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A veteran of 49 bombing missions in Europe and recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, Gifford says, "We thought we should speak up as veterans because one of the big efforts of the government in the early 1980s was to say peace groups were naive."

Gifford, 69, lives in Halifax, Canada's most heavily militarized city, with 25 per cent of its work force depending in some way on the Department of National Defence. Like other Canadian ports, Halifax welcomes more and more American warships and subs carrying nuclear weapons, vessels which have moved north since the US navy adopted a strategy of forward deployment.

A thoughtful man, Gifford says he had similar reasons for joining the air force in 1941 and starting VANA in 1982.

"We felt our way of life and our children's way of life was in danger from the German war machine and so we enlisted to fight it," he says, recalling his feelings

as a second-year theology student at McGill.

Today, Gifford feels the superpower war machines are an even greater threat.

"If you threaten somebody, their response is not to cave in, but to equal and if possible surpass your threat."

During the war, Gifford served as a bomber navigator in the Pathfinder force, which dropped flares and bombs to show where the target lay. Crew members on the bombers were often only 18 or 19 and stood only a 50 per cent chance of completing a tour of 30 missions.

This was pretty tense work, because there was always a lot of anti-aircraft fire going on," says Gifford.

But the Pathfinder strategy improved accuracy so 80 per cent of the bombs fell within a two-mile radius of their targets. Today, some long-range nuclear missiles are accurate within 130 metres.

During a mission flown in heavy cloud cover, another plane nearly dropped its bombs on Gifford's crew, an incident which illustrated for him how tragic mistakes happen in the military.

After the war, Gifford returned to civilian life to study social work, to teach at McGill and to become director of the schools of social work at the University of Manitoba and Dalhousie University.

But Hiroshima and Nagasaki had convinced him war was obsolete. From 1958 to 1962, he campaigned in Montreal to end the H-bomb tests, whose fallout was contaminating a first generation of children around the world; the campaign ended with the partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963.

And now, Gifford continues to work for peace, researching and preparing briefs on alternative defence policies, lobbying politicians, and doing public speaking. This spring he led 30 VANA members to meet with officials at NATO headquarters.

As part of his work, Gifford also appeared in the 1985 National Film Board production *Return to Dresden*. Forty years earlier, he had flown in the raid over that German city which left behind a firestorm similar to those produced by atomic weapons: the flames which swept the city killed 100,000 people.

During his return, Gifford met and talked with the Dresden residents.

"They really wanted to make some sense of the raid — they wanted to believe it had military significance," he says.

But during the mission, Gifford had known Dresden was part of a strategy of bombing civilians to break the country's morale.

"We felt our way of life and our children's way of life was in danger from the German war machine and so we enlisted to fight it . . ." Today, Gifford feels the superpower war machines are an even greater threat.

One scene in *Return to Dresden* ends with Gifford shaking hands with the survivors. But the next great war won't allow for any hand-shaking after its conclusion, so Gifford keeps working to prevent it.

On Canada's other coast, in Victoria, Gladys Kennedy is president of the Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands chapter of VANA. The area is also receiving more visits from nuclear-armed U.S. subs and warships, and is seen as a likely west-coast port in the plans to acquire a Canadian fleet of hunter-killer attack subs.

"We are terribly concerned about the presence of subs in the harbours right now," says Kennedy.

Kennedy worries local officials have not addressed the possibility of a nuclear accident, despite U.S. navy reports of 620 accidents involving nuclear weapons between 1965 and 1985. In 1984, for example, a Soviet Victor class submarine collided with the American aircraft carrier

Kittyhawk, both of which carried nuclear weapons.

The Vancouver Island chapter has 110 members including Pat Crofton, Conservative Member of Parliament for Esquimalt-Saanich and the chair of the standing committee on defence. Kennedy sees Crofton's membership as a direct way to promote VANA positions on the government.

During the war, Kennedy served in the Canadian Women's Army Corps as a medical records clerk in a Saskatchewan hospital.

With the dropping of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, Kennedy believed war would come to an end. But when she later realized the military mind had not grasped the nuclear reality, she began working in a number of peace groups.

Over the past decade, she has worked with groups such as Operation Dismantle and the World Federalists, which are co-plaintiffs with VANA in a legal suit charging the federal government with complicity in nuclear war fighting strategies.

A person with a strong sense of pride in her country, Kennedy wants Canada to develop more independent defence and foreign policies.

"I think we could do it [develop alternatives] for much less than we're planning to spend on these submarines," she says.

VANA's alternative defence policy is set forth in the group's recent brief, titled *Towards a World Without War*.

At the heart of their approach is the commitment towards resolving international disputes through negotiation and the world court at the Hague, thereby extending the rule of law to govern relations between countries.

To back this up, VANA also favours strengthening the powers of the United Nations. For example, a U.N. border control force would help support stability in troubled regions, protecting countries fearing attack.

In terms of other defence issues, VANA advocates withdrawal from NORAD in order to operate the North Warning System independently, but working within the NATO alliance for reform and establishing a demilitarized zone in the Arctic.

If a superpower crisis did turn to war, he says, the Soviets would simply launch their long-range missiles.

VANA members are particularly critical of the federal government's white paper on defence, which they see as a shopping list for equipment, without adequate analysis of the factors contributing to nuclear war.

"We are very concerned our military people constantly remember the things they would have liked to have had to fight World War II," says Kennedy.

And Gifford says the white paper exaggerates Soviet forces to justify increases in defence spending, which has risen by an annual average of 13.5 per cent over the past six years.

For example, he scoffs at the idea the Soviet Union would try to attack North America with its elderly propeller-driven Bear Class bombers, which were designed 30 years ago. If a superpower crisis did

turn to war, he says, the Soviets would simply launch their long-range missiles.

VANA is also critical of the other two major Canadian political parties, for their statements indicating they believe Canada could play a useful military role once a superpower war started.

Gifford and Kennedy know there is a long way to go before Canada opts out of the arms race. But surviving the second World War has given them some confidence in preventing the next one. Says Gifford: "I remember vividly how the war was going against our side from late 1939 until 1942 . . . When we enlisted, we didn't ask for a guarantee our side would win the war and in the same way, we haven't enlisted now because it is an open and shut case we will win."

"Rather, it is the battle that has to be fought."

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Replacing the arms race

by James Young
Peace Issues Coordinator
Canadian University Press

As people with military experience who recognize the threat of nuclear war, Canada's Veterans Against Nuclear Arms have published a brief which details a comprehensive plan for an alternative Canadian defence policy.

Titled *A World Without War: Next Steps in Canadian Defence Policy*, the brief recognizes Canada's current deep involvement in the arms race and proposes ways to get out of it.

At the centre of the approach is replacing the arms race with a reliance on negotiation, arbitration and the International Court of Justice at the Hague. This approach involves extending the legal system which operates within countries to operate between countries as well.

Among VANA's specific recommendations which support this approach in the long term while reducing the threat of nuclear war in the near future are:

1) A strengthened United Nations: The U.N. would back up the world court's diplomatic and legal activities with military and policing activities. For example, a border control force, an expansion of present U.N. peacekeeping troops, would support stability in a troubled region, protecting borders of countries against attack and the smuggling of arms. A monitoring and verification agency would ensure compliance with arms control agreements and give worldwide notification of major military movements.

2) NORAD: Because NORAD could easily become integrated within the Strategic Defence Initiative (Star Wars) and part of first strike strategies, Canada should withdraw by 1991. Canada should also buy out the Northern Warning System and operate it independently. Under this scenario, Canada would then provide information to both the U.S. and the USSR to reassure them they were not being attacked through Canada.

3) NATO: Since the North Atlantic Treaty Organization relies heavily on nuclear weapons, Canada should join with more moderate members — Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands — to get the bloc to work on stabilizing initiatives. Among these are: a) a pledge not to use nuclear weapons first, as the Warsaw Pact has already done; b) the creation of a 300-kilometre denuclearized zone in the centre of Europe, as recommended by the Palme Commission; c) a reduction of military forces as part of balanced reduction by the two blocs.

If NATO does not then show evidence of a commitment to reducing friction between the alliances, Canada should consider withdrawal.

4) Canadian Territory: In terms of defusing the arms race, Canada should declare the country a nuclear weapons free zone and deny passage of any nuclear weapons through its territory airspace or coastal water. And Canada should work with other northern nations to create a demilitarized zone north of 70 degrees.