

Transcription

Ron Camponi

Tape 1

- Interviewed February 26, 1993 -

Dave: Okay, I'm here with Ron Camponi, a Métis veteran and he's agreed to have an interview with us for the war veterans book. And the first question is, when were you born?

Ron: September 25, 1926.

Dave: Where?

Ron: Right here in Saskatoon.

Dave: Did you enlist here as well?

Ron: Yes, I went to school here. Formerly Saint Joseph's school was on, it's now the Native Survival School on 9th street and Broadway avenue in Nutana. I went to school there till I was 15 and I quit. And I went to work delivering groceries for a year in Saskatoon. And then when I was 16 I joined the army, it was 1942 and I was 16 years old and I joined the army. In order to get in, in those days, the birth certificates were written in ink, handwritten. They wouldn't believe I was 18 so they were selling stuff at the drug store called ink eradicator. I think it was 25 cents a bottle. So I went and bought some and changed it from 1926 to 1924 on my birth certificate, cause I had to bring it in to prove my age. So I enlisted in the army and never told my parents, it was sort of a lark, I didn't really think I'd get in. There was 3 of us that went down, we were all 16. The other 2 sort of dropped it and I sort of went on with it. And next thing I know I was in the army. My mother wasn't very happy, my dad didn't mind too much, he was in the service in the first World War and the second World War. He didn't mind too much, but my mother already had a brother overseas, so she was quite concerned about both of us, but she did eventually approve it, okay it reluctantly. So I went on with my basic training in Regina and then went down to Camp Borden, ON done my advanced training as we use to call it. And I was ready to go overseas and they used to call it trained soldier regiment, you'd go up there and then just wait for a draft course. Everything was secret, you didn't know when you were leaving or anything. So we were all in this one _____ hut and this one draft and I woke up one morning and everyone else was gone and I was still there. So I expected something was

wrong so I went on parade in the morning and there was only a few of us left who hadn't left with the draft the night before. And they told me I had to go see the adjutant. So I asked why I wasn't on the draft. And when I seen the adjutant, he had my baptismal certificate from the church that my mother had sent not having told me though. So then I found out that, they asked me how old I was. And I said 18, you got my birth certificate. He said we also have this and he pulled out this baptismal certificate from the church that my mother had sent. So he asked me if I wanted to stay in or get out. They said I would have to wait until I was 19 and I was only 16 at the time. And Borden in those days was all sand, and I couldn't see myself staying on for 3 years in Borden. So I decided to get out. So I got my discharge and came back out west but by this time I was like all my friends were in high school, but I had matured a lot more since that time so they were like, I didn't have much, I couldn't tie in with them because they seen so worried about high school dances and high school girlfriends and to me that was kids stuff now. I had been in the army for close to a year. So they had what they called a vocational training centre here, it was for underage soldiers at the exhibition grounds here. But I wasn't told about that when I got out, I didn't even know it existed. They were right here in Saskatoon at the exhibition grounds, so I decided to join up again within a month or a little over a month. But I had to join as a boy soldier, cause they new my age by this time. I had to join the army as a boy soldier and that was your rank, boy Camponi I was called. I was getting half pay, 70 cents a day. And I got a clothing allowance when I got out of \$35. And the regulations were that if you rejoined within 6 months you had to pay it back. So I pay at the time was in the middle of the month I got \$6 and at the end of the month I got \$7, that was my big payday. And I was stationed right here in Saskatoon, but when you turned 17 1/2 you went back on full pay again. So I went, when I turned 17 1/2 I got, went from 70 cents a day to \$1.40 a day. It was double my salary. And then as they went back in, I had to take my basic training again. I had to go through the whole rigamarole again. And then just about, I was still about 18 years old and the war ended and I volunteered for the Japanese war, it was still going on, I volunteered for that. They shipped us out west here and then the Japanese war ended and I got out again. I went down to Maple Creek, that's where they use to hold you and then send you to Regina to get your discharge. It was sort of a holding unit. So I was quite a hockey player, played a lot of hockey in those days. So when I got to Maple Creek it was around November I think, so I found out they had a hockey team there, so I tried out for it. I was

on the hockey team. So they kept me another 6 months to finish up the schedule. So I actually got out on April 1, 1946 for the second time. Then about December 46, a couple of friends of mine they were asking for people to go back into the army. So they talked about going back in. I don't think either one of them got in, but I wound up back in the army. I sort of enjoyed it. But I thought, go back in till I settle down, because it was hard to settle down after the war. There was a lot of veterans. So I rejoined and then I got married and before I knew it, I had 10 or 12 years. And I thought you only have to go 25 to get a pension. I thought another 13 years and I got myself a pension. So when I had about 12 years in I decided to go through the rest and I stayed in so, I stayed in actually a total of 30 years, well 29 1/2 years. And I got discharged in I believe it was 1973 I finally got my final discharge. So I was in 3 times actually. I retired at 46, because I had joined at 16, I had 30 years of service, and I was only 46 years old when I retired finally. But in the meantime I had gone to Korea, and over in Germany in 3 years. Saw a lot of the country. I came back from Korea in 1954 and I got posted to various places. I was all over Canada. We never, my kids they never really had a home because I figured it out once in my 30 years, the longest posting I ever had was about 4 years in one place, the rest was about 3, sometimes only 2 years. And I was in the armoured core, tank core, and actually over the years I served in 3 different regiments. I started off with the Strathconas in Calgary and I went to, I started there 46, December 46. And then I went to, after I got back from Korea, I went to Korea with B squadron with Strathconas. May 52 I came back in June 53. I spent 2 years in Calgary to 55 and then I got posted to what they use to call the I staff where we work with the Balicias, so I was posted to Winnipeg, still with the Strathconas, but I was on the I staff. Constructional staff there for militia people. And I was there for 2 years. And in 1957 they remobilized 3 armoured regiments. One was the 8th Canadian Azaras, use to be the New Brunswick Azaras, so what they did is take a bunch of officers and seniors and CO's from the regular force to go and form the nucleus of this new regiment, when they formed up. So I went from Winnipeg to Gagetown, NB. 8th New Brunswick Azaras is what they called the regiment, and they changed it to 8th Canadian Azaras, but they use to be the 8th New Brunswick Azaras. And I was in that from 57 till, Gagetown 57-59 and in 59 we went to Germany for 3 years. And came back from Germany and went to Borden, the armoured core school as an instructor. And I was there for about 3 years and I got posted back to Gagetown again this time to the Royal Canadian Lagoons. So I now became a Lagoon. Then

finally I kept asking for postings out west and the more I asked for west, the further east I went. Typical army, but as it turned out, my last posting was to Regina here in 1970 I guess. I was here for 3 or 4 years and I decided to take my discharge or retirement. So there you have it.

Dave: That's the story. So when you were in, you were in Korea as an occupational force, was that after the conflict?

Ron: No, during the conflict. It ended shortly after, I think we came back in June 53 and I think it ended around October 53 or something. There was a lot of shooting going on when I was there.

Dave: Did you see any action yourself?

Ron: Well you see, it bound up something like the first World war. We were entrenched at the 38th parallel and they were entrenched across the valleys and that. There was a lot of shelling and a lot of patrols and that. But we didn't actually go on patrols. The infantry went on patrols of course, we were sort of dug in our tanks. We were there as support. I think the shelling was really hard on the nerves because you can't move, you can't go anywhere, we couldn't move our tanks. We were sort of in one position all the time. That's the kind of action, depends on what you call action. We didn't go up with our tanks, because first of all it was terrible country for tanks, because it was all rice patties and mountains. So if you ever got off the rice patties, you were almost disappeared in the swamps sort of. It wasn't that you couldn't go across country, there was no cross country to go. So it really wasn't a good place for tank to fight, more infantry support is all we did.

Dave: What was your impression of that war. First a police action and then sort of a conflict, and then it was sort of officially declared as a war. What did you think about that?

Ron: Well it was a bloody war, when somebody is shooting at you and shelling you and people being killed, there was a lot of infantry people being killed, it was a bloody war. So they wouldn't have to pay benefits or give all the benefits to wartime people, they called it a police action. Well it was no such thing as police action, it was a bloody war. But they finally recognized it as a war. Any veteran that was in Korea will tell you, my version of a police action and a war was not the same as the governments, or the military. But they have

finally recognized the Korean veterans. It's about time. But then again they don't give us a lot of veterans, because it took so long to recognize. Maybe that's what they waited for, I don't know.

Dave: Yeah, I talked yesterday with Norris Petit and Leon Ferguson, so they had quite a bit to say about the experience there. It definitely was a war when you have artillery shells laying around you. I guess Claude Petit which I didn't realize was wounded when he was at Korea. So it definitely was a war. I was looking at Leon Ferguson's stuff and it took 35 years to get a medal or something, a medal of recognition.

Ron: Well, it took longer than that, because I remember when it was 35 years, and I went down east and all they had was a plastic badge, but it wasn't a medal. But they finally came out with a medal in the last year or two. But I know that it was damn close to 40 years before they recognized it as a war. And I just heard it through the Grapevine that they were giving medals, recognizing it as a war. About a year ago. I was never notified. I still got the plastic button that says you were in Korea, but all it was, was a plastic badge sort of thing. Now there's a medal for it, which I just send away for. But it definitely was not a police action. I mean, like I said, it was a bloody war. I think I was there probably around the time Claude and Norris were there. What year were they there about?

Dave: I don't quite recall the year they were there. They were there for I think a fairly short period of time, because as soon as Claude's mother had caught wind that he was wounded, she sent them the official notice of birthdates for the 2 of them. Both of them were underage. So she sent that to Ottawa, and got them pulled out right away. They were pulled out for being underage, although they had both seen action, that's for sure.

Ron: Something the same as me but I never, well I was ready to go overseas, I guess that's when my mother decided she didn't want me overseas. But like I said, it was never really recognized, but I know the Korean veterans always recognized it as a war. And actually the type of war we had, when we got there, everyone was dug in and it was like trenches. They had their guns zeroed in on our trenches, it was mostly hills, you were on a hill you know. And that was harder on the nerves, than if you could jump in your tank and move or get the hell out of there if you're being shelled, but we couldn't because we were dug in like pillboxes. Just our _____ showing. And the infantry would go out on patrols and we would cover them. We

would register targets during the day and then they would tell us what targets, because we could fire at night, with the instruments, we just lay them on that target and if they'd call for fire, we'd fire just ahead of them or whatever they wanted. So they didn't recognize it. I think it was about 2-3 years ago. And I just heard through the grapevine that they had given out medals. No one officially notified me. But then they didn't know where I was by this time I suppose.

Dave: What did you think about it as a war. Was it something worth fighting for?

Ron: No. I mean, when I think back, at the time I was very patriotic. The first time I heard, when the Korean war broke out, I was, we were going up the Alaska highway, and we were taking convoy. We had about 150 vehicles going up for an exercise up in Alaska. And we heard about the Korean War. I think we were at Fort MacMurray and we had to come back. But I had never heard of this Korea before. I didn't even know there was a country. Of course, it's propaganda, they tell you that you're fighting communists, so you keep your country free. You know. But I guess when I first started to think about it, my daughters when they grew up and started to go to university and I started to look back and think, the Korean people themselves weren't even fighting. It was us and the Chinese, you know the United Nations and the Chinese. The Koreans, we just used there battle ground. We used there country to fight this war. And it wound up as a stalemate as it turns out. But like I said, at the time I was doing my duty towards my country. We never questioned it till later on. And then when my daughters were going to university I started thinking about it, because they were protesting against the Vietnam war. And so I can relate that to the Korean war and what was happening to the people. Cause the term Gook, we all used that term over in Korea, they were just gooks, you know and the way were thinking and lead to think, was that there lives were not nearly as important as ours. And it's hard to admit that, but this is the feeling you got. But that's probably why that's geared into your head. We were far more important than they were. If one of our guys got killed, it hit home. But if a Korean got killed, tough luck. I don't know how many would admit that to you, but then I started realizing that I was as guilty as the rest, I was calling them gooks, all they used the Koreans for was behind the lines fixing roads. They didn't have any equipment, just A-frames and dumping rocks on the roads, and working in your kitchens and stuff like that. Houseboys. So when my daughters, when the Vietnam war was on, they were heavy protestors, especially the

one. She actually went to Washington when they had that big protest in the 60's. And I started thinking about it and I realized that I had no business in Korea fighting a war. However, I was sent there. Part of the Canadian troops. So that's when I started having my doubts about it. It's like anything else now. I think when you see Desert Storm and all that now, being in the service, I can see all the politics involved. Like the Americans going there in Desert Storm if they hadn't had or afraid of all the oil reserves, they wouldn't have been there. You take this Yugoslavia, that's not too important, they're getting a _____ because public pressure is on. But the Middle East was far important, phony little things like Panama, they screwed that up. I mean they went in there with helicopters, just like Beijing, just to capture Noriego. And then they had a hell of a time finding him. There's such a thing as using a sledgehammer to kill a fly, and the grenada or whatever it was called, that was a farce. What were they trying to prove. The army, well they took quite a beating in Vietnam.

Dave: Yeah, so they were trying to what's the word, sort of seek atonement for, through all these other military initiatives. Especially with Iraq.

Ron: Well, I don't know what Saddam Hussein is thinking about, but to take them on was folly anyways.

Dave: Oh yeah. And of course we see things happening today.

Ron: Any other questions you wanted to ask?

Dave: I was checking to see if it's still taping. There were a couple I have written down here. What was the name of your father who was in world War I?

Ron: Angelo Camponi. He was also in World War II for awhile. He was in the navy in World War I.

Dave: What about your brother, you had a brother in World War II was it?

Ron: I had a brother in World War II and after the war there were 4 of us in the army, 4 brothers. Myself, Len, Bill and Tony. We were all in the same regiment.

Dave: Was that the Strathconas, Horse, is that what you called them?

Ron: Strathconas was in Calgary. We all played on the hockey team, 4 of us. So it was a little confusing when they tried to broadcast the game when 3 Camponi's were up. (end of side 1)

Ron: About 80 years total with my dad and the 4 boys. See my younger brother passed away, Len. He served 27 years, and I served 30. We were the two longest. And my other two brothers served about 10 years a piece, after the war and during the war.

Dave: Len, Bill and Tony.

Ron: Tony, Len, Bill and myself. When I went to Korea, I replaced, I took over my brother's tank. He was coming back. Len. They had a picture. We made the Legionnaire magazine. And the 3 of us were in the Star Phoenix, or the Calgary Herald, and the Legionnaire magazine. Because they had the picture of 3 of us on the tank that I was taking over from him. He was on his way back. He was C squadron and I was taking over. I actually took over his tank.

Dave: Legionnaire magazine, do you know where that's out of? Where they produce the magazine?

Ron: Well you could check with any legion, they would know and it was about June 52, July they took the picture and it came out that fall I think. 3 of us on the tank, I was taking over.

Dave: So when you retired from the army, officially, what did you do after that.

Ron: I came back to Saskatoon and started working in the native alcohol centre. And I worked there for about 15 months, and then we started Sask. Native housing. And then I moved over from the Alcohol Centre to Housing. We started the centre in Saskatoon. Clarence Trottier and myself and another guy. We actually bought the building ourselves, an old house. The NAC itself had no money, there was no organization at the time. There was a director, but there was no. We started the house, but we had to buy it ourselves. From there I started working with Sask. Native Housing to get it organized. And then I took over as manager. From there we started Sask. Native Rentals which is another housing group in Saskatoon, I started that. Then we have a society where we own a camp at Chitek Lake, a non-profit registered charitable organization. Started Sask. Pack in Meadow Lake. I was the founder of that. That went for 3 years. That was a pre-fab. I still got a jacket out there that says Sask. Pack on it. We ran that for 3 years, but we

were under financed. But we had 24 people working there. I've been involved with Legal Aid Board, before the PC's took over and sort of made us an advisory board and most of us quit. Because advisory board is nothing. And I use to be on the board of directors for 3rd avenue, above Xerox there. The family _____ bureau.

Dave: Services?

Ron: Family services bureau. I was on there board for awhile, but they weren't dealing with the people I was dealing with. I've always dealt with people at the ground level, right at the bottom. They were sort of, they were doing there thing I guess, but they weren't working with the people I was working with. I also got the Leisure Services program started here, Clarence and I and Tony. For the city has programs now for aboriginal kids. We started that. So I've been fairly active. I got a medal just recently, Morris Blandeau got one, for 125 year. We're being presented with our medals officially on the 8th of March. The Lieutenant Governor is coming down to the Top of the Inn and we'll be getting the official. We already got one presentation from Fisher, the MP, but the Lieutenant Governor, the official ceremony is on the 8th of March, right here at the Top of the Inn. So that's been pretty well, of course I serve the Métis Society for 20 years since I got back, out of the army, I've been involved with the Métis Society, and different, board of directors.

Dave: Are you involved at all with Métis Society at all in any way?

Ron: I'm president of one of the locals here, local 165. I ran for treasurer last time, but I got defeated. Shortly after that I went into hospital and got my leg amputated and my foot. So for the last year, I was in the hospital later on. I'm still involved, but I think I might disinvolve myself pretty quick, I'm getting a little burnt out here. But it's awfully hard to quit when you've been, people depend on you a lot. But sooner or later, you're not going to be around, you're don't last forever. It's like Mulroney and the rest of them. Of course, his was a happy occasion, not for him, but for the people, in my books.

Dave: What about some of the outstanding issues that some veterans feel that are important to them. Like benefits they felt were owing to them. Are you, what sort of perspective do you have on what's happening politically I guess now?

Ron: I think that there has to be a whole thorough inquiry or investigation into people, especially the northerners, even the south, if you didn't grab the paper and find out what programs were available. But I honestly think that Métis and the aboriginal veterans, all of them were really shafted. I don't know if it was intentional or just a bureaucratic what shall I say, bumbling and fumbling, not knowing that there were veterans out there that had come from reserves, right in the north, in small villages, some of them not even villages, trap lines. So the method they used to inform the veterans was definitely bad for the aboriginal veterans. You take the Indians, they had to give up there treaty rights to join the army.

Dave: I didn't know that?

Ron: Oh yes, they did. They had to give up there treaty rights, disenfranchise themselves so they could join the army. Things like that, people like are Métis. We didn't even have reserves. We lived on road allowances and when they came back they went right back to the road allowances. Some of them couldn't read, some couldn't write, some couldn't understand the language. They knew there own language, Cree. There was never anything, people that went out to inform there, or suppose to, didn't get out to these people and tell them what they had coming to them. Benefits that they were entitled to. Not that it was discretionary or anything, but like I said, they never knew what there rights were. Because you have rights to land, education for your children. All these benefits that none of them even knew about. And God knows that this went on from the first World War, right through. So I think that the government or the bureaucrats have done a terrible job. The department of veterans affairs should have a full inquiry into all of this, because there was such thing as widows pension, education and housing that our veterans didn't know about. Even after they passed away, there widows were entitled to these things but they didn't know. Now they're trying to find it and 3 years ago, I was in Ottawa, and visiting my daughters, they both live in Ottawa and work in Ottawa. And I went on my own. When I was on holidays I tried to meet with the deputy minister, and of course I got the bureaucrat. And I asked them for a grant or something to hire people to go out and get all the documentation they could on the Métis veterans and there families, you know regimental numbers, try to trace back. But they said oh no, we can handle it. You seen the meeting here the other day. When I was in Ottawa I met with him, like I say on my own time, and when you meet with bureaucrats, forget it. And that's why at

this last meeting I was disappointed, because as far as I'm concerned these bureaucrats can't change a fucking thing. People get up there, and they bring out all the shit and all they're doing is I'll certainly write our director. We spent an hour and a half, and I think a couple of times, I said look it, this guy can't do nothing. Let's get on with the business. But I didn't push it too hard, because there was a lot of veterans just getting there frustrations out. And let them get them out. They almost threw me out of the office here 3 years ago. Because I went down there and they said we can do it. And I remember, Jimmy D was there and my brother was there and I was there. And I said, it's been 37 years since the last fucking war which was Korea, and nothing has been done, and now because we're asking you for 2 people, maybe for 6-8 months to go out there and get all the data and bring it to you, 37 years you haven't done nothing. And they said we can get it in a couple of months. Old Jimmy D. and my brother they dragged me out of there because I was getting violent. I said don't tell me you can do it in two months. But we still never got any money to go out and research this. Actually take people up there to speak Cree and English. And what I would do is run them a course here for 2-3 weeks right here at DVA and full time just find out every benefit, every little loophole and every program there is available so they can go out there and say what's your case. Here I think you can qualify for this, give them pamphlets, give them information, get there names and bring them in and do something about it. However, that was 3 years ago, and now we're starting over again. Because I know 3-4 years ago, my brother and I Tony tried to get this you know, a couple of vehicles and they said we don't have any money. I said, you can still contract out, why don't you give us a contract, we'll hire two people for 6 months with so much salary and so much expenses, cause they'll have to go all over the north country, into traplines, into little villages, into hamlets, whatever. To dig up, find as many veterans or there dependents as they can. I'm thoroughly pissed off at the whole department of veterans affairs. Like even myself, I was a veteran, qualified for veterans land act, but I was still in the service and I was moving every three years, so by the time I got discharged, the program had ran out to qualify for this land, so I couldn't qualify for it. Yet I was in the service for 30 years. No, bureaucracy, you have to have them I suppose, but when you got a bureaucratic system, everything is general. They don't look into specific cases, they don't look into this is a lot different then, unfortunately they always go by the book. By the time it gets down here, there's no decision makers that can change it or bend it or regulate it, so all you're doing is

beating your head against the wall when you're talking to bureaucrats. And unfortunately let's take a look at the houses they built up north, we'll just use CHMC government. They're building houses that were designed in Edmonton or Ottawa for people living up north who would far rather have a log cabin, which would be far better for them, but they don't meet the standards. So here we are building these little boxes in Saskatoon they're the same up in Yellowknife. Because that's the standards. But they don't go out and say what do you need. We just got a study from CMHC here on the whole urban native housing program. And I don't think any of us were ever involved. We get that thick, it's like a book. And they say, what do you think of this. Why don't they come and ask, come right down to the ground level and say, you run this, or stay right in the office for a month and see how things happen. When you have social housing in the aboriginal community and in your low income, but I'm using the aboriginal community. To give them a house that's the easy part. It's all the problems they have. We're saying when we're going to have a social housing program, you have got to have a big social program going to look after the people with all these problems. But they call it social housing, but all they do is supply houses. They told me one time, I was at a meeting. They said Ron you should get another 100 more houses in this area. That was the Mayor's committee on social housing committee. I said, I don't want 100 more houses. I said I want a social built in program for the tenants to match the housing. It's easy to go out and buy houses, Christ the market is flooded right now. That's not the hard part. The hard part is when they get in those houses and this is what happens. People say you got a nice house now. But what got them there in the first place. They needed one of those houses. Christ they got kids 7, 8 years old sniffing glue and they're saying you've got 100 more houses you can rent out to these natives. I don't want them. I say, 75% and that's being conservative, of your program should be geared towards the people in the houses. And what better target do you have when you have, I'm trying to get a program, and I know I'll never get it when you hear the budget news in the throne speech, but we had before where we had Métis girls on our staff that would go in and like tenant counsellors. Well, the reason we got that is because when they walked in the door, they could identify immediately with the tenants, because they were aboriginal girls. They speak their language and have been through the same thing they're going through. Kids on drugs, kids on dope, kids in jail, family violence. Every girl we hired has gone through every bit of it, and matured and went back to school and straightened their lives around. So they had all the

experience. They could identify with there clients. And then Nora Ritchie and her crew took over the local and fired all the girls from our program, 2 years later they lost the program. Now try to get it back. So to me, now I just got a phone call, they're having a seminar at the end of March, CMHC. Something to do with social housing. And they're having a seminar and they haven't consulted with us or any of the other groups. So it hasn't changed a hell of a lot. They're sitting there saying, this would be good for them and that would be good for them. The manager and his assistant here in Saskatoon, have never been in my office.

Dave: Let alone, in one of the homes of the tenants.

Ron: Anyways, thumbnail sketch of my life.

Dave: Well, you've certainly done a hell of a lot, that's incredible. Yeah, you seem a lot more positive despite the anger in some of the crap that you've had to endure. But you seem a lot more positive. Just comparing you to what Leon was saying about what happened to him after he retired from the army, I think you feel a lot more contributory, you've done a lot for aboriginal people here, and he seems to feel the opposite way.

Ron: I think, I use to have a sign in my office that said, there are people that watch things happen, there are people that don't care what happen, and there are people that make things happen. I'll tell you right now, any program, or anything, you've got to make it happen. You can sit back and bitch and everything else, but you've got to make it happen. And I've made things happen. And that's the way I am, and I didn't do it for self-glory or anything else, it's just that when I came out and seen what was going on, it, but I can sit down and negotiate. I don't just hammer, you owe us this and you owe us that. It's time now to sit down and say look it, we can do that program far better than you and here's why. And half the cost. When you know you're right, it's not hard to be positive. The only thing is to get them to think straight and to getting it to the people that make the decisions. Because I never, I don't go in there. 20 years ago we did. You owe us, and they did. And we had sit-ins and everything else. Now we go in and sit down and say here is what's going to happen. If I don't get any satisfaction from you, I'm going hire. Than you don't get all the bureaucrats made at you, cause as soon as you jump them, then word comes down from the minister, than they're going to make it awful difficult for you. No I've always had, I'm very

impatient, but I've learned that you've got to. Don't sit back and say, wait for them to give us a family-tenant counsellor program. We done a study here, had a survey done ourselves, with some money from the Indian and Métis Affairs Secretariat, a small amount to do a study of what the tenants think, what is required. What would they like to see. 90% of them want to see. Questions were like, would you rather have an aboriginal person work with you? Everyone of them said they would far rather have someone they can identify with to do there counsel them. Anyways, but like I said, you go to make things happen. And that's the way I am. But like I can see, I got a good education from my daughters when they started to go to university. I started seeing the point of view of what was happening in Vietnam. Mind you, although they were from Canada, they knew a lot of students that come across the border to get out of the draft. So it was hard to swallow, being a military person. I was still in the army, guys would come in the PMQ's and the beards, friends of my daughters, and the other army guys said, Jesus Christ you know, well a beard was a no, no in the army. Well it's either that or lose my daughters. They're friends of there's and I'm certainly not going to kick my daughters out because they go out with a guy with a beard, or if he's against the war. Like I said, I got an education. I started looking at it in a different point of view, or more objective. But, time, like all old soldiers, fade away now. You've heard the expression, but I'm getting a little burnt out too I think. I have a hard time with this, it's, you've got to plan everything in advance. Like if I want to have a bath, it's not jump in and have a shower and out in 5-10 minutes. I have got to make sure. I can't go in there with my leg, so I have to sit there and use the shower. Wash the hair and get out. And then dry off my leg and then put my prosthesis on and get my car started and get the windows cleaned off. For me to get to the office is no longer 15 minutes, it's a half a day. But you got to learn to live with it. Because I can sit here and feel sorry about it for the rest of my life, and nothing is going to change. The only thing is the odd time, people say that I'll just drop up, if you're going to drop up at 10:00 then I can't have my bath, and I'm not blaming you cause I made the appointment, so I don't go and have my bath cause I don't have time. And I've got to give myself insulin first, as soon as I get my insulin I've got to eat. Then when I'm finished eating, I have to go and have my bath. So that's frustrating, because I'm still on my own, very independent. By being very independent it costs me a little time. I have a lady who comes in to, like 3 times a week she comes in and cooks my breakfast. Well hell, while she cooks my medicine I can get my medicine,

get that done and go out, have my shower or whatever, before she gets here. But I don't need her. Half the time the house is pretty clean, I don't get it that dirty. So there isn't that much for her to do when she comes. Except in the spring we'll clean all the walls and the curtains, spring cleaning. So, and then the odd time people will just drop in and I tell them phone first. Because to me, if this is drop in, I could be in the bathroom, it's going to be 10, 15, 20 minutes before I get out of there. And so I lock the doors. But most of my friends that know me now, they'll phone ahead, so I just tell them when it's convenient for me. Usually the afternoon is better because by that time. See by 10:00, 11:00 I can have all my stuff done, so then I can, but if I'm going to the office, than I have to get my leg on and start the car, get out to the car, it's slippery so you got to be careful going out there, and then (end of tape)