



Ottawa, Canada K1A 0P4

Mr. Ray Kokkonen, CD
President
Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association
P.O. Box 905
Kingston, Ontario
K7L 4X8

AUG 30 2010

Dear Mr. Kokkonen:

Thank you for your letter of August 23, 2010, concerning the term renewal of the Veterans Ombudsman.

I appreciate your sharing your views with me and can understand the concerns of the Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association in this matter. I would like to assure you that our Government wants to ensure that Canada's Veterans are being treated fairly with respect and dignity.

This is why our Government announced the establishment of a Veterans Ombudsman position in April 2007. Later that year, Colonel Patrick B. Stogran was appointed on a three-year term as Canada's first Veterans Ombudsman. As you are aware, the Ombudsman is mandated to contribute to the well-being of Veterans by reviewing individual grievances and systemic issues pertaining to the Veterans Bill of Rights or to any aspect of Veterans Affairs Canada's programs and services.

In order to truly fulfill his or her role, I believe that the Ombudsman must remain an impartial officer who is independent from the Government. In essence, a term without renewal preserves autonomy and assures Veterans that there is no compliancy on the part of an Ombudsman who wishes to have his or her term renewed by Government.

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While Colonel Stogran's term is not being renewed, it does not in any way diminish all that he has done to help improve the lives of our Veterans. Colonel Stogran is to be commended for his dedication to the well-being of Canada's greatest heroes, and I look forward to continuing to work with him on issues of concern.

Again, thank you for taking the time to write on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jean-Pierre Blackburn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jean-Pierre Blackburn, P.C., M.P.