

## Media Report 29 April 2022

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

## NATO VETERANS ORGANIZATION OF CANADA (NVOC) Presidents Report 29 APRIL 2022

VAdm (ret'd) Larry Murray, Chair of the Veterans Consultation Assembly (VCA), convened a meeting of the VCA on Saturday, 23 April, 0900-1500 hrs in the Victory Boardroom, Legion House, Ottawa. This was an in-person event. There were representatives from 16 different veterans organizations.

Attendance from NVOC was myself and Ted Bransfield. My “observations”:

- Presentation and Q&A: **Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans**. (Dr. Ramesh Zacharias, President, CEO & Medical Director and Paul Roos, Director of Operations [Retired Captain RCR]. This is a VAC funded research team (McMaster University visit [www.veteranschronicpain.ca](http://www.veteranschronicpain.ca)) that is doing national veteran research on “Pain” for Veterans and their families. Aim is to manage pain and to reconnect with life. Focus on bringing hope. COMMENT: all the presentations made used the phrase “Veterans and their families”. This is a huge shift in culture for all veterans to have families included. The definition of a “family” is broad and is who the veteran see’s as his support. Veterans suffer from chronic pain at about 40% [twice that of average Canadians who are not veterans} Pain research will attempt to identify areas where pain – not just physical – also moral injury – shame, guilt and a sense of betrayal can be treated at clinics with an understanding of the plight of the veteran. The intent is to implement evidence based care at clinics across the nation for all veterans. PTSD is not a useful descriptor of the anguish many veterans describe and new terms are being introduced. Mental health for Veterans and their families is getting a lot of attention [ and funding];
- Some Statistics of Interest: there are about 655,000 veterans today; 140,000 are registered with VAC; 110,000 are veterans and survivors who have an annuity/pension. VAC pays over \$100 million a year for Veterans Cannabis [3gms per day!].
- Presentation and Q&A from **Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families**. Research funded by VAC. Visit: [atlasveterans.ca/knowledge-hub](http://atlasveterans.ca/knowledge-hub). Veteran and their families mental health is still largely uncharted territory. Veterans want “one stop shopping” for mental health support. Themes are moral distress and moral injury.
- Presentation by the Veterans “Ombuds” [ we used to call it Ombudsman] Col(retired)

Nishika Jardine. Accompanied with the Deputy Ombud Duane Schippers [Lawyer]. The role is to advocate for “fairness “– fairness in the process! Fairness in treatment and fairness in the outcome. Their reports are all available on their website and are worth checking into, They are very well aware of veteran concerns about wait times for disability claims.

- A presentation was made for the Veterans of the Persian Gulf War ( 10 Aug 1990 to 3 March 1991). They want to be recognized as War veterans rather than Special Duty Area Mission. There were perhaps 5,000 CAF members deployed on the mission – no deaths – lots of mental health injuries.;
- “Marriage after 60” – veterans are tending to live longer [refer to the recent Stats Canada news releases] and there are marriages taking place that are not “Gold-digger” relationships [ a term used after the WW I policy experience]. Very little progress is made on this issue.
- The issues raised by NVOC: (a) Queens Platinum Jubilee Medal. An irritant that some Provinces are issuing and the Federal government is not; (b) Homeless Veterans; (c) Long term care for veterans continues to be the primary focus of NVOC; and (d) Wait times or decision on disability claims.

Final Observation: there is now job title - “Knowledge Mobilizer”. An actual term!

**Great News to share-** the NVOC Board of Directors will meet in person on Monday 16 May and we have had a Board member volunteer to assume the duties of Secretary. Our Secretary for the past eight years has moved to the Trenton area and we have not had a Secretary during the Pandemic. This is a task that requires attention to reports and returns to the Government

Major[retired] Jorma [Hammy} Hamalainen, MMM CD (retired from the CAF on 31 Dec 2021 after 42 plus years of service will hopefully be voted onto the position at our meeting.

### **NATO NEWS AND THOUGHTS [From SHELLDRAKE] 29 April 2022**

Extracted from Geopolitical Futures

**Gas games.** Russia’s Gazprom announced that it had completely suspended natural gas deliveries to Bulgaria’s Bulgargaz and Poland’s PGNiG over their failure to pay for supplies in rubles. (Many other European states said they, too, would not pay in rubles, but they appear to have been spared so far.) Warsaw said it has enough gas in storage to avoid any shortages. Meanwhile, according to the EU network of gas transmission operators, gas supplies under the Yamal contract to Poland resumed on Wednesday morning.

**Great game.** China’s defense minister and state councilor, Wei Fenghe, met with Turkmen President Serdar Berdimuhamedov and expressed interest in promoting bilateral cooperation. Berdimuhamedov said he hoped the two militaries will strengthen cooperation in equipment technology and personnel training. Meanwhile, Kazakh and British defense officials met to discuss bilateral military cooperation.

**China and Iran.** China’s defense minister also traveled to Tehran, where he met with Iranian Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani. They discussed increasing military ties to counter U.S. influence.

**Building up.** Chinese President Xi Jinping called for an “all-out” infrastructure building campaign. During a high-level meeting, Beijing identified transport and energy as being sectors in need of an infrastructure boost, including the construction of ports and airports.

**Balkan trip.** Two U.S. officials, the special envoy for the Western Balkans and the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina

to encourage reforms needed for EU accession. The U.S. officials previously visited Pristina and Belgrade, where they discussed bilateral and energy issues in light of the war in Ukraine. Their trip will also include stops in North Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro.

**The Iberian exception.** The European Commission authorized Portugal and Spain to decouple gas prices from electricity prices for 12 months, a move that is expected to bring electricity prices down by 40 percent. Citing few interconnections with the rest of the EU's energy network, Madrid and Lisbon have been asking for approval for the move for months.

**Discussing Ukraine.** Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki met in Berlin with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to discuss the situation in Ukraine. Discussions revolved around the urgency of delivering weapons to Ukraine and the energy security repercussions of the conflict. The two countries' climate ministers also met, and the German minister said an embargo on Russian oil would soon be manageable for Germany.

## Veterans Emergency Fund

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3. [How to apply](#)
4. [Additional information](#)
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Support you need, when you need it. When the unexpected happens, we can provide you funds for essentials like food, shelter, or medical expenses.

### About this program

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.

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## Do you qualify?

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).

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## How to apply

### 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.

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### 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](#).

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### Mail or in person\*

Download the [application form](#) and mail it directly to the address listed on the form

You can also drop it off at a [VAC Area Office](#) or [CAF Transition Centre](#).\*

\* Offices may not be open due to COVID restrictions. Call 1-866-522-2122 to confirm.

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### Get help with your application

Please call 1-866-522-2122 or send a [My VAC Account](#) secure message and a VAC representative will assist you with your application.

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## Additional information

### 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.

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### Frequently asked questions

#### **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](#)

## **.Adapting and improving for Veterans during COVID-19**

Since the pandemic began, we have reached out to over 20,000 Veterans. While offices remain closed, you can continue to connect with us through [My VAC Account secure messaging](#) or by calling 1-866-522-2122.

Here are some other ways we have adapted to better serve you during the pandemic:

- [Operational stress injury clinics](#) group therapy sessions are offered online.
- [Career transition services](#) continue to be delivered virtually.
- Vocational rehabilitation providers are offering virtual assessments tailored to each Veteran's unique situation
- Certain prescription requirements have been waived and coverage for virtual health services is extended.
- Some health assessments are taking place virtually, allowing our health

professionals to provide more accessible services.

To stay up to date with the latest information, bookmark and visit the Government of Canada's [Coronavirus page](#).

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## Resources for homeless Veterans

[An estimated](#) 3,000 to 5,000 Veterans experienced homelessness in Canada in 2019, and together we can change this.

Staff at Veterans Affairs offices across the country are available to help Veterans who are experiencing homelessness, and connect them with organizations in their communities that work to solve homelessness.

VAC also offers immediate supports like the [Veterans Emergency Fund](#), which can provide funds quickly for urgent and unexpected needs. These can include essentials like food, shelter or medical expenses while we identify long-term needs and look for more long-term solutions.

Further support for low-income Veterans includes:

- the [Canadian Forces Income Support](#), a monthly payment to help low-income CAF Veterans, survivors and dependent children
- the [War Veterans Allowance](#), a monthly payment to Second World War or Korean War Veterans who have a low household income.

There are also support systems for homeless Veterans offered by other organizations such as:

- [The Royal Canadian Legion](#) provides financial assistance to serving and former CAF members, RCMP and their families who are in financial distress
- [Support our Troops](#) provides extra support due to challenges arising from CAF service, and
- [Veterans Emergency Transition Services \(VETS\) Canada](#) helps to secure housing, food and customized supports.

## How you can help

If you or someone you know is experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless, the first step is to contact a [local area office](#) by calling us at 1-866-522-2122.

Free and confidential professional mental health support is also available for Veterans, their families and caregivers toll-free, 24/7 through the VAC Assistance Service, at 1-800-268-7708 or 1-800-567-5803 (TTD/TTY).

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## Engagement

### McGill seeking Canadian Veterans to participate in cannabis use study

The [MissionVAV](#) program from McGill University is developing new strategies to

improve the health of Veterans who deal with physical and mental health issues. McGill is looking for Veterans to participate in an anonymous cannabis use study. Your experiences as a user, positive or negative, are invaluable to researchers.

Currently, knowledge of medical cannabis treatment for conditions like chronic pain, stress, poor sleep and post-traumatic stress disorder is largely driven by trial and error. By participating in this study, you can help researchers find better ways to use medical cannabis to improve the health and well-being of your comrades, their family members and other Canadians.

Visit the [Active Veterans website](#) to share your experience by completing a brief and anonymous online survey. For more information, call 1-800-461-3006. McGill will not collect your name nor contact information while conducting this study.

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**You are invited to take part in an online study:**

**Pain and mental health in Canadian Veterans and their children**

## **IN THE MEDIA**

[Canada outlines plan to increase defense spending and conduct a new defense policy review](#)

[L'effet canadien sur les soldats ukrainiens](#)

[Canadian soldiers headed to Poland to help Ukrainians: 'This is what we trained for'](#)

[Ukrainian sappers defuse Russian minefield outside Kyiv](#)

[Ottawa promet d'envoyer de l'artillerie lourde pour aider l'Ukraine à se défendre](#)

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3 Wing Bagotville — [The Vortex](#)

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