les Casques bleus* in brackets afterwards....

Mr. St. Denis.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** That's all I was going to say, that I supported Gilles' suggestion that we go with the technical words *en français*, and then in brackets or quotations, “*les Casques bleus*”, after that so that people understand what it means. I think that's a great idea.

**The Chair:** I think we do have a consensus.

Monsieur Gaudet, and then I just want to see if there is any government response to that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I want to go back to what I was saying earlier about May 29. I am going to be frank, that is the sort of person I am: I do not think that August 9 is a suitable date for commemorations. I do not know how many of us would remember it, except perhaps for those who live nearby. Everybody knows that November 11 is Armistice Day, but I am not sure about August 9... I am happy to go with the majority, but I think that May 29 would be better. What

happens if the Prime Minister is travelling and other parliamentarians are on vacation on August 9... I respect the views of those who would prefer August 9, but I do not agree. That being said, I will go with the majority.

• (1035)

[English]

**The Chair:** I understand. I know that in Calgary I am always at the August 9 stuff. We always see these guys do a great job with regard to those activities in Calgary, so it's not to be missed.

I sense there is a consensus, probably, especially with all the municipalities and everything else, that we carry forward with August 9.

Is there any reaction from this side at all?

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** I'd just like to comment on the willingness of Mr. St. Denis to make the changes. I think that shows a true spirit of cooperation. I don't think there's anyone in this room who doesn't agree with the idea behind this. There were just some problems, which we seem to have ironed out quite nicely. I still prefer “peacekeeping” because I feel it's more encompassing, but since you've agreed to the second recommendation that would include diplomats and civilians for their recognition, then I'm quite comfortable with that.

There was also some merit to the date change for the reasons that were outlined, because of the fact that it could actually happen on the Hill with all parties present. There's a positive to that, but there's also obviously some real significance to the August 9 date. So if there's no consensus to change the date, I'm quite happy with the August 9 date as well.

I'd just like to say this is the kind of spirit of cooperation that marks this particular committee. It's very nice to have a group of people who are dedicated to veterans, who do the right thing for veterans, whether it's a private member's bill or a piece of legislation. So thank you. It's a pleasure to be part of the committee.

**The Chair:** Mr. Sweet.

**Mr. David Sweet:** I echo those thoughts, and thank you, Mr. St. Denis, for the agreement. Unfortunately, years have gone by now... In terms of May 29 and lining up with the United Nations, of course, if we could replay, it would be great, but the fact is there has been significant momentum across the country in different communities. The aspect of being in school is one of the reasons why Remembrance Day is still strong, because the teachers actually do bring the classrooms of kids. Unfortunately, August 9 does not have that dynamic, but hopefully we can engage the youth a little bit in some other way.

After listening to the witnesses I was pretty soundly on “peacekeeping”. When I heard the one witness talk about the personalization of “peacekeeper”, that resonated with me. So I guess it's just going to be incumbent upon the department to make sure, in all of the literature we put out, in all of the messages, that we broaden the message. It's going to be incumbent upon us to say how far “peacekeeper” reaches—to the RCMP, to the diplomats, to all those people who engage in peacekeeping operations.

So I'm in agreement with the others on where we are at the moment, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I sense, then, that we generally have a consensus here as to the way it's going to take its form.

We didn't actually go through a formal situation with regard to amendments and voting and everything else, but we do have a clearer consensus as to what is to come out of this. So what I think I'd like to go with regard to this is....

The person who comes up with the final draft, this is your job, right, this is your gig? Do you have a clear understanding?

**Mr. Marc Toupin (Legislative Clerk, House of Commons):** We do.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** We can do the clause-by-clause. The amendments are not difficult.

**The Chair:** All right. Let's do that.

Are there any amendments to clause 2? No.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

**The Chair:** The cleanest way to do this is to say, all those in favour of clause 3? I don't hear any. All those opposed to clause 3?

(Clause 3 negatived)

**The Chair:** I think clause 4 is standard.

• (1040)

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** The other amendments are in the preamble.

**The Chair:** Yes. We're going to go back to it.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I see. Okay.

**The Chair:** I'll come back to that, absolutely.

Mr. Perron.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Clause 4, of the French version, refers to blue helmets. We need to change it to "peacekeepers" and add "Blue Helmets" in quotations or brackets after it. The change only refers to the French version.

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** I need you to clarify something for me, Mr. Perron. You are saying that clause 4 would read as follows in the French version:

4. For greater certainty, National Peacekeepers' Day (Blue Helmets) [...]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** In quotation marks.

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** In quotation marks? All right.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay. We have an understanding of how that works then?

Mrs. Hinton.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** In the first clause here we've changed—

**The Chair:** I don't think we're there.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** It's the preamble, actually.

**The Chair:** Yes. I know. We're going to get there. We started at 2.

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Shall clause 4 as amended carry?

(Clause 4 as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we're onto the short title.

Shall the short title carry?

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** As amended.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** Peacekeepers.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Is the title of the bill "National Peacekeepers' Day" or "National Peacekeeping Day"?

**The Chair:** It's "Peacekeepers".

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Very good.

**The Chair:** Shall clause 1 as amended carry?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Peacekeepers.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes.

(Clause 1 as amended agreed to)

**Mr. David Sweet:** Is that clause 1 in the preamble we're talking about at this moment?

**The Chair:** That was the title.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Now we're into the preamble.

What's the easiest way to handle this?

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** I think I heard what the member said. I can read the first paragraph, if that would be helpful.

**The Chair:** Sure.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** Let's get down to the change.

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** The first paragraph in the preamble would read as follows:

WHEREAS in 1956 the Minister of External Affairs, the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, proposed the first United Nations peacekeeping mission and, since that time, Canada has been a leader in keeping the peace around the world, with more than one hundred thousand members of the Canadian Forces participating in peacekeeping and peace support operations—

—instead of missions—

—along with many members of the Canadian police services, diplomats and civilians;

Would that capture what the members want to do?

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Can you say that in French, please?

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** I don't have the French version. I don't know if anyone...



[English]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Chairman, may I just interject? If I'm not mistaken, he said the year 1956, and we heard today that the first peacekeeper died in 1951. I'm not married to it, but is that a concern to anybody?

He said "died in 1951".

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** I wish I had listened more carefully to the exact date.

**The Chair:** I'm going to defer to Mr. St. Denis on this.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I understand that we had a casualty, kind of, in an unofficial.... Peacekeeping became official at the UN level, but it seems to me—and I'm no historian—that prior to that there were unofficial peacekeeping efforts, so there was a gentleman in Kashmir who died in 1951, which would have been those hazy days before there was official peacekeeping. So that's what I took it as, that 1956 was the official UN adoption of the principle of peacekeeping. But 1951 was the unofficial first....

• (1045)

**The Chair:** I think, Mr. Stoffer, that if we were to convert it to 1951 we'd actually change the very nature of.... You couldn't word it.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Okay, no worries.

**The Chair:** Now to the French.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** In the French version, Mr. Perron, the preamble reads as follows:

In 1956 the Minister of External Affairs, the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, proposed the first United Nations peacekeeping mission, and, since that time, Canada has been a leader in keeping the peace around the world, with more than 100,000 members of the Canadian Forces participating in peacekeeping and peace-support missions along with many members of Canadian police services, diplomats and civilians;

Instead of the word "missions", we would use the word "operations" and add the words "diplomats and civilians". I presume that you would also want to amend the second and third paragraphs of the preamble to include "peacekeepers", followed by the words "Casques bleus" in quotation marks.

Although I'm not sure of this, I believe, Mr. Perron, that it would normally appear in parentheses.

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** I see.

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** Quotation marks are usually used to define words, unless you are wed to the idea of having quotation marks.

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** I just find quotation marks cuter than parentheses.

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** Would you agree then to parentheses?

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** As long as it's in good French.

[English]

**The Chair:** Are those all the changes we made to the preamble?

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** Yes, I believe so.

**The Chair:** Shall the preamble as amended pass?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I just noticed in the bill the word "peacekeepers" with an "s" apostrophe. That is a plural possessive, right? In Betty's notes it's "r" apostrophe "s". I think the correct term is "s" apostrophe, which is the plural possessive. It's plural "peacekeepers"; it's their day.

**The Chair:** We'll go with that.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I'm just saying that this is the correct version here, and this is a typo.

**The Chair:** It's your bill, Mr. St. Denis. If you want "s" apostrophe, by golly, you'll have "s" apostrophe.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I think that's the way it is in the provinces.

**The Chair:** Fair enough.

Shall the full title of the bill pass?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** Shall we also change *Casques bleus* in French to say, *les gardiens*?

**The Chair:** Okay.

Shall the title of the bill as amended pass?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** There's also in the heading a reference to *Casques bleus*. Does he want to change it as well?

**The Chair:** Monsieur Perron, do you want the heading to change as well?

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Where? Are you talking about what appears at the top of the page?

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** No, just before clause 2.

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Yes, it would have to be changed everywhere in the text.

[English]

**The Chair:** All right. Do you want a motion on that?

**Mr. Marc Toupin:** Is there agreement?

**The Chair:** Is there agreement to change the header as well?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

Shall I report the bill as amended to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Done.

Yes.

**An hon. member:** When are we going to vote?

**Mr. Roger Valley:** Exactly. We have to vote tomorrow night on, what's it called again, an extension?

**Mrs. Betty Hinton:** Make sure that one's passed and we'll take care of the other one next.

**Mr. Roger Valley:** Is there a reason that it can't be reported to the House now and voted on tomorrow night?

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** No, it goes back to the House for third reading.

**Mr. Roger Valley:** It has to go back for third reading. Okay.

**The Chair:** There's a question from the clerk as to whether the bill should be reprinted.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** I think it has to be.

**The Chair:** It does make a kind of sense, doesn't it? Why not? We've made changes to it.

Sure. This also gives Mr. St. Denis probably a couple of hundred copies to pass around to friends and whatever, right?

• (1050)

**Hon. Albina Guarnieri:** That's 500.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** No, I need 33,000.

**The Chair:** All right. Send them out willy-nilly across the country.

How are we doing for time? I think this is pretty much a wrap.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Alexandre Roger):** Would you report tomorrow?

**The Chair:** I don't know that we're going to decide anything substantive here at this juncture anyway. We'll figure out something.

Mr. Stoffer.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Just as a point of interest for all of you, on Friday at 11:30 at the national cenotaph there will be a ceremony marking the liberation of Holland. The Dutch ambassador—

**The Chair:** Where is this?

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** It's at the national cenotaph at 11:30 on Friday, to mark the liberation of Holland. The Dutch ambassador will be there, people from various veterans groups will be there, and people from VAC and DND will be there as well. It will take about a half an hour or so and that's it.

**The Chair:** You know, one thing we could do as an elegant solution for the Thursday question is potentially to cancel Thursday's meeting and have that as the committee's gathering on Friday.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Well, whoever is here, you're all welcome.

**The Chair:** All right. I don't sense there's a huge consensus, so what we'll do is just have it as an advisory to the committee members. I've attended some of these things in the past and they're very nice. The tulips are lovely.

**Mr. Roger Valley:** What do you intend with Thursday's meeting?

**The Chair:** We're not sure just yet. We'll figure out something.

**Mr. Brent St. Denis:** What about a draft report on PTSD?

**The Chair:** We'll come up with something delicious for you. How does that sound?

The meeting is adjourned.

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