

Media Report 25 Feb 2022

This weeks media reports will cover and answer great questions veterans are still asking such as Frequently asked questions regarding COVID-19 in Ottawa. Due to ongoing and evolving COVID-19 pandemic callers may experience increased wait times when calling the Government of Canada Pension Center. Callers may also experience dropped calls, as all telecommunication networks across Canada are presently facing capacity challenges. 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. Have you made an application for disability benefits from Veterans Affairs Canada and received a decision? If you disagree with that decision, you have the right to review or appeal

PRESIDENTS REPORT 25 FEB 2022.

NVOC was invited to attend a “Teams” [think ZOOM] meeting with the DM Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) (Mr. Paul Ledwell) and senior officials on Friday 18 Feb.

I joined the meeting and here are my observations and updates on some key areas:

- The issues of Military Sexual Misconduct and Military Sexual Trauma have been front and centre and work continues on a substantive response led by survivors and VAC staff for the implementation of supports . There are about 18,000 Military Sexual Misconduct claims so far;
- Processing times, and the level of service the Department can deliver to Veterans through case management and other supports remains the priority. I did comment that our members are concerned that few of the additional temporary staff are being funded into the new Fiscal Year. There are almost 300 staff who do not have contract extensions after March 31st. The good news is that the Minister has been given an additional \$140 million for contract extensions for these new staff. Recruiting and training new people has been a success since 2018 and being able to retain most of these new hires is important for all veterans. In March 2020 there were over 49,000 claims awaiting a decision and now there are about 33,000 claims waiting. This backlog is one of the most significant source of frustration and complaint by veterans.
- The new Minister's Advisory Group members have not been announced. NVOC has submitted two members of our Board of Directors as potential members of one of the six Groups. We seek NVOC membership with a goal of reconvening meetings in the near term. We were told that the Minister will be announcing membership "soon"?
- Mental Health initiatives will begin ! April with a new program reported on to our members in earlier Media Reports. This will garner a lot of attention and could well be a model for future initiatives by VAC. The question was asked if consideration could be made to include family members? Under consideration.
- NVOC has been focused on Long Term Care since we formed and I always ask about progress. VAC does now support an "Age in Place" effort to keep veterans in their homes for as long as is feasible/possible.;
- Military transition into civilian life; post service employment and homelessness were all briefed. Efforts are being made on all these issues.
- The Royal Canadian Legion Dominion Command HQ will resume "in person" working again on 1 March at "Legion House" in Ottawa. They will be announcing new "biodegradable" poppy and wreath supplies for this years campaign.;
- The "Roundtable" did talk about veterans getting the right support at the right time. Approvals for veteran claims remain a priority issue. The DM is keen on maintaining a strong veterans community that includes him and VAC staff and all veterans. He impresses me with his candor and enthusiasm.

Personal Comment: Lord Hastings Lionel Ismay was NATO's first Secretary General, a position he was initially reluctant to accept. By the end of his tenure however, Ismay had become the biggest advocate of the organization he had famously said earlier on in his political career, was created to "keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down." If you read and hear all the nonsense being spouted about NATO being "united and strong" - hope you are not thinking it to be real? The late Senator John McCain once called Russia a "gas station with an Army!"

Putin makes his move. After a meeting of Russia's Security Council on Monday, Russian President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) a decree recognizing the independence of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics. Putin and the two breakaway regions of Ukraine also signed cooperation treaties that permit Russia to send "peacekeeping" forces to Donetsk and Luhansk. Following the declaration, Syria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua all expressed their [support](#) for Putin's decision.

Europe's response. Top EU officials immediately [condemned](#) Russia's move and pledged to implement new sanctions against those involved. The EU's foreign policy chief [said](#) the bloc's top diplomats will discuss how to proceed with sanctions during a foreign ministers meeting on Tuesday. The United Kingdom also [pledged](#) to impose sanctions. Meanwhile, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced on Tuesday that Germany will [block](#) certification of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.

Earlier last week, Russia took steps to de-escalate the situation on its border with Ukraine, announcing the end of the "active phase" of military exercises and posting a video showing their return of troops from the border to their normal locations. Moscow also said that negotiations with the West would continue. For its part, Ukraine made sure to say that the likelihood of military clashes was, but only a few days later, things started heating up in Donbas.

What Happened

- The Donetsk People's Republic said about 600 shells were fired over the past 24 hours.
- The head of the Luhansk People's Republic signed a decree on a general mobilization . DPR leaders followed suit. The head of the LPR signed a decree on the transfer of state bodies, enterprises and organizations to wartime conditions
- On Feb. 19, the DPR was evacuated.
- A group of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Russia flies to the Rostov region to organize the reception of citizens of the DPR and LPR. A state of emergency is imposed in Rostov.

About the Evacuation

- Some 700,000 people are ready to leave the area, according to a statement from the DPR, The evacuation is conducted by the Ministry of Emergency Situations in coordination with local cities and regions.
- Russia has not confirmed the evacuation. According to a source at TASS news agency, there are temporary accommodation centers for only 10,000 places and they will be deployed in the Rostov region in the near future.
- The largest companies in Yakutia are ready to accept only 1,500 refugees. Alrosa, Elgaugol and Kolmar are ready to help the evacuees, including with employment.

- The deputy head of the Russia's Ministry of Emergency Situations said refugees from Donbass can be sent to seven regions of Russia
- Bottom Line: Either the DPR is providing incorrect information about the number of refugees to raise noise, or the Kremlin provide incorrect information because it doesn't want to show that DPR residents are leaving en masse.

On Military Operations

- Still, it seems that Russia still doesn't want to start on outright war. The number of troops on the border with Ukraine are less than the number of troops in the Ukrainian army, and Russia has not prepared any additional reserves. The West is ill prepared too, judging by a still modest troop presence, and military supplies from the United States and NATO have dropped sharply since Feb. 16.
- Russia wants to convey a sense that its moves are a symmetrical response to the evacuation of Western embassies and citizens from Kiev.
- Ukraine notes that the situation in the east of Ukraine is under control. The president went to the Munich conference today.
- Donbass is ready for a constructive dialogue in the contact group on specific issues and with specific proposals
- Area behind the front lines are not panicked. Stores are full of goods and products, and managers say vendors will carry groceries without interruption.
- The situation in the front-line settlements from where the evacuation is taking place (given by the telegrams of the Donbass channel) is also not very similar to martial law

Stray Notes

- In the village of Luganskoye, the night passed quietly.
- Kalinovka, Molochny, Sanzharovka were under fire. The Ukrainian army fired 120-mm mortars, grenade launchers and small arms. Though this is somewhat commonplace, the villagers are worried. The first bus left for evacuation yesterday.
- In Yasinovataya, Things were relatively quiet. Residents are trying to send out children and the elderly as much as possible. In Panteleymonovka, damage was sustained by shelling from the Ukrainian army. Heavy artillery was heard in Makiivka. Dokuchaevsk. "It was noisy at night. but Everything works in the city: shops, market. Communications are working. There is no panic."

Three residential buildings were damaged in Zaitsevo

- U.S. President Joe Biden, citing intelligence, said that Vladimir Putin had decided on a new invasion of Ukraine and it would begin in the coming days under the pretext of genocide in Donbass.

Funding announced to address wait times for Veterans / Annonce d'un financement en vue de réduire les temps d'attente pour les vétérans

(Le français suit)

Dear stakeholders,

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, today announced funding of \$139.6 million over two

years to extend temporary positions as part of action to address the backlog of disability benefit applications at Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). Between 2015-16 and 2019-20, VAC experienced a 40% increase in disability benefit applications, including an increase of more than 75% in first applications. In June 2020, the Department released its strategy to address the long-standing issue of processing times for benefits, and hired more than 350 additional temporary employees dedicated to the issue. Combined with improvements to the decision-making process, the Department has reduced the backlog by 40%, from 23,000 to just over 14,000.

By March 2022, we expect to have cut the number of applications waiting longer than our 16-week service standard by half (from about 23,000 to 11,500), based on current forecasts and to about 5,000 by spring 2023.

[Read the news release.](#)

Paul Ledwell

Deputy Minister, Veterans Affairs Canada

Chers intervenants,

L'honorable Lawrence MacAulay, ministre des Anciens Combattants et ministre associé de la Défense nationale, a annoncé aujourd'hui un financement de 139,6 millions de dollars sur deux ans afin de prolonger la période d'emploi de 595 postes temporaires dans le cadre du plan d'action visant à réduire l'arriéré des demandes de prestations d'invalidité à Anciens Combattants Canada (ACC).

Entre 2015-2016 et 2019-2020, les demandes de prestations d'invalidité ont augmenté de 40 % à ACC, ce qui inclut une hausse de plus de 75 % du nombre de premières demandes. En juin 2020, le Ministère a présenté sa stratégie visant à résoudre le problème de longue date des délais de traitement des demandes de prestations et a embauché plus de 350 employés temporaires supplémentaires travaillant à cet enjeu. Grâce à ces embauches et aux améliorations apportées au processus de prise de décisions, le Ministère a réduit l'arriéré de 40 %, le faisant passer de 23 000 demandes à un peu plus de 14 000.

D'ici mars 2022, nous nous attendons à avoir réduit de moitié le nombre de demandes dont le délai de traitement dépasse notre norme de service de 16 semaines (faisant passer l'arriéré d'environ 23 000 à 11 500), d'après nos prévisions actuelles, et nous nous attendons à ce que cet arriéré se chiffre à 5 000 demandes d'ici le printemps 2023.

[Vous pouvez lire le communiqué de presse.](#)

Paul Ledwell

Sous-ministre, Anciens Combattants Canada

IN THE MEDIA

[Major breakthrough in veterans' treatment benefits](#)

[Canadian Forces publishing new ethos in wake of sexual misconduct crisis: 'Trusted to Serve' La Ville d'Ottawa](#)

[La Ville d'Ottawa pourrait demander l'aide des Forces armées](#)

[The Canadian Armed Forces investigates officer who calls for other military members to stand up against government-imposed pandemic restrictions](#)

[Canadian military members pulled out of Ukraine amid threats of Russian invasion](#)

[Canadian arms earmarked for Kurds now going to Ukraine, but minus the anti-tank weapons](#)

[Over 17,000 mines, munitions defused in liberated lands](#)

[L'armée quitte les centres de vaccination du Québec, peu achalandés](#)

[Construction Engineers: An essential component to a support team](#)

[Col Don Henley receives second clasp to CD](#)

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CFSU Ottawa — [The Guard](#)

CFB Shilo — [The Shilo Stag](#)

19 Wing Comox — [The Totem Times](#)

8 Wing Trenton — [The Contact](#)

17 Wing Winnipeg
— [The Voxair](#)

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CFB Edmonton
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CFB Valcartier — [The Adsum](#)

CFB Kingston
— [Garrison News](#)

CFB St Jean — [The Servir](#)

3 Wing Bagotville
— [The Vortex](#)

CFB Borden — [The Citizen](#)

Canada

| Total Percentage of population vaccinated | Total Percentage of population fully vaccinated | Eligible (5+) Percentage of population vaccinated | Eligible (5+) Percentage of population fully vaccinated | | |
|---|---|---|---|-----------------------------|--|
| 84.04% | 80.42% | 88.40% | 84.59% | | |
| +0.02% | +0.04% | +0.02% | +0.04% | | |
| Total doses administered | First doses | Second doses | Third+ doses | Received doses administered | |
| 80,135,122 | 32,132,167 | 30,748,513 | 17,254,442 | 84.78% | |
| +61,152 | +6,437 | +13,588 | +41,127 | +0.06% | |

Caregiver Recognition Benefit

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QDo you need assistance with daily activities? When you have a serious disability you may need help with activities of daily living such as eating, walking, dressing, etc.

Having a disability sometimes means you need ongoing care to remain in your home. The Caregiver Recognition Benefit recognizes the important role a caregiver delivers on a day-to-day basis by providing them with a tax free, monthly benefit.

Do you qualify?

You should apply for the Caregiver Recognition Benefit if:

- you need daily assistance of a caregiver for at least four of your activities of daily living (See: [What are activities of daily living?](#)),
- your caregiver is not paid to provide or co-ordinate your care and is over 18 years of age,
- you are not a permanent resident of a nursing home or long-term care facility,

- you are a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces, and
- you have a VAC disability benefit*

* You may have received your disability benefit as pain and suffering compensation, a disability award or as a disability pension. If you have a disability pension (or POW compensation), you would receive this support through the [Attendance allowance](#).

Before you apply

As part of your application, your caregiver will be asked to provide proof of identity, for example a driver's license. We need this from any person applying to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) for the first time.

Fill out the application form with your caregiver. Both of you must sign the form.

To receive this benefit, you may be requested to participate in an additional health assessment. VAC will contact you if an assessment is required.

You can expect a decision within eight weeks of submitting your application. Your caregiver will begin to receive the benefit within nine weeks.

Apply online

If you are registered for My VAC Account, you can submit your application for this benefit online. My VAC Account offers a guided web form that makes applying easier. If you aren't registered, you can [register now](#).

[VAC Account](#)

Mail or in person

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

Go to form

Get help with your application

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

Additional information

Find out more

See the [current rates](#).

Over time, to ensure your health and well-being, we may perform a review or re-assessment of your situation once you're in the program.

Please let us know if your caregiver changes. You will need to submit a new application any time your caregiver changes.

[Watch this video](#) for a quick overview of the Caregiver Recognition Benefit.

Related programs

[Caregiver Zone](#) - Online support and resources for those who care for Veterans.

[Disability Benefit](#) - Compensation for your service-related injury or illness.

[Attendance allowance](#) - Monthly payments if your health needs require personal care support.

Frequently asked questions

If I apply for the benefit and get declined, can I appeal?

Yes. If you are not satisfied with a decision you may apply in writing for a review. Learn more about your [review and appeal options](#).

If the benefit is paid to my caregiver, why do I need to apply?

Since it is your health needs that require the services of a caregiver, you must apply for the benefit. However, your caregiver is required to complete and sign a section of the application. If you have granted power of attorney to someone, that person may apply on your behalf.

Is there a time limit to apply for this benefit?

You can apply for this benefit at any time.

Are there policies for this program?

Read more about the [Caregiver Recognition Benefit policies](#).

More [Caregiver Recognition Benefit FAQs](#).