

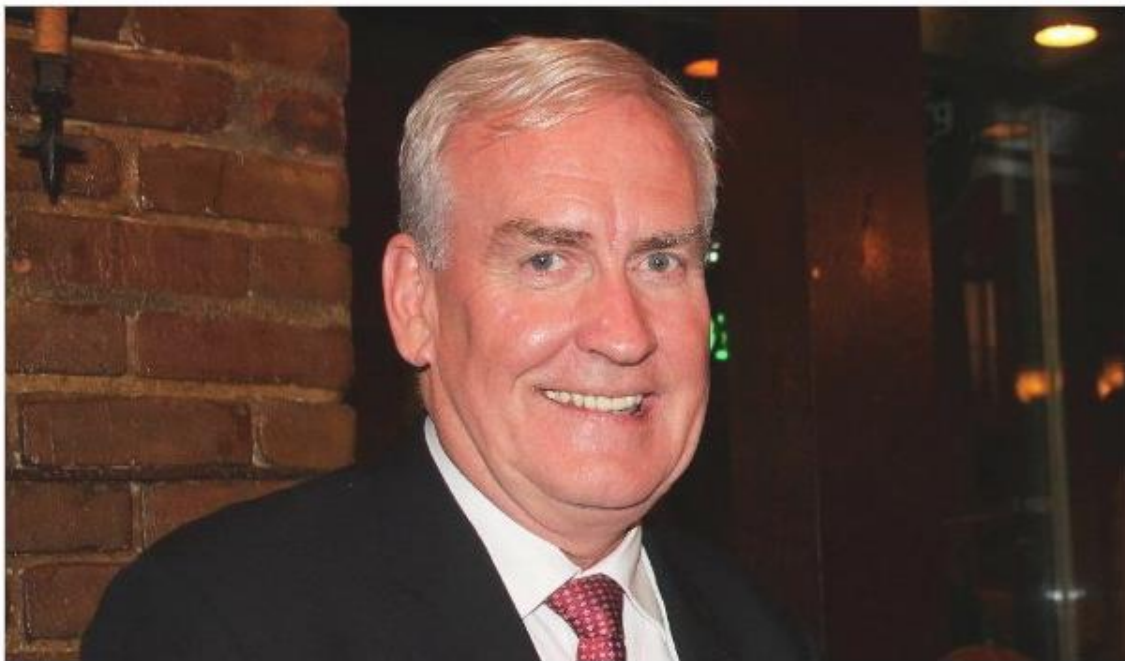
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## VICKERS PRAYED FOR PARLIAMENT HILL KILLER

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Written by Alan Hustak for VMO  
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Kevin Vickers says he regards his posting as Canada's Ambassador to Ireland as "a sacred trust."

Vickers is the former RCMP Chief Superintendent and Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons who was hailed as a hero after the shoot-out with an extremist in the Hall of Honour on Parliament Hill in October 2014. Michael Zehaf-Bibeau shot and killed Corporal Nathan Cirillo who was standing guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, then went on a shooting-spree on Parliament Hill. Vickers was one of the men on the hill who shot and killed Zehaf-Bibeau.

Following the incident Vickers was appointed to the diplomatic post in Dublin. During a visit to Montreal Friday, the ambassador was feted by the Ireland-Canada Chamber of Commerce at an invitation-only reception at Hurley's Irish Pub.

Gracious and amiable, he chatted and patiently posed for photographs with the more than 200 people present.

"When I see the names and faces over there (in Ireland) I realize we are all connected," he said in his brief, self-deprecating remarks, "The Irish not only have names like you, look like you, God bless 'em, they even drink like you."

During his brief visit to the city, Ambassador Vickers met with Mayor Denis Coderre and with representatives of the Quebec government. Vickers may be known around the world for his heroism but he doesn't talk to reporters about the events of that day and shied away from any questions about the shooting.

A practicing Catholic, Vickers has, however, said that after the shooting he had a Mass said for both Cpl. Nathan Cirillo, and for his killer, the man whom he helped shoot to death.

"It kind of occurred to me that Jesus, after he was crucified, the first person he let into heaven was the man crucified next to him – a convicted criminal," he said. "We can hate, we can reject or we can use the tool in the toolbox called forgiveness."

During the reception, Vickers deflected any questions about that fateful day.

"It is the white elephant in the room," he acknowledged saying that not everyone in Ireland knew his role when he took up the position of Ambassador.

He said that when he was introduced to a Fianna Fáil Councillor Mary Butler for Comeragh in Waterford, she vaguely recalled the incident and quipped: "Oh, you're the boy that gave that fella his send off."