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# Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

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Chair: Mr. Bryan May





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• (1535)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.)):** Welcome to meeting number 22 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Today's meeting is taking place in the hybrid format that we're all becoming accustomed to.

I've been made aware that there may be one vote or a number of votes during this meeting. When the bells start ringing, I will be asking for unanimous consent to sit through the bells. We can then suspend to go and vote, and then look into possibly resuming the meeting once the voting period ends. I just wanted to make sure that everyone was aware of that.

Today, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) in the motion adopted by the committee on October 27, 2020, the committee is commencing its study on a strategy for commemorations in the 21st century.

Welcome to all of the witnesses who have taken the time to join us today. First and foremost, I want to thank all of you.

I will introduce each of you, and then I will give you each five minutes for your opening remarks. I will give you a warning when you have one minute left. Don't panic, a minute is quite a long time to wrap things up. You'll see me do this throughout the meeting, not just in the opening comments but in the question period when time is getting short.

First, from the Canadian War Museum, we have Caroline Dromaguet, director general. From the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, we have David Loveridge, area director, Canada and the Americas. From Juno Beach Centre Association, we have Don Cooper, president. From the RCMP Heritage Centre, we have Steve McLellan, board chair. From the Vimy Foundation, we have Caitlin Bailey, executive director.

We're going to start the opening remarks with Ms. Dromaguet.

The next five minutes are all yours.

**Ms. Caroline Dromaguet (Director General, Canadian War Museum):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. As mentioned, my name is Caroline Dromaguet, I'm the director general of the Canadian War Museum. It is a pleasure to be here to talk about how commemoration fits into the activities of the Canadian War Museum and to give you an overview of our strategy for inspiring and educating Canadians, at

home and abroad, in recognition of the service and sacrifice of all who have served.

The Canadian War Museum is Canada's national museum of military history. It acquires and maintains relevant artifacts for its national collection, and it disseminates knowledge through research, exhibitions and public programs. The museum is a venue and facilitator for informed discussion on military history.

Our mission is to promote public understanding of Canada's military history in its personal, national and international dimensions. In other words, we look at how war has affected Canadians as individuals, how it has shaped our country, and how, in times of war, Canadians have influenced world events. We do this through exhibitions, events, programs and partnerships.

[Translation]

This serves the museum and our audiences very well. Personal stories resonate at home and abroad, and facilitate engagement with history in a real and tangible way, whether our visitors are onsite at the museum or engaging with us virtually or on social media.

Although our mandate is not one of commemoration, many of our projects and initiatives are intertwined with the commemoration of important events in Canadian military history.

Since we last presented before this committee in 2011, the Canadian War Museum has completed a successful, multi-year program marking the centenary of the First World War. Exhibitions, public programs, educational initiatives and publications incorporated numerous personal stories, developing and encouraging new knowledge about the First World War.

The personal experiences of more than 40 Canadians are the basis of our current special exhibition, *Forever Changed*, one of the many initiatives we presented in 2020 to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

[English]

As with all of our projects, the exhibition reflects the experiences of a diverse range of Canadians within many different contexts.

The diversity of voices is also reflected in our ongoing collection of oral histories. More than 500 oral histories have been recorded to date, most of them capturing the voices of veterans from the Second World War to Afghanistan.

Partnerships are also critical to us. We collaborate regularly with a wide range of national and international partners—some of whom are on this call today—by contributing historical expertise, sharing artifacts from the national collection or partnering to host live and virtual events.

The challenges resulting from COVID-19 highlighted and accelerated the need to make more of our content available digitally. The War Museum was able to respond quickly, offering rich online exhibitions and resources as well as dynamic, relevant and engaging virtual programs reflecting the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

We also offered digital resources for our supply line discovery boxes, which support educators teaching the First and Second World Wars.

In November 2020, we launched a new online resource for Remembrance Day, providing materials that make it easier to produce lessons and ceremonies to commemorate the service of Canada's military personnel—in classrooms, at home, or in the wider community.

Engagement with our social media channels—where we share many personal stories and commemorative anniversaries with audiences around the world—has risen 17% over the past year.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Canadian War Museum remains a key national resource for the sharing of Canada's military history.

[*English*]

The museum continues to evolve and change in order to remain relevant to the 21st century. For example, we developed in 2017 a new gallery involving the conflicts in Afghanistan. We are also developing a framework to guide the renewal of the museum's galleries in response to demographic and societal changes in Canada. This renewal will include the addition of a new dimension to the presentation of Canada's military history to help explain our world in the 21st century.

[*Translation*]

Exhibitions, products and programs are all part of our mandate, which intertwines with commemoration.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have regarding the War Museum and its programming.

Thank you very much for your attention.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That was almost exactly on time, so thank you for that, but that's not to set up expectations for anybody else.

Mr. Loveridge, the next five minutes are yours.

**Mr. David Loveridge (Director, Canada and Americas Area, Commonwealth War Graves Commission):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon. My name is David Loveridge. I'm the director for the Canada and Americas area of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about the work of the commission here in Canada and around the globe.

The CWGC has a very clear mandate, which was set out when we were established by royal charter during the First World War to commemorate the First World War dead from the British Empire through having their name engraved either on a headstone or on a memorial to the missing.

The royal charter defines three main roles for the commission, which include: to mark and maintain the graves of Commonwealth forces who died during the two world wars; to build and maintain memorials to the dead whose graves are unknown; and finally, to keep appropriate records and registers.

The CWGC commemorates casualties who died during two fixed time periods corresponding to the official start and end dates of both world wars. They start from August 14, 1914, and go to August 31, 1921, and the second period is September 3, 1939, to December 31, 1947.

Today, the commission commemorates 1.7 million Commonwealth war dead in 150 countries and in 23,000 cemeteries around the globe, including Canada's 110,000 war dead, who are interred in 73 different countries in some 65 cemeteries around the world as well.

The commission's work was and continues to be based on principles that each war dead should be commemorated individually, permanently and uniformly, with no distinction made based on civilian rank, military rank, race or creed. These principles are a fundamental reason that Canada, along with its Commonwealth partners, adopted a non-repatriation policy of its war dead during the two world wars.

The commission is organized for operational purposes in six distinct operational areas, each of which reports to our head office in Maidenhead in the United Kingdom, just west of London. As the director of Canada and the Americas area of the CWGC, my remit is to carry out the commission's charter within North, Central and South America as well as the Caribbean. It includes more than 20,000 war graves in over 3,400 burial grounds in 32 countries. The majority of these casualties are buried and commemorated in Canada.

The work of the commission [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] cemeteries and memorials are truly Commonwealth. For example, the maintenance and security of the Beny-sur-Mer and Holten Canadian war cemeteries in France and the Netherlands are the responsibility of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, not of Canada.

Similarly, there are more than 200 Commonwealth war dead buried in Beechwood Cemetery here in Ottawa, including casualties from the forces of Canada, obviously, of Australia, of Britain and of New Zealand, all of whom are cared for by our team here in Canada.

In addition to our charter work, we do what we call agency services. These are tasks performed for various governments outside of our two world war charter tasks. Agency work is expanding in scope each year as governments and other organizations approach the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to take on maintenance of their graves and/or memorials.

By way of example, overseas the commission maintains Vimy, Beaumont-Hamel and other Canadian and Newfoundland World War I battlefield memorial sites in France and Belgium. On behalf of the Government of Canada we also maintain graves of those who died overseas postwar or in South Africa and Japan during the Boer and Korean wars.

In Canada we've been contracted by Veterans Affairs Canada to participate in the veterans graves inventory program, whereby we inspect, repair and record veterans' graves across Canada on their behalf. We are currently in year three of a five-year project with Veterans Affairs assisting them with a backlog of maintenance to some 68,000 veterans' graves in the province of Ontario. Since the start of our work with Veterans Affairs, the CWGC have found, photographed and entered into the VAC database some 205,000 veterans' graves across Canada.

The approximately \$134-million cost of the commission's work is shared by our six partner governments: Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and South Africa, who proportionally pay based on the number of graves from each nation. Canada is the second largest contributor to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, with an annual contribution of just over 10% of our total commission budget, or about \$13 million last fiscal year.

- (1545)

The organization has several oversights. We have a board consisting of the high commissioners of our member countries—so the Canadian high commissioner in London is the representative on the commission board—plus a distinguished group of individuals appointed by royal warrant for fixed terms.

The U.K. Ministry of Defence audits and is one of our larger contributors, as is a separate firm. The commission is increasingly looking for ways to reach out to Canadians and is considering how volunteers could assist in what we do, not as a way to cut costs or reduce our workforce, but as a way to supplement what we do, especially in many of the remote areas in Canada.

Over the next few years, we're going to be looking at a volunteer program in the U.K. called Eyes On, Hands On, and we're going to be looking at a volunteer program in Canada.

To quickly summarize, the commission is made up of co-operative, like-minded countries that agree to the equal treatment and commemoration of the war dead from the two world wars. Our royal charter establishes the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in perpetuity. I would find it difficult, certainly in my lifetime, to believe that any government might put up its hand and be the first to say, "We don't want or need to do this anymore." Commission employees consider our work to be a debt of honour, and I know that most Canadians would agree that this is the right thing for us to be doing.

From a pure commemorations perspective, I believe that Canada receives value for money, for what we spend on the commission. We value our partnerships, and my office and the rest of the commission are committed to working with and assisting our long-term partner, Veterans Affairs Canada.

When people ask me what the CWGC does, I tell them that my organization is part of the guardianship and is a keeper of a significant piece of Canada's heritage—its military heritage—and I'm proud to be part of this wonderful global organization.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

Up next, for five minutes, is Mr. Cooper, please.

**Mr. Don Cooper (President, Juno Beach Centre Association):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's my privilege to have the opportunity to address you and the members of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs today.

My name is Don Cooper, and I am the president of the Juno Beach Centre Association, which owns and operates the Juno Beach Centre in Normandy, France. For those of you who aren't familiar with us, the Juno Beach Centre is Canada's Second World War memorial, museum and cultural centre located on the D-Day landing beaches in Normandy.

The Juno Beach Centre is crucial to Canada's commemorative efforts in Europe. It is not simply a museum about war. It's a place for testimonies and life stories. It's a historic site, interpretative centre and memorial combined.

It is also a cultural representation of the society these Second World War veterans built for their children and grandchildren and for those who would come to settle here in the decades after the war—today's Canada.

The Juno Beach Centre was born of a simple question posed by a group of Second World War veterans. They stood on the spot where, decades earlier, they had landed as young men to begin freeing northwestern Europe from the clutches of Nazi Germany—Juno Beach, Normandy. D-Day, June 6, 1944, would become one of the most significant events in the history of the modern world.

As they looked across the sand and visited the graves of their fallen friends in Normandy, they wondered what would happen when they themselves were no longer around to share these stories. Who would remember? With the same tenacity and resilience they had had in the war, these veterans took it upon themselves to raise \$12 million from public and private donors to build the Juno Beach Centre on the very stretch of beach they had landed on so many years before.

Today, the Juno Beach Centre stands as a sacred piece of Canada in France. It commemorates the story of Canadians who put their lives on hold—or sacrificed them entirely—to fight for a better world. Our founding veterans envisioned a centre that was a living memorial, a place at once of remembrance and of learning, especially for the younger generations who would be the ones to take up the torch when the veterans were no longer with us to bear witness.

Since opening in 2003, we have showcased Canada's Second World War story to over one million visitors. Our success is the result of hard work and many passionate staff, volunteers, donors and partners. Veterans Affairs Canada has been one of our steadfast supporters. Over many years, they have generously supported our operations and our aspirations. We would not be able to do what we do without VAC.

There is perhaps no better testament to the strength of our relationship than the success of the official Canadian ceremony hosted at the Juno Beach Centre to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day in 2019. For anyone who had the honour to attend, it was one of the most moving experiences imaginable, to see more than 40 veterans, now all in their nineties, once again standing on Juno Beach and remembering.

Almost 20 years since opening our doors, we have accomplished more than I can possibly mention right now. We are proud of all our achievements, but perhaps most of all, of our powerful youth programs, which bring history to life for Canadians at home and for those who travel to Juno Beach, as well as for thousands of French students who participate in our educational programs every year.

Our balanced and diverse presentation of Canada's Second World War story includes many perspectives, including the experiences of indigenous soldiers, Black and Chinese soldiers and the many Canadians who courageously served Canada.

Our commitment is to create a space where families can learn and share together, whether they are Canadian, French or from anywhere around the world and whether or not they have a personal connection to the war. It is a profound moment each time a veteran has returned to Juno Beach with their own children and grandchildren. When they tell us we have done their stories justice, we know we have done our job.

We were invited today to provide the committee with input on the long-term Canadian strategy for commemorations as drafted by

Veterans Affairs Canada. Our response is that we think the draft accurately identifies an appropriate vision and mission for the decade ahead and the necessary goals that will serve Canada well in the coming years.

The Juno Beach Centre sees itself marching in common step toward similar goals within the limitations of our World War II story of remembrance. We hope to complement and enhance the activities laid out in the VAC strategic plan and play our part in this effort. We have unique assets to manage and protect on a historic heritage site, and we will carry our message to visitors and those back home alike.

• (1550)

Events that celebrate key dates are an essential tool in the remembrance efforts, but as identified in the VAC plan, the real challenge is in reaching the millions of Canadians of all origins and personal histories with a common message of their shared Canadian military history. It is a history that we can be proud of and one that can bind us as a nation if properly communicated.

Recently, we also launched our new strategic plan, which sets out our path to 2024 when we will mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

One of our most ambitious and important goals to achieve by then is the transformation of our contemporary Canada room, the final room in our museum, that acts as a window through which Europeans can learn about Canadian culture, traditions, diversity and values, as well as the military history we impart. We aim to open this brand new, updated space for the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

A key element to this initiative, as well as all of our operations going forward, will be the integration of sustainable development principles into everything we do. It is our belief that the climate emergency facing the world is our generation's greatest battle and that to live up to the standards set by our forefathers we must again come together to safeguard the world and the peace they fought for. In alignment with the United Nations sustainable development goals for 2030, we are now transforming the museum to act as a regional and national leader in sustainable tourism. These are two of our most aspirational goals, with many others included in the blueprint for the future.

Despite the very real challenges COVID-19 has presented, we're ready to embark on the next five years of recovery and growth. Juno Beach itself has become a strong symbol of the culture and values embodied by Canada, written in the stories of the men and women who demonstrated immeasurable courage and resilience during the Second World War.

More than 75 years have passed since the bonds of friendship between nations—liberators and the liberated—were forged in fire. The JBC demonstrates how they continue today, with the shared purpose of educating newer generations about some of the most important moments in Canada's history and how they can take up the torch of remembrance to become active participants in creating a better world.

We truly believe there's no better place for Canada to share its story with the rest of the world than on Juno Beach.

Thank you.

• (1555)

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

Up next we have Mr. McLellan for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Steve McLellan (Board Chair, RCMP Heritage Centre):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

I'm Steve McLellan. I'm the volunteer board chair of the RCMP Heritage Centre in Regina, Saskatchewan.

I'm speaking to you proudly from Treaty No. 4 territory and homeland of the Métis people.

Heroes and incredible efforts by our veterans deserve recognition and remembrance, and I congratulate this committee for initiating this important conversation.

New media, new media versions of our news, and greater, diverse audiences, and the ever-growing length of time from at least some of our greater-known times of war and peacekeeping make the next few years critical before memories fade and new heroes with much less national significance are raised onto the shoulders of Canadians. Sports, music and entertainment heroes are much better known these days, and while that has always to some extent been the case, it makes your task today even more important. In fact, without the efforts and sacrifices of our veterans over the past 175 years and of yesterday, the new heroes might not have been able to do what they're free to do today in Canada and abroad.

The role of the RCMP is clearly important to all Canadians, and we, too, at the RCMP Heritage Centre see the importance of commemorating our women and men often and with great pride. The military and the police services are going through some difficult times these days. We should help people who read just the headlines learn of the great work done for well over a century by these same forces and the important role they play today and will continue to play tomorrow.

We look forward to learning more from you, sharing ideas and then playing our role as the RCMP Heritage Centre to learn and to help celebrate and properly commemorate their people and their actions. Although we're focused on the RCMP as an entity, we could play an important role to share the broader stories of our veterans of all forces, as we're located in Regina and therefore can be an easier reach to the western audiences and the students and the adults of our western provinces.

We are in the process now of transitioning to become a national museum and I look forward to a day, and future conversations, with my colleagues from the other national museums on the calls today.

I see the stories they tell each and every day that are of great interest to our audiences as well, and our shared exhibit options will not only improve the communications, but improve the commemoration and recognize much more broadly than we have been able to the great things that our citizens have done before us.

In 2023, the RCMP will be celebrating their 150th anniversary. As we proceed as a national force to have our national museum put in place and the celebration activities for that 150th anniversary recognized and implemented, there's a great opportunity for us to involve the conversations that you're embarking on today to be part of that. We need to pay respect to those who have fallen and those who have served and to make sure that our young people, and people of all ages, and newcomers to this country don't forget, and that we make sure we share those stories with them.

I'm well under five minutes. I hope you appreciate that, and I look forward to any questions or conversations that we will have.

Once again, I thank you for having me.

• (1600)

**The Chair:** I absolutely appreciate that, sir. Thank you very much.

Up next we have Ms. Bailey for five minutes, please.

**Ms. Caitlin Bailey (Executive Director, The Vimy Foundation):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Members of the committee and my commemoration colleagues, it is my pleasure to be here today with you discussing the future of commemoration in Canada.

The Vimy Foundation has worked tirelessly since 2006 to provide new and meaningful ways for Canadian youth to engage with the memory of the First World War through experience-based learning, classroom resources and scholarships.

The foundation assisted Veterans Affairs with the funding of the opening in 2017 of the visitor education centre at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and is now the owner and administrator of the Vimy Foundation Centennial Park next to the memorial. We also collaborate with the Hill 70 Memorial, another Canadian-funded property in Loos-en-Gohelle, France.

[*Translation*]

Dear members of the committee, I would like to begin by thanking Veterans Affairs Canada for its investment of \$400,000 over the next three years in our innovative Vimy: A Living Memorial project. Scheduled for launch in April 2022 and conducted in collaboration with several national organizations, this project is entirely digital and designed to bring Vimy and the spirit of Vimy to everyone. We are excited to have the opportunity to work with the European operations team as well as our private and public partners.

[English]

Our work, however, is not finished. As most of you know, the Vimy Foundation, with our colleagues of the Hill 70 Memorial, have been speaking to all of you about the urgency to re-examine the way Veterans Affairs supports private sites in Europe. We are pushing for expanded funding criteria within the existing monument renovations program and a direct contribution of \$700,000 over five years for our two sites, the Vimy Foundation Centennial Park and the Hill 70 Memorial. Both private sites represent significant Canadian investment by individuals, municipal councils and the provinces in the commemoration of these important First World War moments.

I would also remind the committee that at this time the current 2021-22 budget restricts the funding envelope available to Parks Canada for their heritage sites to Canadian sites only, despite the implication of Parks Canada in the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and other heritage battlefields in Europe.

[Translation]

Although these places are out of sight and out of mind due to their distance, they still represent Canada's public image abroad and retain symbolic value for the people visiting these sites. Both of our organizations are committed to maintaining their respective sites in conditions appropriate to their great importance, and we continue to work proactively with the European operations team.

However, long-term maintenance investments are an increasing challenge. I would therefore like to renew my appeal to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs and to Veterans Affairs Canada to move forward together with a new 10-year strategic plan.

[English]

Commemoration is in many ways a community act. It is the coming together of people to mark a significant event in time, but also to mark many thousands of private events: the family member who did not come home, the neighbour who was injured, the lives changed immeasurably.

The Vimy Foundation continues to be a proud partner of Veterans Affairs to provide opportunities for Canadians, especially young Canadians, to take part in this important act. We are looking forward to shaping the future of commemoration with you and with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thank you for your attention.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. Also, coming in under time is much appreciated.

We are going right into the first round of questions, which starts with MP Brassard.

I will give you a heads-up, John, that I will be needing to likely interrupt you during your questions to ask for unanimous consent to continue.

• (1605)

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You won't be interrupting me, you'll be interrupting our witnesses because I'm going to take a minute to ask my question, and I would like all of you to respond in the minute that you will have, because we only have six minutes.

First of all, thank you to all of you for being here. There's no question that commemoration is important to all of us. I think the statement was that hopefully, a government doesn't come in and want this not to be done anymore. I can assure you, there is no one on this committee who would ever propose such a thing. We do understand the importance of commemoration for those who served and for the history of our country.

I've spoken to a couple of you already in side meetings that we've had at the Juno Beach Centre. By the way, Derron Bain and Joel Watson are strong advocates for the centre, as you know, Don.

Caitlin, we've spoken as well. We spoke about the short-term challenges that each organization is having as a result of COVID, but there are some medium to long-term financial challenges that are coming up for all of the organizations. We know that VAC has proposed \$44.9 million in spending in the commemoration programming in 2021-22. We haven't seen a financial plan yet, unless I'm missing something, for the actual strategic plan.

This question is for all of you. If you were us, recommending to the government how to spend money on commemoration, where would you want it to go?

I'll start with Caitlin. You only have a minute.

**Ms. Caitlin Bailey:** Thank you, John. I appreciate it.

Speaking for us, I think the importance of long-term investments in partners is fairly top of mind. We're all working together to try to achieve commemoration. We're all exterior partner organizations that help VAC do the work that needs to be done. Commitments that are over two years, three years, five years for all of us would help us to plan better and would help us be able to better adapt to the situations that we find ourselves in.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Thanks, Caitlin.

Don.

**Mr. Don Cooper:** If I stand back from it, I don't know what the needs are of all the other organizations. We just look at our needs and where we're going.

We're very much a growth-oriented private business, if you will. We've had tremendous success, and 2019 was our biggest year ever with over 100,000 visitors. We've responded to the look forward by saying that we're going to have to make about a \$5-million investment in expanding the Juno Beach Centre and changing things around.

We're hoping that the financial anchor on all of that actually comes out of France and out of the sustainable development activities that we're doing. We're not looking to Veterans Affairs in any major way, but it would be nice to have them participate with the French and with us in terms of expanding the Juno Beach Centre and dealing with our needs as we go forward. We do anticipate a growing museum once this COVID business is behind us.



**Mr. John Brassard:** Thanks.

Steve.

**Mr. Steve McLellan:** The first thing I would suggest is to make sure that we don't lose anything in terms of the physical presence that we have overseas or in Canada, and that's critical because once we lose that...the Vimy centre, for example.

Second, put monies and efforts through the organizations to fund the communications in a manner that the people who we're trying to attract and educate are listening. That would use social media perhaps much more than we have collectively done in the past.

Third, I would encourage you to help incentivize, or encourage, at least, private sector involvement in the kinds of things that we're speaking of today. I think there's a great demand for that and also a responsibility of the corporate community to stand tall and pay their respects, if you will, through these commemoration activities.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Thank you.

Perhaps somebody else on my team can address the private sector challenges that exist currently as well because of COVID.

Next is Caroline.

**Ms. Caroline Dromaguet:** I would come at it from the public institution that we are, focusing on that public history and that preservation and education. I think we would benefit from encouraging the recording of these stories and these experiences of veterans so that their stories are not forgotten. I think that many of our efforts during the planning for the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War made us realize how few veterans are left. It's very important to preserve their stories, their objects and their experiences so that we can educate future generations on their experiences.

• (1610)

**Mr. John Brassard:** Thank you.

I know we have a compassionate chair who is going to allow David some time to respond to that question as well.

Thank you.

**Mr. David Loveridge:** Thank you very much.

I think I'm going to take an angle from the perspective that we have a clear responsibility to maintain 1.7 million memorials or commemorations around the world. Many of those commemorations are over 100 years old now. This involves maintaining not only the graves and the grave markers, but all of the memorials that were built in places such as Thiepval and the Menin Gate, or the India Gate in India.

They're large resources. They're large in scope and large in size. I think our obligation should be to maintain what we have, make sure that we do our veterans proud and that we properly commemorate them going forward. That's an investment that's in perpetuity, from our perspective, and I think it's important going forward.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Thank you, everyone.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

That is your time as well. The bells are ringing, so we timed this very well, folks.

I need to ask for unanimous consent to continue. What I would like to suggest is that we go until the bells are down to 10 minutes.

Does anybody object to that?

**Mr. John Brassard:** We do not on our side, Chair.

**The Chair:** I'm seeing no objection.

I will continue.

**Mr. John Brassard:** I will just warn you that Mr. Davidson, because of his Internet connectivity, has to log off, so we need to give him some time to do that. He'll have to log back on.

**The Chair:** Fair enough.

Up next is MP Amos for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for being with us. We are very grateful.

As Mr. Brassard rightly pointed out, everyone agrees that we need to have great respect for commemoration. We are proud to be doing this work together. I think it will be a non-partisan endeavour, thankfully.

I'd like to come back to Ms. Dromaguet's testimony.

Ms. Dromaguet, thank you very much for being here. The Canadian War Museum is here, in the national capital region, and some of my constituents work there.

What impact has COVID-19 had on your operations? What requests have you made to the federal government to support the museum during this particular period?

Does the federal government's recent budget announcement meet the expectations of the Canadian War Museum?

**Ms. Caroline Dromaguet:** Thank you, Mr. Amos, for that excellent question.

Of course, COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the museum, which was closed to the public for most of 2020. In addition to the subsidy we receive from the government, the majority of our revenue comes from visits to the museum, and we've seen that revenue drop by 96%. Seeing no improvement in the coming year, we had to apply to the government for funding to offset the loss of revenue that we would most likely experience. We were granted this funding, and I believe it is in the neighbourhood of \$4.9 million. That allows us to continue with the programming and activities that we had planned. However, I should point out that the Canadian War Museum and the Canadian Museum of History are a corporation, and they share the \$4.9 million. I should add that the distribution of the money hasn't yet been determined.

We've learned a lot in the past year. Like all cultural organizations, we've had to move to digital platforms. We had already planned to do that, but the current situation has accelerated that shift. By necessity, our planning was often focused on people coming into the museum, physically coming to the site. Now our school and public programs and exhibits are tailored to digital platforms. It's really allowed us to be more consistent with our mandate, which is national. It has allowed us to reach Canadian audiences, and even an audience beyond our borders. We've seen very good results. Our social media presence has increased by 17% in the last year, which is great. It has allowed us to encourage discussion with the Canadian public, which is a very diverse audience.

In terms of the programs we have developed, it has also allowed us to approach military history in a much more modern and current way. For example, the boxes of artifacts that we send free of charge to schools across Canada are accompanied by teaching materials that teachers can use in the classroom. What we found was that more and more, this was generating dialogue with students who were new to Canada, first talking about Canadian military history, and then very spontaneously students from a variety of backgrounds, often from countries that were experiencing conflict, talking about their own experiences. That really allowed us, over the last year, to broaden and reach out to many more Canadians with military history.

There is also the commemoration aspect, of course. With the money that we were very fortunate to receive in the federal budget, we can continue to deliver our programs and expand them in preparation for the very likely renewal of the Canadian War Museum in the years to come.

• (1615)

**Mr. William Amos:** Thank you, Ms. Dromaguet.

I don't have much time left, so I'll close with a message directly to Mr. Cooper and his team at the Juno Beach Centre Association.

Mr. Cooper, thank you for the work you do. One of my constituents, Meriel Bradford, serves on your board of directors, and we in the Pontiac are proud of her involvement in your organization.

Thank you to you and Ms. Bradford, as well as all the witnesses.

**Mr. Don Cooper:** Thank you very much for the compliment. We have a good team across Canada and in France.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Up next is MP Desilets for six minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for being with us and sharing their wonderful experience with us. They play a unique role, in a way, in maintaining the social fabric among our veterans.

All members of the committee are very much in favour of maintaining commemoration activities and are even prepared to give

them a little more prominence, as Mr. Amos just alluded to. However, it must be recognized that this isn't always supported by the general public. Some people think it's an unnecessary expense.

Mr. Cooper, how do we convince people that commemoration activities are a good thing and a necessity? How do we explain that it's money well spent and that it's a way to remember and thank the people who worked and fought for their country?

• (1620)

**Mr. Don Cooper:** May I answer in English?

**Mr. Luc Desilets:** Of course. Your comments will be interpreted into French.

**Mr. Don Cooper:** It will be a little easier for me.

The message is very strong.

[*English*]

The glue that holds Canada together often is our history. We have to have a shared mutual history for that to be successful. As we all recognize in this room, the military history of Canada is an essential part of that.

Getting that message out to new Canadians is a challenge. I've met many of them. They embrace Canada when they come to Canada, and they embrace our history when you tell it to them. You just have to find the communication paths that get them educated on what our history is and they will relate to it. They will grow with it.

That's the challenge. It's not the million visitors we put through the Juno Beach Centre who are the key. Those visitors are often our stakeholders. You're selling to the already convinced. It's the others who haven't come that basically represent the challenge. I think that's the communication part of today. We have so many opportunities to reach people today. There has never been a better time to be in the position of trying to get that message out. It will resonate. We just have to keep pushing at it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets:** Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

I'm very much on the same page when it comes to the importance of our history and valuing our heritage.

Ms. Bailey, I'd like to ask you the same question. What arguments do you think could be made to refute these statements that we absolutely disagree with?

**Ms. Caitlin Bailey:** Thank you very much for your question, Mr. Desilets.

I'm thinking of the idea already mentioned by Ms. Dromaguet. Even though we are in Canada and many Canadians aren't directly connected to the great wars, the military or veterans, we all have a relationship to war and the experience of war. We all have a way of perceiving war and understanding how it has changed the country we come from.

I think we need to talk about not just the veterans, but also the idea of war as a universal experience and then use that to connect people. We could tell them that the First World War or the Canadian experience of it may be really far away, but their experience of war isn't much different in terms of feelings or past events than people who lived through the First or Second World War.

That's what we're doing with our next project, Vimy: A Living Memorial. We want to make connections between people today or between their experiences of war and Canadian experiences of war.

**Mr. Luc Desilets:** Thank you for your answer, Ms. Bailey.

During a pandemic, we obviously can't strengthen this social fabric among veterans, since they can't attend any commemoration activities.

Do any of the witnesses have any suggestions for addressing this need for gathering and socializing among veterans?

[English]

**The Chair:** That's actually your time. I'm going to have to ask for a very brief answer from somebody or we'll have to move on.

• (1625)

[Translation]

**Ms. Caroline Dromaguet:** I can answer the question, if I may.

We have participated in a number of Veterans Affairs Canada working groups. The most recent one was made up of Gulf War veterans, related to Kuwait. We've also introduced a tool for communities to celebrate Remembrance Day, because they can't visit the memorials. This first part of the module has been very useful for schools and communities. This year, we are in phase 2, where we will be incorporating many more testimonials from contemporary veterans. Our goal is to provide these tools to bring communities together, because we expect that they will not be able to gather in very large numbers in the near future.

**Mr. Luc Desilets:** Thank you, Ms. Dromaguet.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Up next we have MP Blaney.

I will have to cut you off before your time, but I will make sure that we come back to you with whatever remaining time you have.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, all, for being here today, and thank you for your important work, because really what I see you as doing is keeping that collective memory alive and educating generation after generation so that we don't forget. That's something we all need to keep in our hearts and on our minds that literally this is how we remember collectively what has happened in our history.

I have tons of questions and not enough time, but the first question I have is around technology and how we retell the story to the younger generation that's coming in. What is the work you're doing around that?

Madam Dromaguet, in your presentation, you talked about the 500 oral histories that have been recorded to date, and I'm really curious about how you're sharing those stories. I would love if you could tell us whether there are any women or how many women are involved in that. That would be helpful.

Perhaps I could just leave it with you at that.

**Ms. Caroline Dromaguet:** Sure. Thank you very much for that question.

It is something that is really top of mind for us. It's reaching those younger audiences, and of course, via the platforms that are more relevant, and I suppose, accessible to them.

As I was mentioning earlier in answering Mr. Amos's question, many of our educational programs have been adapted through a technical platform. This is not only by necessity of what is going on, but also from hearing back from educators. We adapt what we do, not because we think it's what's working, but because we have great relationships with [Technical difficulty—Editor] Canada and other stakeholders who actually give us that very important feedback.

Very quickly, one example from a school program is that we're able to offer access to some of our expert educators to connect virtually to the classroom, wherever they may be, and also invite veterans sometimes to give their own lived history. It's a very popular program in situ, but it's growing in popularity online as you can imagine.

To your second point about the oral history, this is a project that is somewhat in its infancy, where throughout our recent history, for the last 20 years, I would say, we have accumulated these oral histories as we have collected many other things.

We're very happy to have received a very generous donation just around Christmastime that will allow us to actually create a platform. If I can use the working title for this platform, it will be "In Their Voices". It's going to be a digital platform where we will migrate these oral histories but grow the program.

In growing that program, of course, we are very concerned and aware of the need for that diversity and those various voices. It won't only be from veterans, but also the experiences of their families, which we think is part of that bigger story of commemoration. As we know, the experiences of our veterans have affected also the experiences of their family, which is a story that is very important to tell.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you for that.

I don't know how much time I have left.

**The Chair:** If I could jump in, Rachael, this actually would be a good break. It means that I don't have to interrupt anybody. We've stopped your clock. I will confirm with the clerk how much time you have left, but I know there are those who have to deal with some technical stuff, so we're going to suspend for the vote now.

If you don't have to log off, don't. It will be a lot quicker. If you do have to log off, we'll obviously wait for you to come back.

For witnesses, we will be as quick as we can. We have about 10 more minutes of bells. It is about 11 or 12 minutes to do the vote, and then we'll come back and also record how much time the gap has created, assuming there is no objection to add that to the end of today's meeting.

We have confirmation that we're able to extend. Happy voting. We'll see you shortly. We will suspend, folks.

• (1630) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1655)

**The Chair:** We'll wrap up by six o'clock, if that's okay with everybody.

Rachel, you have three minutes.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you very much, and thank you for everyone's patience here today with that interruption for the vote.

Ms. Bailey, I very much appreciate the work that you do. One thing you talked about in your testimony was how critical maintenance supports are and what concerns you have about other countries.

Could you talk about the specific challenges you see around maintenance of these important parks? What kinds of resources need to be implemented to support those especially, of course, that are in other places but that recognize the Canadian impact internationally?

**Ms. Caitlin Bailey:** Thank you so much, Ms. Blaney.

I can speak specifically for our organization, with the Vimy Centennial Park and the Hill 70 Memorial. Both of these are large private sites that exist very close to the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.

Both organizations built them with the intention of continuing to maintain them. We are all continuing to maintain them as we have originally vowed to do. However, the major issue for us is thinking about the future, and not so much the future in five years but in 10, 15 or 20 years, and about what happens with these sites.

It is difficult, I think. Because we all work in this environment, we have a sense of who manages what, where it goes and how it's done, but the average Canadian coming in and seeing one of these sites doesn't know who manages it. Their first stop, often, when there are problems and there are things that are in disrepair, is to go to Veterans Affairs, because that's the first place they think of.

We need to think about the sites that are outside of Canada but that continue to mark Canadian events and make sure that they don't remain out of sight, out of mind, because there aren't Canadians going there regularly and saying, "This is in disrepair," or "This needs to be replaced."

It's just a matter of not falling into that out of sight, out of mind trap until something terrible happens and people are looking at it and asking, "Why did this happen?" It's taking a proactive stance rather than a reactive stance.

I saw the finger from Mr. May, so I'm going to stop here. This, however, would be my first thought on that question.

• (1700)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** That's perfect. Thank you so much.

I leave it to you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, and just to clarify for anybody listening, I didn't actually give anybody a finger.

Up next we have MP Wagantall, please.

**Mrs. Cathy Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate all of you being here. With the little bit of experience I've had going overseas and visiting those sites on a trip as a member of Parliament, believe me, it's something I wish every Canadian could do.

All of my grandkids have been to the museum in Ottawa. We have a lot to be very proud of.

I want to ask some questions of Steve McLellan, who is the chair of the group back home in Saskatchewan working on the museum status for our RCMP Heritage Centre.

As you know, Steve, in his mandate letter from the Prime Minister, the minister has been tasked with making sure that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Heritage Centre is a national museum. I know that's our priority and certainly a very valid one. I'm very excited to see this happen.

However, I also want to bring up the fact that this is a 10-year plan that we're looking at to improve commemoration across Canada. The vision is to have Canadians understand and appreciate those in uniform, their contributions and sacrifices, and to have all veterans and family members feel recognized.

They indicate here that it would be a broader approach to expand the focus of VAC's commemorative programming without removing the traditional focus on World War II and Korean War veterans. VAC wants to increase awareness of other international operations in which the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have served and participated.

Of course, we have to recognize, and sometimes we even forget here within this [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] we have a responsibility to the RCMP as well. We travelled across Canada in the last government, right from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, up to Yellowknife and to Beauval, in northern Saskatchewan, where we met with Métis and indigenous individuals. We visited with serving and veteran RCMP members, who take on incredible challenges.

I wonder what your perspective would be if, as part of that museum, you could see commemoration of our veterans. Do you have an idea of what you think that could or should look like?

**Mr. Steve McLellan:** It's an important question, and as I indicated earlier, your task is critical. I would reiterate, as I and others have said, how important it is that our national brand and our care of remembrance globally be recognized and financed to the extent that we can and that we need to. I would say that we need to, because I know that we can.

As it relates to how to do it, the world has changed in so many ways recently. That's important for us to lament in some ways, of course, but it's also for us to learn the lessons.

For example, you can see our ability today to meet virtually. All of us didn't have to sit on airplanes; we didn't have to take two or three days to do this and it's a very effective way to communicate. Let's think about ways we can do that to share the stories of those people who maybe, certainly if they're Second World War or First World War vets, or Korean vets, are not able to go to Ottawa to share their story. They're not able to go to Remembrance Day services, maybe even in their own town, but they could perhaps sit in front of a camera and do these sorts of things.

To the agencies that are here that are already digitizing those stories, I give you full credit.

I'll reiterate that point of the stories. The reason I think we commemorate is not just the collective great work that these people did; it's how much they gave up to do it. Many of us have lamented the fact that, woe are we, we have to stay inside for six months or a year and we haven't seen our family or our children. Imagine those young men, and women too, who didn't see their families for four or five years. Let's tell those stories about their experiences.

Sometimes when our young people, and we ourselves, are shown that experience in movies, they don't really show the trenches. They do not show the difficult days. They show the celebratory times in a French bistro or something like that. I think we need to be able to say, "Let's hear from these people."

Another thing that's similar across all forces, the RCMP who serve in peacekeeping roles and North-West Mounted Police who served in roles overseas with different wars, is that they don't often come back and speak of it broadly and freely. Let's provide a space safe for them to do that so that we capture, in their words, and to the approval that they'll give us, their stories and their experiences.

• (1705)

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** I'm sorry. Thank you.

I just have one more question in relation to that, because—

**The Chair:** Cathay, I'm afraid that's time. I'm sorry.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** All right.

**Mr. Steve McLellan:** My apologies, Cathay.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** No, not at all. That was excellent. Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** Next is MP Samson for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

I thank all five of you for your presentations today and the role you play in helping recognize our men and women who serve. It's so important.

I'll focus my question on two groups, Caroline and David, because I want to talk about modern-day veterans, if we're recognizing them and to what extent, and how we can do better.

Of course, March 31 was the seventh anniversary of the end of the Afghanistan war, and there are modern-day veterans who feel

that their dates are not on the cenotaphs, from 2001 to 2014, and the role that Canada played in peace and the service of peace. Some of them are quite frustrated.

A constituent of mine, retired Chief Warrant Officer Robert Thompson, has been the champion of this issue for a number of years now. By his count, about 7,500 cenotaphs across the country are failing to recognize the Afghan vets.

Are we recognizing them in some way, shape or form now in your institutions? If so, how are we doing it and how can we do it better as we move forward?

Let's start with Caroline.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Caroline Dromaguet:** Thank you, Mr. Samson.

[*English*]

It is a very important question. You're quite right.

Again, if I come to this from a public institution point of view, if I start from a collecting point of view, it's a bit of a challenge for us because we want to be able to collect these stories, but these veterans still are in possession of these objects and they're not quite ready to let them go. However, we have other ways to record their stories.

Of course, modern-day veterans are among the individuals we hope to interview and whose stories we hope to record. That's how we're recognizing those stories.

Also, as I was mentioning in my opening statement, in 2017 we updated our permanent galleries to tell the story from the cold war to Afghanistan. That was a very important project for us because we were able to give a voice to these, as we would call them, modern-day veterans, so we have some very poignant and relevant stories.

You're right. It's so important to tell because it's in our living memory. We're maybe a bit used to commemorating events that happened 75 or 100 years ago, but these are conflicts that most of us still remember, so it's very important to tell.

• (1710)

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you, Caroline.

Maybe I can have David chime in, and then I have another quick question.

Go ahead, David.

**Mr. David Loveridge:** I'll be really quick.

For the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as I stated in my opening statement, our mandate is very clear. It's the First World War and the Second World War, and even within those two periods it's very specific. Even if veterans who came back from the First World War, for example, died outside our mandate period, we don't take care of them as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. They're cared for by Veterans Affairs Canada.

So it's difficult for us, because we honour all of our veterans. We want to do that, but even, for example, at Beechwood there isn't a separate section for the Afghan veterans.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you, David. We're looking at how we could do it, however, so maybe that will be an addition.

That being said, I'll come back to you, Caroline.

How can we apply an Afghan veterans lens to what we do from now on in commemorating?

**Ms. Caroline Dromaguet:** I think it's a case of making their story relevant to people today and speaking to their experience. In my view, it's important for people to connect with what these veterans have experienced. We're talking about making sure that the contribution of Canada on the international level is known. I think that's very important.

Just to finish that off, we are getting a lot of feedback from educators across the country who really want us to integrate these very modern stories and experiences into the tools we provide to teachers. It's a matter of engaging these veterans in telling those stories. It can be a challenge. Not everybody wants to talk about it.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you.

My time is probably running out, but David—

**The Chair:** It is.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** —just with your expertise, how easy would it be to put those dates on the cenotaphs, the 7,500, that aren't on them now?

**The Chair:** Give a two-second answer, please.

**Mr. David Loveridge:** From a pure physical ability, it would be easy. From a political perspective, it may be not so easy.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Up next is MP Desilets for two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We recently learned that Veterans Affairs Canada has set aside approximately \$45 billion for 2021-22 for commemoration activities. I have difficulty knowing whether this amount is adequate, too much, or not enough. I have little knowledge of the scope of anything related to commemoration activities.

Mr. McLellan, as a central agency in this area, do you think that Veterans Affairs Canada is providing appropriate funding for commemoration activities?

[*English*]

**Mr. Steve McLellan:** Those are both very good questions, and thank you.

I can guarantee this. There will be many people who say that \$44 million is too much and many others who will say it's not enough. Such is your world of politics.

I would suggest that if you give enough time for people to ramp up, it will do a nice job.

My day job is with a chamber of commerce, and I know that the private sector honours the people you're representing in this discussion today. They will step forward. If you need them to do that, then let's bring them to the table.

On the second point, concerning Veterans Affairs, my responsibilities with the heritage centre have not—I'll be honest—been integrated heavily with Veterans Affairs, so I couldn't speak to that. I would, however, look forward to more conversations on this in the future.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets:** Thank you, Mr. McLellan.

Mr. Loveridge, we are short on time, but I'd like your opinion with respect to overseas memorials compared to those chosen in Canada and Quebec.

Is there sufficient funding on both sides? Is there an area, overseas or in Canada, that is being left behind?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Give a brief answer, please.

**Mr. David Loveridge:** My understanding is that the funding in Europe is sufficient to meet the requirements for the memorials in the short term. I have heard nobody say that there was not sufficient funding in Europe. I'm talking specifically about the VAC memorials that we care for under the commission.

In Canada we don't have a lot of memorials, but we do have more than 228,000 grave markers, which I think many of you may be aware were not being well maintained. That's why we're in this five-year project right now to care for the backlog.

I would hate to see us go back to the shortfall funding that we had prior to this project. Understanding what's required to maintain our grave markers, then, which are memorials here in Canada, would be very important going forward.

• (1715)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Up next we have MP Blaney for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you.

I will come back to you, Mr. Loveridge.

Thank you for talking about all the work you're doing in terms of maintaining those gravesites. I think that's incredibly important. I'm wondering, with this backlog how long it is going to take to catch up, and what your ongoing concerns are moving forward. The other part of this—and I've heard this from other folks—is how are we including young people in seeing and participating? What is more meaningful than educating people by actually having them be there and understanding what it means when we talk about our history?

**Mr. David Loveridge:** Those are both really good questions.

We're in year three of addressing the entire backlog across Canada for the Veterans Affairs grave markers. We're making great progress, particularly in Ontario. We're getting them done and bringing them up to a standard that I think anyone who looks at them would think was acceptable. I think at the end of this period we'll be good. I would hate to see us go back to having a backlog again, so those are issues that we'll address going forward.

On the young people thing, I think Caroline has also talked a lot about the engagement program. We call the engagement program Eyes On, Hands On, and our plan is to start that program sometime in 2022-23. Through it we want to engage the youth, the Legion and the cadet corps. We want to do that kind of stuff first of all to help us maintain, care for and be "eyes on" to all of our markers across Canada but also to use it as an educational opportunity for those groups to understand veterans. That engagement and outreach are critical as we go forward, because our veterans, especially from the First World War and Second World War, are disappearing and disappearing quickly.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you for that. I really appreciate that.

I know I don't have a lot of time for a really meaningful next question, but I think this is the important factor, that education. Often, it's those hands-on opportunities that help us pass on that knowledge, so I really appreciate that you're doing that work.

I'll leave the last few seconds I have to the next questioner.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Up next we have MP Davidson.

Go ahead, please, for five minutes.

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses.

Thank you for the 12 seconds, MP Blaney.

Caroline, first, I want to say thank you. This is a picture. He kind of looks like me. That's my grandfather from 1914. He was at Vimy Ridge, hill 60, and I went to the War Museum one day and your people there helped me take this old negative and turn this into a photo so we could identify exactly almost to the day where that picture was taken, so I thank you for that and for all the work.

You know what? Since we're on the photo, it's always all about the riding. I would say to our Juno Beach Don that I'm proud to say Jim Parks is in my riding in Mount Albert. I thank you for that flag program you started. I didn't know anything about that flag program until Jim was doing a run this year, which I was proud to go out to support.

Anyway, there are a couple of things. In my riding is Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. They have a small cenotaph that's in need of some repair. This leads me to my first question. What are we doing with first nations people to show and teach the new generation the contributions they made to Canada in all our wars and all our conflicts?

I may interrupt because I have so many questions. Someone can go ahead with that, if they would.

Go ahead, Caroline.

• (1720)

**Ms. Caroline Dromaguet:** Thank you, Mr. Davidson.

That's a great picture and I'm glad we were helpful in getting it for you. That's also an excellent question.

In terms of first nations and indigenous stories, it's very top of mind and a priority for our institution. Of course, we have stories that are intertwined in our permanent galleries, but I can say that we have amplified that in the last few years. Our most recent and moving example was the donation of the portrait of Philip Favel, who was actually part of D-Day. We were able to commemorate him in a partnership event with DND last November, so his story is being told and secured. When we shared the photo, it actually went viral, so we see there is an interest and a need to tell those very important stories.

We're also involving indigenous stories and perspectives in our educational resources. When we're talking about supply line kits or some of our school programs, for instance, we are integrating those stories and talking about those important experiences and continuing our efforts to collect.

Perhaps I'll end by saying that more and more we recognize it's important that when we do speak about these experiences that it's done in consultation and that the voices that are heard are the voices of the people we represent. That is something we take really seriously and want to increase as we move forward.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Thanks very much for that.

I have a Silver Cross mom who works for me—her son was killed in action in Afghanistan—and she was very disappointed by the Liberal government when they failed to invite them to the Afghan memorial unveiling. She got a letter two days after the unveiling. I want to know what we're doing currently to make sure things like that don't happen again and that they're always involved in the commemoration process.

When there's a commemoration process, is there going to be outreach especially to families, I would say, of those who have recently been killed in action? Is outreach going to take place?

**The Chair:** Who is the question going to?

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** I'm asking anyone who's involved in commemoration, but I'll leave that. That was just an upsetting incident that took place.

That's something we have to look at: if there's going to be any commemorative unveilings like there was with the Afghanistan memorial that families are notified on that.

Second, I think—

**The Chair:** It will have to be very quick, Scot.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Okay.

With private sector involvement like Vintage Wings of Canada, Michael Potter's organization, is there more that we can do with the private sector?

**The Chair:** We need a very brief answer, please.

Scot, who was that going to?

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** I guess it would be to Caroline.

Everyone else I'm going to say is gun-shy. I don't want to use that word, but—

**Ms. Caroline Dromaguet:** Sure, I can jump in here.

We have partnered with institutions or private sector companies like Vintage Wings on several public programs. We're always open to receiving proposals, which we review, and if they fit and align with our mandate, we're more than happy to collaborate.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Now, for five minutes, we have MP Casey, please.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to start with Ms. Bailey.

In your opening remarks, you made a reference to something I'd like you to elaborate on. It was around the budget that was handed down on Monday of last week, and a reference to the Parks Canada budget including funding for Canadian sites only.

Can you provide us with a little more detail on what the issue is there and what your advice would be as we consider the budget and the budget implementation act? If there's a problem, what is the problem, and what would you like us to do about it?

**Ms. Caitlin Bailey:** Absolutely. Thank you so much, Mr. Casey.

It wasn't really pointing out a problem specifically. It was more saying again that, for the European monuments, there's a kind of out of sight, out of mind mentality.

My colleague Mr. Loveridge mentioned that the budgets are adequate in the short term, and I think that's a good point. They are adequate in the short term, but I think we have to continue to think about the long term. We're thinking, okay, we have  $x$  amount here, which is allocated for improvement and maintenance of Canadian sites, but those are sites specifically in Canada. The budget does say that Parks Canada is getting...I can't remember the amount specifically, for the maintenance of its  $x$  number of sites in Canada.

The overseas sites are a partnership management system with the Commonwealth War Graves, as Mr. Loveridge mentioned. Parks is implicated and Veterans Affairs is implicated; there are private bodies like us implicated as well. The concern our organization has is, again, the long term, and trying to think about what happens when these sites need improvement.

The improvement budget right now says it's Canadian sites in Canada. That causes problems in the long term.

• (1725)

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Thank you.

Mr. Cooper, you indicated that 2019 was the best year ever for the Juno Beach Centre.

I'd be most interested in hearing from you about the impact of COVID and what it's going to mean for you going forward. What has been the impact of the pandemic and what do you anticipate the lasting effects will be?

**Mr. Don Cooper:** That's a great question. I was good at guessing at the beginning of the pandemic, but I'm getting fairly poor at looking down the road anymore.

It was a disaster from our point of view, in terms of revenues. Revenues went to zero, obviously, as we closed the museum. We were open for a few months last year, so I guess our revenues are down maybe 85% or something because we were open for a few months. That continued into this year. We haven't opened this year yet, and we don't know when we're going to open next. Our revenues are at zero.

I have to say that governments in France and in Canada have really stepped up. We've had salary support programs in France. We've had money that's basically contingency funding that they backed. In Canada, you know the programs. There were wage support programs, and we have special consideration from Veterans Affairs, so I think we're fine.

I think there's going to be a surge when things open up, so we'd be back to heavy visitor traffic. People are just trying to go out and visit. When we get our international travellers back, I think we'll be in good shape.

I'm very optimistic that in the long term things will settle back into normal and we can continue on our growth plan again.

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Thank you.

I have a very quick question for you, Mr. McLellan.

You indicated that you're in the process of getting your museum to national status. Where are you in that process? What steps are yet to be taken?

**Mr. Steve McLellan:** We are moving forward. It is not a process that has a playbook, so we are creating it with Canadian Heritage at the table. I would like to say that this process is moving at the speed of business or the speed that we would like, but it's not. It's a slow process, and while we have been referenced recently in the most recent budget—we're very appreciative of that, and the details of that are still to come—we're committed and we're very convinced that the story we're telling and the opportunities we have are important to Canada.

We will continue moving forward. We expect it will be a couple of years before we invite all of you to that opening ceremony though.

**The Chair:** I'm afraid that's time.

Next on my list is MP Doherty, but I understand that Todd's having some Internet issues, so we're going to Cathay.



MP Wagantall, you have five minutes.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Thank you so much, Chair.

I would like to go back to Mr. McLellan.

When we're talking about commemoration, what I'm hearing is awesome. We need that commemoration to be there for the first purpose, which is to ensure that Canadians understand and appreciate the contributions and sacrifices made by those in uniform.

However, the second one is for all veterans and their family members to feel recognized. I haven't talked to RCMP members as much, but, for example, for the Afghan cohort, there is not yet a place in Canada where they can go that says we recognize what they did.

When I think of the opportunity for the museum for RCMP, I know from speaking with them that many of them faced atrocious circumstances overseas but also at home. For our veterans now, is there a way we should include that type of commemoration by VAC considering that they are part of our responsibility within Veterans Affairs?

• (1730)

**Mr. Steve McLellan:** It's an interesting question. I think that for solutions to determine the best way collectively as Canadians to honour these people—those who lost their lives as well as those who suffered—there needs to be a broader conversation.

We spend an awful lot of time, and rightfully so, on the First World War and Second World War, and I applaud that 100% and support it, but you've alerted us today to the Afghan women and men who have come back. They all left something on the sands of Afghanistan, if you will, as our Mounties do when they have served. There are some great tragedies, sadly, that have happened recently in the world of policing and that I think need to be represented.

As for how we do it exactly, I couldn't tell you, but I do know that the Mounties do a capable job, a very, very good job, of recognizing those who have lost their lives. They do an annual memorial service and so on, and on Depot their names are recognized on a cenotaph.

I think what we need to do is make sure that we, as Canadians and agencies, have that ability to place that name, if you will, and then, most importantly, that we tell the rest of Canada to come and see it and pay attention to it. Through standing in front of those cenotaphs in Arcola, Saskatchewan, or Yorkton, Saskatchewan, or on Depot, people say, "Okay, this is critical. Man, these people made a difference."

Standing next to a Mountie who knew that person whose name is there, that matters, and it needs to matter. We need to continue to tell Canadians why it matters. Otherwise, we'll continue to make the mistakes we've made in the past. Let's not do it again in the future.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Thank you.

Caroline, I would like to ask you a question. In reading through what you shared today, I note that you "are also developing a framework to guide the renewal of the Museum's galleries in re-

sponse to demographic and societal changes in Canada". You say, "This renewal will include the addition of a new dimension to the presentation of Canada's military history, to help explain our world in the 21st century."

I find that very fascinating and would love that. Have you processed this? Are there things you can share with us today as to what that is going to entail?

**Ms. Caroline Dromaguet:** Thank you very much. It's my pleasure to talk to you about that a little bit.

Again, this is a project that is starting for us. As with anything, museology ages quickly as well, so we want to ensure that our museum, which is already 16 years old, if you can believe it, is in need of that renewal and that new approach. The way we told history in the late 1990s and early 2000s is different from how we tell it today.

Our main objective in the early days of this new framework, I would say, is to tell that story in a very meaningful and relevant way. I think many of the participants on this call have alluded to this earlier. It's to make history matter. If an event happened 100 years ago, how does it still impact the Canada we know today, so that all Canadians can connect to that history?

Probably one of my favourite examples is the story of Francis Pegahmagabow, who was the most decorated indigenous soldier in the First World War. We tell his story in our gallery, but in our new approach, what we would do is extend that story and say how Pegahmagabow's legacy and his activist work later on paved the way for some of the indigenous rights we know today, so that people can make that connection with history.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Perfect. Thank you.

Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** That's exactly time. Thank you.

Up next we have MP Fillmore, please, for five minutes.

• (1735)

**Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.):** Thank you to the witnesses for their time today.

One of you said that we are all connected to service in some way. It was very nice of Scot Davidson to share the story of his grandfather.

I'm going to hold this up. That's my grandfather. Maybe he knew Scot's grandfather. He was also at Vimy Ridge. He was injured there. That was him when he was signing up freshly to the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry a long time ago.

He was lucky. He came home and he started a family and I was able to take my seat in Parliament to help to participate in the democracy that he and others gave so much to defend. It's a great privilege to be here with all of you.

Ms. Dromaguet, two years in a row now we've missed the Battle of the Atlantic gala. You'll remember the famous photograph of the survivors of the Battle of the Atlantic. We have that photograph each year and the group gets smaller every year. I'm just so terrified of going back from 2019 to 2022 when we'll be able to do it again and how much that group will have shrunk by then.

To all of you, thank you for the work you do to commemorate and remember the sacrifices that have happened, that have been made by Canadians over many years.

I want to bring it to memorials and physical monuments. I represent Halifax as the navy town so I'm going to go to the navy by way of example. Here in Point Pleasant Park we have the anchor of HMCS *Bonaventure*, the Bonnie. It is a monument to people who lost their lives in service during peacetime.

There are a lot of monuments like it around the country whose ownership is not quite clear. They suffer from vandalism, from age. In the case of the *Bonaventure* monument, it's shoreline erosion because it's right on the edge of the ocean. We recently were able to coordinate among DND, VAC and a local survivor's group of the HMCS *Kootenay* disaster whose shipmates' names are on that monument, and we were able to bring that monument back in time for the 60th anniversary of the *Kootenay* disaster. But it wasn't easy. It wasn't straightforward.

Using that as an example, I'm wondering if any of you might have some advice for us on how we can care for these many smaller monuments throughout our communities across the country that commemorate those who have fallen.

I'll start with Mr. McLellan, given your domestic mandate, but if others would share any wisdom, I would be very grateful.

**Mr. Steve McLellan:** Thank you.

I can be very crisp on this.

We have many young people who are lamenting the fact they can't get out and socialize. We have many young women and men in this country 18 to 25 years old, 30 years old, who want to be cause supportive. If we give them a cause, it can be two days' work, five days' work; it could be a committee of young people who would support the necessary work. I think they would do all kinds of things, the physical work to take off the graffiti, to call on sponsors, to do the work that's necessary and to share the stories. I think there are lots of young Canadians we've not engaged in this, and we've asked our veterans to serve again by putting their cash and their time towards it.

Let's get our young people active. I bet they'd be more than enthusiastic.

**Mr. Andy Fillmore:** I think it's a brilliant idea. That brings labour to the equation.

There's also something about funding though. It was a rather expensive bit of shoreline restoration.

Are there any experiences perhaps from the other witnesses from overseas monuments how other countries or other veterans organizations are managing the funding stream that preserves these monuments going into the future?

**Mr. Don Cooper:** I can comment quickly on France, since I know it a little.

Generally, as in Canada, they often fall under the municipalities' purview, and the municipalities will look after them and have a sense of history that gets them to do that.

The youth aspect is really important. That's a great idea that Steve brought out.

In France and in Holland in particular, both countries, they get the youth out there to put wreaths and little Canadian flags on the graves, so they're involved, essentially in commemoration. That's an important aspect whether you're removing graffiti or something else. So stick with the idea.

● (1740)

**Mr. Andy Fillmore:** Thank you both for that. It's a great idea. I very much appreciate it.

**The Chair:** There is about 10 seconds left, and I think Mr. Loveridge has his hand up.

I don't want that 10 seconds to go to waste if you want to contribute something, sir.

**Mr. David Loveridge:** I'll be quick.

We have a fair bit of experience with it. A lot of regimental units especially over in England and Europe put together memorials. It's easy to fund for the memorial; it's difficult to fund for the life-cycle maintenance of the memorial.

Part of that, I think, is the same in Canada. People want to build memorials, and those are all good things, but unfortunately it's who owns it afterwards, and who maintains it, and where the funds come from. Those are the kinds of questions we need to be asking.

**The Chair:** That's excellent. Thank you very much.

Up next for two and half minutes is MP Desilets.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desilets:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to come back to what Mr. Loveridge was just talking about.

Ms. Bailey, some time ago we were approached by a heritage association located in France. This association looks after the maintenance of a memorial site we're talking about, a site that is very important to the 22<sup>e</sup> Regiment. It's the Canadian Mont-des-Cats memorial in northern France. Compared to Vimy, this site isn't as significant, as it's a small place.

Do you think Veterans Affairs Canada has a funding strategy to help these kinds of second-class memorial sites?

**Ms. Caitlin Bailey:** For now, yes. There's a program in Canada under the umbrella of the commemorative partnership program, which is designed to fund the renovation of second-class monuments, that is, small monuments, community monuments, and so on. This applies only to Canada. That's kind of the problem. There's no similar program for monuments elsewhere in Europe.

Mr. Loveridge said earlier that the question was complicated in terms of who owns it and who provides the funding. Is it up to France or Canada? The regiment may not even exist anymore or it may exist in a different form today. There's a lot of complexity in this, but I think it would be a good start to open up this program to monuments like the one you mentioned.

**Mr. Luc Desilets:** I understand the situation well. The associations that take care of these small monuments have a very hard time getting funding. These monuments are overseas, and they're not as large as Vimy.

Mr. Cooper, you alluded earlier to the fact that your organization is facing significant deficits because of the lack of traffic.

Is your organization in danger now?

**Mr. Don Cooper:** No, not at all.

[English]

**The Chair:** It's time, but I'll allow for a quick answer.

[Translation]

**Mr. Don Cooper:** We're not in danger. We're very well served by the government assistance we've obtained in France and in Canada.

**Mr. Luc Desilets:** Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

**The Chair:** Next is MP Blaney for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you, Chair.

I will come back to you again, Mr. Cooper.

I'm extremely relieved to hear that and I have no doubt that people would stand up for this very important monument.

I have a couple of questions. You spoke in your presentation about your ideas and thoughts around the expansion and what you want to do with the facility you have. I'm wondering what that looks like.

The other thing I thought you did a really good job on was talking about the opportunity and commitment to bear witness to this history and to have this as the monument that does that work. I'm wondering if you could talk about activities that you're doing to encourage youth to participate and learn. Are there any steps you're taking to do things with technology or anything to engage that younger population?

**Mr. Don Cooper:** Yes, I think that's basically been the theme of our museum from day one. I don't know if somebody else has done it now, but we certainly were the only museum that had a youth circuit going through it, for example. It was specifically designed for people four feet tall.

We've maintained that throughout. We've done it today with the Peter and Madeleine theme, and so forth. Yes, we've addressed that. We address it in terms of the interactions of the local population of French kids, who basically do the commemorations, plant the flags and do those kinds of things. From the beginning we've had very much a youth-focused orientation.

To the point about financing, essentially we have a vibrant museum that we're trying to make better all the time. When we look at a project, for example, like our expansion project, it's to accommodate the extra visitors we're getting and can anticipate. It's also a project that gets us closer to that goal of sustainability in financing. Basically, we're talking about expanding our boutiques so we can sell more goods and make more money. We are also going to expand into a coffee shop that will bring in additional revenues. The net result of all of this—and there's a business case to say this—is that we're going to spend this money, but we're going to get it back over time and make for a better visitor experience.

We're a little different from Vimy, which doesn't charge and can't charge. It's a different animal. We basically can and do operate our facility as much like a business as we can.

• (1745)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Up next for five minutes is MP Brassard.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm looking to the future, and I would pose this to all of our witnesses.

With some of the commemoration ceremonies you have planned, the difficulty is knowing whether the things are going to be open, whether we're going to be able to plan for these types of commemorations. Going forward, what are some of the plans with respect to each individual organization as it relates to commemoration of some of the more significant events that affect our military?

Caitlin, do you want to start again?

**Ms. Caitlin Bailey:** Thank you so much, John. Yes, I'm happy to start.

Our first, which will be Vimy 105, will be next year. It's hard to believe we're already five years out from the centennial.

**Mr. John Brassard:** I was there for the 100th. It was unbelievable.

**Ms. Caitlin Bailey:** So was I. I was in a tent. I'd never want to go back to that tent, but it's hard to believe that we were there.

Our 105 initiative is Vimy: A Living Memorial, which is a digital project. It is an app that will explore the Vimy site. We're working with the European operations team to do that. In addition there will be a digital commemoration space, which we're building with the National Film Board of Canada. It is going to connect contemporary veterans and Canadians with historical sources to try to bring people together on the question of what war means.

When we have finished that, we will move on towards the building of the monument. We'll be planning a lot of different activities around Walter Allward and the cross being built within the monument.

We have a lot on the go right now and will have for the next five years.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Right. That's great. Hopefully things will have returned to normal by that time so we can celebrate 105.

I said this after my experience at Vimy 100. I came back and actually said it in the House of Commons. Just as much as the Taj Mahal, the Wailing Wall, and other sites around the world attract religious symbols or individuals, I think Vimy is a place that every Canadian schoolchild should visit as part of not just the learning experience but really understanding. Being at the Vimy 100 celebration was, for me and I know for many, a life-altering experience. I appreciate that.

Don, I'll next go to you. What are some of the things that the Juno Centre is looking forward to when and if we do get back to some sense of normalcy?

**Mr. Don Cooper:** I think I've been fairly optimistic in my comments so far. Where we have challenges is with funding capital projects as we go forward. There are a few I can give you. There are confidential discussions happening, but I'll try to couch my words carefully.

• (1750)

**Mr. John Brassard:** You know that we're open right now. People are watching.

**Mr. Don Cooper:** I understand.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Just be mindful of that.

**Mr. Don Cooper:** The house on the beach is a project that is in play for us right now. It's historic, but the owners essentially have put it in play. We've been in discussions for a couple of years, and in discussions with the town of Bernières. It's a huge asset on the Normandy beach. It's a huge visual representation of the landings. My dad talked about it. He went in on June 6, and basically the house on the beach was his reference point.

That's one project, and an example of the challenges we face: what do you do; how do you do the programming for it; how do you make it make money, or at least break even so it's not a burden, and so on and so forth.

We have another major project too. I won't talk about it, but it's been in the French press, not so much in Canada. We have a battle brewing with a neighbour who wants to put up 70 apartments right next to our parking lot called les Dunes.

**Mr. John Brassard:** I've heard about that.

**Mr. Don Cooper:** We won our second legal battle in that fight, but we are continuing to fight and we'll see where it goes. There's an upside to it potentially, and a downside that could be quite negative, if that project goes through and doesn't allow us to keep barriers up, essentially, to keep people off our roads.

That's the synopsis of where I see the future and where we're going.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Mr. Chair, how much more time do I have?

**The Chair:** You have about 40 seconds.

**Mr. John Brassard:** I'll just conclude by saying thank you to all of the witnesses for coming here today.

I said at the outset and I'll say it again that on the issue of commemoration, the history of our country, the lives that have been lost, the blood that's been spilled, the families that have been decimated by war, keeping these memories alive is critical to what we do, not just here as a committee in the recommendations we're going to be making, but also to any government that is in place to make sure that commemoration is held true.

Thank you to all of the witnesses.

**The Chair:** Up next for five minutes is MP Amos.

You don't have your headset on, Will.

I'm not sure whether he's having trouble unmuting.

Will, can you hear me okay? You're on my list, but if you want to defer, that's fine.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Is it time for a Mr. Davidson song—a little intervention?

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Don't get me started.

**Mr. William Amos:** No more soup and sandwich bowl.

Sorry, Mr. Chair, but I didn't realize that I was on the list again. I'm happy to defer to a colleague. I'm also happy to seize the occasion. I don't have this good fortune—

**The Chair:** Sure. You're on my list, but if one of your colleagues wants to jump in—

**Mr. William Amos:** Let me jump in, because I didn't have the opportunity to ask Ms. Bailey her opinion of the federal budget and how it did or didn't work for the Vimy Foundation.

I know that many members on this committee stood up in support of what Vimy was seeking, and I commend my colleagues for their budget activism in that regard.

Ms. Bailey, perhaps you could opine further.

**Ms. Caitlin Bailey:** Thank you very much, Mr. Amos.

We did not get the allocation that so many of you advocated for, and I'd like to thank all of you for the efforts you made on our behalf. It was really, really wonderful to see, and it was excellent to be able to speak to each of you and to know that you took an interest in the drum that we're banging.

We understand that the budget this year is certainly a particular budget. We're in a situation where there are many, many more needs than ours that are pressing and immediate. Ours is more of a long-term proposal.

From our perspective, in the short term, yes, we didn't get the envelope this year that we asked for, but we will continue to push for that envelope. We will continue to draw attention to the question of overseas monuments.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Desilets also mentioned the issue of the Canadian memorial at Mont-des-Cats. It's very difficult to make a decision on all these requests.

[*English*]

I think it's a pressing issue. We would like to see the 10-year plan, and we would like to work with Veterans Affairs on this to see that 10-year plan try to handle these questions proactively rather than reactively.

My colleague, Mr. Loveridge, mentioned this as well. There's been a ton of work done on repairing the backlog of gravestones here in Canada, and nobody wants to see that backlog build back up again. There needs to be a continued proactive view rather than viewing it from when everything is falling apart and it becomes such a big problem that no one can ignore it anymore.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. William Amos:** Thank you.

Chair, do I have a little time left?

**The Chair:** Yes, it looks like you have two minutes, and it looks like Mr. McLellan has a contribution.

**Mr. Steve McLellan:** Yes, for just a brief second. I have a hard stop as I have to leave for our heritage centre board meeting, and I

wanted to say thanks to everyone. Congratulations on this conversation and good luck in your efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

Will, you have about a minute.

**Mr. William Amos:** Perhaps I could give Mr. Cooper the opportunity to speak to the Juno Beach reaction to the budget.

**Mr. Don Cooper:** We're happy with the budget so far. I think we basically have been satisfied with the level of support we've received. We would also always like a little more to help us with our main projects. We don't run out of aspirations and visions for things to do.

We've maintained the same level of support for about 15 years. We think it's being eroded by inflation and so forth, and we think it merits a review, but other than that, I don't have any dissatisfaction to express.

**Mr. William Amos:** Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Seeing as we only have a few minutes before our stop at six, I don't think we have time to get through another round.

I want to take a moment and thank all the witnesses for being here today. This has been a very good session, and I want to thank you for your contribution to this study.

Members, our next scheduled meeting is on Monday, May 3, when we'll resume this study. It will be attended by department officials as well as the Royal Canadian Legion.

Again, thank you very much, all of you, for your help today, and a big thank you to all the tech staff, the folks that can make us be heard, both in this meeting and across Canada, in both official languages. Thank you very much, everybody.

I adjourn today's meeting.





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