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News Release

Canada's Largest In-School Program for Veterans Loses Federal Government Support

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The Dominion Institute announced today that its flagship Memory Project Speakers' Bureau – a national educational program that connects veterans with young people across the country – will not receive support from its primary funder, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) for the 2008-2009 school year. Each school year, the Memory Project Veteran Speakers' Bureau helps over 1,500 veterans from across Canada talk about their wartime experiences with upwards of 150,000 school children.

After twelve months of discussions between the Institute and Veterans Affairs Canada, the Institute staff informed Minister Greg Thompson's office last week that time had run out to use new federal government funds to help plan and implement veteran school visits for the 2008-2009 school year. VAC had been the Memory Project's largest single funder, providing a total of \$450,000 in financial support over the last three years.

"This is certainly disappointing news for the 1,500 veteran volunteers and the thousands of teachers who use The Memory Project to help educate young people about our country's military history," said Rudyard Griffiths, co-founder of The Dominion Institute. Mr. Griffiths continued: "We are going to make every effort to ensure that our veterans are supported in their efforts to talk with young people in schools but the reality is the loss of our major funder, Veterans Affairs Canada, will have a significant impact on our ability to facilitate school visits this autumn and into 2009."

Each year the Institute spends the summer months updating the Memory Project's educational materials and recruiting more veterans into its speaker's bureau. Starting in September, the Institute receives requests from teachers interested in bringing a veteran into their classroom to talk about their wartime experiences. Institute staff then facilitate visits reaching on average 150,000 school kids nation-wide.

According to a recent scientific survey of 500 Canadian veterans, conducted by the Innovative Research Group on behalf of the Institute, veterans feel that programs such as The Memory Project are an effective way to teach young people about Canada's military history and an important volunteer activity.

- *Sixty percent (60%) of respondents agreed that the federal government is not doing enough to help commemorate the service and sacrifice of our Second World War veterans*



- *Nearly two-thirds (63%) of veterans feel that in-school programs are the most effective way to educate young Canadians about our military history*
- *Nine out of ten (87%) veterans feel that talking to schools about their military experiences is one of their more rewarding volunteer activities.*
- *Nearly two-thirds (63%) of veterans fear that because they are getting older, they will not be able to visit with school children for very much longer.*

For a detailed factum summarizing these poll results, click [here](#).

Second World War veterans are passing away at a rate of 500 per week. In 1995, at the time of the 50th anniversary of the end of the War, there were more than 500,000 veterans alive in Canada. Today there are approximately 200,000.

Created in 2001, The Memory Project is the Dominion Institute's premiere educational program, designed to connect veterans and students online and in classrooms across the country. For more info visit: www.thememoryproject.com.

Veterans who participated in this survey are available for interviews. Please contact the Dominion Institute for veteran contact information by region and conflict.

Memory Project by the Numbers

- More than **1,500** veteran volunteers engaged in the program
- Veterans represent more than **500** small, mid-sized and large communities
- More than **175,000** students host a veteran annually across Canada
- More than **4,000** teachers and educators involved in project
- 750,000 school children have received a visit from a Memory Project veteran volunteer since the program started in 2001.

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