

Media Report 11 JUNE 2021

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

Tracking every case of COVID-19 in Canada

22,810 active 1345,523 recovered 25,761deaths

- [D-Day spirit of remembrance lives on, despite the pandemic Second World War history enthusiasts parade in WWII vehicles in Colleville-Montgomery, Normandy, Saturday June, 5 2021 on the eve of 77th anniversary of the assault that helped bring an end to the Second World War.](#)

[D-Dayspirit of remembrance lives on, despite the pandemic ...](#)

www.ctvnews.ca/world/d-day-spirit-of-remembrance-lives-on-despite-the-pande...

[Do not lose sight of how the military sexual-misconduct crisis affects those who serve](#)

PAUL MANSON AND RAY HENAULT

CONTRIBUTED TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL

DATED JUNE 4, 2021

[General \[retired\] Paul Manson is the Patron of the NATO Veterans Organization of Canada.](#)

General Paul Manson was chief of the defence staff from 1986 to 1989 and is Canada's oldest living former CDS. General Ray Henault served as chief of the

defence staff from 2001 to 2005 and finished his military career as chairman of the NATO Military Committee in Brussels from 2005 to 2008.

Deeply troubling evidence of sexual misconduct within the Canadian Armed Forces has created a crisis of confidence in the military. In particular, massive media coverage of recent allegations against several senior officers, including a former chief of the defence staff and his successor, brought home to Canadians the seriousness of the matter and has led to a resounding call for culture change.

Lost in much of the resulting debate, however, has been the effect on those who serve or who have served. Pride of service has always been a hallmark of membership in Canada's military, and witnessing the damage that has occurred to the very foundation of that pride has been a painful experience for veterans and current members alike. Knowing as we do that the vast majority of military personnel are ethical, law-abiding citizens who abhor sexual misbehaviour, we urge Canadians to understand that these dedicated people, more than anyone, are seeking to bring about the changes needed to eliminate such behaviour. They want to play a major role in the corrective process so that they, as serving members, can restore a high regard for the military in the eyes of the public.

The men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces understand that the continued failure to provide protection from all forms of inappropriate sexual conduct at the hands of other members of the Armed Forces is shameful. It has been heartbreaking to hear the horrific accounts of those who have been hurt in this way, only to be denied the compassion and respect they deserved because of institutional barriers and poor leadership. In the end, no matter what policies, systems or processes are implemented, it is a fundamental responsibility of all leaders – indeed, all members of the military, of every rank – to look after their teammates and offer full support to those who have been hurt during their service and to prevent further transgressions. In this the military must work in full co-operation with all civilian authorities and agencies and act quickly to implement the recommendations of former Supreme Court justice Louise Arbour, in her upcoming review of sexual misconduct in the Armed Forces, and from former Supreme Court justice Morris Fish in his recently released review of Canada's system of military justice. Accusations of misconduct against any member of the military must be treated seriously and expeditiously by authorities at all levels of the institution.

Doing so will require the preservation of the basic principles of our democratic, law-based society. The presumption of innocence must be upheld in the course of investigations, and conclusions must be evidence-based. The privacy of involved individuals, whether accuser or accused, must be respected in accordance with Canadian law. Punishment, where warranted, needs to be appropriately based on the circumstances of the case. The application of military law has to be demonstrably effective and free of bias or interference.

We have seen how some senior officers have been subjected to allegations, information leaks from unnamed sources and negative public pronouncements in the media. These have real consequences, as the highly public removal from

office of high-ranking military leaders is arguably the most significant sanction imaginable in the profession of arms. As was seen in the wake of the suspension of former vice-chief of the defence staff Mark Norman in 2017 over a breach-of-trust charge that was ultimately dropped, these acts can have serious consequences for the individual and their family. They can also negatively affect ongoing missions, operational readiness and critical national security programs.

There are countless examples in history of senior military leaders being relieved of command for having been judged as underperforming, acting unlawfully or behaving unethically; this is a part of traditional military culture, especially in the heat of combat. In peacetime, however, other factors can come into play, including when higher authority deems such removal necessary to demonstrate the maintenance of the high standard expected of those entrusted with command authority and responsibilities.

There is a clear need to act aggressively and visibly on any allegation of sexual misconduct in the Armed Forces. However, in all of this, authorities must take into account an important objective: rebuilding and sustaining the confidence, morale and trust of all uniformed personnel. If their pride is thus restored, the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces can be relied upon to play a vital role in eliminating sexual misconduct within their ranks and continue to excel in their critical operational missions at home and abroad.

FEDERAL BUDGET 2021: VETERANS DESERVE BETTER

May 18, 2021 EXTRACTED From "Esprit de Corps" Vol 28 Issue 528 Issue 5

By Brian Forbes, Chairman, NCVA and Chairman of the Executive Committee, The War Amps

The much-awaited 2021 federal budget was introduced by the Finance Minister, Chrystia Freeland, on April 19, 2021.

Although there was unfortunately not a great deal of attention given to veterans' issues, the following budgetary proposals represent a number of potentially positive developments in relation to veterans' benefits and the operations of Veterans Affairs Canada

1. Supporting our Veterans- "Veterans are three to four times as likely to suffer from depressive or anxiety disorders, and over 15 times more likely to experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), than the general population. Veterans are entitled to financial support for mental health

care through the Treatment Benefit Program but they can wait up to two years to receive mental health care while waiting for their disability benefit application to be confirmed. ...

•“Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$140 million over five years starting in 2021-22, and \$6 million ongoing, to Veterans Affairs Canada for a program that would cover the mental health care costs of veterans with PTSD, depressive, or anxiety disorders while their disability benefit application is being processed.”

Comment: The National Council of Veteran Associations in Canada (NCVA) and The War Amps of Canada (WAC) have strongly crusaded for a dramatic, systemic change to address the unacceptable backlog and wait times currently experienced by veterans in making disability claims to the department. Although this proposal does not comprehensively extend our concept of automatic entitlement/pre-approval, it does provide a significant step forward in recognizing that treatment benefits should be granted immediately and not be dependent on the disability application process which can take up to two years. Thus, this provision is hopefully a springboard to expanding this principle so that veterans are not held in the lurch for many months and even years before health care/treatment benefits are available to them. The government has determined that mental health care (PTSD, depressive or anxiety disorders) should be given priority at this time. It will be our position that this should be extended to all physical disabilities so that veterans in serious need of health care or treatment benefits should be granted the same sense of priority.

It is noteworthy that the actual budgetary accounts provide financial funding for Veterans Affairs Canada in the amount of approximately \$28 million to extend disability adjudication resources provided in Budget 2018 for an additional year, and to develop more efficient disability benefits application and decision-making processes using digital technologies. We continue to urge VAC to take more creative and innovative steps to address the backlog/wait times dilemma. In our considered judgment, increasing staff resources and digital technology alone will not meaningfully alleviate this ongoing crisis impacting the disabled veterans' community.

2.The Veteran and Family Well-being Fund– As many veterans have faced unique challenges during the pandemic, the government is proposing in Budget 2021:

3.Towards a New Disability Benefit– It is not without significance that “the pandemic has exposed many of the long-standing challenges persons with disabilities face, including an increased risk of poverty. The Government of Canada has a number of programs and services in place that provide

support to Canadians with disabilities [including disabled veterans] but these are often complex and can be difficult to navigate for users. To ensure all persons with disabilities have the support they need to overcome persistent barriers to full economic and social participation, the government [has] committed to bringing forward a new disability benefit.

•“...to provide an additional \$15 million over three years, starting in 2021-22, to Veterans Affairs Canada to expand and enhance the Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund for projects that will support veterans during the post COVID-19 recovery, including addressing homelessness, employment, retraining, and health challenges.”

•“Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$11.9 million over three years, starting in 2021-22, to Employment and Social Development Canada to undertake consultations to reform the eligibility process for federal disability programs and benefits. This will help maximize the reach of these programs and improve the lives of Canadians living with disabilities. This work would feed directly into the design of a new disability benefit.”

Comment: This budgetary proposal was somewhat surprising and not totally clear as to its application to disabled veterans. It will be of interest as to how this potential new disability benefit will be integrated into veterans' legislation, given the extensive disability programs that currently exist in the Pension Act/Veterans Well-being Act.

It will be our position that this provides an excellent opportunity to adopt our longstanding recommendation for a “one veteran – one standard” approach which would result in one pension/compensation/wellness model for all disabled veterans with parallel disabilities.

Many of the NCVA/Ministerial Policy Advisory Group recommendations also emphasize the expansion of the Income Replacement Benefit/Career Impact Allowance to cover future loss of income/the expansion of the Additional Pain and Suffering Compensation benefit and the addition of Exceptional Incapacity Allowance, Attendance Allowance and family benefits found under the Pension Act.

If the department is truly interested in creating a new disability benefit, we would be fully prepared to collaborate on providing recommendations to achieve this end for Canada's disabled veterans.

4.Improving Access to the Disability Tax Credit– The government has committed to helping more people living with disabilities better access the Disability Tax Credit provisions by expanding the eligibility criteria for mental functions and life-sustaining therapy.

- “Budget 2021 proposes to update the list of mental functions of everyday life that is used for assessment for the Disability Tax Credit. Using terms that are more clinically relevant would make it easier to be assessed, reduce delays, and improve access to benefits.

- “Budget 2021 also proposes to recognize more activities in determining time spent on life-sustaining therapy and to reduce the minimum required frequency of therapy to qualify for the Disability Tax Credit. To ensure these changes enable applicants to have a fair and proper assessment of their eligibility for the Disability Tax Credit, the government will undertake a review of these changes in 2023

“It is estimated that, as a result of these measures, an additional 45,000 people will qualify for the Disability Tax Credit, and related benefit programs linked to its eligibility, each year. This represents \$376 million in additional support over five years, starting in 2021-22.”

Comment: The expansion of the Disability Tax Credit program may prove to be beneficial to many disabled veterans who have failed to qualify up to this point in time as a consequence of the rather restrictive eligibility rules that have pertained to this particular tax credit.

We will keep an eye on the implementation of these budgetary proposals as applicable to the veterans’ community.

5.Ending Homelessness– “COVID-19 has exacerbated many of the hardships faced by Canadians experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. Many have had to choose between the harsh cold of the streets or the risk of an outbreak in shelters.”

“Every year, thousands of veterans access emergency shelters. After their service, every veteran deserves a home.

- “Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$45 million over two years, beginning in 2022-23, for Employment and Social Development Canada to pilot a program aimed at reducing veteran homelessness through the provision

of rent supplements and wrap-around services for homeless veterans such as counselling, addiction treatment, and help finding a job.”

Comment: We will hold the feet of the department to the fire in truly implementing programs which will address veteran homelessness across Canada, which has been identified as a significant crisis in many major cities and communities.

6. Addressing Sexual Misconduct and Gender-based Violence in the Military– In response:

- “Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$236.2 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, and \$33.5 million per year ongoing to the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada, including \$158.5 million over 5 years and \$29.9 million per year ongoing funded from existing resources to expand their work to eliminate sexual misconduct and gender-based violence in the military and support survivors. Specifically:
 - “Enhance internal support services to victims, including access to free, independent legal advice and enabling military members to access services without making a formal complaint.
 - “Implement new external oversight mechanisms to bring greater independence to the processes of reporting and adjudicating sexual misconduct within the military.
 - “Undertake other initiatives to enhance institutional capacity to address harassment and violence, including enhancing the military justice system to better respond to allegations of misconduct and support survivors.”

Comment: There is no question that this DND/CAF crisis deserves the highest government priority, as empty platitudes and inadequate commitments to date have proven insufficient to rectify this abysmal embarrassment of leadership in the CAF/DND.

NCVA supports the initiatives contained in the federal budget to address the fundamental need to protect victims of this totally reprehensible sexual misconduct through the establishment of independent legal mechanisms and adjudicative processes.

In conclusion, it must be stated that, although progress has potentially been achieved in a number of areas, given the massive financial expenditures delineated in this year’s federal budget, it is indeed unfortunate that the

government did not place a higher emphasis on addressing the longstanding inequities in veterans' legislation which continue to exist.

It must also be kept in mind that budgetary proposals are only a first step in the legislative process. With a pending election on the immediate horizon, the implementation of these recommendations will need to be closely monitored to ensure the government is able to carry through with the enactment of these specific initiatives that are of benefit to Canadian veterans and their families.

There is little question that the veterans' community will be focused on the individual federal political parties and their respective election campaign platforms to assess which party is prepared to address outstanding veterans' concerns

BUDGET 2021: SOMETHING FOR SENIORS Extracted from SAGE – The magazine published quarterly by the National Association of Federal Retirees. Summer 2021. The budget promised more focus on long-term care, health care and retirement

security <https://www.federalretirees.ca/en/news-views/publications/sage-magazine> Veterans and military Budget 2021 also proposes to provide \$45 million over two years, beginning in 2022-23, for a pilot program aimed at reducing veteran homelessness through the provision of rent supplements and wrap-around services for homeless veterans such as counselling, addiction treatment and job search assistance. Funds are targeted to address sexual misconduct and gender-based violence in the military, including an additional \$74 million over five years to enhance support services for victims, including legal advice and peer support groups, as well as to enhance research and training. Mention was made of "other initiatives" to boost the military's capacity to address harassment and violence. The budget tags \$140 million over five years to Veterans Affairs Canada for programming to cover mental health-care costs for veterans with PTSD, depression or anxiety disorders while their disability benefits application is being processed. An additional \$15 million over three years will be added to the Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund to support veterans through the COVID-19 recovery. Veterans Affairs will have \$29 million to enhance service capacity — likely to help streamline processes and deal with the benefits backlog that has dogged the department and hurt veterans for years. "There are good investments in this budget for veterans, but it's falling short of telling us how the Government of Canada will move its military toward more equitable outcomes and how these measures will address the long-standing gaps serving women have faced," Soulière said. "We know it's a government priority — it's in the veterans affairs minister's mandate letter — so we'll have some more work to do here."

ON TARGET: "I SEE CRACKS": GENERAL EYRE

June 7, 2021 "Esprite de Corps

By Scott Taylor

Last week in an interview with the Canadian Press Lieutenant-General Wayne Eyre, Canada's acting Chief of the Defence Staff, admitted that the Canadian military is beginning to exhibit 'cracks'.

Eyre explained that these 'cracks' are the result of the Canadian Armed Forces facing a multitude of concurrent challenges in terms of maintaining a brisk operational tempo while dealing with plummeting morale in the ranks.

The greatest contributor to that loss of faith in the senior leadership has been the almost continuous barrage of sexual misconduct revelations involving the top brass.

The first of these bombshells exploded on Feb. 2, 2021 when Global National's Mercedes Stephenson revealed two allegations of sexual impropriety against General Jonathan Vance.

Vance had just stepped down as CDS after a five-year stint as Canada's top soldier, but he had not yet officially retired from the Forces.

Admiral Art McDonald announced that in addition to a Canadian Forces National Investigation Service (CFNIS) investigation into the Vance allegations, a separate independent inquiry would be initiated into the actions of the former CDS.

The ink was still damp on McDonald's message when it was announced that he was stepping aside as CDS to allow the CFNIS investigate a sexual misconduct complaint against him.

Then came the news that Lt.-Gen. Chris Coates would not be deploying to his new position at NATO headquarters because of an extra-marital affair he had while at his NORAD posting in Colorado Springs.

Next up to bat was Chief of Military Personnel, Vice Admiral Haydn Edmundson. News reports first cited that as a young officer Edmundson had faced allegations of impropriety while an instructor at CFB Esquimalt. The chain of command at the time had cleared Edmundson, which earned him the satirical nickname of the 'mulligan' man.

However once that story broke, memories were jarred and a separate accusation arose against Edmundson. This was an allegation of rape that occurred aboard a RCN ship in 1991.

On Friday, May 14 it was announced that Major General Dany Fortin was suspended from his high profile post overseeing the national roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccines with the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The reason for Fortin's removal was that he too was under investigation by the CFNIS for past sexual misconduct. Media reports have revealed that the

complaint against Fortin dated back to 1989 when he was a cadet at the College Militaire Royal in St Jean, Quebec.

In less than four months Canada lost two four star generals, two three star generals and a very high profile two star general. For the purists, I realize that Canadian generals wear maple leaves instead of stars, but either way you slice it, that is a lot of brass to lose in a very short span of time.

In the wake of this sudden exodus, senior female officers have been promoted or appointed to key positions.

Lt. Gen. Frances Allen is to become Canada's first female Vice Chief of the Defence Staff. Jennie Carignan was recently promoted to Lieutenant-General and named to head the task force to eliminate sexual misconduct.

Commodore Josee Kurtz will soon assume the post of commandant at the Royal Military College in Kingston. The first female to hold that position.

Stepping up to fill the void left by Fortin's departure is Brigadier-General Krista Brodie who was previously Fortin's deputy commander at the Public Health Agency.

These promotions will definitely change the face of the 'old boy's club', which was previously the composition of our senior military leadership. However, this in itself will not be enough to change an institutional culture that has been defined as highly sexualized by none other than former Supreme Court Justice Marie Deschamps in her 2015 independent review of military sexual misconduct.

I think Lt.-Gen. Eyre is optimistic to describe the current crisis in the military as mere 'cracks.'

The CAF is currently changing the senior leadership on the fly, trying to alter a decades old culture of sexual misconduct, while still managing overseas operational deployments in Latvia and Iraq, coping with a personnel shortfall of 2,300 soldiers, and still assisting Canadians in dealing with a deadly pandemic.

This is definitely no time for anymore 'cracks'.

IN THE NEWS

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