

Poppy-selling vet bounced

85-year-old told to leave by The Bay

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Veteran Alan Lawrence gathers Remembrance Day donations every year. This year security officers asked him to pick up and leave.

In the 20 years veteran Alan Lawrence has been selling poppies he has never felt as dishonoured as he did yesterday when Hudson Bay Company security kicked him to the curb.

He was inside the Bay office tower at Yonge and Bloor Sts. selling poppies like he had for years when security told him to get of the property.

"It just shows how much some people think about what we did, and that hurts," said Lawrence, 85, who joined England's Royal Navy at 16.

"They have some nerve resenting me standing on their property and telling me to get off. I couldn't believe anyone could be so obnoxious.

"We made it possible for him (the security guard) to have a job. He wouldn't have it if Hitler had won."

Lawrence had a similar experience five years ago at the Toronto Stock Exchange.

"It isn't always that pleasant standing outside. To kick me out is absolutely stupid and I can't believe it could happen in Toronto," Lawrence said.

Others couldn't believe it, either.

Mike Sawyer, who has been a reservist for the past four years, went into the store's management office to give them a piece of his mind.

"It's disgusting. This business is only possible because of men like him. I can't believe the attitude," Sawyer said.

Beverly Scarrow says she can't believe a veteran would be treated in this fashion.

"My father is a veteran. It's ridiculous something like this could happen. It's not like this isn't a good cause. It is sad they would have this attitude toward a veteran," Scarrow said.

Businesses do have a right to say who can be on their property, said Ray Kokkonen, acting president of the Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association.

STRANGE HAPPENING

"I find this strange. As long as you aren't obstructing traffic, most businesses are happy to work with the campaign," he said.

"I'll be going out in a few days to sell poppies and I can't think of a good reason for a business to kick someone out."

Pebble Carrier, a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 344, says members should get clearance from companies before they started campaigning.

"There are some who would go out (not representing any organization) and are just panhandling," he said.

Brookfield Property Management, which told Lawrence to leave, has since apologized.

"One of our security saw him (Lawrence) and he didn't have a memo authorizing him to be there and he was asked to leave even though he was here for a good cause," said Arash Ghorbandaei, Brookfield director of security.

Money donated to the Royal Canadian Legion during the Remembrance campaign is placed in public trust funds and is used to help needy ex-service members and their families.

"It isn't just for the veterans but also for our boys overseas right now," Carrier said.

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