

Media Report 01 Jan 2021

HAVE A SAFE HEALTHLY NEW YEAR 2021

This media report will be posted on our website. Go to <http://www.natoveterans.org/news> and click on News – Current News."

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, [ctive COVID-19 cases: 77,452 | Recovered: 448,215 | Deceased: 14,800 | Total: 541,616](#) 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.

SOON IT WILL BE TAX TIME

Tax credits and deductions for persons with disabilities

Tax credits and deductions are available for persons with disabilities, their supporting family members, and their caregivers.

[What's new](#)

I want information on:

- [Disability tax credit](#)
- [Medical expenses](#)
- [Disability supports deduction](#)
- [Child disability benefit](#)
- [Registered disability savings plan](#)

Find out how you can benefit

Meet the people who may be eligible for the disability tax credit or other government programs for persons with disabilities.

[See Scenarios](#)

Related links

- [What can persons with disabilities claim as a deduction or credit?](#)
- [GST/HST Information](#) – Goods and services that are exempt supplies or zero-rated for the GST/HST
- [Excise gasoline tax refund](#)
- [Free tax clinics](#)

- [Authorize or cancel a representative](#)
- [Services for persons with disabilities](#)
- [Disability benefits](#)

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A recap of the latest news, updates and more. Throughout the year, we will share news from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) and related sources so you know what's happening.

Here's a look at what's been going on since our last update in August:

75th anniversary of Victory over Japan (V-J) Day and the end of the Second World War

More than 10,000 Canadians served in Asia and the Pacific during the Second World War. On Saturday, August 15, the Government of Canada held a wreath-laying ceremony in Halifax to mark the 75th anniversary. This ceremony was followed by the unveiling of the 2020 Veterans' Week poster. [Watch the ceremony on Facebook.](#)

National Peacekeepers' Day

More than 125,000 Canadian peacekeepers have participated in dozens of international efforts over the past six decades, in countries all over the world. On August 9, we marked National Peacekeepers' Day. [Watch the video statement from Minister MacAulay.](#)

Shortlist announced for National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan design competition

Five teams from across the country have been invited to submit proposals for the monument in Ottawa. The teams have until spring 2021 to complete their proposals. [Learn more about the teams who were shortlisted.](#)

Virtual Series: Women Veterans Forum Update and LGBTQ2+ Roundtable

In August and September, we hosted a three-part virtual series of panel discussions to strengthen partnerships with the women and LGBTQ2+ Veteran and stakeholder communities. Recordings of the discussions are available on our website. [Watch the virtual series.](#)

Team Canada's Invictus Games competitors share their stories (podcast)

This past May, Team Canada was scheduled to compete at the Invictus Games in the Hague, Netherlands. Although the Invictus Games are postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Team Canada's competitors continue to train and prepare. Check out these [new episodes of the Faces of Freedom podcast](#) to hear from several competitors.

VAC National Survey extended until October 31

The 2020 VAC National Survey will now run until October 31 after it was paused due to COVID-19. You may receive a phone call from Forum Research Inc. (on behalf of VAC) asking about your satisfaction with VAC's benefits and services. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and confidential.

Over 2,750 people participated in the annual Navy Bike Ride

Cumulatively, riders completed over 25,000 rides to commemorate the 25,000 Atlantic crossings made by Canadian Naval and Merchant Marine Force during the second world war. Participants also raised \$59,266.22, which will benefit the Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund and the Support Our Troops organization. [Read more about the Navy Bike Ride.](#)

Have you downloaded the free COVID Alert app yet?

COVID Alert, the free COVID19 exposure notification app, is now available for people in Canada to start using. You can download it from either the [Apple App store](#) or [Google Play store](#).

Here's a look at what's coming up:

Roundtable discussion with LGBTQ2+ Veterans

On October 21, we invite you to a roundtable discussion with Veterans and stakeholders from the LGBTQ2+ community sharing their experiences and perspectives with senior officials from Veterans Affairs Canada. [Register for the roundtable webcast.](#)

If you have difficulty registering or if you have other questions about this event, please email vac.engagement.acc@canada.ca

More virtual information sessions about My VAC Account coming soon

Do you have questions about My VAC Account? Attend one of our information sessions, via WebEx, for an overview. Sign up for the [English session on October](#)

[28](#) or the [French on October 29](#). More dates will be added to our Calendar of Events soon. [Visit the Calendar of Events](#).

Veterans' Week starts November 5

Every November, from the 5 -11, we remember and honour the extraordinary efforts of our Veterans and Canadian Armed Forces members. This year, Canada remembers the end of the Second World War. [Read more about Veterans' Week](#).

Bridge Benefit—Canadian Armed Forces pensions

This page provides information about the bridge benefit in the form of questions and answers, specific to the following audiences:

- Regular force members who enrolled before March 1, 2007
- Regular force members who enrolled on or after March 1, 2007
- Reserve force members in the Reserve force (part-time) pension plan (Part I.1)
- Reserve force members who have qualified for the Regular force (full-time) pension plan (Part I)

Please note that questions 1 to 12 deal with the bridge benefit payable under Part I of the [Canadian Forces Superannuation Act](#) (CFSA), i.e., the pension arrangements that apply to members of the regular force and reserve force members in the regular force pension plan. Questions 13 to 15 deal with the bridge benefit payable under the [Reserve Force Pension Plan Regulations](#) (RFPPR).

You may want to know, INFO FOR OUR YOUNGER MEMBERS

What is the bridge benefit?

It is a monthly amount payable to Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) annuitants in addition to the normal monthly benefit payable under the [Canadian Forces Superannuation Act](#) (CFSA). This additional component exists to ensure a stable retirement income is paid from the time the annuity or annual allowance commences and continues until the annuitant reaches age 65, dies or becomes entitled to a disability pension under the [Canada Pension Plan](#) (CPP)/ [Quebec Pension Plan](#) (QPP).

How did the bridge benefit come about?

When the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) was introduced in 1966, the decision was made to coordinate the new universal plan with the plans offered to the federal public sector work force. The integrated arrangements took the form of a “two-step” contribution rate and consequently

a “two-step” benefit, plus a time limited bridge benefit. By integrating the [Canadian Forces Superannuation Act](#) (CFSA) and the CPP, pension plan members did not have to make additional contributions toward their retirement income. Virtually all other employer-sponsored pension plans in Canada, including the provincial public sector pension plans, made the same decision. If a stacked approach had been adopted, pension benefits would have been greater, but the cost of the plan would be higher which would have increased either or both contributions payable by the members and the government (i.e. taxpayer).

What happens to the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act pension when the annuitant turns 65?

The bridge benefit ceases being paid at the end of the month following the month of the annuitant's 65th birthday.

How is the bridge benefit calculated?

The bridge benefit amount is determined at retirement by first calculating 2% of the member's average annual Canada Pension Plan (CPP) earnings (to a yearly maximum – see note below), multiplied by the member's years of pensionable service from January 1, 1966 to retirement (not exceeding 35 years). This amount is then multiplied by a percentage that depends on the year of the member's birth. For members born before 1943 the percentage is 35, while for those born after 1946 the percentage is 31.25. For those born between these years the percentage varies on a sliding scale.

Note: The maximum average annual CPP earnings are calculated each year on the basis of average wages in Canada.

For example, if a member born before 1943 retired from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in 2002 with 25 years 11 days pensionable service (25.03014 years) and earnings exceed the CPP ceiling (\$37,860 in 2002), the bridge benefit would be calculated as follows:

$0.02 \times 25.03014 \times \$37,860.00 \times 35\% = \$6,633.49$ per year or \$552.79 per month

Thus, the bridge benefit portion of this former member's pension, payable to age 65 or the commencement of a CPP disability benefit would be \$552.79 per month.

What does the integration of contributions under the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act and Canada Pension Plan mean as far as contributions to be paid by the member?

It means the contribution rate under the pension plan set out in the [Canadian Forces Superannuation Act](#) (CFSA) Part I is two-tiered. Members pay contributions at a lower rate on their salary amount that is covered by the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) than the contributions payable on salary above that amount.

Can I choose not to pay for the bridge benefit?

No. The bridge benefit and the portion of your pension contributions that relates to it are an integral part of your Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) pension arrangements.

Will I be reminded about the bridge benefit once I become an annuitant?

Definitely, you will receive regular reminders. Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members about to retire receive a briefing during which the details of the bridge are explained to them. Furthermore, the annual information letter sent to annuitants contains information about the terms of payment of the bridge benefit.

Once I reach age 65, do I need to inform someone at the Government of Canada Pension Centre to stop my bridge benefit payments?

No. The system will automatically know when an annuitant reaches age 65. However, in the unlikely event that the bridge benefit does not cease, annuitants are encouraged to contact the [Government of Canada Pension Centre](#) as soon as possible to avoid having to pay back pension benefits.

What happens if I start receiving Canada Pension Plan disability benefits? Do I need to let someone know?

If you start receiving a Canada Pension Plan or Quebec Pension Plan (CPP or QPP) disability benefit, your bridge benefit entitlement ceases. You should advise the [Government of Canada Pension Centre](#) as soon as possible and provide them with a copy of the CPP form "1808 Notice of Entitlement" or QPP "Notice of Acceptance". These documents are included with your first CPP/ QPP disability pension cheque. This minimizes the risk that your bridge benefit will not stop as quickly as the law requires, creating an overpayment of pension, which must be recovered.

I am the survivor of a Canadian Armed Forces annuitant whose bridge benefit has stopped being paid. Will my survivor's allowance be based on the pension before or after the bridge benefit stopped?

The survivor's allowance is based on the member's basic annuity plus the bridge benefit. The survivor's allowance is not affected by any entitlement that person has under the CPP or QPP.

Will cessation of the bridge benefit affect the indexing of the pension payable under the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act to a retired Canadian Armed Forces member?

The bridge benefit portion of a retired member's benefits is indexed in the same way and at the same time as the rest of the member's pension. Once the bridge benefit stops, so does the portion of the monthly payment that reflected the indexation of the original bridge benefit amount. The indexation of the remaining portion of the benefit is not affected in any way.

Do Canadian Armed Forces members contribute to the Quebec Pension Plan or Canada Pension Plan?

Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members contribute to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). Earnings in the CAF are subject to the CPP regardless of the member's location. Although a

member served in Quebec, the member was contributing to the CPP rather than the Quebec Pension Plan (QPP).

I contributed to the Quebec Pension Plan with an employer before I joined the Canadian Armed Forces. Am I entitled to Quebec Pension Plan?

If you contributed to the Quebec Pension Plan (QPP) at any time during your working years and reside in Quebec at the time your pension is to start, you should apply to the QPP. In any case, the retirement pension will be calculated on your full CPP and QPP contributory earnings. For further information on the CPP, you should contact [Service Canada](#). For further information on the QPP, you should contact the [Régime des Rentes du Québec](#).

Is there a bridge benefit under the Reserve Force Pension Plan (RFPP)?

Yes. The monthly amount payable to a retired member under the [Reserve Force Pension Plan](#) (RFPP) includes both a basic lifetime pension and a temporary additional component (the “bridge benefit”). The objective of this bridge benefit is the same as under the Regular force plan, namely to stabilize retirement income from the time the member retires until they become entitled to a normal retirement or a disability pension under the [Canada Pension Plan](#) (CPP)/ [Quebec Pension Plan](#) (QPP). At that point in time, retirement income will come from both the RFPP and the CPP/ QPP.

Is the Reserve Force Pension Plan bridge benefit paid on the same basis?

Yes. It is a monthly payment that is added to the basic lifetime pension paid to an annuitant, it is indexed at the same time and at the same rate as the basic pension and it stops being paid at the time a normal retirement pension or a disability pension becomes payable under the [Canada Pension Plan](#) (CPP)/ [Quebec Pension Plan](#) (QPP).

How is the bridge benefit calculated under the Reserve Force Pension Plan?

The annual amount of the bridge benefit is determined, at the time of ceasing to participate in the [Reserve Force Pension Plan](#) (RFPP), by calculating one half of one percent (0.005) of the member's “updated bridge benefit earnings” – their annual earnings adjusted for wage growth, up to a maximum based on the average of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) maximum earnings (\$43,700 in 2007).

For example, if a member became eligible for an immediate annuity in 2007 with “updated bridge benefit” earnings totalling \$167,000, the bridge benefit would be calculated as follows:

$$0.005 \times \$167,000 = \$835 \text{ per year, or } \$69.58 \text{ per month}$$

Thus, the bridge benefit portion of this member's pension, payable to age 65 or the commencement of a CPP disability benefit would be \$69.58 per month.

Note: If a member who is entitled to a deferred annuity opts instead to receive a (reduced) annual allowance, the bridge benefit will be subject to the same reduction. In the example above, if the member were receiving an annual allowance equal to 80% of the full annuity amount, the bridge benefit would be $\$69.58 \times 0.8 = \55.66 per month.

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● **Colonel the Reverend Robbie Hall, underwater bomb disposal expert – obituary**

● Colonel the Reverend Robbie Hall, underwater bomb disposal expert – obituary By Telegraph Obituaries 29 December 2020 •

● Colonel the Reverend Robbie Hall, who has died of cancer aged 63, was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal for neutralising a German bomb in particularly hazardous circumstances. On November 21, a civilian maintenance diver located what was thought to be a bomb at Beckton Gas Works, East London. It was under 40 feet of water in a large gasometer and was obstructing the workings of the equipment. The water was stagnant and polluted with poisons after more than 50 years use. Pumping out the water would have contaminated the River Thames and would have involved taking neighbouring gasometers out of service. The nose section of a very large bomb was found, containing decomposing explosive and a sample was sent for analysis. This showed that it was active explosive. Early on November 26, they began a systematic search of the sloping floor of the gasometer, working up to 50 feet below the surface of the water. By 1400 hours they had located the crumpled tail fin and the main section of the bomb. The fuse was intact but could not be identified as it was facing down into the mud. Hall then set about defusing the bomb, working by the light of a torch while trying to keep his balance on the unstable dinghy. The hiss as the hand drill pierced the vacuum in the fuse indicated that, as had been feared, it was in perfect condition. This was the culmination of many hours of great physical effort. The three men who were by then exhausted were in constant danger of being crushed by the swinging bomb or falling off the structure. Robert George Russel Hall, the son of a civil engineer, was born at Spinningdale in the Scottish Highlands on November 9 1956. After his family moved south to Rowlands Gill, near Newcastle, he was educated at the local grammar school. Hall was keen on running, rock climbing and scuba diving, and his party piece was one armed pull-ups, which he would do with just a fingertip hold on top of a door jamb. In November 1982 he was appointed as second-in-command 7 Field Squadron. The tour included six months in the Falkland Islands in 1983. In September 1989 he went to the Canadian Staff College at Toronto. Having gained a Distinction, he was posted to the Special Forces section at the MoD, where he was involved in the planning for the First Gulf War. Possessing a strong Christian faith, he trained for the ministry and obtained a Master's Degree in biblical mission. He served as the pastor of Hope Baptist Church at Bridgend. Colonel the Reverend Robbie Hall, born November 9 1956, died November 6 2020

● Robbie Hall married, in 1980, Helen Thompsett, whom he had met in Germany when she was teaching at a military school. She survives him with their three sons, all of whom followed their father into the forces and, at one time, were all serving in Afghanistan.

● After commanding the Defence Diving School at Portsmouth, followed by a staff job at HQ 1 (UK) Armoured Division, his final posting, in December 2007, was as Commandant of the Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Munitions and Search School.

● In 1986, he joined 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD). The Regiment was undergoing a period of expansion which required the formation of the new 22 Field Support Squadron (EOD). The manpower had to be found from within the Regiment and Hall

was chosen to be the first officer commanding, raising it from scratch, a challenging job that he performed with tact and great professionalism, while still performing duty as Training Major.

- Always known as Robbie, in 1973 he enlisted in the Corps of Royal Engineers. He was commissioned three years later and his first posting was to 3 Armoured Division Engineer Regiment, which included a tour in Northern Ireland.
- The courage, selfless dedication to duty and professionalism displayed by Hall and his team were recognised by the award of the Queen's Gallantry Medal to all three of them – the first time that all ranks received the same award.
- It took a further hour to neutralise the fuse. The half-ton bomb was then winched up to the top of the gasometer and eased by Hall through the small airlock. Eventually, at 0130 hours, it had been lowered 100 feet to the ground where it could be steamed out by others.
- By 1800 hours, Hall had positioned the emergency services and arranged for the area to be evacuated. He and his team dived down to the bomb, which was now known to be extremely dangerous. Shackles were attached to it, and with great difficulty it was prised from the mud, winched to the surface and manhandled into a rubber dinghy. Throughout this operation, all three men were working in close contact with the bomb.
- The team was now faced with a major bomb disposal incident. On November 24 they dived again to recover the nose section. It was identified as an unexploded 500kg Second World War German bomb. It had entered through a hole in the crown of the gasometer which was patched up at the time.
- Debris in the water clogged Hall's breathing apparatus, and he had to cough this up to be able to breathe normally. Visibility in the water was nil and all the work had to be conducted by touch alone.
- Hall, with Staff Sergeant Nigel Daly and Sapper John Wright, entered through a small airlock at the top and were lowered 100 feet by winch to the surface of the water. The interior was pitch black and the atmosphere heavy with gas fumes.
- In July 1986, Hall joined 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) as the Training Major. He became the leader of the regimental diving team, specialising in underwater bomb disposal.
- He was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal for neutralising a German bomb found under 40 feet of water at Beckton Gas Works

Introduction

What is the Table of Disabilities?

The Table of Disabilities (TOD) is a legislated /statutory instrument used to assess the extent of a disability for the purposes of determining disability benefits. The Table considers the

relative importance of a certain body part/system to assess the level of impairment and the impact that impairment has on the individual's quality of life.

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Additional Information

The old Table of Disabilities affects decisions prior to April 1, 2006.

[Table of Disabilities \(1995 edition\)](#)

This publication is available upon request in alternate formats.

[All Chapters – PDF Version](#)