

Transcription
Cliff Hessdorfer
- Interviewed Feb. 24, 1993 -

I enlisted June 1942 in the reserves. June 1944 in the active. Then I got discharged underage and I joined up in April 1945 and I got discharged at the end of the war and then I joined permanent force in 1948-1953. I was 2 years in reserve. We use to go every summer to Dundurn for a couple of weeks, and then back. You work at your own job, whatever. In June 1944 I got into the active army, and I took basic in Prince Albert and Maple Creek, and I was discharged from Maple Creek. And the second time it was April 1945, I went back to Maple Creek and then to Calgary and I was discharged in September I think it was 1945 from Calgary. They sent me to Regina to my own and then they discharged me from there. And then in 1948 I applied for permanent force and I was accepted, so I went to B.C., then _____, Ontario, then back to Chilliwack.

At first I was with the infantry and then I went with the Royal Canadian Engineers and then I ended up with the Royal Canadian Armed Service Core. I was in Prince Albert in August 1944, I started to get that pain in my chest. And it was never died. It was still NYD, (not yet diagnosed). And I had that same pain and same all the way through. And even after I got discharged the same thing. And they didn't find out, they gave me lots of X-rays, but it was always of the chest, because I told them it was a sore chest. The pain is there and it's always there. But in 1968 I went to a doctor here, my doctor was on leave or something, and there was a doctor from England here. And they ask me, "do you want to see him?" I said, "well a doctor is a doctor." First thing he did, he sent me for X-rays and they X-rayed my chest. They gave me that white stuff. Come back, I had ulcers. And now they say that they see that old scar and everything in there. And that was always this time you see. But it's all in the documents. They say "no, I can't see this." Mrs. Dixie can't read English or something, and that guy in Charlottetown the same thing. They make you go back. I had to go back 10 years and then they tell me it's no good. They only wanted that active service. Well they had it here all the time. And then we found out that we could get the war records down there, we got it and everything is right there, he's got it all in black and white.

All the stuff I was taking, it was ulcers, but they could never say it was ulcers. And I didn't know either, the pain was up here, I figured ulcers would be in your stomach. But apparently it starts way up here. You know, that's where it was so sore. That was the same when I first went on sick leave for that, that's when it happened. I was never sick or anything till then. If I would have known that, if we could have got them papers right away, everything is there in black and white, why wouldn't they see the evidence?

After I got married, I was out in 1953. I got married and well at that time the wages were only low, \$1.00/hour I got in financial difficulty. So I went and seen the DVA here and there was a guy here, he had 1 leg, maybe 2 legs off. He was a very nice man. He took me in and showed me everything. He says he couldn't do anything through them, but they have a benevolent fund, money from the canteens. So he payed off most of my debts, so I could go to work without getting a garnishee. But I also owed a finance company. They wouldn't pay off that, but the ordinary bills, you know like doctor, dentist or whatever it was, food, grocery store, furniture store, like I got behind. But I had went and got a lawyer to put all the bills together to get a lump sum, and I paid him so much a month. At that time maybe I was making \$200/month. It was low. So I was giving only like \$25-50, so it would take a long time. And after when you got to layoff for the winter, it was all seasonal work mostly. But this guy, Guenther I think was his name at the DVA, he paid off that and then he said you should go for pension. So I told him the only thing I ever had this not yet diagnosed disorder and my leg. It happened at 23:59 at night and they said I wasn't in the army. You know, it happened on vacation. I showed him my leg and everything.

It happened in the kitchen - this guy was drunk and he was manhandling everybody. I had army shoes on, and they were pretty good. But when he flipped me, my ankle twisted, and my ankle was sore for a long, long time. And I don't know, ever since then when I was working. Sometimes I couldn't put on my shoe even, but they say there's nothing wrong. But anyways, he said there's no use putting your chest, at that time it wasn't diagnosed. This was maybe 1962 or 1963. I never had that ulcer at that time. It was still NYD. But I was taking all this stuff like amphrogel and tums and charcoal tablets, you name it I was taking it. Anything on my own. But afterwards when they diagnosed that, they gave me that kind of pink stuff. It helped, it kept it down till 1980 or 1983-84 when it broke

again. The ulcer broke. They had to give me blood. Then I had that arthritis from before, so they gave me early retirement instead. They they gave me my full wages for six months and then they put me on long-term disability.

I was an operating engineer. I was on there till I was 65 years old. At 65 they took me off. All I get now is Canada pension and my old age pension. And while I was taking that, like the \$1200 they were giving me, they told me to apply for disability Canada Pension. So they gave me disability Canada Pension of \$600 and some which they took off the \$1200. So now when I got 65 they took me off the disability Canada Pension. Instead of \$690, they gave me \$508, straight Canada Pension. Still, it's better than before. Before you got 65 it was straight old age pension, that was it. Now you got a little bit. But if a man is entitled to it, he should get it. That's what I think.

METIS VETERANS

I remember Bill Bourassa, Walter McKay. Bill was in both, World War I and II, and Walter McKay was in World War I. I remember the second one was Veterans Guard, Bourassa. And Albert Gordon he was in I and II, same as Bill. Veterans Guard, were older soldiers that joined up for the second World War, and they put them guarding POW's. But there was lots of other ones there. Even in Prince Albert there was lots. All headquarters and that. They were all pretty well World War I, and the instructors were from the permanent Corps. It was hard to get in then, but the guys use to in 1937. It was more or less a job. There was lots there. I don't remember all the names. Bill moved to Saskatoon in 1952 or something. He moved here about 10 years before me. And Alex Primeau, well he got to be my cousin afterwards. He married my cousin. He was in World War I. Well lots of them, they were gassed. Like that McKay and Primeau they were gassed. There was a lot of those veterans, they only got veterans allowance. They never got disability. They had to wait until they were 60 years old before they got any help too.

My brother. _____, had a stroke and it will be 12 years this coming July. He was 60 years and he had a stroke. And he hasn't talked since. He lives in Prince Albert. He had a spot on his lungs when he got discharged. He never went after it or anything, he just kept on working. He got a job with the city of P.A. and became a water meter reader. But still they said

that walking, you're not suppose to get a stroke or something, but he got it. First day of the holidays I think it was too. But he's getting war veterans allowance, but they take everything off. There's a certain ceiling. So I think now they took the war veterans allowance all off and they just give him this homecare or whatever it is. I think it's always Canada Pension and a pension from the city and it would be too much for the war veterans allowance.

I don't know exactly what it is, but I talk to his wife. I had made it a point when he comes and visit me here, before he had his stroke, I told him the difference between war veterans allowance and disability pension. Oh he said I'm working there's no use bothering it now. But it was too late afterwards. But they must have lots of that in their documents anyways. He was with the Royal Canadian Army Service Core.

AFTER THE ARMY

At the end of the war, what do you call them, I forget the name of them now. I had a little stroke in 1985, and it's hard. Something sounds familiar and you somehow think of it. Gratuities.

They gave you gratuities and they'd match that here if you wanted to buy stuff. In 1946 I went partners with a guy and I bought a sleigh with that outfit. There was a lot of horses in those days, so I bought this sleigh and that guy had the horses, and we teamed up and we hauled all that spring break up. In the fall I used it for awhile again, and then it was getting more trucks and stuff. It was getting obsolete. But it helped.

When I got discharged in 1945, you had to have grade 10 to get into the permanent force. So I wrote a letter and asked and they accepted me on the IQ test. So I was okay there. Then after I took some more courses here. Then I went to Kelsey. Christ, I was 45 years old when I went to Kelsey. I got my grade 12 GED down too. But it's too late. If I wouldn't have got that god damn stroke, it wouldn't have been too bad. Now you don't remember nothing till after. Like at night, you think of something in the daytime, so you think of it at night. It comes back to you.