

Media Report 07 August 2020

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. If you have received a disability benefit, you may also qualify for the Additional Pain and Suffering Compensation—a tax-free, monthly benefit — payable for life. 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 it.

- Speak to a chaplain

You and your immediate family can get spiritual support when the need arises through VAC's pastoral outreach service.

About this program

If you are dealing with end of life issues, the death of a Veteran, a burial in the National Cemetery, or bereavement, we can connect you with spiritual support.

Many of the clergy associated with the pastoral outreach service are retired Canadian Forces Padres or Royal Canadian Legion Chaplains who are familiar with the military way of life and the challenges you may face as you transition to post-service life, or deal with the loss of a loved one.

Do you qualify?

Pastoral outreach services are available to:

- Any Veteran, including Merchant Navy Veterans
 - Immediate family of Veterans
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How to apply

You do not need to apply for this service. To access pastoral outreach, please call the 24-Hour VAC Assistance Service at 1-800-268-7708.

Additional information

Find out more

These services are not intended to replace the ministry of civilian clergy when you are a regular member of a civilian parish. However, we are able to provide a prompt response when pastoral emergencies occur and you do not have access to local clergy.

Related programs

[Bereavement support](#): Emotional support when Veterans or their families are dealing with end of life issues or bereavement.

[Funeral and burial services](#): Income-tested financial assistance when Veterans meet certain military criteria.

[Veteran family program](#): If you're medically releasing or released, find help and advice during transition to post-military life.

Frequently asked questions

What services does Veterans Affairs Canada provide to families?

Veterans Affairs offers both direct and indirect support to Veterans' family members through a variety of benefits and services, for which the following are a few examples:

- Case management services
- Transition services
- Mental health services
- Rehabilitation services and vocational assistance
- The Family Caregiver Relief Benefit (replaced by Caregiver Recognition Benefit, April 01, 2018)
- The Public Service Healthcare Plan
- Educational assistance
- Financial benefits and disability / death benefits
- VAC Assistance Service

- Operational Stress Injuries Social Support (OSSIS)

Grave marker maintenance

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Quick links

- [About this program](#)
- [Additional information](#)
- [Frequently asked questions](#)

We honour Canada's fallen and preserve their legacy. One way we do this is by maintaining their gravesites and grave markers, at home and abroad.

About this program

Veterans Affairs Canada and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission maintain the gravesites and grave markers, that were provided and installed by the Government of Canada, of more than 300,000 fallen Canadian Armed Forces members here and throughout the world.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for the graves of the 110,355 Canadians who died for the periods of:

- the First World War – August 4, 1914 to August 31, 1921, and
- the Second World War – September 3, 1939 to December 31, 1947.

Veterans Affairs Canada directly maintains the more than 200,000 graves of Canadian Armed Forces members who died outside these dates.

Additional information

Find out more

Over the last fifteen years, Veteran Affairs Canada has inspected gravesites and gravemarkers across Canada. A databank containing pictures, GPS readings and conditions of the markers has been established from these inspections and is used to develop the annual cemetery maintenance plan.

In the 2018 budget, the Government of Canada announced an additional investment of \$24.4 million over the next five years to address urgently needed repairs.

Track the progress of this project

We created a map to track the progress of this project. Click on a province to see how the project is doing.

PE

NSABBCYTNTNUSKMBNLNLNBONQC

Total number of repairs: 57,179

Total number of repairs completed from April 2018 – March 2019: 12,141

Total number of repairs planned for 2019-2020: 12,984

21.2%

**Note – data on actual number of repairs completed from April 2019 to March 2020 will be inputted by May 31, 2020.

You can help

If you know of a gravesite that requires maintenance or is unmarked, or you require additional information about this program, please contact Cemetery Maintenance at vac.cm-mc.acc@canada.ca or call 902-626-2440.

Related programs

[Funeral and burial assistance](#): A reimbursement of costs to ensure Veterans have a dignified funeral and burial.

[Canadian Virtual War Memorial](#) – an online registry that honours Canadians who have given their lives in service to their country.

Frequently asked questions

What is the Cemetery/Grave Maintenance Program five-year project?

In the 2018 budget, the Government of Canada announced an additional investment of \$24.4 million over the next five years to address repairs and to ensure that the graves of those who served are well maintained. The work began in 2018 and will continue into 2023. The new funding will be used for cleaning, restoring or replacing grave markers, and fixing foundation issues.

Where are repairs being done?

Of the total estimated 57, 000 repairs over 5 years, approximately 12,300 repairs are planned to take place in year 1 at cemeteries in:

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland
- Nova Scotia
- Ontario

- Québec
- Saskatchewan

How does VAC determine if a grave site needs repairs?

Veteran grave markers were visited and inspected over the last fifteen years. We have a databank that contains pictures, GPS readings and conditions of the markers. This information is used to prepare the annual cemetery maintenance plan used by VAC program officers who prepare contracts for repairs.

Funeral and burial assistance

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Quick links

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- [Do you qualify?](#)
- [How to apply](#)
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Every Veteran deserves a dignified funeral and burial. The funeral and burial program helps pay for these services.

About this program

Funeral and burial assistance is provided through the [Last Post Fund](#) – a non-profit organization – to help pay for funeral and burial services, including a military gravestone, for eligible Veterans.

To qualify the Veteran will have met service as well as health or financial criteria.

Do you qualify?

You should apply for this assistance if the Veteran met the following military service and either the service-related (matter of right) or financial (means tested) criteria.

Military service

To qualify, the Veteran must have been:

- a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces or any predecessor naval, army or air forces of Canada or Newfoundland; or
- a Canadian Merchant Navy Veteran of the Second World War or the Korean War; or
- an Allied Veteran who served with the Allied Forces during the Second World War or the Korean War. The Veteran must also have lived in Canada for at least 10 years, or lived in Canada prior to enlisting and was living in Canada at their time of death.

Service-related (Matter of right)

If the deceased Veteran received (or qualified for) a disability benefit from Veterans Affairs Canada and died as a result of that service-related disability.

Financial (means tested)

Eligibility is based on net assets at the time of death. If the assets of the deceased and the financial resources of the estate are insufficient to cover funeral and burial costs, a total or partial coverage of the cost is possible.

In the case of a Veteran with a spouse or dependent children, the combined assets of the couple are considered, excluding:

- A base amount of \$37,000
- \$700 per dependent child
- The family house and vehicle
- Income received during the month of death

If the net value of the estate of a single Veteran is not sufficient to pay off existing liabilities, including the cost of funeral and burial services, the Veteran is deemed to be eligible for this assistance.

How to apply

Please note there is a one-year time limit after the Veteran's death to apply for assistance.

Apply online

An online form may be used to initiate an application. Once submitted, a Last Post Fund representative will contact you. An official application form will follow by mail.

Apply by phone

If you'd like to apply for funeral and burial assistance call the Last Post Fund at 1-800-465-7113.

Additional information

Find out more

The current maximum rate payable toward funeral home costs is \$7376 + tax. Funeral and burial assistance can cover the following types of costs:

- any medical costs of the deceased Veteran's last sickness that have not otherwise been paid by the Minister and are not covered by a private or provincial health care plan;
 - the following funeral services:
 - preparation of remains,
 - a casket or an urn that meets the standards specified by the Minister,
 - ceremonial services
 - death notices
 - transportation of the remains from where death occurred to a funeral home and to the place of burial and cremation;
 - if required, a single grave and reasonable costs of opening and closing the grave as well as its perpetual care;
 - a grave liner, if required;
 - cremation
 - a military style grave marker—upright or flat granite, or in certain cases, flat bronze—fitting with the standards of VAC.
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Related programs

[Grave-marker maintenance](#) – Maintenance of all markers and grave sites that were provided by the Government of Canada.

Frequently asked questions

Are all Veterans eligible for funeral and burial assistance?

Any Veteran who meets the service criteria and who dies of a service-related injury or illness or their estates cannot pay for some or all of the funeral and burial costs would be eligible for this assistance.

Can an application for assistance be made prior to a Veteran's death?

No. An application form cannot be issued or approved until the actual date of death because financial information and marital status can change right up to that time. The Last Post Fund would be pleased to discuss the information necessary to apply for assistance under the Funeral and Burial Program so a family member may prepare the information ahead of time should anything occur.

Where I can read about the regulations for this program?

For more detailed information about the regulations, please read the [Veterans Burial Regulations](#).

- [For your interest in the 2021 Census round table / Merci de votre intérêt pour la table ronde sur le Recensement de 2021](#)

- Veteran and military serviceThe federal government spends over \$4 billion annually in payments to Veterans, their families and other program recipients. Yet, in Canada, there is no comprehensive data source available that provides a complete listing of Veterans to ensure that these funds are targeted to those who are eligible. The historical records that are available consist of census records from 1951, 1961, 1971, as well as a variety of incomplete administrative data. To fill this data gap, a question on Veteran and military service was included on the questionnaire to enumerate the total number of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Veterans living in Canada. The Census questionnaire is the best tool to reach all Veterans and military personnel, as it enumerates residents of collective dwellings, including military bases, as well as hospitals and seniors' residences, where Veterans may reside. The questionnaire is also used to enumerate residents who are residing overseas temporarily at the time of the census, including CAF members and their families. Having highly reliable information on Veterans will provide meaningful insight into a broad number of policy, program and evaluation issues that affect the Veteran population. Statistics Canada and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) will work together after the 2021 Census to keep this information up to date.The question on Veteran and military service tested well. Results from the 2019 Census Test were compared with external sources. The proportion of respondents who reported being Veterans was within the range of what was estimated by VAC using a data modelling approach based on 1971 Census data and administrative data, the proportions of male and female CAF Veterans, and their average age.Ted – of interest to our members is the addition of questions about veterans.

La version en français suit.

Hello,

I would like to thank you and your organization for your interest in the 2021 Census virtual roundtable.

We appreciate the overall positive feedback that we received during the roundtables and are committed to continue working with community leaders like you. This will help ensure that we have the maximum support for the census and that the decisions that matter to us are based on solid data stemming from the 2021 census.

The census content is determined by the government and is reflective of the largest and most comprehensive input on the evolving needs of Canadians, followed by rigorous qualitative and quantitative testing. The

final content reflects the balance of assuring continuity and quality with the needs for new and improved information.

Thank you again for your interest in the roundtable. The presentations can be found on the [Road to the 2021 Census website](#). To learn more about the 2021 Census, please consult [Painting a Portrait of Canada: The 2021 Census of Population](#).

As we pursue the road to the 2021 Census, we are looking forward to continuing this conversation with you and invite you to stay in touch with us at the following address: Census Communications / Communications du recensement.

Sincerely,

Anil Arora
Chief Statistician of Canada
Statistics Canada / Government of Canada
anil.arora@canada.ca

Bonjour,

Je tiens à vous remercier, vous et votre organisation, de votre intérêt pour la table ronde virtuelle sur le Recensement de 2021.

Nous apprécions les commentaires positifs que nous avons reçus lors des tables rondes et nous nous engageons à continuer de travailler avec des leaders communautaires comme vous. Cela contribuera à nous assurer que nous avons le maximum de soutien pour le recensement et que les décisions qui nous importent reposent sur des données solides issues du Recensement de 2021.

Le contenu du recensement est déterminé par le gouvernement et reflète l'apport le plus important et le plus complet sur l'évolution des besoins des Canadiens, suivi de tests qualitatifs et quantitatifs rigoureux. Le contenu définitif reflète l'équilibre entre l'assurance de la continuité et de la qualité, d'une part, et les besoins en matière d'informations nouvelles et améliorées, d'autre part.

Merci encore de l'intérêt que vous avez porté à cette table ronde. Les présentations se trouvent sur le site Web la page [En route vers le Recensement de 2021](#). Pour en savoir plus sur le Recensement de 2021, vous êtes invités à consulter le livre du recensement intitulé [Brosser un portrait du Canada : le Recensement de la population de 2021](#).

Dans notre voie vers le Recensement de 2021 nous sommes désireux de continuer la conversation avec vous et vous invitons à rester en communication avec nous à l'adresse Census Communications / Communications du recensement.

Sincères salutations,

Anil Arora
Statisticien en chef du Canada
Statistique Canada / Gouvernement du Canada
anil.arora@canada.ca

- The census is the primary source of exhaustive demographic data in Canada. In 2021, the census questionnaire will collect the following information:
 - address
 - names of usual residents
 - date of birth, age
 - sex at birth, gender
 - relationships of household members (including marital or common-law status)
 - knowledge of official languages
 - languages spoken regularly at home and language spoken most often at home
 - first language learned at home in childhood
 - minority official language educational rights
 - Veteran and military service
 - activities of daily living
 - place of birth of person/parents
 - citizenship (Canadian citizenship, other citizenship)
 - non-official languages
 - ethnic or cultural origins
 - First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit)
 - population groups
 - Status Indian
 - First Nation or Indian Band
 - membership in a Métis organization or Settlement
 - enrolment under an Inuit land claims agreement
 - religion
 - mobility (one year and five year)
 - education
 - labour market activities
 - place of work and commuting
 - expenditures (child care, child and spousal support)
 - housing.
- Subject: Census 2021 – Veteran identifier question / Recensement de 2021 – Question d'identification des vétérans

(le français suit)

Dear Stakeholders and Advisory Groups members,

I am pleased to let you know that the questions which will make up the 2021 Census are now public and will include a Veteran identifier question – the first since 1971. As Minister of Veterans Affairs, I was surprised to learn that there is no formal listing of Canadian military Veterans. This creates a significant information gap that hampers the ability to fully understand and respond to the needs of Canadian Veterans and their families. That is why Veterans Affairs Canada has been working closely with Statistics Canada and advocating for the inclusion of a Veteran identifier question on the national survey.

We recently learned that these efforts had paid off – the 2021 national census will ask, “Have you ever served in the Canadian military?”. The addition of this question will provide the first truly accurate data on Canada’s Veteran population in 50 years. The data gathered from this survey will inform programs, supports and services for Canadian Veterans and their families for years to come. This is truly a victory that ensures those who serve our country no longer remain hidden from official statistics and gives us the opportunity to put the best supports in place that they so richly deserve.

For the latest 2021 Census information and developments, I invite you to visit the Statistics Canada website [The road to the 2021 Census](#).

Sincerely,

Lawrence MacAulay

Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence

Chers intervenants et membres des groupes consultatifs,

Je suis heureux de vous informer que les questions que contiendra le Recensement de 2021 sont maintenant publiques et qu’il y aura parmi celles-ci une question d’identification des vétérans – la première depuis 1971. En tant que ministre des Anciens Combattants, j’étais surpris d’apprendre qu’il n’existe aucune liste officielle des vétérans militaires canadiens. Il en résulte un important manque d’information qui empêche de comprendre entièrement les besoins des vétérans canadiens et de leur famille et d’y répondre. C’est pourquoi Anciens Combattants Canada travaille étroitement avec Statistique Canada et plaide pour l’inclusion d’une question d’identification des vétérans dans l’enquête nationale.

Récemment nous avons su que ces efforts avaient porté fruit – le Recensement de 2021 comptera la question suivante : « Avez vous déjà servi dans l’Armée canadienne ». L’ajout de cette question fournira les premières données vraiment précises en 50 ans, au sujet de la population de vétérans du Canada. Les données recueillies permettront d’orienter les programmes, les mesures de soutien et les services offerts aux vétérans

canadiens et à leur famille pendant des années à venir. Il s'agit d'une victoire qui garantit que ceux qui servent notre pays feront maintenant partie des statistiques officielles et qui nous donne l'occasion de mettre en place les meilleures mesures de soutien qu'ils méritent tant.

Pour obtenir les derniers renseignements et progrès au sujet du Recensement de 2021, je vous invite à consulter le site Web de Statistique Canada [En route vers le Recensement de 2021](#).

Cordialement,

Lawrence MacAulay

Ministre des Anciens Combattants et ministre associé de la Défense nationale

Rideau Hall hires ex-Cirque du Soleil manager as it copes with fallout from harassment claims

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/rideau-hall-special-advisor-governor-general-julie-payette-1.566439>

IN THE NEWS

Government officials claimed OPP were investigating military efforts to allegedly hide documents in Mark Norman case — that turned out to be false

<https://ottawasun.com/news/national/defence-watch/government-officials-claimed-ontario-police-were-investigating-military-efforts-to-allegedly-hide-documents-in-mark-norman-case-that-turned-out-to-be-false/wcm/6b4d0075-a558-4fc6-a6f7-4204f39d397b>

Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign

Chief of the defence staff Jonathan Vance announces retirement

Could Canada's next chief of defence staff be a woman?

WWII veteran celebrates 97th birthday in Red Deer

Armée canadienne : le chef d'état-major Jonathan Vance quittera ses fonctions

WWII veteran celebrates 97th birthday in Red Deer

COVID-19 another threat to contend with: Edmonton-based soldiers resume training forces in Ukraine

Forces buy new equipment to transport people with infectious diseases

205 Chinese peacekeepers depart for Lebanon

Sapper Don Holloway selected as honorary senior during Red Deer's Garden Party tour

Meet the 'Smuzzle,' the US Army's new hybrid suppressor that reduces sound, recoil and flash