

## Media Report 16 Dec 2022

This weeks media reports will cover and answer great questions veterans are still asking and local Media Articles and An illness or injury can have an impact on your ability to adjust to life after service. We all need healthcare services. The Treatment benefits program provides coverage for a variety of benefits and services to help you get—and stay healthy

### **NATO Veterans Organization of Canada Presidents Christmas Message 2022**

The gift of love.

The gift of peace.

The gift of happiness.

May all these be yours at Christmas.

On behalf of myself and the Board of Directors, thank you for all your support and guidance this year. We were able to conduct a successful General Meeting virtually on 29 October and have elected a Board of Directors - down from twelve to eight.

Our thoughts are also with those Canadians that can't be with those dearest to them at this time, whether that be through their duties, either here or overseas, or other circumstances, We remember the Christmas's of years past, as does every generation of soldier, sailor and airmen. And we'll raise a glass to each other and one to those who will spend their Christmas on a deployment far, far away from home.

Merry Christmas to all – veterans and their families and to the Brother/Sisterhood of our youth and to those who serve today.

The Christmas holiday affords each of us time for gratitude and introspection. We can take stock of all we have accomplished for our Veterans, and all that remains to be done. May this wonderful time of the year touch your hearts in a special way. Wishing you all much happiness not just today, but throughout the New Year.

From our bubble to yours, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season! Stay safe and take good care of yourselves.

Randy Stowell,CD

National President

#### NATO VETERANS ORGANIZATION OF CANADA (NVOC)

#### **PRESIDENTS OBSERVATIONS OF A VIRTUAL MEETING DM VAC-SENIOR OFFICIALS AND VETERAN STAKEHOLDERS (December 2022)**

Fellow Veterans:

- The Deputy Minister VAC { Paul Ledwell) convened a virtual meeting on Wednesday 7 December, thanked members for joining, and acknowledged the importance of hearing from stakeholders on the issues that are preoccupying members and matters that the Department should be attentive to. There are new senior Officials that were introduced – An Assistant Deputy Minister Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance [ ex Navy] and a New Associate Deputy Minister [ also ex-Navy].
- Veteran Advocates included Peacekeepers; Gulf War Veterans, ANAVETS; The Legion; RCMP Veterans; Rainbow Veterans; National Association of Federal Retirees [ amongst others].

For the past decade we have worked under the assumption that there are perhaps 650,000 veterans [ about 110,000 get an annuity/pension] and about 140,000 are “clients” of VAC. The

current Census has asked about past/current military service and the numbers now being reported are around 462 thousand veterans. Of interest is that the census had 26,000 Indigenous veterans. This number of 462 thousand is considered to under report actual numbers, but will be the number used in the future.

My "Observations" from the December virtual meeting follow:

- The Department has successfully reduced the time it takes to get a calculation the time it takes to deliver the payment to successful applicants. payment out to a Veteran after their application is approved. Additionally, the Department has accepted the Office of the Auditor General of Canada's recommendation to include in the wait time
  - Disability Claim Processing Times. VAC continues to shrink the backlog of disability claims – they now have over 350 new trained, staff working to adjudicate claims [ with funding for these positions for two years]. VAC is well aware of the "wait time" concerns for Veterans. They continue to receive about 1500 telephone calls per day. There are 31,000 claims in the que. Processing times are being reduced and the decision times are closing the gap between female and male veterans and also between Anglo/Franco veterans. The desired "Service Standard" of 16 weeks is at 80% and the senior VAC staff are optimistic that by the summer of 2023 they will reach the "Service Standard" for 100% of applications. This is significant progress. There are about 14,000 veterans who are Case Management supported.
  - Rehabilitation and Vocational Assistance. Contracting out. Intent is "one stop" service for the veteran – direct and seamless.
  - Mental Health Benefits. Since 1 April there have been over 2300 applications for immediate mental health treatment within the veteran community. VAC is working to appreciate that the health concerns of women veterans are different than that of male veterans.
  - Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD). Four veterans have been identified as having been given this counselling. This issue has been in the Media and the DM spoke clearly to all of us that the Minister is doing an in depth look at how staff could offer this kind of advice to veterans. This is NOT acceptable within the Department.

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The Department has started gradually re-opening offices across the country and is working to implement access by appointment for Veterans interested The in in-person services. . Veterans can now make on-line appointments to visit an Office. The VAC Offices are working at about 60% capacity.

- Public Engagement. Ministers Advisory Groups have not met these past two years and an announcement of membership was made this summer. NVOC will have Jorma (Hammy) Hamalainen as the NVOC member on the Care and Support Advisory Group.
- The RCMP advocate raised the concern for modern veterans about "marriage after 60" and the outdated [ circa WW I ] "Gold digger" clause. There is some degree of optimism.

This message to members is intended to give some idea of the work being done by your "volunteer" members of the Board of Directors. NVOC continues to focus on Veteran long term care – in the home – for veterans and their families. We keep an eye on backsliding i.e. A Veteran is a Veteran continues to be an issue that we consider important.

Hope that you are all healthy and safe!

*Randy*  
Randy Stowell, CD  
National President  
NATO Veterans Organization of Canada

Mental health supports are available

For many Canadians, taking care of mental health can be challenging—especially during the holiday season. If this describes you, you should know that you are not alone.

You should also know that mental health services are available to Canada's Veterans, retired Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members, their families and their caregivers.

VAC offers a number of supports, including mental health benefits, counselling services, coverage for medical costs, and rehabilitation. Also, the VAC Assistance Services Line is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and you don't have to be a client to call. Visit our [Mental health and wellness webpage](#) for more information.

Life Speak tips: the holiday season and loneliness

While the holiday season is often seen as a time of togetherness and joy, it can also be a time when many feel isolated and lonely. For many, it can lead to increased stress that affects their mental health.

Everyone feels lonely sometimes. You may experience loneliness if you live alone or have limited social interactions. You may also experience loneliness while living with other people if you feel disconnected or misunderstood.

Constant holiday reminders can trigger or heighten these emotions, making it especially challenging to cope with loneliness during this season. LifeSpeak has some expert advice on how to manage these challenges:

- [What is loneliness?](#)
- [How to make connections and reduce loneliness](#)
- [Living with loneliness](#)
- [10-min Guided Meditation: Bringing on Holiday Cheer: A Breathing Exercise to Help Manage Holiday Stress](#)
- [Enjoying the Holiday Season on Your Own](#)

Log in to [LifeSpeak](#) from any computer or mobile device (use Access ID: canada).

If you need psychological support, contact the VAC Assistance Service at 1-800-268-7708 or use the [chat service](#) (password: canada). For persons who are

hearing impaired: TTY 1-800-567-5803. The VAC Assistance Service is available by telephone 24 hours a day / 365 days a year anywhere in Canada.

## Veteran stories

He proudly served—and still protects



After retiring from a 36-year military career, working with the Corps of Commissionaires and beating cancer, Lt. Colonel (Ret'd) James Ostler is ready to slow things down—to a turtle's pace.

Well, maybe not that slow. The 61-year-old still runs about 20 kilometers a week and hits the pavement every weekend with the "Sunday morning Champs" running club. The Army Veteran is also the Nest Box Protection Coordinator with the conservation organization "Turtles Kingston." The group makes and sells boxes covered with wire mesh that protect the delicate nests of Ontario's eight at risk turtle species from predators. With the support of Veterans Affairs Canada's Education and Training Benefit, he plans to go back to the Royal Military College to study Environmental Science, and specialize in wildlife conservation and sustainability—specifically to learn more about the turtles he's been volunteering his time to protect.

[Read his full story.](#)

Do you have a story to share about experience in the Canadian Armed Forces? Tell us about it [by email](#).

## Commemoration

Leadership, heroism and self-sacrifice



During the Second World War, Canadian soldiers were active not only in Europe, but also in the Far East. In 1941, the British, hoping to deter hostile action by Japan, decided to reinforce their outpost in Hong Kong.

Canada sent a force of more than 1,900 people. They were the first Canadians to see combat during the Second World War.

John Robert Osborn was one of them.

On 19 December 1941, when Japanese forces attacked Mount Butler, south of the city of Hong Kong, Osborn showed his true colours.

As grenades flew toward the Canadian position amid a hail of gunfire, Osborn picked them up and threw them back at the enemy. Unfortunately, one landed

where it was impossible to pick it up. After shouting a warning to his comrades, Osborn threw himself on the grenade. It exploded, killing him instantly. His self-sacrifice undoubtedly saved the lives of many others.

Osborn's courageous act did not become known until after the war had ended. In 1946, he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, in recognition of his bravery in the Battle of Hong Kong.

## The Christmas truce of 1914



In December 1914, something incredible happened on the Western Front of the First World War. In the midst of brutal fighting, Christmas spirit came to the front lines.

After more than four months of brutal trench warfare, soldiers were dreading being away from their families during the holidays.

Then, on December 24, soldiers from both sides put down their weapons and stepped out of their trenches. They met in no man's land and exchanged gifts, took photographs and some even played impromptu games of soccer.

For a short time, there was peace.

More than 100 years later, the story of the Christmas truce lives on in our hearts and memories

## Long-term care

Do you require 24-hour personal and nursing care on a short-term or long-term basis? We can provide financial support to qualifying Veterans for the cost of this care.

All health systems in Canada provide some level of long-term care support in provincially licensed or regulated facilities.

Financial support from Veterans Affairs Canada may be available when you have been admitted to 24-hour care in a community bed (available to any provincial resident) or contract bed (only available to Second World War or Korean War Veterans).

The assessment process and admission to long-term care facilities is managed by your provincial, regional, or local health authority. Please contact the agency responsible for long-term care in your province or territory:

- [Alberta](#)
- [British Columbia](#)
- [Manitoba](#)
- [New Brunswick](#)

- [Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
- [Northwest Territories](#)
- [Nova Scotia](#)
- [Nunavut](#)
- [Ontario](#)
- [Prince Edward Island](#)
- [Quebec](#)
- [Saskatchewan](#)
- [Yukon](#)

If you have been admitted to a long-term care facility, you may qualify for and should apply for financial assistance if you served in the Canadian Armed Forces and have:

- a low income,
- a service-related disability, or
- a health need for long-term care.

Before you apply

Before you apply for financial assistance from Veterans Affairs Canada, you must first be admitted to a long-term care facility.

Apply online

If you are registered for My VAC Account, you can submit your application for this benefit online. If you aren't registered, you can [register now](#).

My VAC Account

Mail or in person

Download the [application package](#) (VAC1503APe). Then, drop it off at a [VAC office](#). You can also mail your completed form directly to the address listed on the form.

Get help with your application

The staff at any [VAC office](#) can assist you, or call us at 1-866-522-2122.

Note for legal representatives: Include a copy of the document that shows you to be the legal representative (e.g. Power of Attorney). If you have previously provided this, you do not need to send it aRelated programs

[Treatment Benefits](#) - Coverage for medical and health related services.

[Veterans Independence Program](#) - Payments for home and health care services that you need to remain independent at home.

[War Veterans Allowance](#) - Monthly payments if you have a low household income.

What is the maximum a Veteran must pay toward their long-term care accommodation costs?

Effective 1 October 2019, the maximum accommodation and meals monthly amount paid by a Veteran is \$1,058.28. Any supplementary charges such as the costs of semi-private or private rooms are not part of this calculation.

Do some Veterans pay less than the maximum amount?

Veterans who are admitted to care as a direct result of a condition for which they are in receipt of a disability benefit are not required to pay toward their long-term care. Also, Veterans may have a reduced contribution if they are married or have a lower income.

Where can I find the policies for this program?

Read the [policies related to the long-term care program](#).

## IN THE NEWS

[British Army trials Rafael's latest navigation system in GPS-denied scenarios](#)

[Les manèges militaires de Sherbrooke seront préservés](#)

[Deterrence the American way': The new B-21 bomber debuts](#)

[Machine learning, GPS alternatives key for navigating future jammed environments](#)

[Les résidents permanents peuvent désormais postuler pour rejoindre les Forces armées](#)

[Army approves \\$162 million for new 'terrain-shaping' system](#)

[Veterans sharpen sharpen culinary skills](#)

[Additions and amendments to qualify for service medals](#)

[Engineering excellence on display: Exercise NIHILO SAPPER 22](#)

[La Légion d'honneur](#)

[Former residents of Quebec military base must apply for compensation for contaminated water before Jan. 15](#)

[Defense Minister: Canadian military specialists start training Ukrainian sappers in Poland](#)

[Canadian engineers call for change to their private 'iron ring' ceremony steeped in colonialism](#)

**Base/Wing — Newspaper**

14 Wing Greenwood — [The Aurora](#)

22 Wing North Bay — [The Shield](#)

4 Wing Cold Lake — [The Courier](#)

CFB Esquimalt — [The Lookout](#)

CFSU Ottawa — [The Guard](#)

CFB Shilo — [The Shilo Stag](#)

19 Wing Comox — [The Totem Times](#)

8 Wing Trenton — [The Contact](#)

CFB Petawawa — [The Petawawa Post](#)

17 Wing Winnipeg — [The Voxair](#)

CFB Halifax — [The Trident](#)

CFB Edmonton — [The Western Sentinel](#)

CFB Valcartier — [The Adsum](#)

CFB Kingston — [Garrison News](#)

CFB St Jean — [The Servir](#)

3 Wing Bagotville — [The Vortex](#)

CFB Borden — [The Citizen](#)