

Fall 2014

# salute!



**Veterans Affairs Canada: Proudly Serving Canada's Veteran Community**

## World Wars Commemoration

Proudly remembering  
Canada's contribution



# salute!



Veterans Affairs Canada: Proudly Serving Canada's Veteran Community

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## On the cover

Walter Georgeson and nearly 100 other Veterans were in Normandy on June 6, 2014 to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landings—one of Canada's most significant and successful military engagements. The campaign would help signal the beginning of the end of the Second World War. Mr. Georgeson was a member of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and saw his first action at Juno Beach.



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## Minister's Message

This year, our Government launched a pivotal period known as the World Wars Commemoration. Through to 2020, our nation is proudly recognizing Canada's men and women who have courageously served and sacrificed in defence of peace and freedom.

As Canadians, we know it is our duty to remember these contributions of current and past generations. We understand that there are, and always have been, threats to peace and freedom, and that our cherished way of life has not been protected without sacrifice. We fought two world wars—where more than 110,000 Canadians gave their lives. And from the Korean War through to the conflict in Afghanistan, hundreds more made the ultimate sacrifice in an effort to defend the innocent and the powerless. Unfortunately, here at home, the tragic events of October 20 and 22 are a grim reminder that Canada is not immune to the types of attacks that we have seen elsewhere around the world. But as our Prime Minister has said, we will not be intimidated by these despicable acts. We are a nation dedicated to securing peace and freedom at home and abroad, and we will remain a beacon of hope for those who share our collective values of peace, freedom and democracy.

Throughout the month of November, let us remember and honour those who have given so much to protect our democratic and peaceful way of life. Let us also remember the men and women who are proudly serving in uniform today to keep our nation proud, strong, and free.

Lest we forget.

Hon. Julian Fantino, PC, MP  
Minister of Veterans Affairs

## In Memoriam

Throughout November, as we remember the many Canadians who have made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our grateful nation, our thoughts and prayers will also include the family and friends of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, who was killed on October 20, 2014 in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and Corporal Nathan Cirillo, who was killed on October 22, 2014, while performing ceremonial honour guard at the National War Memorial in Ottawa. May God bless them and keep our land glorious and free.



# Prosthetics

Improving our service to Veterans is always a top priority. Working closely with the War Amps, the Department has made some important changes to better support Veterans who wear prosthetics.

**First, replacing a device is faster.**

Previously, only a medical specialist could prescribe the benefit, but now these can be

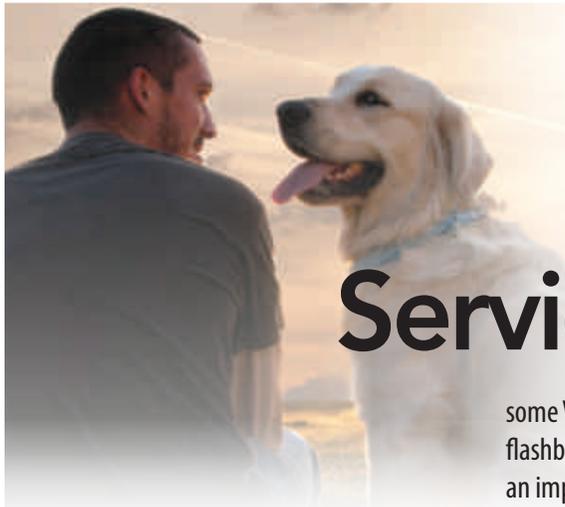
prescribed by a family physician. This one important change can shorten the wait time for a replacement device simply because Veterans can avoid waiting weeks or months to get an appointment with a specialist.

**Veterans can also be provided with more than one device.** In addition to a daily use device, they can now be provided with back-up prosthesis for specific uses, plus recreational devices designed for activities such as skiing, swimming, golfing, etc. **Finally, over-the-counter supplies related to prosthetic use can now be reimbursed without a prescription.** Removing this

barrier was just common sense.

Together, these important and helpful changes will help improve the quality of life of disabled Veterans by relying on the experience and knowledge of their family doctor and their prosthetic provider, making it more cost-effective to purchase specialized devices, and reducing the workload on physicians.

Not surprisingly, the War Amps welcomed these changes because of the obvious benefit to amputee Veterans. Brian Forbes, Chairman of the War Amps Executive Committee, added: "We... will continue to work with Veterans Affairs Canada to improve the administration of the Department's prosthetic policy and related health care programs."



# Service Dogs

Best friends. Exercise partners. Companions. Guardians. Could a specially trained dog be all this and more for Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)? Some Veterans have told the Department that their service dog has been essential to their recovery.

Unlike the typical family pet, a psychiatric service dog has been trained to act as a constant companion, to perform tasks that help its owner, and even to help manage common symptoms of PTSD. For example,

some Veterans who experience nightmares or flashbacks, say their service dog can provide an important "reality check" with persistent nudges and calm behavior that help the Veteran to feel safe.

There is anecdotal evidence from Canada and the United States that psychiatric service dogs are playing an important role in the lives of Veterans living with PTSD. However, before the Department can make any policy decisions, more scientific evidence is required. To learn what is known, the Department commissioned the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research to coordinate the collection and evaluation of

existing research. The results of this study revealed that evidence was limited and more research was required.

To help build this required evidence, Veterans Affairs Canada consulted with stakeholders and announced funding for a two-and-a-half-year pilot project. The main objective of the project is to determine if the use of service dogs will assist Veterans living with PTSD.

The Department has committed up to \$500,000 for the pilot project, that will begin in 2015. It is expected that as many as 50 Veterans using psychiatric service dogs will participate in the study.

This fall, independent researchers will be contracted to design and implement the pilot project. At a minimum, Veterans participating in the project must be receiving a disability benefit for PTSD from the Department and have approval of the mental health professional who is treating them.

# Connect With VAC Online

*My VAC Account* is a secure, online service that gives you 24-hour access to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). *My VAC Account* is available to Veterans, still-serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP.

Through *My VAC Account*, you can send secure messages to the Department; apply for disability benefits and track your application status; access forms for Career Transition Services, health-related travel and the Veterans Independence Program (VIP); manage your personal information; send documents to support your applications; review information about benefits you receive; and manage your direct deposit information.

We continue to update and enhance *My VAC Account* to make it more user-friendly and accessible.

## How do you register for *My VAC Account*?

If you have previously done business with VAC, you can use your VAC file number, VAC Health ID number, or CSDN ID to register. If you are new to Veterans Affairs Canada, you will be asked for a few basic details to create your account.

For more information, or to register for *My VAC Account*, visit [veterans.gc.ca](http://veterans.gc.ca) and click the green "My VAC Account" button on the top of the screen; call us at **1-866-522-2122**; or visit any VAC or Service Canada office.



# Italian Campaign

Over a 20-month period, more than 93,000 Canadian troops fought in Italy. They faced some of the harshest conditions and fiercest fighting of the Second World War.

## June 10, 1943

The assault on Sicily was one of the largest seaborne operations in military history. The victory took more than four weeks, but with control of Sicily, the Allies had secured the Mediterranean Sea for Allied shipping.

*"Some of my earliest childhood memories are of the soldiers who handed out gum and shared their food with us. These memories have given me a deeply personal appreciation of Canada's men and women in uniform."*

- Hon. Julian Fantino

## September 3, 1943

Following the victory in Sicily, the Allies landed on the mainland and began the "crawl" to northern Italy. One of the most difficult battles was in Ortona. Canadian troops ultimately liberated the town after more than a week of vicious street fighting.

## Heroic acts

Three soldiers were awarded the Victoria Cross during the Italian Campaign: Ernest "Smokey" Smith, John Mahony and Paul Triquet. For "bravery in the field," Tommy Prince was awarded the Military Medal.

## Aftermath

Canadian troops did not participate in the final victory. After 20 months of fighting they were sent, in February 1945, to the Netherlands to be reunited with the First Canadian Army. Canadian casualties during the Italian Campaign totalled more than 26,000, nearly 6,000 of which were fatal. Most of the Canadians who died there are buried in Italy.



Scott Harrigan meeting with HRH, The Prince of Wales.  
Halifax - May 19, 2014

# Operation Entrepreneur

With a naval career that covered two decades and included stops in over 20 countries, Lieutenant Scott Harrigan is very accustomed to life in the military, but he describes his transition to a work-from-home entrepreneur as a natural one.

A native of New Brunswick, Harrigan graduated from the Royal Military College in 1997. After another 18 months at the Naval Officer Training Centre, he was eager to start what would become a diverse and successful military career.

Over the years, he has sailed on almost every warship in Canada's East Coast fleet during tours in support of the efforts in Afghanistan,

the Persian Gulf and Haiti. It was during his last posting that Harrigan made his first Mariner dog leash, the product that helped launch his second career as an entrepreneur.

"I came up with the original idea while serving as the Deck Officer on the HMCS *Preserver*," Harrigan says. "I was trying to learn some of the knots my Bosuns had perfected. I made the original half dozen leashes as Christmas gifts." The rest, as they say, is history.

Today those marine knotted dog leashes are just one of the many pet items sold through Mariner Dog Products, the company that Harrigan founded in 2009.

After trying to source glow-in-the-dark ropes for his hand knotted leashes, Harrigan decided to start a second company and become the Canadian distributor for Glorope, a line of glow-in-the-dark ropes, fabrics, and marine products. The transition from a military career to entrepreneurship was eye-opening for Harrigan. "When I began, I didn't think my military skills would apply to the business world. However, it wasn't long before I realized that the military had given me tremendous experience in accounting, human resources and of course, leadership. All of which are critical to running a business."

Another important element in Harrigan's transition to a civilian career was the Based-in-Business bootcamp offered through the Prince's Operation Entrepreneur. This is a made-in-Canada program to assist members with ideas for good businesses, but who lack the knowledge base, networks or confidence to become successful entrepreneurs. The

bootcamp is offered at three universities across Canada—Memorial University, the University of Regina and University Laval. The course is available at no cost to Veterans and to Canadian Armed Forces members, Regular Force or Reserve, preparing to transition out of the military. The initiative is funded through support from the Government of Canada, the True Patriot Love Foundation, the Queen's Trust, Aimia and the Mosaic Corporation. The entrepreneurial bootcamp was an important step in Harrigan's transition from naval officer to business owner, and the expertise of the faculty and mentors in the program were a good match for the website that Harrigan hoped to establish. "There is just so much information that comes at you over the week. Each person would come away with something different. For me, it was about building an e-commerce website and about identifying the fact that I didn't know what I didn't know," recalls Harrigan. Matthew Rowe, a spokesperson for the Prince of Wales' Canadian charitable office, describes the curriculum as intensive. "It's like getting an MBA in a week; the curriculum

covers all aspects of how to run a business. Some participants describe it as being akin to drinking from a firehose, but this method gives students a complete overview of what it will take to run a business. At the end of the week, students have learned a tremendous amount and have developed a solid business plan."

“When I began, I didn't think my military skills would apply... However, it wasn't long before I realized that the military had given me a tremendous experience...”

The week's activities are intensive and include classroom presentations and one-on-one time with business professors and mentors. Students who complete the program qualify for business mentorship in their community and for a five-year, low interest loan of up to \$45,000 to start their business.

Today, Harrigan is enjoying the freedom that comes from being his own boss. His two companies are growing, and he is in discussion with national retailers and pet product distributors in B.C. and Ontario to carry his signature Mariner leashes and his line of glow-in-the-dark pet products. Harrington credits his military training in the Canadian Navy, the mentorship he received through the Prince's Operation Entrepreneur, and his own hard work and dedication for the success he has enjoyed.

#### The Prince's Operation Entrepreneur

A made-in-Canada program that provides transitioning Canadian Armed Forces men and women with the education, financing and mentoring they need to build and grow a successful business. Learn more at [princescharities.ca](http://princescharities.ca)

#### Career Transition Services

Veterans who seek out professional services for their search for civilian employment can receive financial support of up to \$1,000. [veterans.gc.ca/services/](http://veterans.gc.ca/services/)



## HIRING VETERANS in the Government of Canada



The Government of Canada is creating **new employment opportunities** in the **federal public service** for **Canadian Armed Forces** personnel and **Veterans**

For more information, visit [veterans.gc.ca/services](http://veterans.gc.ca/services)



Veterans Affairs  
Canada

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Canada

Canada



# Moving Forward

In June of this year, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs issued *The New Veterans Charter: Moving Forward*. This report strongly endorsed the Charter as the right foundation for delivering services and benefits to Veterans and their families and made several recommendations to enhance those services.

In the long term, the Department will consider each recommendation in detail and examine ways to enhance benefits for Veterans and their families.

Families of injured Veterans will benefit from new services such as access to psychological counselling services and a new training

program to assist caregivers of Veterans. Since their introduction in 2006, the programs of the New Veterans Charter have been helping Veterans and their families make a successful transition from military to civilian life. This includes programs that provide injured Veterans with tailored benefits that address their needs including services to restore their health and independence, vocational training, income support, and a lump-sum award to compensate for their injuries.

In addition, Veterans and their families can also access many individual and family group health benefits and help with launching a civilian career.



## Sign up for direct deposit

Using direct deposit is reliable, secure and you get your money faster. If you have a *My VAC Account*, setting up direct deposit only takes a few steps. Otherwise, call us if you have questions or download the direct deposit form. Visit [veterans.gc.ca/services](http://veterans.gc.ca/services) to learn more.

## Quick facts about disability benefits



**17,000**  
first applications received each year



**80%**  
of first applications have a decision within 16 weeks



**9 Weeks**  
the amount of time it typically takes to obtain service health records from DND or Library and Archives



**90%**  
of hearing loss applications have a decision within 12 weeks

### Next Steps:

Learning from the methods used to speed up hearing loss decisions, we are streamlining the decision process for other common injuries (for example, knee, back and ankle).



## Share your thoughts

Visit the Veterans Affairs Canada Facebook page for the latest updates and information on services and benefits for Veterans.

[facebook.com/VeteransAffairsCanada](http://facebook.com/VeteransAffairsCanada)



## Get involved in the conversation

Follow us on Twitter. Remember to use #veterans or @VeteransENG\_CA. We always welcome your comments and suggestions! Get involved in the conversation at

[twitter.com/veteransENG\\_ca](http://twitter.com/veteransENG_ca)

# Did You Know?



## Free admission & lunch at War Museum

Canadian Veterans and military personnel can receive free admission for themselves and up to two family members when they visit the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. And thanks to contributions from generous private donors and schools across Canada, Operation Veteran also provides coupons, valued at \$11 each, which can be used in The Mess, the museum's cafeteria. More than 5,000 Veterans have benefited from the program. To get your free lunch and admission, just present your military identification or proof of service. Visit [warmuseum.ca](http://warmuseum.ca) or call **1-800-555-5621** for more information. (TTY for the hearing impaired: **1-819-776-7003**).



## Discounts on train travel

VIA Rail is showing its support and gratitude to the men and women who have served our country. Veterans and still-serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces can receive a 25% discount on the best available fares in all classes (excluding Express Deals) for one-way or round-trip travel on any VIA Rail train in Canada. This discount can also be applied to up to five family members travelling with you in the same class. For all the details and conditions or to book your ticket, visit [viarail.ca](http://viarail.ca) or call **1-888-VIA-RAIL (1-888-842-7245)**.



## Caregiver Tax Credit

If you care for a senior or disabled family member, you may qualify for a non-refundable tax credit. The Caregiver Amount Tax Credit is for those who care for a dependent senior or disabled family member over the age of 18 in their homes. To receive it, the dependent must have a net income of less than \$20,000 and be a resident of Canada. For 2014, the maximum claim amount is \$4,530 for each dependent. Other criteria may apply. Please visit [cra-arc.gc.ca](http://cra-arc.gc.ca) to learn more about how to receive the Line 315 – Caregiver amount and other related credits.



## Special Tribute for Veterans of the Second World War



To mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canada's engagement in the Second World War, Minister Fantino recently launched a national initiative to pay tribute to today's Veterans of the Second World War. This unique tribute—a limited edition commemorative pin and personalized certificate of recognition—is now available by request. All living Canadian Veterans who served for at least one day of the Second World War with the Canadian Armed Forces, the Merchant Navy or any Allied force are eligible to receive this tribute. Request forms are available at [veterans.gc.ca](http://veterans.gc.ca), by calling **1-866-522-2122** or by visiting any VAC or Service Canada office.



# WORLD WARS COMMEN



From 2014–2020, Canada will proudly remember Canada’s contribution to both of the World Wars; each a significant turning point in our nation’s history.

Never before had the world seen a conflict like the First World War. For a nation of eight million people, Canada’s war effort was remarkable. Of the 620,000 men and women who served, 66,655 gave their lives and another 172,950 were wounded. No longer viewed as just a colony, Canada had truly become a nation. This newfound status was purchased by the gallant men who stood fast at Ypres, climbed Vimy Ridge, captured Passchendaele, and entered Mons on November 11, 1918.

More than one million Canadians and Newfoundlanders served in the Second World War; more than 45,000 gave their lives and another 55,000 were wounded. For a country of only 11 million people, Canada’s contribution was again remarkable. At war’s end, Canada was a significant military power with the world’s third largest navy, fourth largest air force and an army of six divisions. Canada had grown significantly through the ordeal of war and now assumed new responsibilities as a leading member of the world community.

This year, some important milestones from each war were commemorated, beginning with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day on June 6, one of Canada’s most significant and successful military engagements. D-Day and the campaign that followed in Normandy would help signal the beginning of the end of the Second World War. We also remembered the start of the First

World War on August 4 and the beginning of Canada’s engagement in the Second World War on September 10. In November, the Minister and Veterans will be in Italy to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Italian Campaign.

**“Today...  
all Canadians  
should reflect  
upon their  
sacrifices and  
achievements  
in liberating  
the world from  
tyranny 70 years  
ago. These brave  
men and women  
deserve our  
gratitude for  
protecting our  
cherished way  
of life ...”**

-Hon. Julian Fantino



# COMMEMORATION

**Featured  
Photos**

**Page 10:**

Normandy (2014)

**On this page (top to bottom):**

Vimy Ridge (1917); Passchendaele (1916); Italy (1943); Belgium (1944).

## How to reach us

**veterans.gc.ca**  
**1-866-522-2122**  
Email: **information@vac-acc.gc.ca**  
From the United States, call:  
**1-888-996-2242**  
From the United Kingdom, Germany,  
France, or Belgium, call:  
**00-800-996-22421**  
From any other country; call collect  
**613-996-2242**

## Request a review or appeal a disability benefit decision

**Bureau of Pensions Advocates**  
**1-877-228-2250**  
or  
**Veterans Review and Appeal  
Board**  
**vrab-tacra.gc.ca**  
**1-800-450-8006**  
Outside Canada or the USA;  
call collect: **902-566-8751**  
**vrab-tacra@vrab-tacra.gc.ca**

## VAC Assistance Service

Confidential, professional counselling 24/7  
**1-800-268-7708**  
TTY: **1-800-567-5803**

## Funeral and Burial Program

**lastpostfund.ca**  
**1-800-465-7113**

## Office of the Veterans Ombudsman

**ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca**  
**1-877-330-4343**  
Outside Canada; call collect:  
**902-626-2919**



# SNOW REMOVAL

Reimbursement for snow removal  
is just one of the services available  
under Veterans Affairs Canada's  
**Veterans Independence Program (VIP).**

Find out if you qualify:  
**veterans.gc.ca/services**  
**1-866-522-2122**



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