

Media Report 03 April 2020

This weeks media reports will cover and answer great questions veterans are still asking suchas Frequently asked questions regarding COVID-19 in Ottawa. Support you need, when you need it. Counselling and compensation for your mental health needs, such as **depression. THE VETERANS EMERGENCY fUND, When the unexpected happens you can get you quick access to funds for urgent needs such as food, shelter or medical expenses from the last report. Benefits to Support you need, when you need it. Rehabilitation services and local Media Articles.**

I did participate in a teleconference call last Friday – moderated by the DM VAC. My notes/observations are attached for information. The “BIG” idea was -

“Desperate times call for desperate measures”

(credit to Brian Forbes). Given the backlogs and delays – could consideration be given to accept claims at face value? Spot audits later for abuses? The medical world is under great stress and for a veteran to seek medical data/information under these circumstances is difficult – if not impossible. Looking at how the Federal Government is responding to financial conditions just over the few days since this conference – the idea does have a lot of merit in my opinion. The Minister and the DM did hear the proposal and we will wait and see.

I have also attached a copy of the CDS Letter of 27 March

Randy stowell, National President NVOC

The CDS sent a letter to all Families and members of the Force regarding the Virus emergency.

My understanding is that Force Protection has motivated the CF to disperse most members to a safe location i.e. Home. Members are to maintain individual readiness for “on call” duties. The posting/promotion cycles are in a “contracted” mode! [fewer moves]. The “Ottawa Citizen had a section about this in today’s newspaper.

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/canadian-military-on-notice-to-provide-logistic-support-help-vulnerable-populations-in-wake-of-covid-19/>

Urging the federal government to automatically approve the roughly 44,000 outstanding applications for disability benefits from injured veterans, we will see what happens ????

One of Canada's largest veterans' organizations is urging the federal government to automatically approve the roughly 44,000 outstanding applications for disability benefits from injured veterans to help them better deal with the COVID-19 crisis.

The call from the National Council of Veteran Associations, which represents more than 60 veteran groups, comes amid fears about the financial and emotional toll the pandemic is taking on veterans struggling with mental and physical wounds.

Veterans Affairs Canada says staff are still processing claims as they work from home and that there are no immediate plans to automatically approve the backlog, which was already a source of frustration and anger for many veterans forced to wait years for support even before COVID-19.

But the COVID-19 crisis presents yet another barrier for veterans to get their applications approved, said council chairman Brian Forbes, who is also executive director of The War Amps Canada and a member of Veterans Affairs Minister Lawrence MacAulay's policy advisory group.

“It was bad enough as far as the backlog and the delays and the number of new claims (before COVID-19),” Forbes said in an interview “And then when you put the coronavirus on top of it, you've got a perfect storm. Things are just not getting done.”

Veterans Affairs Emergency Fund

They are reaching out to all veterans to pass on the word that during this pandemic they have emergency funds available to veterans who find they just can't make ends meet!

Call 1-866-522-2122 and inquire about their Veterans Affairs Emergency Fund. A grant of up to \$10,000 can be made available within 48 hours of application.

From their website:

Every situation will be different and unique, which is why applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The emergency fund covers essentials, such as:

- Food
- Clothing
- Rent, mortgage
- Medical care/expenses
- Expenses required to maintain safety and shelter.

As this is only temporary financial relief, we will also work with you to identify your long-term needs. Together, we will look for solutions to improve your financial stability.

What the government is offering you in coronavirus-related benefits and how to get them

Here's a quick summary of the major tax changes affecting individuals

The federal government this past week announced a variety of tax measures to help Canadians facing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Here's a quick summary of the major tax changes affecting individuals.

Tax payment and filing deadlines

The government is extending the deadlines for filing personal tax returns and paying balances owing. You now have until June 1, 2020, to file your personal tax return, which is one month later than the usual April 30 deadline. Self-employed taxpayers (and their spouses or partners) still have until June 15, 2020, to file.

You also now have until Aug. 31, 2020, to pay any balance owing on your 2019 tax returns, which is four months later than the usual April 30 deadline. You may have to pay interest on any balance owing after Aug. 31 for your 2019 tax return.

- [6 tools to help you be more productive working from home](#)
- [How to keep those teleconference calls on track](#)
- [Working from home? You should be using a VPN.](#)

But if you expect to receive income-tested benefits, such as the Goods and Services Tax credit (GSTC) or Canada child benefit (CCB), it is recommended that you still file your tax return by April 30 to help ensure your benefits can be properly calculated in time to receive the 2020-21 program payments that begin in July 2020.

If you are expecting a tax refund, it's also a good idea to file your tax return as soon as possible since the Canada Revenue Agency will continue to process refunds throughout tax season.

Tax instalments

Under the tax rules, quarterly tax instalments (due March 16, June 15, Sept. 15 and Dec. 15) are required for 2020 if your "net tax owing" this year will be more than \$3,000 (\$1,800 for Quebec tax filers) and was also over \$3,000 in either 2019 or 2018. Effectively, the definition of net tax owing is your net federal and provincial taxes, less income tax withheld at source. If you are self-employed, your instalments must include any Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions and voluntary Employment Insurance (EI) premiums.

You now have until Aug. 31, 2020, to pay your March 2020 and June 2020 quarterly personal tax instalments, and any other instalments that would normally be due between March 18 and Aug. 31. The government has confirmed

that neither interest nor penalties will accumulate on these amounts during this period.

Temporary income support for workers and parents

The government introduced a variety of new measures for Canadians without paid sick leave who are sick, quarantined or forced to stay home to care for children. The first is waiving the one-week waiting period for those individuals in imposed quarantine who claim EI sickness benefits, and waiving the requirement for a medical certificate to qualify for those benefits

Secondly, the government is introducing the Emergency Care Benefit (ECB), which will provide up to \$900 bi-weekly for up to 15 weeks. This flat-payment benefit will be administered through the CRA and provide income support to workers (including those who are self-employed) who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.

The ECB will also be paid to workers (including self-employed) who may be taking care of a family member, such as an elderly parent, who is sick with COVID-19 but does not qualify for EI sickness benefits, and to parents with children who require care or supervision due to school closures and are unable to earn employment income, regardless of whether they qualify for EI or not.

ECB applications will be available in April and require applicants to attest that they meet eligibility requirements. They will need to re-attest every two weeks to reconfirm their eligibility. You can apply for the ECB either using the secure [CRA MyAccount](#) portal or [My Service Canada Account](#) website, or by calling a toll-free number that will be equipped with an automated application process.

Special one-time payment

The government announced a one-time special payment to be given out by early May 2020 through the GSTC, thereby doubling the maximum annual GSTC payment amounts for the 2019-20 benefit year. The government has estimated the average boost to income for those who qualify for this measure will be approximately \$400 for single individuals and nearly \$600 for couples. The government estimates this will help more than 12 million low- and modest-income families.

Increased Canada child benefit

The government is also increasing the maximum annual CCB amounts for the 2019-20 benefit year by \$300 per child. It estimates the average increase for families receiving the CCB will be approximately \$550. These families will receive the extra benefit as part

of their May 2020 payment. It is estimated that more than 3.5 million families will benefit.

RRIF minimums

You must start making minimum withdrawals from your RRIF in the year after it is established. Minimum withdrawals are calculated as a percentage of the fair market value of your RRIF assets at the beginning of the year, and the percentage is based on your age at the beginning of the year. Withdrawals from your RRIF, including the minimum amount, are taxable as ordinary income at your marginal tax rate. The federal and provincial pension income credits are available for RRIF withdrawals once you are at least 65 years old.

The government announced it is reducing the minimum withdrawal from RRIFs in 2020 by 25 per cent “in recognition of volatile market conditions and their impact on many seniors’ retirement savings.” For example, a taxpayer who was 71 on Jan. 1, 2020, now only has to withdraw 3.96 per cent of the fair market value of their RRIF (as of Jan. 1), down from the normal rate of 5.28 per cent.

This decrease will provide needed flexibility to seniors who are concerned they may be required to liquidate more of their RRIF assets than they need for living expenses to meet the current legislated minimum withdrawal requirements.

For those who already withdrew the higher RRIF minimum for 2020, it remains to be seen whether the government will permit them to re-contribute all or a portion of their excess withdrawals into their RRIF, as was permitted in 2015 when the RRIF minimums were last revised.

How to Grocery Shop Safely During the Coronavirus Outbreak

<http://www.msn.com/en-ca/lifestyle/smart-living/how-to-grocery-shop-safely-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/ar-BB11zH3N?li=AAggxAX>

Submarine solider shares a few coping strategies for many of you now facing a Covid-19 .

During my time in the Submarine Service, I – along with many others – endured many weeks and months cooped up in a steel tube under the waves. I just thought I’d share a few coping strategies for many of you now facing a Covid-19 “patrol”.

ROUTINE: Life at sea is dictated by shifts and routines. You can tell what day it was by what was for dinner. Make a routine now, test it then write it down & stick to it. Divide your day up in to work (if home working) rest, exercise, meals, hobbies, etc. Do the same for kids.

PRIVACY: the only place private at sea was your bunk. Make a dedicated private time / place in the routine. Even if you timeshare the front room get everyone a couple of hours alone. Do whatever you want: watch shit films, pray, yoga, arrange matches: whatever gets you through.

EAT: scran onboard was usually pretty good and broke up the monotony of patrols. Take time to prepare meals. A good mix of "feast & famine" will stop the pounds piling on – one boat did Steak Saturdays, Fishy Friday, Curry & Pizza nights. On other days soup & bread was enough.

EXERCISE: you'll have the advantage of not having to use a spinning bike in a switchboard. 20-30mins a day of whatever as a minimum. Fitness Blender on YouTube has workouts for all. It's a natural antidepressant, breaks up the day and keeps you healthy. Get outside when able.

CLEAN: that house is going to get grungy now you're spending a lot more time in it. Put time in your daily routine to clean and stick to it.

CONNECT: even during radio silence we still got a weekly telegram from loved ones back home. This was a weekly highlight. Keep in touch with your people. My current work have agreed a daily "coffee" catch up online even if there's no work to discuss.

PERSPECTIVE: like all other patrols, this one will end. It's a shit sandwich but better than dodging barrel bombs. Don't obsess the news or Twitter shit. Bring your world closer, focus on little things that you enjoy & make plans for the future. At least you should have a window!

Mental health and wellness

Counseling and compensation for your mental health needs, such as, [depression](#).

Compensation for illness or injury

Financial payment provided for a service-related illness or injury.

Talk to a professional now

[Get support right now from a mental health professional by calling 1-800-268-7708.](#)

Assessment and treatment

Services that provide support for a mental health condition, such as an operational stress injury.

Counselling services

[Professional, peer or spiritual services and support.](#)

Rehabilitation services

Treatment and therapies to overcome or cope with a service-related illness or injury.

Medical costs

For services and expenses related to your mental health needs.

Additional information

Understanding mental health

[A wide range of mental health resources and information for you and your family.](#)

Veteran Homelessness in Canada

[Veterans Affairs Canada and local organizations are taking steps to reach out to Veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.](#)

COVID-19 — Information for Veterans

Veterans Affairs Canada

To our Veterans: As we all grapple with the realities of COVID-19, I want you to know that Veterans Affairs Canada employees are continuing to work every day to serve you and your families. The last few weeks have certainly presented our team with a new set of challenges, but we adapted as quickly as possible to what is, for the time being, our new normal. [READ MORE](#)

Vétérans avec une blessure de stress opérationnel et COVID-19: comment gérer le stress et l'anxiété

45e Nord

En cette période incertaine liée aux effets ravageurs de la COVID-19, il est tout à fait justifié d'éprouver de l'inquiétude. Pour certaines personnes, le stress et l'anxiété se manifesteront de manière intense. La pandémie en soi est inquiétante, le nombre de décès, la contagion au sein de nos communautés, les répercussions sur notre quotidien et les effets du confinement ne sont que quelques facteurs qui influencent directement notre santé mentale. Bien que le mécanisme du stress et l'émotion qu'est l'anxiété soient normaux, ils peuvent être difficiles à gérer et encore davantage dans le contexte actuel qui est sans précédent. [LIRE PLUS](#)

Canadian military has plan to mobilize 24,000 personnel to respond to COVID-19

Ottawa Citizen

The Canadian military has a plan to mobilize 24,000 regular and reserve force members to respond to novel coronavirus. Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan said Monday the personnel are ready to help, although no requests for such help have come in at this point from provincial, municipal or territorial governments. Sajjan said the Canadian Forces can provide a wide variety of support and is in particular focusing on northern and Arctic communities. Those communities have limited health and logistics support capabilities. [READ MORE](#)

COVID-19: l'armée se prépare à répondre à tout moment

La Presse

Les équipages de deux navires de la Marine royale canadienne ont reçu l'ordre de s'isoler dans un hôtel de Halifax pendant deux semaines, alors que le gouvernement fédéral annonçait lundi qu'il était prêt à mobiliser du jour au lendemain jusqu'à 24 000 soldats pour lutter contre la pandémie de COVID-19. [LIRE PLUS](#)

Honouring a local soldier's wartime efforts

Kamloops This Week

A Kamloops veteran has been awarded a medal from the French government 75 years after he helped liberate the country on D-Day. Lloyd Funnell has been given the Legion of Honour medal by France. "At first, I thought it was too much for me, because the rank and file don't get in that position — but, occasionally, they do," Funnell, who turns 100 in October, told KTW. Originally from Manitoba, Funnell served as a soldier between 1941 and 1945. He married in 1951 and lived in various places across Western Canada before settling in Kamloops. [READ MORE](#)

RCAF help transport military personnel as training schools and colleges close because of COVID-19

Ottawa Citizen

With Canadian Forces colleges and training schools now closing the Royal Canadian Air Force is helping military personnel get back to their home bases or in the case of officer cadets their home cities and towns. Approximately 500 military personnel from various academic and training institutions will be travelling home on RCAF flights beginning this weekend, confirmed Department of National Defence spokesman Dan Le Bouthillier. [READ MORE](#)

COVID-19: op UNIFIER réduit la voilure de 70 pour-cent

45e Nord

En raison de la pandémie, un nombre réduit de membres des FAC seront déployés en Ukraine dans le cadre de la Roto 9 de l'Op UNIFIER, a finalement annoncé le Commandement des opérations interarmées du Canada (COIC). «À la lumière de la pandémie actuelle de COVID-19 et de la situation qui prévaut tant au pays qu'à l'étranger ainsi que de la suspension des activités non essentielles des opérations de déploiement des FAC, le nombre de membres du personnel quittant au début avril pour l'Op UNIFIER sera réduit.», indique le COIC. [LIRE PLUS](#)

COVID-19 pandemic postpones trip marking WWII liberation of the Netherlands

CBC News

Canadian veterans of the campaign to liberate the Netherlands during the Second World War have had to postpone their return to mark the 75th anniversary of that event. The trip was scheduled for May 1-10, but there were health concerns as the COVID-19 pandemic continues its spread. "We had planned to take a government of Canada delegation, including Second World War veterans and veterans of the liberation itself back to the Netherlands," said Jennifer MacLeod, manager of overseas events at Veterans Affairs Canada. [READ MORE](#)

Military medal and service coins stolen from army member in Kingston

Global News

Kingston police are currently investigating after a thief stole a medal and service coins from a Canadian Armed Forces member in the city. Police say the theft took place overnight from March 22 to 23. One general service medal, obtained by the military member from a tour in Kuwait, and two military coins were stolen from the member's vehicle. [READ MORE](#)