

Media Report 20 Oct 2023

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

NVOC Presidents Report to Members 20 October 2023

NVOC was invited to attend an “in person” meeting by the Dominion President of the Royal Canadian Legion [Bruce Julian] on 14 October at Legion House, Ottawa. The aim of the meeting was to bring together representatives of various Veterans’ organizations to identify and discuss urgent issues and find commonality on which matters to provide organizational focus or advocacy to the government for the betterment of all Veterans and serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and their families. This “Veterans Consultative Assembly” is an annual gathering. I attended this event.

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Veterans Affairs [VAC] attended for several hours and she gave comments and laid out current priorities.

The DM VAC [Paul Ledwell] hosted a virtual Coffee Group meeting on Tuesday, October 17. I attended this event. There were 20 people “on line” – about half were veterans advocating? Senior VAC staff gave detailed briefs on issues.

What follows are my “Observations” of what was discussed at these two events. **My observations are NOT records.**

Attendance at the “Veterans Consultative Assembly” was from the following groups:

Airborne Regiment Association of Canada; ANAVETs; Canadian Naval Air Group; CAVUNP; Korean Veterans Association; Maritime Air Veterans Association; Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project; **NATO Veterans Organization of Canada**; Nursing Sisters Association of Canada; Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada; Polish Combatants Association;

Rainbow Veterans of Canada; RCAF Association; Indigenous Veterans; and the Royal Canadian Legion.

My "Observations":

- The Minister presented the priorities of the Department: (1) dealing with the backlog of disability claims. There has been a surge in disability applications these past two years. VAC gets about 6600 claims a month. The good news is that the trained staff within the Department are being kept on, and ongoing budget cuts that are being made to all Departments will not impact on service support to veterans. Regional offices will not close – they are all up and running now and will continue. The support to veterans will NOT be reduced or impacted. Core support for veterans is protected. (2) Commemorations of the work and the sacrifice of veterans – including the “modern veteran” [I am not sure what a “modern “ veteran is?]. There is more interest in doing more commemorations for recent missions/operations. (3) Mental Health. Veteran Homelessness is an ongoing issue.

The Minister took questions:

- The Afghanistan Memorial will be built – near the War Museum in Ottawa. There has been some controversy about design selection – there was a Jury that made recommendations and there was a survey of some 12,000 veterans. The survey of veterans became a key factor in selecting Team Stimson. <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/afghanistan-monument>
- Veterans Long Term Care [LTC] – for the veteran and the family. This is the primary issue for NVOOC [and has been since we formed]. The issue is much more topical now within VAC. The idea of “age in place”/ nursing homes without walls?... has attention – The Veterans Independence Program does give veterans support in living at home. <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/housing-and-home-life/help-at-home/veterans-independence-program>

There was discussion about removing the requirement for a level of “disability” to apply for VIP. [Personal comment: this is not likely to happen?]. As “boomers” age there will be a surge in demand for LTC and there is concern that veterans will not get the support they need? Today VAC has thirteen agreements with Provinces and Territories and all

agreements are tailored to the local jurisdictions. I am not sure about numbers, but I think that there are about 2200 veterans in LTC today in over 225 facilities? Your Board of Directors is paying close attention to Veterans LTC. Lots of issues?...preferred access beds?...community beds?....contract beds?... Denmark spends more on home care than institutional care! Instead of funding being assigned to a bed, funding is assigned to an individual, who has the choice on how to use the money (within certain parameters). For members – The Veterans Ombud has a useful "Care at Home Resource Guide" A guide to the benefits and services available through Veterans Affairs Canada that support Veterans to remain independent in their own homes. <https://www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/en/publications/resource-guides-and-information/care-home-resource-guide>

- "Marriage after 60"...the "Gold Digger" Clause. Considerable interest and discussion. This is not just an issue for veterans. Implications for all public service retirees and a change to the superannuation act would be needed. There are millions of retirees that would be impacted. [Personal comment: this is not likely to happen?].
- Gender based Analysis. Diversity/Inclusion/Equity is almost an agenda item at any Government meeting. This is serious and is a part of all discussions. Observation: at the meeting the "Rainbow" Veterans were represented by a 53 year old "Transgender" woman [she was one of the younger people at the table – there are still a lot of "old white guys" trying to speak/advocate for veterans].
- Ministerial Advisory Groups are functioning again. Our member on the Care and Support group is Hammy Hamalainen. <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/what-we-do/public-engagement/advisory-groups>

Action: the Royal Canadian Legion will draft a letter to the Minister [will circulate to all attendees] thanking her for attending and will offer the three "Priorities":

- Veterans Long Term Care;
- Veterans Independence Program: and
- Marriage after 60.

There were two presentations made at the Saturday event that are interesting:

(1) “The Burns Way”. TryCycle Data Systems. The Burns Way is named in remembrance and in honour of Earl Burns, a proud Veteran (Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry), a residential school survivor, and a member of the James Smith Cree Nation who died protecting his family and his community on September 4, 2022. Earl ultimately gave his life to save others. He was honoured posthumously with the Silver Cross, in recognition of his sacrifice and bravery

<https://theburnsway.ca/>

“The Burns Way is a new and innovative initiative that will bring together Indigenous, non-Indigenous and Minority partners to improve access to mental health support for veterans right across Canada. The Burns Way seeks to build trust in the availability of services and puts the veteran in control of their journey to wellness”.

For the first time in Canadian veterans’ history, the Royal Canadian Legion, Saskatchewan First Nations Veterans Association/Assembly of First Nations, and Aboriginal Veterans Autochctones have come together and committed to working together to improve mental health services for ALL veterans. What was my “take away” is that there is statistical data that highlights the similarities between Indigenous and Military veterans! [...lack of trust?...anger?....suspicion?...silos – think Regiments? And Tribes?].

I am interested and will be visiting their Ottawa office on Monday October 23. for a deeper dive into the program.

(2) “The Pepper Pod” <https://pepperpod.ca/>

The presentation was given by LCol [retired] Sandra Perron – founder and CEO. A very dynamic speaker. [It has to be said – she was the first woman to be commissioned as an Infantry Officer.]

They are into year three – they are well funded!...and deliver sessions across Canada. Transition workshops...they have “graduated 279 women and have a waiting list of over 300. Lots of talk about sharing deep emotions?...group hugs...laughter and tears...Wonder woman Wednesdays...giggles,,,snow “she”ing.

Nestled in the scenic Gatineau Hills in Chelsea, Quebec, The Pepper Pod is a retreat centre that serves, supports and inspires women in the Canadian veteran community—including women veterans, soon-to-be veterans and spouses of veterans .NOTE: the spouse has to be a woman [can be a transgender woman].

Our mission is to connect women in tightly knit tribes that support one another as they navigate life's adventures as a veteran. We serve our community by creating programs specifically designed for women veterans and give them an opportunity to connect through a multitude of events throughout the year.

Hope that this is informative and helpful?

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

Do your part to support Veterans this Remembrance Day

We couldn't be more grateful for the ongoing passion, dedication, and support that we've received from our Legion volunteers – especially during pivotal times like Remembrance Day. This year, The Royal Canadian Legion's Poppy Campaign will start on October 27th. You can honour local Canadian Veterans by supporting the Legion and wearing a Poppy. We encourage all Canadians to take a moment to pause on November 11 to remember.

The Veterans Emergency Fund provides prompt financial support to Veterans, their families, and survivors, who are facing an unforeseen financial emergency that is threatening their health and well-being

Support you need, when you need it. When the unexpected happens, we can provide you funds for essentials like food, shelter, or medical expenses.

The Veterans Emergency Fund provides prompt financial support to Veterans, their families, and survivors, who are facing an unforeseen financial emergency that is threatening their health and well-being.

The Veterans Emergency Fund can cover essentials such as:

- food;
- clothing;
- rent/mortgage;
- medical care/expenses; and,
- expenses required to maintain safety and shelter.

Every situation is unique. Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis. We will also work with you to identify your long-term needs.

You should apply for the Veterans Emergency Fund if you have an urgent financial need, are a Canadian resident*, and are a:

- Veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF);
- current spouse/common-law partner of a Veteran;
- survivor of a deceased Veteran or CAF member; or
- orphan of a deceased Veteran or CAF member (or the legal guardian if the orphan is under the age of 18).

*Someone who has resided in Canada for at least 183 days in the previous fiscal year (April 1-March 31).

Before you apply

We will need as much information as possible about the financial emergency. This could include: invoices, quotes, notices, or statements to explain the situation.

If this is your first time applying to a VAC program, we will need proof of identity (e.g. driver's license).

You can expect a decision within 1-2 business days. If approved, you will receive payment within 1-2 business days.

Online

Fill out and submit your application online through My VAC Account. This is the recommended approach, and will give you the quickest response.

If you are not registered with My VAC Account, you can register now.

Apply by mail

Download the application form and mail your completed form directly to:

Veterans Affairs Canada
PO Box 6000
Matane, QC
G4W 0E4

Get help with your application

Our staff can assist you.

- Call us toll-free at **1-866-522-2122** (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. local time)
- Send us a [My VAC Account](#) secure message
- Schedule an in-person appointment using our [online booking form](#) or by calling **1-866-522-2122**

Please note our service locations offer in-person services by appointment only.

Related programs

The [Assistance Fund](#) can help if you in a financial emergency, if you receive the War Veterans Allowance.

The [Canadian Forces Income Support](#) is a tax-free monthly benefit to help low-income Veterans, survivors, and dependent children.

Do I need to receive benefits from Veterans Affairs Canada to apply for emergency funding?

No. However, we will require the information about the Veteran in order to confirm their service history.

What will staff use to quickly confirm a Veteran's service information?

VAC staff will be able to confirm a Veteran's service information by entering their name, service number and date of birth into our Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN). VAC will work with DND to obtain service information for those Veterans who don't have an existing relationship with VAC.

Are there policies for this program?

Yes. Read the [Veterans Emergency Fund policy](#).

Find more [Veterans Emergency Fund FAQs](#).

IN THE MEDIA

[Memo: Canadian Armed Forces members asking for donations to help with housing, food costs](#)

[L'inflation mine le moral des soldats canadiens, selon l'aumônerie royale canadienne](#)
[Canadian Forces base may return to Grande Prairie](#)

[We will help you': Canada to send military aircraft to evacuate citizens from Israel in 'coming days'](#)

[La technologie israélienne face aux arsenaux hétérogènes du Hamas et du Hezbollah](#)
[Canada sending more artillery shells, aircraft bombs to Ukraine, defence minister says](#)
[New safety training brought in after sexual assault on Canadian at NATO base in Latvia](#)

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](#)

Base Gagetown — [Gagetown Gazette](#)