

Media Report 17 JULY 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.

Stage 3 reopening framework

<https://files.ontario.ca/mof-framework-reopening-province-stage-3-en-2020-07-13.pdf>

How to review or appeal a decision

[Share this page](#)

Quick links

1. [About review and appeals](#)
2. [Departmental review](#)
3. [Veterans Review and Appeal Board](#)
4. [Judicial review](#)
5. [Related information](#)

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.

About review and appeals

If you choose to review or appeal your decision from Veterans Affairs Canada, your first call should be to the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA)—a nation-wide organization of lawyers

within Veterans Affairs Canada. Their team will review your file and may recommend a departmental review or a hearing before the Veterans Review and Appeal Board.

Departmental review

One of the most common reasons why applications for disability benefits are not approved by Veterans Affairs Canada, or the assessment is less than you expected, is due to a lack of sufficient evidence in the original application. If you have new evidence that was not included in your application, you may request a departmental review and submit the new evidence.

The [Bureau of Pensions Advocates](#) team can help you with the written submission and application forms.

In a departmental review, an adjudicator from Veterans Affairs Canada will examine your submission, including any new evidence, to determine if a new decision should be issued. [Learn more about how Veterans Affairs Canada reviews a disability claim.](#)

Veterans Review and Appeal Board

If the departmental review does not meet your expectations or if your case does not merit a departmental review, you can take your claim to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB).

The [Veterans Review and Appeal Board](#) is an independent federal tribunal that offers two possible chances to appeal a disability decision from the Department. The first step is a review hearing.

Review Hearing

If possible, you are encouraged to attend and testify at your hearing. Your travel costs may be covered by Veterans Affairs. Your lawyer will:

- go through the evidence in your case with the Board members;
- ask questions of you or any other witnesses;
- introduce new evidence, and,
- make oral arguments on your behalf.

If you are unable to appear in-person, your lawyer can represent you. It is possible to testify by telephone, if you have the agreement of the Board.

Following the review hearing, you will receive a decision letter from VRAB.

If you disagree with the decision, you have the right to appeal it. This next step is an appeal hearing.

Appeal Hearing

Appeal Hearings take place in Charlottetown before a different panel than your review hearing.

For an appeal hearing, your lawyer will either argue your case on your behalf in front of a panel or file a written submission to the panel. You are not required to attend your appeal hearing.

Your lawyer will:

- go through the evidence in your case with the Board members;
- introduce new evidence, and,
- make oral arguments on your behalf.

The Board's decision at an appeal hearing is final and binding. That said, there are provisions in the Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act that allow the Board to further reconsider the matter if there has been an error of fact, error of law, or if new evidence becomes available. These reconsiderations are not routine. Your lawyer will advise you if they believe the Board would agree to hear a reconsideration in your case.

If you remain unsatisfied with the final decision, there is only one other avenue of appeal remaining – a judicial review.

Judicial Review

In certain and specific circumstances, you may be able to pursue a [Judicial Review through the Federal Court of Canada](#). This approach should only be considered in situations where you and your lawyer are certain that the Veterans Review and Appeal Board has made an error in law or in fact, or that VRAB overlooked significant facts that could impact other applicants for disability benefits. This usually involves an issue of interpretation of specific law(s). Your lawyer will advise you if they think a judicial review is an option you should consider.

It's important to note that lawyers from the Bureau are not mandated to represent you before the Federal Court. They can advise you if your case has merit, but to proceed through this review, you will need to hire your own legal counsel or you can choose to represent yourself. In order to proceed to Judicial Review you have a 30-day time limit to apply to the Federal Court of Canada.

Related information

[Bureau of Pensions Advocates](#) - If you choose to review or appeal a disability benefits decision made by Veterans Affairs Canada, a lawyer with the Bureau of Pensions Advocates can provide you with free legal advice and representation.

[Veterans Review and Appeal Board](#) - Find out how you can make an application to have your disability benefits decision independently reviewed by the Board.

[Judicial review \(Federal Court of Canada\)](#) – The Federal Court has the jurisdiction to review decisions made by most federal decision-makers.

Fact sheets

- [What you need to know about a review hearing](#)
- [What you need to know about an appeal hearing](#)

- [Letter to Premier Ford](#)
<https://webmail.bell.net/appsuite/api/mail/Premier-Ford-June25.pdf?action=attachment&folder=default0%2FINBOX&id=109760&attachment=2&delivery=view>

[Letter to Veterans Affairs Minister](#)

<https://webmail.bell.net/appsuite/api/mail/Letter-to-MacAulay.pdf?action=attachment&folder=default0%2FINBOX&id=109759&attachment=2&delivery=view>

[Link to Departmental plan to address wait times / Lien vers le plan ministériel visant à réguler les temps d'attente](#)

NVOC Friends – the DM VAC held a monthly ZOOM video conference on Friday 26 June. There have been several new advocate additions to this event. The DM typically gives us all an overview and we are given an opportunity to ask questions make comment. Of the 3700 VAC staff they have about 98% working offsite and will gradually return to Buildings/Office spaces. They continue to get about 10,000 “In Box” telephone/emails/letters each week and are responding. The main issue from advocates is the rate of disability claims being processed and the time it takes. The back logs and the turnaround times are taking far too long and this is an opportunity to fast track “protocols” – simplify and reform? Understandably, the Department is working differently – with a huge focus on staff health and safety. They continue to provide service to veterans [and their families. NOTE the family is now included in briefings to us as a normal concept. This was not always the case!]. Ted Bransfield has included the Veterans Emergency Fund in his weekly Friday reports. The fund had high demands in April – mostly food related. The demand is back to “normal”.The Legion has made requests for financial help – I have sent you the Legion letter to the PM and there will be Legion Branches that will not survive past August. They are talking several hundred Branches – out of some 1380 Branches that functioned prior to the virus. The big news is that Treasury Board has approved [not yet released] \$79

million for an additional 300 staff to fill out the teams doing the disability claim adjudication/processing. Staff take time to hire and to train.[It takes five years to get a staff member with five years experience!!! That is not always understood]. The email from the Minister gives considerable information. The Ministers Advisory Groups were briefed on this today. Well worth a read. Ted and Doug- can you include this entire email in the Friday SITREP and also have this email put on our website for all members. (Personal Note – NOT for inclusion. I have six disability claims being processed and in August it will be two years since making the applications.) Time is not on the side of the Veteran. Hope that you all can enjoy celebrating – Mask on and self isolating – Canada Day. Canada does have a shared history that has brought us to where we are today. I am not keen on tearing down statues!!! Randy

From: Engagement (VAC/ACC)

Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 4:10 PM To: Engagement

(VAC/ACC) Subject: Link to Departmental plan to address wait times / Lien vers le plan ministériel visant à réguler les temps d'attente

(Le français suit)

Dear Stakeholders and Advisory Group members,

As you have heard me say before, tackling the backlog is my top priority. With that in mind, I am pleased to share with you the Department's plan to address wait times: [Timely Disability Benefit Decisions: Strategic Direction for Improving Wait Times](#). This plan focuses on the tactics and initiatives in progress to improve wait times for Veterans applying for Disability Benefits.

I wanted to share this response directly with you, our stakeholders and advisory group members, so you can see exactly how we plan to address this issue, including the concrete steps we will be taking in the coming months.

There is no one single initiative that will reduce wait times. This is why our plan includes hiring, digital solutions, innovation, all in an integrated approach. In the plan you will see details on initiatives like our Veterans Benefit Teams—integrated teams that will serve as one-stop-shops for all applications, reducing the potential wait time at each step of the process.

We encourage you to read the full [plan](#) and share it on your social media channels.

Your support in helping us inform the Veterans community and your advocacy on their part is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lawrence MacAulay

Minister of Veterans Affairs and

Associate Minister of National Defence

Chers intervenants et membres des groupes consultatifs,

Comme je l'ai déjà dit, la prise en charge de l'arriéré est ma priorité absolue. Dans cette optique, je suis heureux de vous communiquer la réponse récente du Ministère au rapport du Comité permanent des anciens combattants au sujet de la façon dont nous réduirons les temps d'attente : [Prise de décisions en temps opportun relatives aux prestations d'invalidité – Orientation stratégique pour améliorer les temps d'attente](#). Ce plan est axé sur les tactiques et les initiatives en cours visant à améliorer les temps d'attente pour les vétérans qui présentent une demande de prestations d'invalidité.

Je tenais à transmettre cette réponse directement à vous, à nos intervenants et aux membres des groupes consultatifs, y compris les mesures concrètes que nous prendrons au cours des prochains mois, afin que vous puissiez voir exactement comment nous planifions régler ce problème.

Une initiative unique ne suffirait pas pour réduire les temps d'attente. C'est pourquoi notre plan comprend l'embauche, les solutions numériques et l'innovation, selon une approche intégrée. Le plan contient les renseignements sur les initiatives comme nos équipes intégrées responsables des prestations aux vétérans qui serviront de guichets uniques pour toutes les demandes, ce qui réduira le temps d'attente possible à chaque étape du processus.

Nous vous encourageons à lire la [réponse complète](#) et à la partager sur vos réseaux de médias sociaux.

Je vous remercie de nous aider à informer la communauté des vétérans et votre groupe consultatif.

Cordialement,

Lawrence MacAulay

Ministre des Anciens Combattants et
ministre associé de la Défense nationale

© Bell Canada, 2020

Battle of Britain 80th Anniversary 20 September 2020

- Due to health and safety concerns and other military constraints the 80th Battle of Britain Ceremony will not be in the usual Parade format this year.

A quiet ceremony will take place at the Cross of Valour at the WWI/WWII original cemetery located at the National Military Cemetery – Beechwood.

There will be NO ENTRY to any spectators, and attendees will be Commander RCAF, one WWII Veteran, the RCAF Chief WO, and a Padre.

2 wreaths will be laid and a flight of WWII aircraft will make 2 passes over the site during the Last Post and Reveille. A Facebook email link to the site and the ceremony will be provided at a later date – no Facebook membership is required.

This will be a hybrid ceremony – a combination of the actual and virtual interludes of discussions with Veterans.

I have been tasked by the Commander to communicate with NVOC, 410 Wing RCAF Assn, RCAF Association HQ, and the RC Legion to alert all interested parties of the changes this year, and how to access the ceremony remotely on the 20th September.

Shortly a pdf poster will be made available and the Facebook link will be provided.

Do you think we can inform our NVOC members Canada-wide through our Media Reports which many members are reading.

Best regards,

Matt Carson

IN THE
MEDIA

South Surrey veteran Colonel Don McClellan honoured by South Korea as Ambassador for Peace

Cloverdale Reporter

A South Surrey senior who served in the Korean War nearly 70 years ago was thanked this week for his efforts “in restoring and preserving our freedom and democracy.” Retired Col. Donald McClellan was presented with an Ambassador for Peace Medal during a ceremony at Amica White Rock, where he has lived since last September.

[READ MORE](#)

Small N.S. community gets creative getting to work after bridge collapses

CTV News

It was a scene that stunned an entire community and the many who saw the video online of a Guysborough County bridge collapsing. "Nobody got hurt, but she went down like a ton of bricks," said area councillor Fin Armsworthy. Tangled rubble is all that's left of the Tittle Bridge, a link between the community of Canso and Durrell's Island, where more than two dozen permanent residents live on the other side.

[READ MORE](#)

Le Canada a dû être aidé par le Royaume-Uni pour transporter des soldats

La Presse

Le contingent militaire canadien, qui est arrivé en Lettonie en janvier dernier, doit être remplacé en juillet. Il était prévu que l'un des trois avions Polaris CC-150 des Forces armées canadiennes quitte la base de Trenton, en Ontario, avec environ 120 soldats mercredi dernier avant de ramener au pays ceux stationnés en Lettonie.

[LIRE PLUS](#)

Alberta air force base to use goats, sheep to get rid of unwanted vegetation

Global News

A Canadian Forces base in Alberta is recruiting a new battalion of lean, mean, eating machines for a mission that will require limited action this summer. The Department of National Defence has put out a tender for goats and sheep to graze on part of the base at 4 Wing Cold Lake. "We did this in [CFB] Comox a few years ago and I have a feeling the idea kind of kicked off from that

experience,” said Captain Mat Strong, public affairs officer for 1 Canadian Air Division based in Winnipeg.

[READ
MORE](#)

QinetiQ wins contract to scope upgrade to Royal Canadian Air Force ranges

Skies Magazine

QinetiQ has been awarded a one-year contract, with an additional option year, by the Royal Canadian Air Force’s (RCAF) Air Warfare Centre to develop a roadmap for the modernization of RCAF Air Weapons ranges, which will enable the combination of live and virtual environments for collaborative team training.

[READ
MORE](#)

L'Aviation royale canadienne a complété l'opération FRÉQUENCE 2020

45e Nord

Du 26 juin au 4 juillet 2020, les Forces armées canadiennes ont encore une fois soutenu la France dans le cadre de l'opération FRÉQUENCE en transportant du matériel entre la France et la région africaine du Sahel à l'aide d'un CC-177 Globemaster. «Grâce à cette opération, les FAC offrent un solide soutien à un allié important et contribuent aux opérations françaises en Afrique de l'Ouest et dans la région du Sahel afin de renforcer la sécurité et la stabilité régionales et internationales», a tenu à souligner cette semaine le commandement des opérations des Forces armées canadienne sur son compte Twitter.

[LIRE
PLUS](#)

Sentries return to National War Memorial as COVID-19 threat recedes

CFJC Today

Military sentries are returning to their spots in front of the National War Memorial and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as the threat posed by COVID-19 appears to be receding. The Canadian Armed Forces has posted a ceremonial guard at the monuments near Parliament seven days a week from April to November since 2014. The sentry program was established both as a way to honour the sacrifices of those who have served in uniform and to protect the memorial and tomb from vandalism and other acts.

[READ MORE](#)

Canadian troops forced to hitch ride with British military to and from Latvia

Global News

Canadian troops have been forced to hitch a ride with the British military to get to and from Latvia due to a shortage of working planes. Canada has 540 troops in Latvia, where they form the core of a 1,500-strong multinational battlegroup established by NATO three years ago. Similar battlegroups led by Britain, Germany and the U.S. have been established in Estonia, Lithuania and Poland, respectively.

[READ MORE](#)