



The NATO Veterans Organization of Canada (NVOC) is an advocacy group for members of the military. Photo supplied

# Advocacy group helps veterans at national level

- [SCOTT STANFIELD](#)
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- [LOCAL NEWS](#)
- [NEWS](#)
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An advocacy group is helping members of the military receive the support they deserve from the country they served.

When it first began, the NATO Veterans Organization of Canada (NVOC) was about camaraderie and support for those who served on North Atlantic Treaty Organization missions. It has since evolved into a national body comprised of veterans from all branches of service, and from all eras. Membership is open to anyone who has served or is serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, regular or reserve force.

“Our biggest issue right now is long- and short-term care for veterans,” said Comox resident Jack Shapka, director of the Pacific/Territories region of NVOC. He spent more than 45 years in the air force. “Over the last several years, our infamous federal governments have been shutting down the veterans hospitals that were providing long-term care.”

While the number of Second World War and Korean War veterans has diminished, he said there are many modern-day veterans who served in the Gulf War, Afghanistan and other conflicts who have issues and who “probably could use some of these beds and some of this care.

“We take issues like this, pump it up through our chain, and when they meet with DVA (Department of Veterans Affairs), we try and make some changes or improvements,” Shapka said.

One change they made was to eliminate some of the red tape in the Veterans Independence Program, which provides funding for housekeeping and other such services.

NVOC is one of only six veterans organizations that meets regularly with Veterans Affairs Canada.

Yearly membership dues are \$20.

FMI: [natoveterans.org](http://natoveterans.org)