



Veterans Affairs Canada

Performance Report

For the period ending
March 31, 2000

Canada

Improved Reporting to Parliament Pilot Document

The Estimates of the Government of Canada are structured in several parts. Beginning with an overview of total government spending in Part I, the documents become increasingly more specific. Part II outlines spending according to departments, agencies and programs and contains the proposed wording of the conditions governing spending which Parliament will be asked to approve.

The *Report on Plans and Priorities* provides additional detail on each department and its programs primarily in terms of more strategically oriented planning and results information with a focus on outcomes.

The *Departmental Performance Report* provides a focus on results-based accountability by reporting on accomplishments achieved against the performance expectations and results commitments as set out in the spring *Report on Plans and Priorities*.

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Foreword

On April 24, 1997, the House of Commons passed a motion dividing on a pilot basis the *Part III of the Estimates* document for each department or agency into two separate documents: a *Report on Plans and Priorities* tabled in the spring and a *Departmental Performance Report* tabled in the fall.

This initiative is intended to fulfil the government's commitments to improve the expenditure management information provided to Parliament. This involves sharpening the focus on results, increasing the transparency of information and modernizing its preparation.

The Fall Performance Package is comprised of 83 Departmental Performance Reports and the President's annual report, *Managing for Results 2000*.

This ***Departmental Performance Report***, covering the period ending March 31, 2000 provides a focus on results-based accountability by reporting on accomplishments achieved against the performance expectations and results commitments as set out in the department's *Report on Plans and Priorities* for 1999-00 tabled in Parliament in the spring of 1999.

Results-based management emphasizes specifying expected program results, developing meaningful indicators to demonstrate performance, perfecting the capacity to generate information and reporting on achievements in a balanced manner. Accounting and managing for results involve sustained work across government.

The government continues to refine its management systems and performance framework. The refinement comes from acquired experience as users make their information needs more precisely known. The performance reports and their use will continue to be monitored to make sure that they respond to Parliament's ongoing and evolving needs.

This report is accessible electronically from the Treasury Board Secretariat Internet site: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr/dpre.asp>

Comments or questions can be directed to the TBS Internet site or to:

Planning, Performance and Reporting Sector
Treasury Board Secretariat
L'Esplanade Laurier
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1A 0R5
Tel: (613) 957-7167
Fax (613) 957-7044

Veterans Affairs

Portfolio Performance Report

**For the period ending
March 31, 2000**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "George Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "George" and last name "Baker" clearly distinguishable.

**The Honourable George Baker
Minister of Veterans Affairs**

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Acronyms Used

| | |
|---------|---|
| BPA | Bureau of Pension Advocates |
| BRP | Benefits Redesign Project |
| CAC | Corporate Application Centre |
| CCRA | Canada Customs and Revenue Agency |
| CF | Canadian Forces |
| CCSA | Client-centred Service Approach |
| CSDN | Client Service Delivery Network |
| CWA | Civilian War Allowance |
| DND | Department of National Defence |
| DPR | Departmental Performance Report |
| FIS | Financial Information System |
| FCEMS | Federal Committee on Environmental Systems |
| FTE | Full-Time Equivalents |
| HCCI | Health Care Coordination Initiative |
| IM/IT | Information Management / Information Technology |
| ISO | International Organization for Standardization |
| IT | Information Technology |
| ITD | Information Technology Division |
| KEP | Knowledge Economy Partnership |
| PRAS | Planning Reporting and Accountability Structure |
| PTSD | Post Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| PWGSC | Public Works and Government Services Canada |
| RCL | Royal Canadian Legion |
| RCMP | Royal Canadian Mounted Police |
| RPP | Report on Plans and Priorities |
| RVCN | Review of Veterans' Care Needs |
| SCONDVA | Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs |
| TBS | Treasury Board Secretariat |
| VA | Veterans Affairs |
| VAC | Veterans Affairs Canada |
| VIP | Veterans Independence Program |
| VLA | Veterans Land Act |
| VRAB | Veterans Review and Appeal Board |
| WVA | War Veterans Allowance |
| Y2K | Year 2000 |

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Executive Summary

In 1999-00, Veterans Affairs' programs continued to reflect Canada's commitment to the well-being of its veterans, eligible Canadian Forces members and former members, qualified civilians and their dependants. Our commitment to provide program and service delivery based upon courtesy, speed and fairness remains unshakable.

Performance Commitments to Canadians:

- ▶ in recognition of their sacrifices to the nation, the **timely, fair and consistent delivery of benefits and services** that contribute to the independence, quality of life, and standard of living of Canada's veterans, eligible Canadian Forces members and former members, qualified civilians and their families.
- ▶ **clients' rights protected** through professional, legal representation in appealing decisions related to disability pensions and allowances.
- ▶ **commemorative programming** to improve the Canadian public's knowledge and recognition of the achievements and sacrifices of Canada's military in the defence of freedom and their significance in the development of Canada as a nation.
- ▶ **fairness** in the Disability Pension and War Veterans Allowance programs.

Challenges:

The Portfolio faced a number of significant challenges in its operating environment in 1999-00. These related to shared jurisdiction in some program areas, implementing federal government priorities, the rapid pace of technological change coupled with the need for Year 2000 readiness and financial, legislative, administrative and workplace reforms.

In carrying out its overall mandate, Veterans Affairs continued to face two particularly significant challenges: *taking care of our clients*; and *taking care of our people*.

Performance Accomplishment Highlights:

- ▶ In 1999-00, an estimated 208,000 veterans, eligible Canadian Forces members and former members, qualified civilians and their families received benefits and services amounting to \$2.08 billion by a staff complement of 3,257 full-time equivalents.

- ▶ On April 13, 1999, the Department of National Defence - Veterans Affairs Canada Centre for the Support of Injured and Retired Members and their Families opened in Ottawa. The Centre, staffed by representatives from both departments, provides information on VAC program benefits and services and referral services. In 1999-00, the Centre handled over **7,000 inquiries**.
- ▶ Pilgrimages were conducted to commemorate the **55th Anniversary of the Normandy Campaign**, the **55th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands** and the **55th Anniversary of the Italian Campaign**. During Veterans' Week 1999, ceremonies commemorated the sacrifices of Merchant Navy Veterans and members of the Canadian Forces during the Battle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, 1942 to 1944.
- ▶ On February 1, 2000, the government announced a tax-free Ex-Gratia payment to Canada's **Merchant Navy Veterans** and surviving spouses, compensating them for demobilization benefits which they were not eligible to receive at wars' end. A total of \$50 million has been allocated for this package.
- ▶ The Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) conducted a **client satisfaction survey** to provide clients an opportunity to comment on the quality of the service they received from the Board. The Veterans Review and Appeal Board was one of the first federal tribunals in Canada to undertake such a survey. Seventy-two percent of all clients surveyed reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of service they received from the Board despite the fact that only 30% received a fully favourable decision.
- ▶ In October 1998, staff at the Veterans Review and Appeal Board developed and coordinated a Portfolio-wide activity called "**My Grandmother's Wartime Diary**" as part of Women's History Month. In this fiscal year, these stories describing women's experiences during the Second World War, both at home and in wartime service, were published in hard copy and made available to the Canadian public on the VAC web site as a component of the Portfolio's mandate for commemoration.
- ▶ 1999-00 was the first full year that comment cards were available in all Veterans Affairs Canada district offices. Clients again acknowledged the efforts of our service delivery staff with a 97% rating on overall **quality of service** as **very good** or **good**.
- ▶ On September 9, 1999, the Deputy Minister and Departmental Executive Board made a commitment to produce a **Five-Year Strategic Plan** which would address the Department's need for a creative yet realistic approach to leading organizational change. The VAC Five-Year Strategic Plan is scheduled for completion by December 2000.

- ▶ The Department and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board continued to respond to the needs of veterans and current and former members of the Canadian Forces with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other psychiatric illnesses. On February 17, 2000, VAC implemented new protocols for the adjudication of benefits for clients with **psychiatric and other related illnesses**.
- ▶ The Portfolio responded to concerns raised by both our existing clientele and still serving or retired members of the Canadian Forces. One such concern focussed on health issues potentially related to depleted uranium. In this instance, the Department of National Defence agreed to pay for **depleted uranium testing** for any still serving members, while Veterans Affairs Canada agreed to cover the costs of testing for all released members who are applying for disability pension.
- ▶ **Bill C-61** (S.C. 1999, c. 10) which amended the *Pension Act*, the *War Veterans Allowance Act* and other acts under the responsibility of the Minister of Veterans Affairs came into force on May 1, 1999 to implement several improvements in veterans' benefits. In 1999-00, Veterans Affairs also worked with the Department of Justice to draft legislation to modernize federal statutes in relation to the benefits and obligations of common-law partners, leading to the introduction in Parliament of **Bill C-23** on February 11, 2000. Other legislative initiatives included the drafting of legislation aimed at improving benefits to members of the Regular Force and to civilian groups who served overseas in support of the armed forces.

Section I: Message

A. Minister's Message



I am pleased to present to Parliament and to the people of Canada the Performance Report for the Veterans Affairs Portfolio for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2000.

As we enter the new Millennium, it is appropriate for Canadians to reflect on the contribution our military community and country have made to the cause of peace. During the wars and peacekeeping missions of the past century, we have built a legacy of worthy sacrifice and proud accomplishments – a legacy that has been instrumental in the development of Canada as an independent nation and a respected member of the world community. Each of us owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to those special Canadians whose toil, determination, spirit and sacrifice helped win freedom and peace, time and time again.

During Veterans' Week we celebrated a "Century of Valour" by paying tribute to Canadian veterans and peacekeepers. We at Veterans Affairs are honoured to serve them.

During the past year, the Portfolio's proud public servants have once again demonstrated an exemplary dedication to our clients, earning high service satisfaction ratings while demonstrating responsible stewardship of Portfolio resources. I would like to highlight a few of our successes. Over the past twelve months we have made considerable advances in addressing the Quality of Life concerns of our Canadian Forces clients. Numerous initiatives have positioned us to offer all clients an improved continuum of service and more holistic needs assessment and support. We provided long overdue recognition to Merchant Navy Veterans and were able to announce a compensation package that further recognized the wartime services of Canadian and Newfoundland merchant sailors. In March 2000, we announced the extension of veterans' benefits to civilian groups, such as the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit and Ferry Command, who served overseas in close support of the war effort.

As always, our clients have remained our first priority, receiving the high quality, client-centred, personalized service they have grown to expect. We will continue to support the aspirations of our older veteran clients to remain active, healthy, and participating members of their communities, while also working to improve our services to Canadian Forces members and their families.

The information contained in this Performance Report demonstrates our achievements in client service during the 1999-00 fiscal year. I look forward to building on this record in the years to come.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "George Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "George" and last name "Baker" clearly distinguishable.

The Honourable George Baker

B. Agency Head's Message



With pleasure, I submit to Parliament the 1999-00 Performance Report of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board.

You should take note that the composition of our clientele is changing measurably. The veterans' component is declining, but there is a discernible increase in Regular Force claimants stemming from Canada's extensive peacekeeping activities. We have recognized the need for more comprehensive education and awareness of the special challenges facing the young peacekeeper. We have emphasized the need for accurate and reliable evidence as well as our obligation to produce decisions which are comprehensive and of high quality.

We have launched and completed a Client Satisfaction Survey which provided applicants with the opportunity to tell us how we are doing as a Board and what we need to review. The extraordinarily high favourable rate is a tangible endorsement that we are both doing and focussing on the right things. We take great pride collectively in our service to Canada's soldiers and veterans and we will continue to ensure, to the very best of our ability, that they receive first rate service and all the benefits to which they are entitled by law.

A handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is stylized, with a large, looped 'B' and 'C' that are interconnected. The name 'Brian W. Chambers' is written in a cursive script above the large loops.

Brian W. Chambers
Chair, Veterans Review and Appeal Board

Section II: Portfolio Performance

A. Societal Context

1.0 Objectives

The objectives of the Portfolio reflect both our mandate and mission:

| Veterans Affairs Canada | Veterans Review and Appeal Board |
|--|--|
| To provide benefits and services that contribute to the financial, mental, physical and social health and well-being of veterans and other eligible clients in recognition of their sacrifice to the nation, and undertake commemorative activity with a view to keep the memory of their sacrifices and achievements alive for all Canadians. | To provide clients with full opportunity to request review and appeal hearings to ensure a fair adjudicative process for disability pension and War Veterans Allowance claims. |

2.0 Strategic Priorities

The Portfolio identified the following strategic priorities in *Part III of the 1999-00 Estimates: Report on Plans and Priorities*. Each of the Strategic Priorities, as well as other key priorities, is discussed in Section II under Performance Accomplishments, beginning on page 11 of the Report.

| Strategic Priority | Business Line | Page |
|---|--------------------------|------|
| Review of Veterans' Care Needs (RVCN) | Benefits and Services | 14 |
| Client-centred Service Approach (CCSA) | Benefits and Services | 16 |
| Ste. Anne's Hospital | Benefits and Services | 17 |
| Veterans Organizations | Benefits and Services | 18 |
| Health Care Coordination Initiative (HCCI) | Benefits and Services | 53 |
| Benefits Redesign Project (BRP) | Corporate Administration | 17 |
| Year 2000 (Y2K) Project | Corporate Administration | 35 |
| Corporate Services Infrastructure Review (CSIR) | Corporate Administration | 35 |
| Knowledge Economy Partnership (KEP) | Corporate Administration | 54 |

3.0 Key Co-delivery Partners

VAC's Key Co-delivery Partners are identified in **Figure 4**, beginning on page 8.

4.0 Social and Economic Factors

The social and economic influences of the Portfolio ¹ are best illustrated in the two major challenges facing it: *taking care of our clients*; and *taking care of our people*.

Taking Care of Our Clients

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) has two distinct client groups: war service veterans and their survivors, and ex-members of the Canadian Forces and their immediate family members.

Figure 1: Canada's War Service Veterans

| | | | |
|--|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| In Canada, approximately 11% of all seniors are veterans and 28% of veterans are receiving benefits and services from Veterans Affairs. The total veteran population at March 31, 2000 was estimated at 382,776. | | March 31, 2000 | Average Age |
| | World War I | 435 | 100 |
| | World War II | 365,014 | 78 |
| | Korea | 17,327 | 69 |
| | Total | 382,776 | 78 |

Each of these two client groups requires very different services. Seventy-four percent of **war service veterans** are now in the 75 to 84 age group and are facing end of life issues. Our care for them is more complex and more expensive than during their younger years. They incur multiple disabling conditions that require our staff to communicate more extensively with them, their families, medical professionals, and community care workers. The result is case work that requires more frequent assessments and more effort to adjudicate and re-adjudicate, all at increased cost. Our growing number of **Canadian Forces clients** are younger than our war veterans and have very different service expectations and requirements. Their applications for benefits are often more complex and resource intensive due to the volume of documentation, the increasing frequency of multiple claims and the complexity of issues presented, such as stress related illnesses. If unsatisfied with an initial disability pension application, this client group is twice as

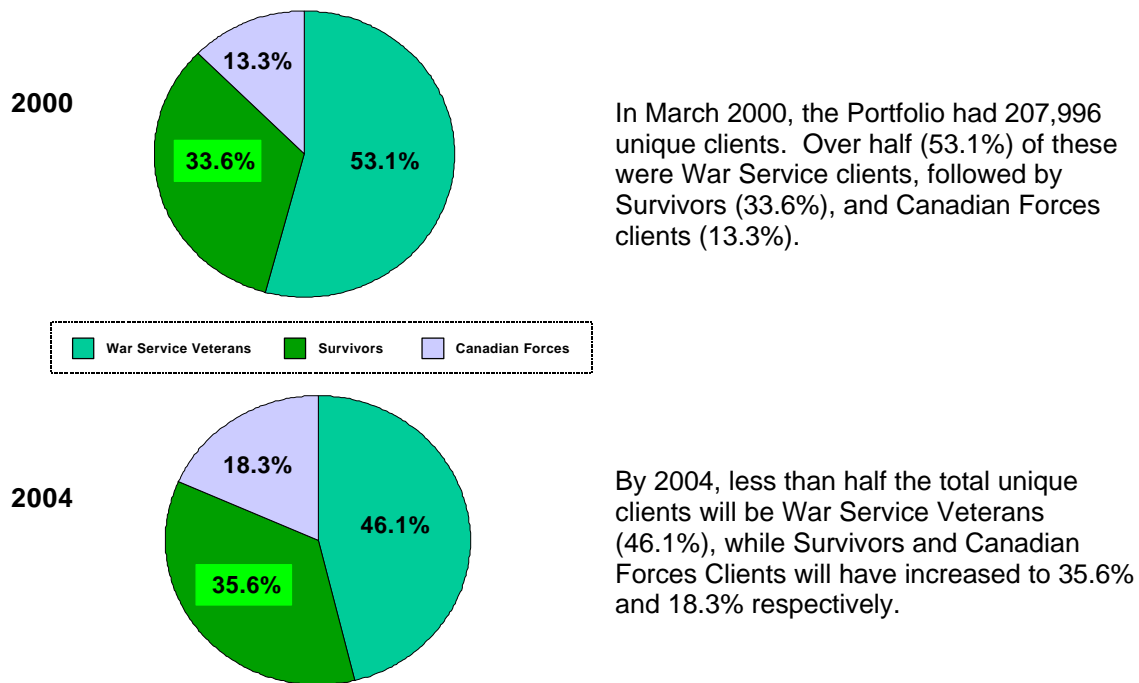
¹ Throughout this text the term "Veterans Affairs Canada" refers to the Department of Veterans Affairs, while the terms "Veterans Affairs" or "Portfolio" refer to activities relating to both the Department and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB).

likely to go to review, compared to war service veterans, and almost four times as likely to seek an appeal.

Against this backdrop, Veterans Affairs continues its efforts to: maintain traditional service excellence while addressing new client demands; maximize the return on VAC's major investments in information technology; and, enhance VAC's visibility at the centre to increase its contribution to horizontal processes.

VAC clients are traditionally categorized as belonging to one of the following client types: War Service Veterans, Survivors, and Canadian Forces. **Figure 2** shows the current breakdown of unique clients ².

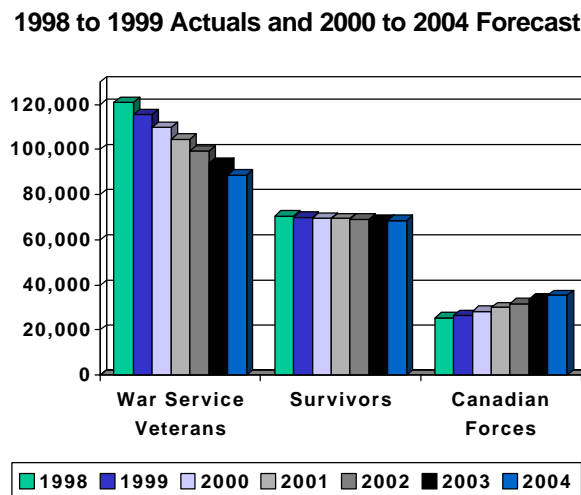
Figure 2: Veterans Affairs Canada - Unique Clients



While the aging and overall decline of the veteran population will have a dramatic impact in terms of overall client numbers, other demographic factors play an equally significant role in terms of assessing long-term program participation, associated expenditure requirements and workload pressures. **Figure 3** is a forecast of VAC clients by client type.

² Combining clients from all programs, and removing duplicate clients, results in a total unique client count

Figure 3: Forecast of Clients by Client Type



The number of War Service Veterans is expected to decline by 5% per year and the number of Survivors is expected to decrease less than 1% per year. The number of Canadian Forces clients has been increasing at an average annual rate of 9% since 1995, and is projected to increase at a rate between 5% and 7% per year over the next five years, reaching 35,000 by 2004. The proportion of Canadian Forces and Survivors will exceed 50% of the total client population by 2002.

Taking Care of our People

Veterans Affairs is a client-focussed organization. As friend, advisor and service provider, our staff have invested enormous energy in adjusting to major changes in our clientele and their needs. At the same time that we applaud their success in meeting this professional challenge, however, it is important that we acknowledge the tremendous personal challenge this has posed. For adjustments to client needs and expectations usually generate reciprocal needs for staff to acquire new skills, foster new relationships, respond to increased pressures and master new demands.

Ninety-seven percent of those clients who completed client comment cards have rated the Department's service as very good or good. Our goal is to maintain this approval rating as we adjust to the more intense levels of care required by war veterans, as well as the very different – and often urgent – needs of our growing Canadian Forces clientele.

Even with the increased use of technological enablers, this dynamic work environment has generated marked workload increases for Veterans Affairs employees. While they continue to focus on the needs of their clients, these dedicated public servants are themselves under stress and in need of support. The results of Veterans Affairs' participation in the 1999 Public Service Survey show that our staff are very concerned about: workload and overtime; training and development; work-life balance; enhancing workforce diversity; creating a supportive, family-friendly workplace; and both harassment and discrimination. Veterans Affairs is actively addressing these concerns. The results of the Survey also revealed that the vast majority of the Portfolio's staff are proud of their jobs and the clients they serve.

Managing, planning and coping with change in an environment of limited human and financial resources poses many challenges to the Department. Among these is our need to attract, train and retain dedicated staff from coast to coast. Meeting that challenge is central to our continued achievement of service excellence.

B. Performance Results Expectations and Chart of Key Results Commitments

1.0 Key Results Commitments, Expected Results and Key Partners

As part of our continuing effort to improve the reporting of performance information, the wording of the service commitments to Canadians that appeared in the Portfolio's ***Part III of the 1999-2000 Estimates - Report on Plans and Priorities*** has been revised. **Figure 4** outlines the Portfolio's **Key Results Commitments, Expected Results and Key Partners**. The chart also identifies Performance Accomplishment Areas that support the Expected Results and the Key Strategic Partners where VAC has leveraged resources in various areas. Many of the performance accomplishments have additional Expected Results particular to that initiative in the discussions in Section II, Part C beginning on page 11.

Figure 4: Key Results Commitments, Expected Results and Key Partners

| Key Commitment | Expected Result(s) | Performance | Page | Key Partner(s) |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Veterans Affairs Canada | | | | |
| Benefits and Services The delivery of benefits and services that contribute to the independence, quality of life and standard of living of Canada's veterans, eligible Canadian Forces members and former members, qualified civilians and their families in recognition of their sacrifice to the nation. | ▶ compensation for sacrifice in service to Canada | ✓ Disability Pension Program ✓ Ex-Gratia Payments to Merchant Navy Veterans ✓ Bill C-61 ✓ Bill C-41 | 19 20 21 22 | Veterans Organizations |
| | ▶ timely, fair and consistent service delivery | ✓ Veterans Affairs Canada - Canadian Forces Project ✓ Review of Veterans' Care Needs ✓ Continuum of Service ✓ Client-centred Service Approach ✓ Table of Disabilities Project ✓ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder ✓ Gulf War | 12 14 15 16 20 21 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans Organizations • Provincial and territorial health care departments • National Defence • Health Canada • Community volunteer agencies across Canada |
| | ▶ client independence and healthy lifestyle ▶ optimization of health ▶ appropriate care in logical location ▶ improved quality of life | ✓ Ste. Anne's Hospital ✓ Veterans Independence Program ✓ Treatment and other health related benefits ✓ Health promotion and education ✓ Long-term care | 17 23 23 24 25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans Organizations • Blue Cross Atlantic Canada • Health Canada • Provincial, territorial and private care facilities • Province of Quebec |
| | ▶ improved basic standard of living | ✓ War Veterans Allowance Program | 20 | Human Resources Development Canada |
| | | | | |

| Key Commitment | Expected Result(s) | Performance | Page | Key Partner(s) |
|---|---|--|----------------------|--|
| Pensions Advocacy The rights of Veterans Affairs Canada clients protected through professional, legal representation in appealing decisions related to disability pensions and allowances. | ▸ clients being informed of the process and their rights | ✓ Client Satisfaction Survey | 26 | |
| | ▸ professional case preparation and representation | ✓ Case presentations and client representation | 27 | Royal Canadian Legion |
| Commemoration A knowledgeable Canadian public that recognizes the achievements and sacrifices of Canada's citizens in the defence of freedom and appreciates the historical significance of these accomplishments in the development of Canada as a nation. | ▸ increased knowledge and public awareness of commemoration subject matter by Canadians, especially youth | ✓ Education ✓ Community Outreach | 27 27 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial and territorial Departments of Education • Canadian War Museum • Veterans Organizations • STEM-Net |
| | ▸ veteran recognition in life and death | ✓ Honours and Awards ✓ Pilgrimages and Ceremonies ✓ Veterans' Week ✓ Celebrating the Millennium ✓ Funeral and Burial | 28 28 29 29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth War Graves Commission • Veterans Organizations • Foreign Governments • Last Post Fund • Canadian Heritage • National Defence |
| | ▸ maintenance, preservation, and showcasing of Canada's commemorative resources | ✓ Graves, Grave Markers and Cemeteries ✓ Memorials | 29 30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth War Graves Commission • Public Works and Government Services Canada • Foreign Governments |

| Key Commitment | Expected Result(s) | Performance | Page | Key Partner(s) |
|---|---|---|----------|----------------|
| Veterans Review and Appeal Board | | | | |
| Fairness in the Disability Pension and War Veterans Allowance Programs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ consistent, timely, independent review and appeal process ▸ clients informed of their rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ VRAB Survey ✓ Review and appeal hearings | 38 40 | |

C. Performance Accomplishments

1.0 Portfolio Financial Information

| Veterans Affairs Portfolio 1999-00 Financial Resources (\$ millions) | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| | Veterans Affairs Canada | Veterans Review and Appeal Board |
| Planned Spending (Estimates Part III) | 1,961.5 | 8.1 |
| <i>Total Authorities</i> | <i>2,091.2</i> | <i>9.4</i> |
| Actual Spending | 2,067.2 | 9.4 |
| Actual FTEs (Full-Time Equivalents) | 3,154 | 103 |

The summary of financial information is intended to show: what the plan was at the beginning of the year (Planned Spending); what additional spending Parliament has approved to reflect changing priorities and unforeseen events (Total Authorities); and, what was actually spent (1999-00 Actuals). The actual Full-Time Equivalents totals for the year have also been included.

Detailed Portfolio financial performance information for the 1999-00 fiscal year may be found commencing on page 65 of this document.

2.0 Performance Accomplishments by Business Line

In 1999-00, our performance accomplishments reflect not only how we met our commitments to our clients but how we are working to effectively position the organization to meet the diverse service requirements of clients in the future.

A number of service standards have been established to assess quality of service and our performance. The summary report is found beginning on page 47.

Veterans Affairs Program

2.1 Benefits and Services Business Line

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Key Commitment | The delivery of benefits and services that contribute to the independence, quality of life and standard of living of Canada's veterans, eligible Canadian Forces members and former members, qualified civilians and their families in recognition of their sacrifice to the nation. |
|---------------------------|--|

Veterans Affairs Canada - Canadian Forces (VAC-CF) Project

In concert with the Department of National Defence (DND), VAC provided advice to Government on its response to the *Standing Committee on National Defence and*

Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA) recommendations contained in the "Moving Forward: A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces" Report (October 1998). The 89 recommendations dealt with the issues of pay and allowances, the housing crisis, the injured, retirees and veterans, the Military family and transitions. [Sixteen of the recommendations involve VAC with respect to care of the injured, retired and veterans]. On March 25, 1999, the Government accepted all of the SCONDVA recommendations and its response was presented as a comprehensive *Quality of Life* package.

| Expected Results |
|--|
| Advice to Government on Response to the report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs on Quality of Life of Canadian Forces (CF) members ~~ |
| Establish a strong network between the two Departments which encourages commitment to improvement of services for CF members ~~ |
| Raise VAC staff awareness of CF members' needs ~~ |
| Raise CF members' awareness of VAC entitlements and benefits |

In June 1998, the VAC-CF Project was formally established within VAC to provide leadership and act as a departmental focus for CF issues related to improving services. A staff exchange - in the form of a DND and VAC Liaison Officer - has also been established to promote better awareness and understanding of each department's programs and services.

VAC has worked closely with DND throughout this time period. In addition to establishing working groups to resolve issues related to the timely transfer of records, electronic records and medical reports, other accomplishments included:

- ▶ the opening of the ***DND -VAC Centre for the Support of Injured and Retired Members and Their Families*** in Ottawa on April 13, 1999. An evaluation of the first year of operation of The Centre is anticipated to be complete by September 2000.
- ▶ guidelines were provided to the field on accessing the ***Post Deployment Regional Health Centres*** that included special instructions to facilitate access for former members who had general health concerns related to service in Croatia, and a description of the new ***DND Operational Trauma and Stress Support Centres*** that serving members can access for traumatic stress and post traumatic stress disorder.
- ▶ a ***Business Case Study*** was carried out to determine the feasibility of developing and implementing a ***Crisis Line*** for former CF members and their families. In 2000-01, an Action Plan will be developed to support its implementation.
- ▶ increased effort continued to be directed towards ***improving the awareness of both CF members in terms of VAC program benefits and services and VAC staff with respect to CF issues***. In addition to an enhanced departmental presence on major CF bases and the development of educational products such as the “VAC In-Service to the Canadian Forces” brochure and video, a number of briefings and seminars have been conducted with DND and VAC personnel.

Review of Veterans' Care Needs - *Strategic Priority*

The objective of the Review of Veterans' Care Needs Project was to determine client needs, potential demand for services and whether programs are appropriate, as well as developing more effective **partnerships** for effective delivery.

Expected Results

Provide the direction for developing health and support program over the next decade by:

Identifying the future long-term care needs of veterans and examine appropriate ways to meet those needs;

~~

Addressing the majority of the eligibility anomalies raised by VAC staff and Veterans Organizations during the Review's consultation phase;

~~

Determining options for meeting care needs of Canadian Forces clients; and

~~

Providing options to strengthen caregiver support.

The Review collected qualitative and quantitative data and found that current program structures, eligibility requirements and administrative procedures impede staff in providing service to clients and can be barriers to accessing support and services. Furthermore, the Department's health care programs do not fully reflect current trends nor do they include the full range of services and care required to respond to needs and promote and maintain health, thus restricting VAC's ability to partner for delivery of health services.

The Review, which was completed on March 31, 2000, identified changes in needs of clients and gaps in support and services. The Project has completed an

evidence-based client profile of the care needs of aging veterans and Canadian Forces clients, identified options to meet their care needs, proposed revisions to service delivery requirements and procedures and programs which impede service, and identified information and communications needs. The Review has produced numerous research documents which are being placed on the Veterans Affairs web site for reference purposes.

The Continuum of Service Project will follow up on all aspects of the recommendations of the Review of Veterans' Care Needs to remove barriers to quality client service for aging veterans and Canadian Forces clients.

Through the VAC-CF Project and the Continuum of Service Project, ongoing activities include liaison with the Department of National Defence and other government departments, as well as continuing consultation with clients, stakeholders, and staff on results and recommendations. The Department is developing options to respond to and implement the Review's recommendations which would remove barriers to quality client service.

Continuum of Service

The Continuum of Service Project was established to respond to the recommendations of the Review of Veterans' Care Needs. The Continuum of Service is an approach to program and service delivery which places the client at the centre and facilitates the provision of the right service, at the right time, in the right place, using all available resources within and external to the Department. It includes a broad range of programs and services designed to promote and maintain health and enhance quality of life. Because clients' needs often extend beyond VAC boundaries, closer relationships with other service providers are necessary to achieve seamless service delivery.

Principles of the Continuum of Service include promoting a continuum of treatment and preventative services; integrating service delivery; enhancing partnerships with individuals, families, communities, voluntary organizations, and others; monitoring and measuring program outcomes; and sharing information and best practices. Continuum of Service principles were used as the cornerstone for a number of recommended changes to health programs and eligibility for VAC's aging veteran clients. Some of these changes are expected to take effect in the Fall of 2000, while others form the basis of a longer term phased-in implementation plan.

The Department has engaged in extensive consultations with other federal government departments, experts in aging and gerontology and others in the development of this policy framework. Health Canada has agreed to collaborate with VAC in the evaluation of the Continuum of Service on issues of national interest and impact, for example, social service integration and cost-effectiveness of home care.

The Continuum of Service principles are now being used as a basis for responding to the needs of VAC's Canadian Forces clients. The project team will suggest ways to modernize the spectrum of benefits and services to this client group and propose options for the Minister to take to Cabinet.

Client-centred Service Approach - *Strategic Priority*

The Client-centred Service Approach (CCSA), which will be fully implemented across

Expected Results

The adoption of a client-centred service delivery model, standards for service which promotes positive health outcomes and the promotion of standardized work processes

Canada by December 2000, is an approach to service delivery that focuses on and serves the individual needs of the veteran and significant others as a whole (including the family and caregiver) regardless of age or circumstances. By adopting CCSA as the philosophy of VAC's client services, the Department has chosen a service approach which emphasizes providing "service" with or without the provision of "benefits." In addition, clients are actively involved in the decision-making.

The Client-centred Service Delivery Model prescribes a structured **needs-based process** to which all clients who contact VAC will have access. The components include: client contact with VAC; screening that leads to information gathering, assessment, or targeted assistance; resolution of issue(s); development of an action plan; implementation; and, follow-up as required. These components also lay the foundation for the development of **measurable and achievable** client or **outcome-based** service standards.

The CCSA National Implementation Project, conducted in seven offices across the country, has helped to evaluate the resources, teams and skills that VAC will need to implement CCSA nationally. The project sites in St. John's/Cornerbrook, Peterborough, Quebec City, Calgary, Victoria and the Head Office in Charlottetown have demonstrated how VAC will be organized to provide improved services to veteran clients whose needs are changing rapidly, and to the younger Canadian Forces clients with different and more complex needs. VAC is now well positioned to serve any client with complex and or diverse care needs.

All commitments regarding the CCSA were met earlier than originally targeted. The first evaluation was completed by May 31, 1999, and recommendations implemented by November 30, 1999. All Operational Readiness Reviews, were completed by March 31, 1999.

CCSA will ensure that clients receive a level of service appropriate to their needs. Clients with greater needs will receive more support from skilled Departmental staff, as well as from other agencies. By implementing the Client-centred Service Approach, aging veterans and other clients with complex needs will receive the right service, at the right time, from the right person.

Ste. Anne's Hospital - *Strategic Priority*

The Ste. Anne's Hospital is located on a 21-hectare site less than half an hour from Montreal.

The Hospital's mission is to provide veterans with high quality geriatric, psycho-geriatric and gero-psychiatric care that respects both dignity and autonomy. Through its Day Centre, the Hospital also offers support services to patients who are still living in their own homes. It offers a wide range of services, social and recreational activities, physiotherapy and animal therapy, along with a unique dysphagia (difficulty in swallowing) program. To treat dementia, a condition often associated with aging clientele, Ste. Anne's has set up an innovative

Expected Results

The successful transfer of Ste. Anne's Hospital while ensuring that eligible veterans continue to have access to quality long-term care services, consistent with those provided to veterans across Canada

psycho-geriatric program of a kind found only in about twenty North American hospitals. Whether in the treatment of physical illness in geriatrics, cognitive disorders in psycho-geriatrics, chronic mental illness in gero-psychiatrics, or through the services of its Day Centre, the Hospital strives to provide its residents with the best possible quality of life.

In making the best use of its resources, the Hospital seeks to optimize the programs and services it offers, while adapting them to the needs of its aging clientele. Relations between staff and residents are characterized by a profound appreciation of the veterans' exceptional achievements and respect for their personal integrity.

In February 2000, Quebec officials informed Veterans Affairs that they no longer wished to proceed with discussions and negotiations for the transfer of Ste. Anne's Hospital. The Department's Transfer Team, located in Montreal, was subsequently disbanded. Future plans for renovations to the Hospital are expected to be explored by the Department.

Benefits Redesign Project - *Strategic Priority*

The Benefits Redesign Project (BRP) is developing and implementing an integrated Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN), to support the delivery of benefits and services associated with the Disability Pensions, Economic Support and Health Care Program areas of the Department. Release 1 (R1) of the new software was implemented in February 1999.

Expected Results

The implementation of a cost effective business solution that will ensure the long-term continuity of service to veterans and prepare the organization for the future

Design, development and unit testing of the core unit processes for Release 2 (R2) has been completed.

Part of the Release 3 (R3) functionality was developed and implemented in July 1999 to provide the automated support for the national implementation of the CCSA. Releases 2 and 3 have been delayed by the Y2K freeze on systems implementations. Implementation of

Release 2 and enhanced Release 3 functionality will take place in 2000-01.

Veterans Organizations - *Strategic Priority*

Veterans Affairs has a long and successful history of working closely with Veterans Organizations, a history of full consultation on matters of importance to them and the Portfolio.

Expected Results

Continued constructive relationships

This close relationship has led to the mutually beneficial conclusion of numerous major initiatives such as: the ex-gratia payments to

Merchant Navy Veterans; the successful implementation of the provisions of Bill C-61; the process resulting in the unveiling of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; the Canada-wide observance of a Two-Minute Wave of Silence on November 11, 1999; the completion of Phase III of the Review of Veterans' Care Needs; the initiation of a multi-year project to completely review the Table of Disabilities; and, the opening, in April 1999 in Ottawa, of the DND-VAC Centre for the Support of Injured and Retired Members and their Families.



VAC and the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which will allow the RCL to have access to their clients' data electronically via the Department's main computer system, the Client Service Delivery Network. This electronic access will further enhance the RCL's ability to help their clients prepare and monitor the progress of disability pensions and other applications.

Many of the achievements reported in this document are the results of ongoing consultations and close working relationships with Veterans Organizations which occur at the national level, as well as, at the regional and the district levels all across the country.

2.1.1 Pensions and Allowances Service Line

Veterans Affairs Canada provides eligible clients with disability pensions, prisoner of war compensation, special awards, War Veterans Allowances and other economic

benefits and survivor and dependant benefits. These benefits are provided through a number of services: counselling; assisting in the preparation of applications; medical exams; adjudication; payment; account maintenance; and, responding to queries.

| Expected Results |
|--|
| Delivery of compensation programs for sacrifice in service to Canada ~~ |
| Improved Basic Standard of Living |

In 1999-00, the Pensions and Allowances Service Line established two expected results where performance achievements were vital to demonstrating our commitment to Canadians.

Disability Pension Program: The Disability Pension Program has annual expenditures of approximately \$1.18 billion, making it the Department's largest program. In 1999-00, disability pensions were paid to approximately 150,000 recipients - 63,500 war service veterans, 59,000 survivors and 27,500 Canadian Forces members and former members.

The number of pension clients is expected to remain fairly constant over the next few years. The number of Canadian Forces and survivor clients are forecast to increase between 5% and 7% and less than 1% per year respectively while the number of War Service Veterans is forecast to decrease by 5% each year.

Expenditures are predicted to rise by between 1% and 3% per year over the next five years and, as in the past, expenditures are predicted to rise faster than the number of clients. Most of the rise in expenditures will be due to inflation applied to pension amounts each year. However, the remainder will be due to increasing predicted expenditures for survivors followed by Canadian Forces clients, the number of clients receiving attendance allowance and the number of children. Increasing expenditures for survivors are mainly due to increasing numbers of survivors of Second World War veterans and survivors of Canadian Forces clients that offset declines in survivors of First World War veterans. The number of clients receiving attendance allowance has been growing, outpacing declines in clients receiving clothing allowance, and is expected to

continue to grow. In addition, the number of clients with children has been increasing over the last few years, mostly due to increased numbers of younger Canadian Forces clients. With projected increases in the numbers of Canadian Forces clients, this area is expected to grow.

War Veterans Allowance Program: The WVA Program continues to experience declines in both the number of beneficiaries and expenditures. This pattern is a reflection of the mortality rate plus an ever-increasing number of clients who obtain their major income support from other federal programs, such as the Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan. The client composition continues to gravitate towards survivors. Approximately ten years ago, in 1991-92, less than 50% of WVA clients were survivors, however, by comparison for 2000-01, survivors will form almost 70% of the overall client population. As of 1999-00, there were 16,667 individuals who were recipients of this benefit, and the overall annual payout was approximately \$38 million.

Ex-Gratia Payments to Merchant Navy Veterans: On February 1, 2000, the government announced a tax-free package for Canada's Merchant Navy Veterans (MNVs) and surviving spouses.

Canadian and Newfoundland Merchant Navy Veterans who served during the First, Second and Korean Wars, and who were not wartime members of the Armed Forces are eligible to apply. These payments compensate MNVs for demobilization benefits which they were not eligible to receive at wars' end. A total of \$50 million has been allocated by the Government for this package. Maximum length-of-service payments range between \$5,000 and \$20,000, with an extra 20% paid to prisoners of war. Merchant Navy Veterans or surviving spouses have until July 31, 2000, to apply for this benefit. As the Department will not know the total liability until this date, successful applicants are receiving 60% of their eligible payment at this time.

As of March 31, 2000, 10,225 applications were received from Merchant Navy Veterans. Seven hundred and six payments were processed totalling \$5.5 million.

Table of Disabilities Project: In the Spring of 1999, the Department commenced a consultative process with a wide range of stakeholders, including Veterans Organizations, and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, to review and update the Table of Disabilities.

Expected Results

Timely, fair and consistent service delivery of compensation programs

The Table of Disabilities revision will create a more responsive and modern

guide for assessing pensioned disabilities. Upgrading will also be effected by providing more descriptive impairment assessment criteria at each level of impairment. A review of the relativity of impairment level and consequent disability pension awards for the various body systems will also be undertaken. It is also proposed that the project will include the revision of existing entitlement guidelines that would assist in relating claimed disabilities to military service.

The revision and updating of existing entitlement and assessment guidelines will result in better decision support material and will also enhance VAC's ability to inform and counsel clients and facilitate an open, helpful and communicative evidence gathering phase. The adjudication process itself will be made more transparent to clients by providing a more understandable set of criteria. Internet access to the Guidelines is also proposed.

The initial information gathering and design stage of this project has concluded. The task of designing and drafting a revised Table of Disabilities was started in June 2000.

The ***Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines*** will be introduced progressively between September 2000 and March 2001. Completion of the new Table of Disabilities ***Assessment Guidelines*** has been targeted for March 2001.

Bill C-61: On May 1, 1999, Bill C-61 came into force. As a result of this Bill, survivors of disability pensioners have, on application, been awarded increases in their pensions where it has been shown that the veteran's disability had been under-assessed at the time of his/her death. Attendance Allowance benefits have been extended and paid to veterans receiving Prisoner of War compensation only, and Exceptional Incapacity Allowance benefits have been extended and paid to veterans receiving a combination of disability pension and prisoner of war compensation. Also, as a result of Bill C-61, all Merchant Navy Veterans legislative clauses were transferred directly into the *Pension Act* and the *War Veterans Allowance Act*.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): On February 17, 2000, VAC implemented new protocols for the adjudication of benefits for clients with psychiatric and other related illnesses. These protocols have been established using a case management approach to ensure individuals with PTSD/psychiatric illnesses receive the benefits and services they need and to which they are entitled, in a timely and responsive manner.

In the existing Table of Disabilities, the chapter on psychiatric conditions has been revised, broadening the considerations of the effects PTSD has on all aspects of an individual's life. The assessment criteria has also been enhanced. As well, a team of pension adjudicators in consultation with a medical advisor has been dedicated to adjudicating both entitlement and assessment decisions on PTSD and other psychiatric conditions, ensuring consistency and quality of decisions.

Bill C-41: In March 2000, the government announced its intention to improve access to veterans' program benefits to members of civilian groups who served in close support of the armed forces during wartime. These groups participated in the overseas war effort but currently do not have full access to veterans' benefits. They include: the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit, the Corps of (Civilian) Canadian Fire Fighters for Service in the United Kingdom, nursing aids and other members of the Canadian Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance, and Ferry Command personnel (pilots who ferried aircraft over the Atlantic). The legislation was subsequently tabled in Parliament as part of Bill C-41, in June 2000.

Gulf War: VAC gives priority service to Gulf War clients, in the preparation and processing of pension claims and health care benefits.

- ▶ An internal **Gulf War Working Committee** was formally struck in June 1999. This committee coordinates all Veterans Affairs activities, communications, studies and initiatives to improve the services and benefits it provides to Gulf War clients. The Committee exchanges information and consults with DND and Veterans Organizations on general issues surrounding the management of Gulf War clients. VAC is also represented on DND's Gulf War Illness Advisory Committee.
- ▶ Both VAC and DND continue to monitor **research** and **new developments in the medical community** aimed at determining whether there is an underlying cause of the medical conditions affecting some Gulf War personnel.
- ▶ Where unexplained illnesses are claimed for disability pension and a medical diagnosis cannot be determined, yet it is evident that the client is suffering from an illness or disability of a chronic nature, clients are **counselled and assisted in gathering the documentation to support their claim.**
- ▶ In cases of difficult-to-diagnose conditions, VAC may refer former CF members with Special Duty Area service (including service in the Persian Gulf), to DND's Post Deployment Regional Health Clinics for **diagnostic investigation** or **clinical evaluation and testing.**

As of March 31, 2000, 378 pension claims had been filed by Gulf War personnel.

- ▶ In order to alleviate concerns of individual members, who served in the Persian Gulf and who believe they may have been exposed to radiation from Depleted Uranium (DU), **DND is paying for DU testing for any still-serving members** who want to be tested. **VAC is covering costs of DU testing for released members** who are applying for a disability pension.

2.1.2 Health Care Service Line

In 1999-00, there were a number of areas in the Health Care Service Line where performance achievements were essential to realizing commitments made to Canadians.

Veterans Independence Program (VIP): The VIP assists clients to remain healthy and independent in their own homes or communities by offering a variety of services to those

who meet the eligibility requirement. In 1999-00, the total number of clients accessing the Program was approximately 69,600 with associated expenditures of \$156 million. Actual expenditures confirmed that while the number of clients is decreasing, the number of elements and expenditure levels per client are increasing, resulting in total expenditures at about the same level.

| Expected Results |
|--|
| Client Independence and Healthy Lifestyle ~~ |
| Optimization of Health ~~ |
| Improved Quality of Life |

Treatment and Other Health-related Benefits: Eligible clients are provided with treatment and other benefits (for example, prescription drugs, medical, dental, prosthetic services, vision, audio, oxygen), directly related to their pensioned conditions. Treatment benefits are also provided to clients for non-pensioned conditions when these were not covered by a provincial health care plan and the client was receiving services under the VIP, or when they were within the income limits defined by the *War Veterans Allowance Act*. In 1999-00, approximately 139,000 clients were eligible for treatment benefits, 85% of whom used at least one program benefit or service during the fiscal year. In 1999-00, over 3.4 million drug care claims and 1.4 million claims for other benefits were processed for clients.

- ▶ **Pharmacy Review Project:** The Pharmacy Review Project finalized implementation on a national basis in May 1999, with the Point of Service system being activated in the Prairie Region. During the 1999-00 year, the review of over 4,200 client records was completed to apply the established standards to all recipients of ongoing pharmacy benefits.
- ▶ **Dental Care:** Dental adjudication at Head Office experienced a major increase in the number of initial adjudications and reviews. During the year, over 7,300 claims were received for adjudication or review. A backlog in initial adjudication of approximately eight months was eliminated during the 1999-00 year. An equally significant backlog of the reviews is currently being addressed.

Health Care Division continued to participate in the HCCI, primarily in pharmacy, audio and vision programs with agreements being negotiated with provider groups in all three areas.

Health Promotion and Education: Health promotion and education plays a major role in improving the quality of life of members of our client community and in maintaining their independence. With the aging of our veteran population, health promotion has been identified as a **key priority** area.

| Expected Results |
|--|
| The implementation of a national approach to health promotion which will emphasize maintaining independence, preventing illness and improving health and quality of life |

Along with the focus on an aging clientele is the commitment to improve services for our Canadian Forces clients. When discussing a continuum of service, health promotion leads the way. That is, it forms the first point of entry to the continuum with the expectation that by encouraging

increased health knowledge, personal wellness, healthy activities, and attention to safety, we will contribute to the maintenance of the overall health and independence of individuals and families, prevent or postpone the onset of disease, and **improve quality of life**.

The past year has realized major developments in meeting established objectives. In **partnership** with other levels of government and non-government organizations, Veterans Affairs developed a national health promotion strategy which is outlined in the **Framework for Health Promotion and Education**, finalized in the Fall of 1999. Based on the experience from pilot projects conducted across Canada in 1997-98, as well as findings from the Review of Veterans' Care Needs, the national approach emphasizes maintaining independence, preventing illness and improving health and quality of life.

The following achievements were realized:

- ▶ Completed the Framework for Health Promotion and Education in the Fall of 1999.
- ▶ Completed two pilot projects in 1999 with Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island RCL Commands, including six sites, using technology to facilitate access to and disseminate health information with the aging client group. Plans are underway to expand this initiative to encompass other provincial Legion Commands in partnership with Industry Canada.
- ▶ Finalized a MOU which outlines a **strategic alliance** with Health Canada for implementation of community-based falls prevention initiatives funded by Veterans Affairs using Health Canada's Population Health Fund.
- ▶ Established an evaluative mechanism to ensure that the rationale, process, impacts and outcomes from Legion projects were assessed and best practice guidelines instituted to support the Department's commitment to and support for health promotion goals and objectives.
- ▶ Conducted two national symposia addressing issues identified by the RVCN - "Care Giving" symposium in Winnipeg and "Wellness" symposium in Charlottetown.
- ▶ Maintained membership with Federal Interdepartmental Committee on Aging and Seniors Issues and contributed to the National Framework on Aging and the Seniors Policies and Programs Database.

Expected Results

Appropriate care in logical location

Long-Term Care: A Residential Care Strategy was developed to address the long-term care needs of Canada's veterans. Over \$7 million was spent in 1999-00 to carry out the initiatives under the Strategy including:

- ▶ Development of a "day" program in Victoria, British Columbia at the Lodge at Broadmead. This program is providing respite care for families one to two days per week to provide some assistance for the family member(s) who are caring for the veteran at home. The program has had the added benefit of providing an excellent transition for the veteran from living at home to living at the "Lodge" when the veteran's health care needs are such that placement is required. This has greatly reduced the stress that normally arises from such a change in living arrangements.
- ▶ Development of a certificate program in Health Care of the Elderly - Camp Hill (Halifax, Nova Scotia). Designed to create an opportunity to provide geriatric training, persons who obtain a certificate are made available as a community resource to the medical community. Plans are underway to make such programs available in all regions.

- ▶ Overseas Service Veterans pilot project for Camp Hill in Halifax, Perley-Rideau Centre in Ottawa and the Lodge at Broadmead in Victoria. This project provides home care benefits and access to the VAC treatment program for veterans residing at home awaiting placement in a Priority Access Bed (PAB) facility.
- ▶ Best practices conference in 1999 involved ten large PAB facilities from four western provinces and Ste. Anne's Hospital. This is an example of Federal/Provincial cooperation. Further details on this conference can be found on page 32 of the report.
- ▶ Working with Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation toward having all VAC priority access bed facilities accredited, in keeping with the Council's new national standard.

Plans are underway which would see up to \$14 million invested to update facilities in Atlantic Canada, primarily in New Brunswick.

2.1.3 Pensions Advocacy Service Line

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <p>Key Commitment</p> | <p>The rights of Veterans Affairs Canada clients protected through professional, legal representation in appealing decisions related to disability pensions and allowances.</p> |
|----------------------------------|---|

In order to determine how satisfied clients are with the service provided by the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA), a **client satisfaction survey** was developed and sent to 840 clients. Five hundred and sixty-nine clients, or 67.7%, responded to the survey. The client satisfaction survey addressed the client's satisfaction with service delivery in the three major areas of professional, personal and timely service.

| Expected Results |
|---|
| <p>Clients being informed of the process and their rights</p> |

Highlights from the survey relating to clients being informed of the process and their rights: 84.3% of clients stated they received an explanation of the hearing process; over 80% were satisfied with their readiness to attend their hearing; and, **91.5% of clients were satisfied that Bureau staff took the time to explain things.**

In addition, to establish the "confidentiality of files" aspect of professional service, a review of 207 departmental files was conducted for evidence of information of a client/solicitor relationship. In the file review, no serious breaches of client/solicitor privilege were found.

Expected Results

Professional case preparation and representation

In 1999-00, the Bureau was solely responsible for the case presentation and client representation at **4,929 review hearings** and worked jointly with the Royal Canadian Legion on **251 additional review hearings**. The RCL was solely responsible for the case

presentation and client representation of an additional **161 review hearings**.

- ▶ The Bureau's average service standard delivery time was **95 days** for all claims.
- ▶ In 1999-00, the Bureau was solely responsible for the case presentation and client representation at **2,145 appeal hearings** with an average service standard delivery time for all cases of **92 days**. The RCL was solely responsible for the case presentation and client representation for an additional **146 appeal hearings**.

In 1998-99, a number of service standards were established to address the advocate's role in terms of the client receiving a fair and just adjudication of their claim. These standards and the Bureau's accomplishments are provided in their entirety on page 50.

2.1.4 Commemoration Service Line

Key Commitment

A knowledgeable Canadian public that recognizes the achievements and sacrifices of Canada's citizens in the defence of freedom and appreciates the historical significance of these accomplishments in the development of Canada as a nation.

The Commemoration Initiative, anchored by education and community outreach activities, provides the framework for implementation of our renewed commemorative efforts.

Education and Community Outreach: Educational efforts were directed towards the development of innovative products for Canadian youth, including the development of a new education kit on the Second World War; pre-production for a resource kit on the "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier"; and, continued distribution of the First World War education kit and interactive CD-ROM. The Department presented its interactive

Expected Results

Increased knowledge and public awareness of commemoration subject matters by Canadians, especially youth

learning exhibit, "Chronicle of an Unknown Soldier" to audiences in Quebec and Nova Scotia. Community outreach efforts were directed towards the development of products, publications, displays; conducting ceremonies and other special events; and, further developing the commemoration portion of the Portfolio's web site. Two new publications were produced: *The Battle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence* and *My Grandmother's Wartime Diary*.

A major milestone was achieved with the implementation of a new database structure to support the Canadian Virtual War Memorial feature on the VA web site. Produced in partnership with Canada's Digital Collections (Industry Canada), the database builds upon the existing First and Second World War records, to provide electronic access to additional information on Canadian fatalities recorded in the Newfoundland, South African War, Korean War and Merchant Navy Books of Remembrance. A second highly successful partnership was launched with Canada's Digital Collections and STEM~Net of Newfoundland, a private sector company. This pilot project is aimed at linking the individual names recorded in the Newfoundland Book of Remembrance to digital images that offer an insight into their life, military service and sacrifice. An agreement was also concluded with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to facilitate additions and corrections to our respective Canadian war dead registries.

Honours and Awards: During the past fiscal year 7,460 decorations or medals were issued, of which 4,951 were first issue and 2,509 were replacements.

Expected Results

Veteran recognition in
life and death

On November 4, 1999, during a ceremony in the Senate of Canada, Her Excellency, the Governor General, approved the Gulf of St. Lawrence Commemorative Distinction, honouring the courage, fortitude and professionalism of the Canadian and Newfoundland Merchant Navies' services

during the Battle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence between 1942 and 1944.

On November 8, 1999, during a ceremony in Port-aux-Basques, Newfoundland, the Minister of Veterans Affairs and representatives of the Canadian Chancellery presented the pennant comprising the Gulf of St. Lawrence Commemorative Distinction to the Marine Atlantic ferry *M.V. Caribou*. This vessel perpetuates one of the Newfoundland merchant vessels, the *S.S. Caribou*, that was lost at sea during the Battle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Pilgrimages and Ceremonies: During 1999-00, major pilgrimages were conducted overseas to commemorate the *55th Anniversary of the Normandy Campaign*, and the

55th Anniversary of the Italian Campaign. During Veterans' Week 1999, special ceremonies were held in Canada to officially commemorate the **55th Anniversary of the Battle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.** The Department also held its annual Commemorative ceremonies in France, at the Beaumont-Hamel Memorial in July, and at the Vimy Memorial in November. Ceremonies were also organized and conducted for the Prime Minister during his visits to Japan in September (Hong Kong Campaign and Korean War), and to South Africa in November (South African War). The official parties for these activities included veterans, youth and cadets, and parliamentarians.

Celebrating the Millennium: In 1999-00, the Department continued to work with the Royal Canadian Legion and other Veterans Organizations in support of Millennium Projects, such as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Two-Minute Wave of Silence.

Veterans' Week: For the past five years, the week leading up to Remembrance Day has been designated as **Veterans' Week.** The theme for 1999 was "A Century of Valour." From coast to coast, Canadians participated in the Two-Minute Wave of Silence.



Funeral and Burial: The overall transfer of the administration of the Department's funeral and burial program to the Last Post Fund, remained outstanding as of March 31, 2000, pending the resolution of same sex benefits legislation.

Graves, Grave Markers and Cemeteries: The Department continued to carry out its responsibility for grave maintenance for approximately 110,000 Canadian war dead located in 74 countries and for an estimated 300,000 grave sites located in about 15,000 cemeteries across Canada where service personnel, veterans, and others buried at the expense of Canada rest. Major cemetery restoration projects were undertaken at the Veterans Cemetery, Esquimalt, British Columbia, and Wawota Cemetery, Wawota,

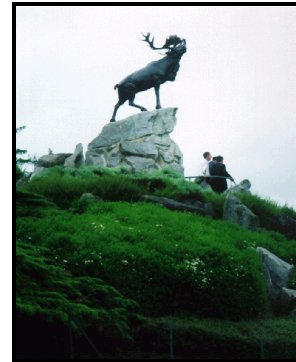
Saskatchewan. The future upkeep of 261 Canadian war graves and monuments dating from the South African War was ensured, through an agreement drafted last year by VAC and the National Monuments Council of South Africa.

Expected Results

Maintenance, preservation and showcasing of Canada's commemorative resources

Memorials: During 1999-00, significant work was done to address challenges to the structural integrity of the Vimy Monument, including: a stone assessment; repairs to the drainage system; and, commencement of a pilot project aimed at addressing water infiltration problems. Plans were also developed to begin a phased overall rehabilitation of the Vimy Monument beginning in early 2000-01.

Further measures were undertaken to assess, restore or enhance the historical and environmental integrity of our European memorial sites, including landscape restoration, forestry management and battlefield terrain monitoring. Significant attention was again devoted to historical and on-site research at both Vimy and Beaumont-Hamel. In 1999-00, these activities have resulted in the documentation, stabilization and conservation of many artifacts. The development of an interpretive centre for the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial Park advanced, with both the building and exhibits design being completed. Plans call for the centre to be completed in time for an opening on July 1, 2001.



In early March 2000, the Commemoration Division hosted "Lest We Forget: Preserving Meaning and Emotion through Battlefield Terrain" at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial, the first international multi-disciplinary workshop on the conservation of battlefield terrain. A set of conservation guidelines was drafted for the sites, including specific recommendations that can and will be implemented immediately. A first draft of "The Vimy Charter" which lays out basic principles for the conservation of battlefield terrain on an international basis, was developed during the event. The Charter has garnered interest and support from authorities in Australia, France, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Visitors to Memorials in 1999-00

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| 250,000 Books of Remembrance Parliament Hill, Ottawa | 750,000 Vimy Memorial Site France | 110,000 Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Site France |
|--|---|---|

2.1.5 Social Union Framework Agreement

The following activities reflect the spirit of the Social Union Accountability Framework.

All Canadians are Equal

Aboriginal Peoples of Canada

The National Round Table on First Nations Veterans Issues is being developed to examine concerns raised by First Nations Veterans relating to the way in which they and their dependents were treated during and after the wars, with special emphasis on World War II and the Korean War.

The National Round Table will give First Nations Veterans and their representatives the opportunity to research how various departments, such as the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, VAC and DND, handled requests for benefits from First Nations Veterans. The National Round Table will also give First Nations Veterans the opportunity to explain what happened in their own situation and share concerns about their treatment. A separate process similar to the National Round Table is being considered to address the concerns of Métis and Non-Status Indian Veterans.

Working in Partnership for Canadians

Continuum of Service Policy

VAC's client services has as its policy objective to provide a holistic continuum of service, which ensures that the health and service needs of VAC's clients are met in partnership with health, social and voluntary agencies at provincial and community levels across Canada.

This objective implies the provision of a continuum of service to eligible clients notwithstanding varying program eligibility. The continuum of service crosses jurisdiction and program lines, provides needs screening to clients who may be at risk, and more intensive care plans and follow-up, depending on the degree of need.

Seniors' Portal

Governments are re-inventing how we do business by becoming more citizen-centred and providing single window access to a range of services, targeting the needs of specific client groups. The explosive appeal of the Internet has created unique communications

and service delivery opportunities that overcome traditional time, distance and organizational barriers. "Virtual" service integration is now possible for both citizens and service providers, but seniors have some barriers to overcome.

The Federal Government is developing an Access Canada for Seniors (ACFS) Strategy, citizen-centred Internet portal to access government services at all levels. This is only the first step and foundation for the realization of a broad vision of inter-organizational partnerships for citizen-centred service delivery, combining both on-line and traditional modes in a multiple channel environment serving seniors, their families, caregivers and service providers. The seniors' portal provides new and unique opportunities for inter-organizational collaboration, strategic partnerships and innovative service delivery.

Sharing Best Practices in Long-term Care

VAC achieved success in hosting a Western Canada Best Practices in Long-term Care meeting in Calgary. This session brought together long-term health professionals from ten of the larger, long-term care facilities from the four western provinces where VAC has contracts for Priority Access Beds for veterans. Staff from Ste. Anne's Hospital, VAC's remaining departmental institution, Head Office and western Regional Offices also participated. The meeting provided these participants with an opportunity to showcase their best practices in the areas of dementia, palliative and respite care and to network with colleagues in other long-term care facilities and other provinces. There was an overwhelming interest in continuing this type of learning and networking and VAC is involved in the early stages of planning a national symposium of this type to be held later in 2000.

Royal Canadian Legion Alternative Housing Project

In cooperation with the Royal Canadian Legion, VAC has initiated a project to develop and implement a housing program that will address the current and long-term needs of Canadian veterans and seniors.

In coordination with the Dominion Command, the Provincial Commands and various local legion branches throughout Canada, this project is determining the need for, and the interest in, veterans and seniors housing; coordinating research and investigation, as required; and, assisting the branches in determining what seniors' housing needs exist in their areas. This will also include maintaining and updating the existing "Housing Directory" to include new facilities and renovations to existing structures and adding any new facilities developed or renovations undertaken as a result of the Legion Seniors' Housing Project.

Part of this project will involve exploring funding opportunities for seniors' housing initiatives involving regional and federal sources as well as provincial and institutional funding.

Integrated Services for Seniors and Veterans Pilots

VAC is engaged in a partnership with the provinces of Prince Edward Island and Ontario in conducting an Integrated Services for Seniors and Veterans (ISSV) pilot within Treasury Board's Service Canada initiative. The objective of Service Canada is to provide citizens with one-stop access to a range of government services in a fast, reliable, convenient and cost-effective way.

The ISSV pilot sites in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and Owen Sound and London, Ontario, are offering our veteran and senior clients a point of service from which they can access health and social services programs in an effective, reliable and timely way. The pilots are exploring the viability of a model of integrated client services targeting veterans and seniors and offer services such as common access, client screening and assessments using a client-centred approach and collaboration in the delivery of health care. Where possible, these pilots will promote co-location of services.

A key focus of Service Canada is to enhance delivery networks and expand and refine responsive core service content. Linkages are being made horizontally and vertically with other federal departments, such as Human Resources Development Canada and other provincial departments and agencies.

The Federal Spending Power - Improving Social Programs for Canadians

Veterans Affairs Canada's Residential Care Strategy is the framework for managing the long-term care needs of eligible clientele now and into the future. The strategy envisions VAC demonstrating its concern for veterans' care without duplicating existing quality assurance processes according to the following guiding principles:

- ▶ Ensure that the predominant needs are addressed (such as, dementia care, caregiver support, and greater choice of long term care settings).
- ▶ Respect the provincial jurisdiction in the delivery of health services while assuring that veterans have a continued "citizen plus" status (lower accommodation and meals charges and more extensive treatment benefit eligibility).

- ▶ Respond quickly and with flexibility to the changing needs of veterans. This includes: offering more long-term care alternatives or an increased number of, or reallocation of, beds in the community.
- ▶ Focus on quality and monitoring activities for veterans' care and the outcome of their care in their various care settings.
- ▶ Maximize the expertise available from long-term care professionals in VAC's larger, long-term care facilities where VAC has Priority Access Beds, with community facilities.
- ▶ Encourage veteran involvement in the governance of Priority Access Bed sites, as appropriate.

2.1.6 Benefits and Services Business Line Financial Resources

| Benefits and Services Business Line 1999-00 Financial Resources (\$ millions) | |
|---|----------------|
| Planned Spending (Estimates Part III) | 1,915.2 |
| <i>Total Authorities</i> | <i>1,971.4</i> |
| Actual Spending | 1,950.1 |
| Actual FTEs (Full-Time Equivalents) | 2,606 |

Note: An explanation of the variance between planned spending and actual spending can be found on page 65.

2.2 Corporate Administration Business Line

The Corporate Administration Business Line provides corporate direction and operational support services that meet the specific needs of the Portfolio in fulfilling its mandate. Performance Accomplishments that support both internal and external Government priorities were realized.

Year 2000 Project - *Strategic Priority*

VAC completed all compliance work internally and with service delivery partners. The Portfolio rolled systems into 2000 under a formal Year 2000 Transition Plan. No significant problems were encountered and VAC systems ran smoothly throughout the first months of 2000. Ste. Anne's Hospital systems, medical devices and facilities were all made compliant and transitioned into 2000 with no problems.

Expected Results

Ensure that all VA government-wide mission critical systems are Year 2000 compliant

- ▶ VA met its pre-defined goals for the compliance level of each class of systems.
- ▶ VA prepared contingency plans and operated its contingency monitoring function successfully.
- ▶ The CSDN Release 1 is now operating as a fully compliant Year 2000 system. A Portfolio-wide systems freeze until March 31, 2000, was implemented to ensure system stability during the Year 2000 roll-over period.

Corporate Services Infrastructure Review - *Strategic Priority*

The following objectives of the Review have been achieved:

Expected Results

Modernized corporate services which will provide clients with the choice of how, where and when consistent quality services will be provided

~~

Performance measures which will be embedded in the service processes

- ▶ Technological platforms used to deliver corporate services in the Portfolio have been upgraded;
- ▶ A new CSDN has been implemented and is being maintained within existing infrastructure; and
- ▶ Veterans Affairs Canada information systems operated without business interruption

through the Year 2000 date roll-over. The final two releases of the CSDN are entering the implementation phase.

Human Resources

The PeopleSoft human resources information system was implemented on schedule and on budget and well within the time frame required to meet the Portfolio's Y2K requirements.

The Portfolio's La Relève Strategy was revised to ensure that activities support the objectives of achieving strong leadership, an enabling work environment and a sustainable workforce, key success areas described in the Framework for Good Human Resources Management. These objectives were achieved through initiatives such as a structured dialogue between managers and employees, the Employee Information and Support Services Program, the revitalization of the Portfolio's Rewards and Recognition Program, the Employment Equity Student Program and the development of a leadership/management learning model.

Information Technology

The first release of the CSDN was successfully implemented and integrated into the Information Technology Division's ongoing operations and maintenance. The CSDN is now the system of record for WVA payments. The Release 2 Operational Roll-out Plan was developed in February 2000, the Implementation Plan was established in March 2000, and a Risk Management Contingency Plan has also been developed. Steps have been taken to provide optimized CSDN support and maintenance.

- ▶ The Corporate Information Technology (IT) Review recommendations and organization adjustments were approved in May 1999. Extensive briefings took place during 1999. A new model was developed and the new organization Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) took effect on April 3, 2000.
- ▶ A successful partnership with the former Revenue Canada (now Canada Customs and Revenue Agency-CCRA) enabled access to a secure data centre to house VAC national network servers. VAC is involved in the initial stages of the Canada Post Electronic Service Delivery Pilot for Web-based client service. VAC signed an agreement with Government Telecommunications and Informatics Services to act as certification agent for all Federal Departments on Prince Edward Island.

Financial Information Strategy (FIS)

VAC's FIS Strategy Document was approved. Targeted FIS financial system software was installed in the Corporate Application Centre (CAC). FIS compliant FreeBalance

Financial System Software licencing has been procured and migration to this version of software is planned early in the new fiscal year. A detailed FIS Project Plan is under development. The FIS initiative has been linked to the Portfolio's Modernization of Comptrollership Initiative. Treasury Board Secretariat has provided preliminary FIS funding. An internal Control Review on CSDN R1 was completed. Recommendations were sent to program managers and an action plan is being developed.

Management Support Services

Some automated solutions have been pursued to facilitate records management for Merchant Navy clients. A project has been initiated to carry out a more comprehensive review for other records.

Corporate Planning

In 1999-00, Corporate Planning prepared the Portfolio Performance Report and the Report on Plans and Priorities, and is currently crafting an updated Sustainable Development Strategy for the Portfolio, to be tabled in Parliament in December 2000.

On September 9, 1999, the Deputy Minister and Departmental Executive Board made a commitment to produce a Five-Year Strategic Plan which would address the need to plan ahead. The planning process that has been adopted is transparent, invites the active participation of internal and external stakeholders, and employs innovative approaches like electronic employee consultations. The strategic plan builds on the solid accomplishments of the past, while taking into account numerous recent initiatives aimed at clarifying the service needs of our clients, and will provide a framework for future excellence. The finished plan will provide employees with a common point of reference and clear future priorities, while demonstrating to all Canadians how VAC intends to translate hard-earned tax dollars into well-earned support to the very special citizens we so proudly serve.

2.2.1 Corporate Administration Business Line Financial Resources

| Corporate Administration Line 1999-00 Financial Resources (\$ millions) | |
|---|--------------|
| Planned Spending (Estimates Part III) | 46.3 |
| <i>Total Authorities</i> | <i>119.8</i> |
| Actual Spending | 117.1 |
| Actual FTEs (Full-Time Equivalents) | 548 |

Note: An explanation of the variance between planned spending and actual spending can be found on page 65.

Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program

2.3 Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Key Commitment | Fairness in the Disability Pension and War Veterans Allowance Programs. |
|---------------------------|---|

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board is an independent, quasi-judicial agency which adjudicates on the review and appeal aspects of Disability Pensions and hears final level appeals for War Veterans Allowance claims. The Board also has the authority to reconsider decisions at the review and appeal levels. It ensures due process through sound, timely and effective quasi-judicial adjudication in accordance with the governing legislation.

Veterans Review and Appeal Board Survey

The VRAB conducted a **client satisfaction survey** to provide clients an opportunity to comment on the quality of the service they received from the Board. The Veterans Review and Appeal Board was one of the first federal tribunals in Canada to undertake such a survey. Clients were very receptive to the questionnaire and welcomed the opportunity to provide information and comments to assist the Board in its continuous improvement activities.

Overall, I am thankful the way my review was conducted and I think the Review and Appeal Board does the best it can for the applicant.

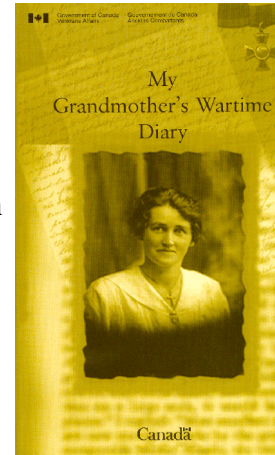
Thank you.

VRAB Client Survey Comment

The survey also served to educate clients on the independence of the Board, being an agency operating at arms' length from the Department of Veterans Affairs. An excellent response rate of 83% was realized. A total of 72% of all clients surveyed reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of service they received from the Board despite the fact that only 30% received a fully favourable decision.

My Grandmother's Wartime Diary

In support of Employment Equity, Commemoration and Women's History Month, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board developed and coordinated a Portfolio-wide activity called "*My Grandmother's Wartime Diary*". All VA employees were invited to contribute wartime stories from their mothers, grandmothers, and friends, of their experiences during the Second World War both at home and in wartime service, all with the same goal in mind - "service to their country". The response received was overwhelming! Stories came in from across the country, most of which were then shared with VA employees via e-mail each day throughout the month. Although the initiative originated in 1998, this year these stories were published in hard copy and made available to Canadians on the VA web site.



Decisions set aside by the Federal Court

Under Section 18 of the *Federal Court Act* a dissatisfied appellant may request that a case be judicially reviewed by the Federal Court. In 1999-00, fourteen cases out of the 7,742 cases (0.2%) that came before the Board during the fiscal year were submitted to the Federal Court for review. Nine cases were reviewed by the Court. Only three were sent back to the Board for reconsideration.

The Legal Unit of the VRAB conducted an analysis of all cases reviewed by the Federal Court of Canada - Trial Division during the 1999-00 fiscal year. The objective was to analyze what has been said about the decision-making process, review any problems the Federal Court identified and highlight any areas of concern.

Review and Appeal Hearings

Over the course of the fiscal year 1999-00, many initiatives were implemented to continue to improve quality service to our clients.

| Expected Results |
|--|
| Clients receive a consistent, timely and independent review and appeal process ~~ |
| Clients informed of their rights |

The Board is committed to a client-centred focus and has placed emphasis on areas clients have deemed more important. One key area of importance to clients is the quality of the decisions. During this performance period the Veterans Review and Appeal Board has placed significant importance and effort in meeting this need. The Board strives to maintain the balance between the

expectations of our clients and service commitments made to them. In 1999-00, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board adjudicated on 5,275 reviews and 2,245 appeals and heard 222 applications for reconsiderations. The Board issued fifteen decisions for War Veterans Allowance appeal hearings.

This is the second year for reporting on the VRAB's service standards published in the brochure, "*At Your Service*". In some cases, results exceeded last year's report while in others more emphasis was placed on the additional complexity of cases combined with focussed efforts on the quality of decisions, while still striving to maintain service delivery commitments. Results of the service standards are reported in **Figure 7** beginning on page 48.

Members' Training

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board provides intensive training to its members on all aspects of the adjudicative process, including the legislation, administrative law, medical and legal issues, the conduct of hearings, conflict resolution and decision writing. The primary goal of the Board's training program for members is to foster a consistent approach to hearing room issues, decision-making and decision writing without fettering the discretion of these independent decision-makers. Annual members' conferences are held to share information, identify issues and present medical and legal experts to convey information to members on pertinent issues and new developments relating to the work of the Board. New members are matched with experienced members as well as Pensions and Allowance Analysts to learn the various complexities of the adjudicative and hearing processes and

At the review level, members are expected to hear 24 to 30 cases per week while at the appeal level, members hear 24 to 32 cases per week.

to enhance the members' decision writing skills. A Standing Policy Committee composed of six Head Office and Deployed Members advise and give recommendations for the approval of the Board's Chairperson. The issues include such items as quality, consistency, training and policy strategies for the Board. Recommendations resulting from this Committee are shared with all Members.

Administrative Law Training

The Legal Unit at the Board has expertise in Administrative Law and shares this specialized knowledge not only with Members of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board but with other tribunals including provincial tribunals from across Atlantic Canada.

Consistency

To ensure consistency of decision writing, the Quality Assurance Unit reviews the majority of draft decisions rendered by the Board. Upon review, the unit will provide feedback on decision writing to the Members for consideration. The Quality Assurance Unit's role is to promote a consistent approach to decision writing without affecting the Members' independence and discretion. As well, a random sampling of work is conducted in each operational unit to ensure consistency in procedures, identify trends and emphasize quality. A revised *Consistency Guidelines* was released this fiscal year and was created to implement basic and uniform standards of format, style and language usage in VRAB decision documents. These Guidelines are updated regularly and used by all Members and staff. In February 2000, the *Rulings Book*, a working tool used by all Members and staff to guide consistent usage of the rulings and effective dates of awards granted by the Board, was revised. It is an exhaustive compilation of all possible legal orders that may be issued by the Board under the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act*, the *Pension Act* and all other related Acts.

2.3.1 Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line Financial Resources

| Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line 1999-00 Financial Resources (\$ millions) | |
|--|-----|
| Planned Spending (Estimates Part III) | 8.1 |
| <i>Total Authorities</i> | 9.4 |
| Actual Spending | 9.4 |
| Actual FTEs (Full-Time Equivalents) | 103 |

Note: An explanation of the variance between planned spending and actual spending can be found on page 65.

D. Other Performance Issues to Note

1.0 Government-wide Priorities

Since 1944 Veterans Affairs has worked alongside other federal departments, voluntary organizations, provincial governments and the private sector to serve its clients and support the initiatives of the Federal Government as demonstrated in the *Speech from the Throne*. That tradition continues today as the Portfolio seeks innovative ways to meet the diverse service requirements of both an aging veteran population and a younger clientele composed of eligible Canadian Forces members and former members.

Given the fiscal environment in which VA operates and the need to satisfy the constantly changing requirements of the clients we serve, promoting and nurturing working relationships with other organizations makes good business sense. VAC's "*continuum of service*" policy framework is predicated on the multi-disciplinary delivery of services and benefits within the context of **partnerships** with provincial, community or voluntary services. It is a holistic approach to meeting the needs of our clients and requires the inclusion of those serving in other **health, social and community** agencies across Canada. In this regard, the nurturing of constructive partnerships is a prerequisite to the achievement of VAC objectives.

While VA undertakes partnerships for a variety of reasons related to improved mandate delivery capabilities, in many instances such activities can also help to identify or develop *service synergies* for the Department. A service synergy exists where **collaboration** with other federal agencies, provincial and municipal governments,

voluntary organizations and the private sector, provides wider exposure for the staff competencies of the Portfolio. We can share what we do well and further develop service synergies in association with other public servants.

Additionally, VAC has developed a series of *strategic partnerships* including: the Health Care Coordination Initiative; the VAC/Canadian Forces Coordination Team; a partnership with DND and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), for the processing of health care claims; and, a number of initiatives with the Royal Canadian Legion. During 1999-00 the Commemoration Program alone partnered with over 250 organizations in eight countries in the delivery of commemorative activities throughout the world community.

The Portfolio is committed to enhancing the *health and quality care* of its special clients, for example, through the establishment of the joint DND-VAC Centre to provide information, counselling, referral and case monitoring for injured Canadian Forces members and their families. In concert with our associates at Health Canada, VAC promotes an improved, balanced, and healthier lifestyle for our clients and Canadians as a whole. A MOU between the Department and Health Canada funds projects for aging veterans, other qualified clients and seniors that will ultimately result in the maintenance of independence and improved *quality of life* for Canadians.

In promoting **a strong and united Canada**, VAC conducts commemorative activities and has developed an Internet youth site to *engage youth* and all citizens in learning about the sacrifices and accomplishments in wartime and peacekeeping activities around the globe that have helped to forge our nation and advance Canada's standing in the *world community*.

Veterans Affairs continues to pursue the sustainable development commitments laid out in its Sustainable Development Strategy of 1997 and to monitor results that contribute to the *quality of our environment*. This strategy will be updated in December 2000.

The Portfolio continues to review legislation and propose changes to make access to its programs and services *fair and equitable*.

Veterans Affairs is working in concert with the Treasury Board Secretariat to modernize its management practices. Using the principles of *modern comptrollership*, VA is placing greater emphasis on the organization's participants and their behaviour - on positive ways to motivate staff to achieve organizational objectives and render organizations more effective while meeting the fiduciary responsibilities entrusted to it by Parliament. To meet the present and future needs of clients in an ever-changing technological environment, VA continues to move towards integration of financial and non-financial information and shift emphasis from control and compliance to *results and values*.

2.0 Service Improvement Initiative

As we enter the new millennium we continue the balance between the investment in advances in technology to drive service improvements and the investment in staff to fulfill the desire of our clients for personalized contacts with those who know and understand what they have experienced. To maintain this balance we take every opportunity to seek feedback from our clients. In 1999-00, we conducted several initiatives that underscore our continued focus on our clients and the continuous improvement in the quality of the service we provide.

Client Satisfaction Measurement Activities

In 1999-00 the Portfolio conducted two client satisfaction surveys, one by the Veterans Review and Appeal Board and one by the Bureau of Pensions Advocates. While both surveys were conducted in the early Spring of 2000, they were completed independently and no clients were requested to complete both surveys. The results of these surveys are highlighted below.

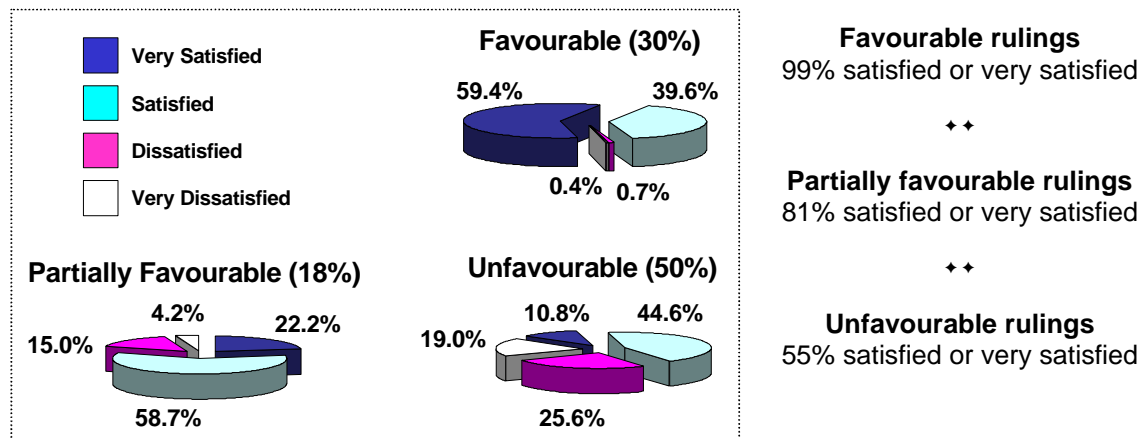
Veterans Review and Appeal Board

As part of our ongoing efforts to support our members in rendering quality decisions, this year the VRAB consulted clients in a national client survey. The purpose of the survey was to provide clients at the review and appeal levels an opportunity to comment on the quality of the service they received so that the Board can become aware of their views and changes could be implemented to improve services. As well, this survey was used as a tool to educate clients on the independence of the Board, as an agency operating at arm's length.

Of the 1,142 surveys sent out to VRAB clients, 948 completed surveys were returned, representing a response rate of 83%. This response rate was well over what was anticipated and speaks highly of the clients' willingness to share their ratings of service and thoughts with the Board.

The level of satisfaction varied depending on the decision result as shown in **Figure 5** on page 45.

Figure 5: Overall Satisfaction by Decision Result



Bureau of Pensions Advocates

In order to determine how satisfied clients are with the service provided by the BPA, a client satisfaction survey was developed and sent to 840 clients. Five hundred and sixty-nine clients, or 67.7%, responded to the survey.

From the survey, 82% of clients were given an opportunity to discuss their case prior to their hearing. Only 67.5% of clients were satisfied that they had a reasonable amount of time with their lawyer prior to their hearing; 92.5% of clients were satisfied that they were informed of who would represent them; 85.7% of clients were satisfied that they were given an estimate of the time it would take to present their case; and, 79.6% of clients felt that the actual time it took from their request for an appeal to the actual date of the hearing was reasonable.

Highlights from the survey results review are listed below:

- ▶ 96% of clients surveyed were satisfied that Bureau staff are protective of their privacy/confidentiality.
- ▶ On eleven questions to the client with respect to communication and accessibility, the range of satisfaction was 73.2% to 98.1%. A higher percentage of satisfaction was expressed regarding clear communications and providing clients with sufficient notice of hearing dates, while a lower percentage of satisfaction was expressed regarding the availability of required information and the time it took for clients to meet with their lawyer.
- ▶ On five questions to the client with respect to personal services, for example, courteousness and respectfulness, the range of satisfaction was 83% to 93.5%.

Comment Cards

The 1999-00 year was the first year for full implementation of the VAC client comment card initiative. The *“Help Us Serve You”* card was made available to clients at all service sites across the country. These cards allowed clients the opportunity to comment on the quality of service received and provide suggestions on how it could be improved. There were a total of 1,222 responses received during the year and 97% of respondents rated the overall quality of our service as either very good or good. A summary of the findings is presented in **Figure 6** on page 47.

Portfolio Service Standards

The 1999-00 year was the second year that the service standards brochure *“At Your Service”* was available at all service sites across the country. This brochure outlines the quality of service that clients can expect to receive when they contact us. A table, containing summaries of the service standards measured this year and our accomplishments, can be found in **Figure 7** on page 48.

Figure 6: Client Comment Card Feedback at VAC District Offices in 1999-00

| Quality Element | Yes | No | Very Good | Good | Fair | Poor | N/A | No Response |
|--|-------|-------|-----------|-------|------|------|------|-------------|
| Overall Quality of Service | | | 82.4% | 14.2% | 1.4% | 0.4% | 0.3% | 1.3% |
| Courtesy | | | 85.1% | 12.7% | 0.9% | 0.1% | 0.2% | 1.0% |
| Helpfulness | | | 84.3% | 12.3% | 1.1% | 0.4% | 0.2% | 1.7% |
| Speed | | | 71.7% | 21.4% | 3.4% | 1.1% | 0.7% | 1.7% |
| Respect for Your Privacy | | | 83.2% | 13.8% | 0.6% | 0% | 1.3% | 1.1% |
| Clarity of Information/Explanations | | | 77.7% | 17.8% | 2.1% | 0.8% | 0.3% | 1.1% |
| Receipt of all Information, Help and Material Required | 94.7% | 3.0% | | | | | | 2.3% |
| Service in Official Language of Choice | 98.1% | 0.5% | | | | | | 1.4% |
| Office Easy to Access | 87.6% | 3.4% | | | | | | 9.0% |
| Convenient Hours of Operation | 90.6% | 1.1 % | | | | | | 8.3% |

Figure 7: Veterans Affairs Client-Based Service Standards Measurement Results in 1999-00

| Service Standard | Summary | Accomplishments |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Hours of Service | We will provide you with at least eight hours of service each business day and we will post our hours in each office. | <p>Eight hours of service each business day: 39 sites: 36 or 92% met the standard 100%. (three sites are co-located with Human Resources Development Canada and are open to the public only 7.5 hours/day)</p> <p>Hours of service posted: 39 sites: 37 or 95% met the standard 100%.</p> |
| Language of Choice | We provide our services in the official language of your choice in many of our offices. (Locations are listed in the " At Your Service " brochure). | <p>Language: Portfolio monitored its performance of actively offering services in both official languages through spot checks, VAC Client Comment Cards, and complaints. Of the 208,000 clients served by VA in 1999-00, only two complaints were received by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.</p> |
| Office Visits | If you visit one of our offices, you will be able to discuss your needs with a Veterans Affairs employee who will either address your requirements immediately or arrange an appropriate referral. | <p>Needs discussed with VA employee: 39 sites: standard was met 96% of the time.</p> |
| Confidentiality | All personal information you provide us will be kept in strict confidence and used only for the purpose intended. | <p>Privacy: Of the 1,433 privacy requests and 196 access to information requests processed by VAC in 1999-00, no privacy breaches or complaints by clients were reported to the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.</p> |
| Monthly Payments | Your monthly Disability Pension or War Veterans Allowance cheque will be delivered to your home (or deposited in your bank account) by the second last banking day of the month. | <p>Monthly Payment Delivery: Between April 1999 and March 31, 2000, VAC's production of 457,913 cheques and 1,495,442 direct deposits were issued to Public Works and Government Services Canada within the scheduled cut-off dates to meet the published service standard.</p> |

| Service Standard | Summary | Accomplishments |
|--|--|--|
| Disability Pensions | If you make an application for a disability pension, we will send you our decision within eighteen weeks from the time that you and your representative complete your application and provide us the necessary supporting medical and other information. | Disability Pension Decisions: Decisions were rendered on 9,759 or 90.1% of 10,827 claims within eighteen weeks. |
| | If you have a pensioned condition and you think it has worsened, we will reassess it and send you the results within fifteen weeks of your request to us, unless a specialist referral is required, or the examination takes place outside Canada. | Reassessment Decisions: Decisions were rendered on 5,813 or 73.5% of 7,905 claims within fifteen weeks. |
| | If you submit a claim for Attendance Allowance, Clothing Allowance or Exceptional Incapacity Allowance, we will send you a decision within eight weeks. | Special Awards Decisions: Decisions were rendered on 4,176 or 76.9% of 5,433 claims within eight weeks. |
| | If you have new or additional evidence and ask for a Departmental Review of a previous decision, we will send you the results of the review within four weeks. | Departmental Review Decisions: Decisions were rendered on 380 or 71.8% of 529 claims within four weeks. |
| War Veterans Allowance Applications | When you apply, we will send you a decision within seven weeks from the time we receive your application and all the necessary documentation. | War Veterans Allowance Decisions: During the fiscal year, 1999-00, decisions were rendered on 4,695 War Veterans Allowance claims with an average turn around time of 27 days. |
| Income Assessment for Health Benefits | If you wish to apply for health benefits which require that we assess your income, we will send you a decision within seven weeks from the time we received your application and all the necessary documentation. | Decisions on Income Assessment: 4,561 or 95% of 4,904 of actions taken had decisions made within seven weeks. |
| | If you are not satisfied with the WVA or income assessment decision and request a review, a decision will be provided within seven weeks. | Reviews of Decisions: 184 or 94% of 202 actions taken had decisions made within seven weeks. |

| Service Standard | Summary | Accomplishments |
|--|--|---|
| BPA Appointments and Interviews | Requests for appointments with an advocate will be responded to within one week and an interview will be scheduled for a mutually agreed upon time. If you are being represented by the Bureau of Pensions Advocates on a review or appeal hearing, you will be offered the opportunity to discuss your upcoming case with your advocate, either in person or by telephone, whichever is most practical under the circumstances. | <p>Request for appointment responded to within a week:</p> <p>Reviews 17 sites: 13 sites or 76% met the standard 100% 2 sites or 12% met the standard 95 - 99% 2 sites or 12% met the standard 76 - 94%</p> <p>Appeals 18 sites: 13 sites or 72% met the standard 100% 2 sites or 11% met the standard 95 - 99% 3 sites or 17% met the standard 76 - 94%</p> <p>Opportunity offered to discuss case: 18 sites: 11 sites or 61% met the standard 100% 4 sites or 22% met the standard 95 - 99% 3 sites or 17% met the standard 76 - 94%</p> |
| BPA Communications | You will be informed of who will be representing you, how we will proceed with your case and an estimate of the time it will take to present your review or appeal claim. | <p>Client informed of representative: 18 sites: 17 sites or 94% met the standard 100% 1 site or 6% met the standard 76 - 94%</p> <p>Client informed of how Advocate will proceed with case: 18 sites: 14 sites or 78% met the standard 100% 1 site or 6% met the standard 95 - 99% 3 sites or 17% met the standard 76 - 94%</p> <p>Client informed of time estimate: 18 sites: 9 sites or 50% met the standard 100% 2 sites or 11% met the standard 95 - 99% 4 sites or 22% met the standard 76 - 94% 1 site or 6% met the standard 50 - 75% 2 sites or 11% met the standard 0 - 49%</p> |

| Service Standard | Summary | Accomplishments |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| | We are committed to presenting your review case to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board within four months of your application and your appeal case within three months of your request for an appeal hearing. | <p>Present review cases to VRAB within four months: 3,802 or 77.1% of 4,929 review cases presented by BPA to VRAB in less than four months.</p> <p>Present appeal cases to VRAB within three months: 924 or 43.1% of 2,145 appeal cases presented by BPA to VRAB in less than three months.</p> <p>970 additional appeal cases (for a total of 88.3% of all appeal cases) were presented in less than four months of contact by the client.</p> |
| VRAB Review and Appeals | When you apply for a review or appeal to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, you will be sent a decision within one month from the date of the hearing. | <p>Reviews of Decisions: 2,484 or 50% of 4,968 review cases met the standard. The monthly averages for processing all decisions ranged from 0.9 months to 1.3 months.</p> <p>Appeals of Decisions: 1,296 or 62% of 2,090 appeal cases met the standard. The monthly averages for processing all decisions ranged from 0.7 months to 1.3 months.</p> |
| | If you present your review or appeal to the Board by written submission, we will ensure that your case is processed and a decision issued to you within one month. | <p>Reviews of Decisions: 59 or 90% of 66 written submissions met the standard. The monthly averages for processing all decisions ranged from 0.3 months to one month.</p> <p>Appeals of Decisions: 28 or 33% of 84 appeal cases met the standard. The monthly averages for processing all decisions ranged from 0.8 months to 2.4 months.</p> |

| Service Standard | Summary | Accomplishments |
|---|--|---|
| Health Care Decisions and Claims | If you contact us regarding a health care benefit which you feel you are entitled to, or submit a claim for reimbursement on a current benefit: You will receive a decision or we will process your claim within four weeks of our receipt of all the necessary information. | Health Care Decisions or Claims: Data currently unavailable as the implementation of a reporting database was postponed. Analysis will be done to determine how data will be captured in the future. |
| Health Care Appeals | If you are not satisfied with a decision, you can appeal it and you will receive a decision within eight weeks of our receipt of all the necessary information. | Health Care Appeals: Data currently unavailable as the implementation of a reporting database was postponed. Analysis will be done to determine how data will be captured in the future. |
| Long-Term Care Facilities | When clients require long-term care, Veterans Affairs can offer financial support, where facilities meet standards set by the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation, or provincial or territorial standards, or Veterans Affairs guidelines. | Long Term Care: No measurement mechanism in place. All of VAC's clients who are funded by the Department are placed in facilities which fall in one of the three categories included in the service standard. |
| Funeral and Burial Assistance | <p>You will receive a decision within five weeks from the time you submit all the necessary documentation.</p> <p>If you are not satisfied with the Last Post Fund decision concerning your application, you may request a review and a decision will be provided within four weeks.</p> | <p>Funeral and Burial Assistance Decisions: 10,402 or 99% of 10,507 decisions met the standard.</p> <p>Review of Decisions: No measurement mechanism in place.</p> |

3.0 Reporting on Collective Results

3.1 Health Care Coordination Initiative - *Strategic Priority*

The Health Care Coordination Initiative (HCCI) was established in 1994 to develop and implement a strategy to coordinate federal government purchasing of health care services and products for federal clients at the lowest possible cost through coordination of effort among departments and agencies. Ten departments and agencies formed a **partnership** with a view to minimize inefficiency and duplication in their delivery of health care programs, while maintaining or improving the quality of the services they provide. Veterans Affairs Canada is the lead department for the Initiative and provides executive leadership through the HCCI Secretariat.

Expected Results

Provision of a satisfactory level of health care products and services for federal clients at the lowest possible cost

~~

Improved decision-making in program administration and delivery

HCCI and the Treasury Board Secretariat developed an Accountability Framework for the Initiative which requires annual reporting of the costs and results of HCCI activities. The first report (1998-99), was produced in the Fall of 1999 and clearly demonstrated the benefits, both quantitative and qualitative, of horizontal management in health care. The report also shows that HCCI is well ahead of schedule in contributing positively to the bottom lines of partner departments. The HCCI actual net cash flow (savings minus costs) for Year One of the three-year Business Plan was \$3.1 million ahead of projections.

At present, vision care agreements exist in Saskatchewan and the four Atlantic Provinces; a pharmacy agreement is in place in Saskatchewan; a national agreement is in place for the purchase of hearing aids, as well as a plan for the recycling of medical devices. Together these and the other initiatives will produce savings of over \$9 million per year for partner departments.

The departments have also collaborated on activities which support improved program management. The planned joint policy advisory committees for pharmacy and dental have been approved, and, in the case of pharmacy, have been meeting for one year. Joint policy reviews have been carried out for both the audiology and oxygen programs which have resulted in changes in departmental policies.

The HCCI departments have begun planning for the next phase of their partnership, developing a three-year business plan for work to be undertaken when their current plan expires in March 2001.

3.2 Government On-Line

Veterans Affairs has established a Project Office and a matrix management project organization for Government On-Line. The Portfolio plans to meet the "Tier 1" requirements by December 2000. Several initiatives have been identified as potential steps towards Government On-Line for our developing departmental and project strategy documents. Veterans Affairs has commenced partnership work with other government departments and has a leading role in the Access Canada for Seniors "cluster" for on-line service.

3.3 Knowledge Economy Partnership - *Strategic Priority*

During 1999-00, the Knowledge Economy Partnership (KEP) Steering Committee

| Expected Results |
|--|
| Strengthen the relationships between citizens and all levels of government ~~ |
| Improve access to government services ~~ |
| Eliminate red tape, overlap and duplication of services ~~ |
| Stimulate economic growth ~~ |
| Enhance the skills of the local workforce ~~ |
| Create a transportable model for collaborative governance |

approved eight projects, and five projects were carried over which had commenced in the previous year. Veterans Affairs co-sponsored several projects including the Innovative Solutions Agency, the Quality Pride in Service Conference and Information Technology Week on P.E.I. '99. A comprehensive evaluation of KEP was completed by Consulting and Audit Canada with very positive results. An action plan is now being implemented to address the recommendations. A strategic planning exercise was carried out with three strategic priorities identified: Citizen-centred Service Delivery; Identify Opportunities and Potential Partners to Advance the Knowledge Economy and Information Technology on P.E.I.; and Human Capital:

How the Knowledge Economy Affects Workers and How Workers Affect the Knowledge Economy. Committees were set up to champion each of the Strategic Priorities.

4.0 Key Reviews, Audits and Evaluations

The Audit and Evaluation Division conducted numerous studies during the 1999-00 fiscal year, which looked at various components of both programs and operations. Recommendations raised in each study were presented to senior managers and each report was subsequently approved for finalization by the Departmental Executive Board.

| Review | Recommendations | Response |
|---|---|---|
| Review of Client Service Delivery Network and Mid-term Assessment of CSDN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establish a governance structure for CSDN ▶ Appoint a Transition Manager ▶ Appoint a Completion Manager to design, develop, implement and operationalize CSDN R2 ▶ Establish a project to specify the scope of R3 development ▶ Develop a strategy and plan to complete the work remaining on BRP | The Department is now in the process of implementing the Chief Information Officer Branch's governance model for the IM/IT functions. A part of this model includes a Coordinated IT Transition Plan which will address the substance of recommendations made by IBM concerning CSDN maintenance and the development of future CSDN releases. |

| Audit | Finding | Response |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Financial Control Framework Audit | Varying levels of strength in financial controls existed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In keeping with the Modernized Comptrollership initiative, the Head Office and field financial staff have begun standardizing the process for assessing finance activities in the district offices ▶ Monitor the effectiveness of financial control in the Portfolio using a combination of methods such as self-assessment, supervision, sampling and internal control review |

| Evaluation | Findings | Response |
|---|--|--|
| Evaluation of CCSA Pilot Project Implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CCSA addresses the holistic needs of the client ▶ Clients contribute to the care plan and decisions ▶ CCSA supports the client regardless of pension or benefit status ▶ Empowerment of employees, employees take on leadership roles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ VAC will continue to embrace advanced management methods ▶ Team delivery of services works in the client's best interests |

Section III: Consolidated Reporting

A. Modernizing Comptrollership

Modernization of comptrollership is one of six Government of Canada priority initiatives to modernize management practices for the 21st century. This initiative focuses on sound resource management and represents a long-term effort to develop standards and practices to integrate financial and non-financial performance information, to properly assess and manage risk, and to ensure appropriate control systems. Modernization of Comptrollership supports responsive government by promoting vigorous stewardship of public resources.

During 1999-00, Veterans Affairs Canada took two important steps towards advancing comptrollership practices in the Department. In the Fall of 1999, VAC joined ranks with other departments to pilot innovations in the Modernization of Comptrollership, and subsequently began a process to assess the Department's comptrollership capacity against benchmarks and a common standard. The results of the capacity check will be used as a basis to establish a Management Agenda or comptrollership action plan.

While the Management Agenda will become VAC's over-arching framework to improve management practices within the Department, various key actions have already been taken which directly contribute to the Modernization of Comptrollership initiative. For example, the Department has produced a discussion paper on risk management to serve as a foundation upon which to build a mature risk management regime; work has started on implementing the Financial Information Strategy which will help integrate financial and non-financial performance information; a process has been initiated to put in place a framework for good human resource management; and a client-centred ethics committee has been created to enhance policy and decision-making related to program and service delivery.

B. Transfer Payments

| Veterans Affairs Program Benefits and Services Grants and Contributions (\$ millions) | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| 1999-00 | | | | | |
| | Actual 1997-98 | Actual 1998-99 | Planned Spending | Total Authorities | Actual |
| Grants | | | | | |
| Disability Pensions | 1,150 | 1,154 | 1,167 | 1,189 | 1,182 |
| War Veterans Allowances and Civilian War Allowances | 52 | 43 | 41 | 41 | 38 |
| Last Post Fund | 10 | 12 | 16 | 16 | 14 |
| Commonwealth War Graves Commission | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Contributions | | | | | |
| Contributions to veterans, under the VIP, to assist in defraying costs of extended health care not covered by provincial health programs. | 150 | 153 | 151 | 160 | 156 |

Only those Grants and Contributions in excess of \$5 million have been reported. All Grants and Contributions to VA are legislated. The expected results and outcomes of Grants and Contributions can be found in the Benefits and Services Business Line beginning on page 12.

C. Sustainable Development

The Portfolio's commitment to sustainable development was outlined in the strategy document that was tabled in Parliament in 1997. In accordance with amendments to the *Auditor General Act* enacted in 1995, a second strategy is being crafted that will outline the Portfolio's goals, objectives, and targets in an action plan for integrating sustainable development into the Portfolio's policies, programs and operations. This second strategy will be critical for advancing the sustainable development agenda, and for measuring the progress that the Portfolio will make over the coming years.

One of the key challenges for Veterans Affairs is to ensure that our day to day business activities not only consider, but also promote, the environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainable development. **Figure 8** on page 59 outlines VA's performance achievements in 1999-00.

Figure 8: Goals and Performance Achievements in 1999-00

| Objectives | Targets for the Reporting Period | Performance Indicators | Progress to Date |
|--|--|---|---|
| Goal #1: Integrate sustainable development into decision-making processes and the organizational culture of the Veterans Affairs Program | | | |
| To improve the delivery of benefits and services using clean technologies in providing client services, as a means to eliminate waste, reduce energy consumption and improve service effectiveness and efficiency. | Undertake a review of the department's environmental assessment procedures and performance to ensure compliance to the <i>Canadian Environmental Assessment Act</i> and to promote environmental assessment as a broadly applied, legitimate decision-making tool. | Include review plan by the end of 2000. Appoint review manager by end of 2000. | Work in progress. Involved in <i>Canadian Environmental Assessment Act</i> (CEAA) five year review consultation event. Operations streamlined. Course of action determined for managing environmental assessments. |
| | Establish mechanisms to measure more accurately environmental impacts of VAC operations. | Install water and electrical meters where feasible by 1999-00. | Meters installed on an experimental basis in selected sites. Complete baseline survey updated annually. |
| | Include a sustainable development clause in all contracts, including packaging reduction where appropriate. | Implement two awareness campaigns to reduce packaging by 1999-00. | Green procurement policy in place. Awareness campaigns targeted for completion in 2000-01. |
| | Undertake a review of the Portfolio's training programs to ensure that staff are adequately equipped for the shift to sustainable operations, particularly in the areas of facility management, procurement and policy development. | Once SDS is tabled and reporting elements of EMS are defined, undertake a review of training requirements. Integrate SD training requirement into established departmental training program. | Financial commitment to Federal Committee on Environmental Systems (FCEMS) Training Package. Negotiations begun on incorporating SD into training. Training CD being evaluated as to the compatibility to system. |

| Objectives | Targets for the Reporting Period | Performance Indicators | Progress to Date |
|---|--|--|--|
| Integrate sustainable development into decision-making processes and the organizational culture of the Veterans Affairs Portfolio | Establish a Sustainable Development Audit and Evaluation Program and build internal capacity to ensure proactive management and due diligence. | Include environmental aspects in the standard internal audit checklist. Internal audit staff to attend formal training on International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14000 based procedures | Checklist developed but not incorporated. Attendance at an Environmental Auditing Course given by Environment Canada. |
| | Develop a Portfolio environmental management system, based upon the ISO 14001 model. | Full implementation by summer 1999. | EMS manual completed by June 2000. Green Teams, Green Champions in place. |
| | Promulgate a sustainable development policy, which includes an accountability framework for its implementation. | Policy approved by management Program evaluation framework to be developed and implemented by October 1, 1999. | Draft EMS Framework established and circulated for discussion, implementation 2000-01. |

| Objectives | Targets for the Reporting Period | Performance Indicators | Progress to Date |
|---|--|---|--|
| Goal #2 To sustain and improve the health status and resulting quality of life and well-being for Portfolio clients and their families | | | |
| | Establish a systematic research program at Departmental, national and international levels to contribute to knowledge about aging. | <p>Develop and implement a VAC Gerontological Advisory Council to provide expert advice and guidance on the development or adjustment of policies and programs that meet the needs of the veteran community.</p> <p>Attend the UN International Year of Older Persons Conference in Montreal in 1999.</p> <p>Increase interaction with the network of research and service providers in the field of gerontology.</p> <p>Ensure VAC staff maintain a high level of awareness of the latest developments in care for the elderly.</p> <p>Develop partnerships with Health Canada and with Health ministries of provincial governments.</p> | <p>Since 1997 a twelve-member council has met approximately five times.</p> <p>Hosted three-way United States/Australia/Canada veterans departments symposium at conference.</p> <p>Numerous presentations at professional and public events/meetings.</p> <p>Latest knowledge integrated into national staff training (CCSA, etc.).</p> <p>Currently informing Health Canada National Health Agenda with provincial implications.</p> |
| | Publish/promote research, advice and information on programs and service models to meet veterans' specific needs | Present and publish papers resulting from those activities associated with the VAC research program and Gerontological Advisory Council. | Ten published papers in peer reviewed journals. |

| Objectives | Targets for the Reporting Period | Performance Indicators | Progress to Date |
|---|--|---|---|
| To contribute to the cultural aspects of sustainable development through the conduct of commemorative activities that expand the awareness of the nation's heritage and assist in defining the legacy of the veteran community. | To seek to shape social values relating to global conflict toward more sustainable ones | <p>Use electronic digital technologies to promote WWI And WWII veteran interviews, by April 1, 2000.</p> <p>Use electronic media to create virtual tours of monuments and cemeteries located in Canada and abroad, by October 1, 1999.</p> | <p>Interviews with veteran clients available on the web site.</p> <p>Virtual tours on the web site.</p> |
| | Seize the opportunities to enhance promotion through use of emerging information technologies. | <p>Using archival materials, create "virtual" products which simulate wartime conditions, as awareness medium.</p> <p>Make electronic awareness material available on the Internet.</p> <p>Promote veterans' messages through the VAC Internet web site.</p> <p>Use of information technology to streamline "family tree" requirements.</p> | <p>Canadian Virtual War Memorial Tour available on the web site.</p> <p>Not accomplished.</p> <p>Oral interviews and press releases available on the web site.</p> <p>Links on the VAC web site to genealogy sites.</p> |

D. Fuel Storage Tanks

Status of Fuel Storage Tanks on Veterans Affairs-owned Land

Annual Report for April 30, 2000

As required under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, Part IV, *Registration of Storage Tank Systems for Petroleum Products and Allied Petroleum Products on Federal Lands Regulations*, this report provides the information set out in Schedule II of the aforementioned regulation, updated to December 31, 1999.

1. The following number of aboveground storage tank systems:

Are registered with Veterans Affairs: **6**

Comply with the *Federal Aboveground Storage Tank Technical Guidelines*: **6**

Do not comply with the *Federal Aboveground Storage Tank Technical Guidelines*: **0**

Should be upgraded in accordance with Schedule I of the *Federal Aboveground Storage Tank Guidelines*:

a) **0** in 2000.

b) **0** in 2001.

2. The following number of underground storage tank systems:

Are registered with Veterans Affairs: **0**

Comply with the *Federal Underground Storage Tank Technical Guidelines*: **0**

Do not comply with the *Federal Underground Storage Tank Technical Guidelines*: **0**

Should be upgraded in accordance with Schedule I of the *Federal Underground Storage Tank Guidelines*:

a) **0** in 2000.

b) **0** in 2001.

E. Regulatory Initiatives

| Initiative | Expected Results | Results Achieved |
|---|---|--|
| "Omnibus" - miscellaneous amendments to veterans' legislation | Improved efficiency in program delivery; consistency with current jurisprudence and government policy; correction of anomalies and inconsistencies; clarification of definitions and provisions; removal of no-longer-used provisions; conversion to gender-neutral language. | Bill C-61, being chapter 10 of the Statutes of Canada, 1999, came into force on May 1, 1999 and implemented approximately half of the planned amendments. Further information on the results achieved through Bill C-61 is found on page 21. The second portion, completing all expected results of the initiative, was drafted in 1999-00 and tabled by the Minister of Veterans Affairs as Bill C-41 on June 15, 2000. Subject to Parliamentary approval, results of Bill C-41 will be achieved at a later date. |
| Miscellaneous regulatory initiatives | Miscellaneous amendments to veterans' regulations to remove obsolete provisions, make changes consequential to Pension Reform and other legislative initiatives, and address observations made by Scrutiny Committee. | Significant progress was accomplished on miscellaneous regulatory initiatives during 1999-00. Amendments to the <i>Veterans Health Care Regulations</i> were drafted and forwarded to the Department of Justice for statutory examination. Amendments to the <i>Veterans Allowance Regulations</i> , <i>Last Post Fund Regulations</i> , 1995, and <i>Veterans Burial Regulations</i> , 1995 were drafted. |
| | Revised health benefits provisions concerning seriously-disabled veterans and annual recalculation of income-based entitlements. | Revised health benefits provisions were drafted but were withdrawn as other legislation, especially Bill C-23 implementing the Supreme Court's rulings on same-sex statutory benefits, had to be given priority. These provisions are being re-drafted and will take into account the benefits and obligations of same-sex partners. |

Section IV: Financial Performance

A. Financial Performance Overview

Veterans Affairs Canada

Total spending authority for the Veterans Affairs Program in 1999-00 was \$2,091.2 million. This was \$129.7 million higher than the planned spending identified in the **1999-00 Report on Plans and Priorities**. Increased authority was obtained through Supplementary Estimates and access to the Treasury Board Votes 5, 10 and 15 for contingencies and centrally funded programs, and is comprised principally of the following items:

- ▶ additional funding of \$50 million for one-time payments to Merchant Navy Veterans.
- ▶ additional net funding for Grants and Contributions of \$31 million.
- ▶ an operating budget increase of \$17.5 million for completion of the Year 2000 Project and for other IT related expenditures.
- ▶ additional funding of \$11.8 million as compensation for signed collective bargaining agreements.
- ▶ an operating budget increase of \$4.7 million to implement the Veterans Affairs component of the “Quality of Life in the Canadian Forces” initiative.
- ▶ an operating budget carry forward from 1998-99 of \$3.9 million.
- ▶ additional funding of \$3 million for one-time payments to Canadian prisoners of war.
- ▶ a \$1.8 million premium on the transfer of funds from salaries to other operating.
- ▶ other spending authority increases totalling \$6 million, including adjustments to statutory authorities.

Actual expenditures for 1999-00 in the Veterans Affairs Program were \$24.0 million less than the total authorized funding which resulted in a lapse of 1.1% of the total authorized. Of this amount, \$18.7 million consisted of small percentage lapses in various Grants and Contributions. The remaining \$5.3 million lapse was in the Program’s Operating Vote, against an authorized budget of \$638 million.

Veterans Review and Appeal Board

Total spending authority for the Veterans Review and Appeal Board was \$9.4 million or \$1.3 million higher than the planned spending identified in the **1999-00 Report on Plans and Priorities**. Increased authority was obtained through Supplementary Estimates and access to the Treasury Board Votes 5, 10 and 15 for contingencies and centrally funded programs, and is comprised principally of the following items:

- ▶ an operating budget increase of \$0.5 million to implement the Veterans Affairs component of the “Quality of Life in the Canadian Forces” initiative.
- ▶ an operating budget carry forward from 1998-99 of \$0.3 million.
- ▶ additional funding of \$0.2 million as compensation for signed collective bargaining agreements.
- ▶ other spending authority increases totalling \$0.3 million, including adjustments to statutory authorities.

B. Financial Summary Tables

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Table 1 Summary of Voted Appropriations

| Financial Requirements by Authority (\$ millions) | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1999-00 | | | | |
| | | Planned Spending | Total Authorities | Actual |
| Veterans Affairs Program | | | | |
| 1 | Operating Expenditures | 543.7 | 637.8 | 632.5 |
| 5 | Grants and Contributions | 1,389.4 | 1,420.4 | 1,401.8 |
| (S) | Minister of Veterans Affairs - Salary and motor car allowance | -- | -- | -- |
| (S) | Re-Establishment Credits under Section 8 and Repayments under Section 15 of the <i>War Service Grants Act</i> of compensating adjustments made in accordance with the terms of the <i>Veterans Land Act</i> | -- | -- | -- |
| (S) | Returned Soldiers Insurance Actuarial Liability Adjustment | -- | -- | -- |
| (S) | Veterans Insurance Actuarial Liability Adjustment | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| (S) | Spending of proceeds from the disposal of surplus Crown assets | -- | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| (S) | Refunds of amounts credited to revenues in previous years | -- | -- | -- |
| (S) | Contributions to employee benefit plans | 28.2 | 32.5 | 32.5 |
| Total Program | | 1,961.5 | 2,091.2 | 2,067.2 |
| Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program | | | | |
| 10 | Program expenditures | 6.9 | 8.0 | 8.0 |
| (S) | Contributions to employee benefit plans | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Total Program | | 8.1 | 9.4 | 9.4 |
| Total Portfolio | | 1,969.6 | 2,100.6 | 2,076.6 |

Note: 1. Operating includes minor capital and other health purchase services
2. Total Authorities are main estimates plus supplementary estimate plus other authorities.
3. Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

Table 2 Comparison of Total Planned Spending to Actual Spending

| Portfolio Planned versus Actual Spending by Business Line (\$ millions) | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Business Lines | FTEs | Operating | Capital | Voted Grants and Contributions | Total Gross Expend- itures | Less: Re-spendable Revenues* | Total Net Expend- itures |
| Benefits and Services | 2,773 | 523.1 | 2.5 | 1,389.6 | 1,915.2 | -- | 1,915.2 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | 2,773 | 548.2 | 2.5 | 1,420.7 | 1,971.4 | -- | 1,971.4 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | 2,606 | 545.8 | 2.2 | 1,402.1 | 1,950.1 | -- | 1,950.1 |
| Corporate Administration | 462 | 44.3 | 2.0 | -- | 46.3 | -- | 46.3 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | 462 | 117.8 | 2.0 | -- | 119.8 | -- | 119.8 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | 548 | 115.3 | 1.8 | -- | 117.1 | -- | 117.1 |
| Veterans Review and Appeal Board | 105 | 8.1 | -- | -- | 8.1 | -- | 8.1 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | 105 | 9.4 | -- | -- | 9.4 | -- | 9.4 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | 103 | 9.4 | -- | -- | 9.4 | -- | 9.4 |
| Total Portfolio | 3,340 | 575.5 | 4.5 | 1,389.6 | 1,969.6 | -- | 1,969.6 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | 3,340 | 675.4 | 4.5 | 1,420.7 | 2,100.6 | -- | 2,100.6 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | 3,257 | 670.5 | 4.0 | 1,402.1 | 2,076.6 | -- | 2,076.6 |
| Other Revenues and Expenditures | | | | | | | |
| Non-respendable revenues** | | | | | | | (34.8) |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | | | | | | | (34.8) |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | | | | | | | (33.5) |
| Cost of services provided by other departments | | | | | | | 23.4 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | | | | | | | 23.4 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | | | | | | | 21.9 |
| Net Cost of Program | | | | | | | 1,958.2 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | | | | | | | 2,089.2 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | | | | | | | 2,065.0 |

* These revenues were formerly called "Revenues Credited to the Vote"

** These revenues were formerly called "Revenues Credited to the General Government Revenues (GGR)"

Note: 1. Operating includes minor capital, other health purchase services, and the following statutory items: Contributions to employee benefit plans, Minister of Veterans Affairs - Salary and motorcar allowance, Spending of proceeds from the disposal of surplus Crown assets, and Refunds of amounts credited to revenues in previous years.
2. Grants and Contributions include both Voted and Statutory Items.
3. Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

Table 3 Historical Comparison of Total Planned Spending to Actual Spending

| Historical Comparison of Portfolio Planned versus Actual Spending by Business Line (\$ millions) | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Business Lines | Actual 1997-98 | Actual 1998-99 | 1999-00 | | |
| | | | Planned Spending | Total Authorities | Actual |
| Benefits and Services | 1,879.9 | 1,915.6 | 1,915.2 | 1,971.4 | 1,950.1 |
| Corporate Administration | 47.1 | 72.7 | 46.3 | 119.8 | 117.1 |
| Veterans Review and Appeal Board | 7.8 | 8.5 | 8.1 | 9.4 | 9.4 |
| Total Portfolio | 1,934.7 | 1,996.8 | 1,969.6 | 2,100.6 | 2,076.6 |

Note: Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

**Table 4 Resource Requirements by Organization
and Business Line**

| Comparison of 1999-00 (RPP) Planned Spending and Total Authorities to Actual Expenditures by Organization and Business Line (\$ millions) | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Organization | Program / Business Lines | | | | |
| | Veterans Affairs Program | | | Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program | |
| | Benefits and Services Business Line | Corporate Administration Business Line | Total Veterans Affairs Program | Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line | Total Portfolio |
| Veterans Services Branch | 1,887.3 | -- | 1,887.3 | -- | 1,887.3 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | 1,923.0 | -- | 1,923.0 | -- | 1,923.0 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | 1,902.1 | -- | 1,902.1 | -- | 1,902.1 |
| Corporate Services Branch | 1.0 | 41.6 | 42.6 | -- | 42.6 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | 1.0 | 114.9 | 115.9 | -- | 115.9 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | 1.0 | 112.4 | 113.4 | -- | 113.4 |
| Commemoration, Public Relations and Bureau of Pensions Advocates Branch | 13.3 | -- | 13.3 | -- | 13.3 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | 21.4 | -- | 21.4 | -- | 21.4 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | 21.0 | -- | 21.0 | -- | 21.0 |
| Benefits Redesign Project | 13.6 | -- | 13.6 | -- | 13.6 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | 26.0 | -- | 26.0 | -- | 26.0 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | 26.0 | -- | 26.0 | -- | 26.0 |
| Portfolio Executive Services | -- | 1.5 | 1.5 | -- | 1.5 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | -- | 1.5 | 1.5 | -- | 1.5 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | -- | 1.4 | 1.4 | -- | 1.4 |
| Audit and Evaluation | -- | 1.9 | 1.9 | -- | 1.9 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | -- | 2.1 | 2.1 | -- | 2.1 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | -- | 2.1 | 2.1 | -- | 2.1 |
| Corporate Planning | -- | 1.3 | 1.3 | -- | 1.3 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | -- | 1.3 | 1.3 | -- | 1.3 |
| <i>(Actuals)</i> | -- | 1.2 | 1.2 | -- | 1.2 |
| Veterans Review and Appeal Board | -- | -- | -- | 8.1 | 8.1 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | -- | -- | -- | 9.4 | 9.4 |
| <i>(Total actuals)</i> | -- | -- | -- | 9.4 | 9.4 |
| Total Portfolio | 1,915.2 | 46.3 | 1,961.5 | 8.1 | 1,969.6 |
| <i>(Total authorities)</i> | 1,971.4 | 119.8 | 2,091.2 | 9.4 | 2,100.6 |
| <i>(Total actuals)</i> | 1,950.1 | 117.1 | 2,067.2 | 9.4 | 2,076.6 |
| Percentage of Total | 93.9% | 5.6% | 99.5% | 0.5% | 100.0% |

Note: Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

Table 5 Non-respendable Revenues *

| Non-Respendable Revenues by Business Line (\$ millions) | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Business Lines | Actual 1997-98 | Actual 1998-99 | 1999-00 | | |
| | | | Planned Spending | Total Authorities | Actual |
| Benefits and Services | 38.0 | 37.2 | 33.8 | 33.8 | 32.3 |
| Corporate Administration | 7.4 | 1.6 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.2 |
| Veterans Review and Appeal Board | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Subtotal | 45.4 | 38.8 | 34.8 | 34.8 | 33.5 |
| Unplanned | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Total Non-Respendable Revenues | 45.4 | 38.8 | 34.8 | 34.8 | 33.5 |

* Formerly "Revenues Credited to the General Government Revenues (GGR)"

Table 6 Statutory Payments

| Statutory Payments by Business Line (\$ millions) | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Business Lines | Actual 1997-98 | Actual 1998-99 | 1999-00 | | |
| | | | Planned Spending | Total Authorities | Actual |
| Benefits and Services | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Corporate Administration | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Total Statutory Payments | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 |

Table 7 Transfer Payments

| Transfer Payments by Business Line (\$ millions) | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------|
| Business Lines | Actual 1997-98 | Actual 1998-99 | 1999-00 | | |
| | | | Planned Spending | Total Authorities | Actual |
| Grants | | | | | |
| Benefits and Services | 1,221.9 | 1,219.1 | 1,236.1 | 1,257.9 | 1,244.1 |
| Corporate Administration | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Total Grants | 1,221.9 | 1,219.1 | 1,236.1 | 1,257.9 | 1,244.1 |
| Contributions | | | | | |
| Benefits and Services | 152.1 | 158.0 | 153.5 | 162.5 | 157.7 |
| Total Contributions | 152.1 | 158.0 | 153.5 | 162.5 | 157.7 |
| Total Transfer Payments | 1,373.9 | 1,377.2 | 1,389.6 | 1,420.4 | 1,401.8 |

Note: Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

Table 8 Status Summary of Major Crown Projects

| Benefits Redesign Project | |
|---|---|
| 1. Overview | |
| <p>The Benefits Redesign Project is developing and implementing a new, integrated Client Service Delivery Network to support the delivery of benefits and services associated with the Disability Pensions, Economic Support and Health Care program areas of the Department. The CSDN is being introduced in stages, or releases. Implementation began with the first release in February 1999, with full implementation to be completed in 2000-01.</p> <p>The CSDN, the technological solution for the delivery of VAC benefits and services, results in faster, high quality decisions that are consistent and standardized; faster and more accurate payment and case processing; and, more comprehensive services to clients.</p> | |
| 2. Lead and Participating Departments | |
| Sponsoring Department: | Veterans Affairs Canada |
| Contracting Authority: | Public Works and Government Services Canada |
| Participating Departments: | Treasury Board Secretariat |
| | Public Works and Government Services Canada |
| | Senior Project Advisory Committee (consisting of all departments that could be impacted by the project) |
| 3. Prime Contractor and Major Sub-Contractor and Addresses | |
| EDS | 45 O'Connor Street, Suite 5000, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1A4 |
| AGRA Monenco | 1145 Hunt Club Road, Suite 600, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 0Y3 |
| 4. Major Milestones | |
| Project Commencement | April 1993 |
| Initiation (Concept) Phase | August 1993 |
| Preliminary Project Approval - Definition Phase | February 1995 |
| Effective Project Approval - Implementation Phase | October 1997 |
| - Gate 1 Certification | November 1998 |
| - <i>Release 1</i> | <i>February 1999</i> |
| - Gate 2 Certification | November 1999 |
| - <i>Release 2</i> | <i>Last quarter of 2000-01</i> |
| - Gate 3 Certification | Last quarter of 2000-01 |
| - <i>Release 3</i> | <i>Last quarter of 2000-01</i> |
| - Project Close-out | Last quarter of 2000-01 |

Benefits Redesign Project

5. Progress Report and Explanation of Variances

The BRP has been underway since 1993 and, on October 30, 1997, the Department received Treasury Board approval to complete the project at a total estimated cost of \$95.2 million. Funding is shared between the Department and Treasury Board. Treasury Board's contribution is an interest-bearing loan of \$60 million.

In accordance with Treasury Board's Major Crown Project Policy and the *Enhanced Framework for the Management of Information Technology Projects*, gates have been established by Treasury Board. Funding has been released in stages when the requirements of a gate have been met.

The requirements for the first and second project gates were met in November 1998 and November 1999 respectively, at which time Treasury Board released the frozen allotments of funds required to proceed to the subsequent project gate.

On February 15, 1999, CSDN Release 1 became the official "system of record" for the delivery of War Veterans Allowance and for determining the eligibility of Canada Service Veterans for health care programs and services. WVA monthly payments are now being processing using the CSDN. WVA legacy systems have been deactivated.

Release 2, which will support the delivery of the Disability Pensions Program, is now scheduled for implementation in the last quarter of 2000-01. The Department has determined that the Veterans Independence Program functionality, originally targeted to be split between Releases 3 and 4, would be more cost-effectively delivered through alternative service delivery arrangements.

The scope for Release 3 has been modified to focus on support for the Client-centred Service Approach business model and new business processes. Early Release 3 deliverables have been included in Release 1 to provide needed automated support to the CCSA project sites. Additional Release 3 requirements are expected to be addressed in a series of phases with required functionality in place prior to project close-out.

Delays in the project schedule have impacted the implementation dates for the releases, but have only marginally increased the overall estimated cost of the project to \$98.6 million. This represents an increase of \$3.4 million from the original estimate developed in 1997.

6. Industrial Benefits

To ensure that businesses have an opportunity to use the Benefits Redesign Project to develop their competitive positions and enhance their abilities to undertake similar projects elsewhere, the contract with EDS includes industrial regional benefits objectives which will be evaluated as the project progresses.

Table 9 Loans, Investments and Advances

| Loans, Investments and Advances (\$ millions) | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Business Line | Actuals | | |
| | 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-00 |
| Corporate Administration - Property Contracts (Active Agreements of Sale - Veterans and Clients) | | | |
| Number of Accounts | 1,763 | 1,089 | 558 |
| Outstanding Balance | 4.2 | 2.4 | 1.3 |
| Amounts due on Instalments plus Arrears * | 2.2 | 1.4 | -- |
| Amounts collected | 2.1 | 1.3 | 1.1 |
| Percentage collected * | 95.3% | 93.2% | -- |

* Information not available for 1999-00.

Table 10 Contingent Liabilities

| Contingent Liabilities (\$ millions) | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| List of Contingent Liabilities | Amount of Contingent Liability | | |
| | March 31, 1998 | March 31, 1999 | Current as of March 31, 2000 |
| Claims and Pending Threatened Litigation | | | |
| Litigations | 600 | 600 | 480 |
| Non-litigations | -- | -- | -- |
| Total | 600 | 600 | 480 |

Veterans Affairs Legislation is presently the subject of litigation in a number of cases. The issues involved are major and decisions in favour of the plaintiffs would have significant financial consequence for the Government.

Section V: Portfolio Overview

A. Mandate and Mission

The Veterans Affairs Portfolio consists of the Department of Veterans Affairs, commonly referred to as Veterans Affairs Canada, and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board.



The Department is comprised of three branches: the Veterans Services Branch; the Corporate Services Branch; and, the Commemoration, Public Relations and Bureau of Pensions Advocates Branch. The Veterans Review and Appeal Board is an independent, quasi-judicial agency established by Parliament in 1995.

Veterans Affairs' mission is to provide veterans, qualified civilians and their families with the benefits and services to which they are entitled; to promote their well-being and self-sufficiency as participating members of their communities; and, to keep the memory of their achievements alive for all Canadians.

The **mandate of Veterans Affairs Canada** is to provide benefits and services to eligible Canadians who served their country during periods of armed conflict and peacekeeping, and to honour their sacrifice and achievements in the defence of freedom. Its legislative authorities are contained in the *Department of Veterans Affairs Act*, 15 other Acts of Parliament and 30 sets of regulations and Orders-in-Council.

The **Veterans Review and Appeal Board's mandate** provides for full and exclusive jurisdiction to hear, determine and deal with all applications for review and appeal that may be made to the Board under the *Pension Act* and the *War Veterans Allowance Act*. All matters related to appeals under this legislation are authorized under the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act*.

B. Portfolio Organization

In 1999-00, the Veterans Affairs Portfolio delivered two programs.

The *Veterans Affairs Program*, delivered by Veterans Affairs Canada, provides a wide range of benefits and services principally in the areas of health care, disability pensions and income support and commemoration programming. Activities were delivered by a

staff complement of 3,154 full-time equivalents from a decentralized organization consisting of a Head Office in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, the National Capital Office in Ottawa, Ontario, and a national service delivery network across Canada. The Department also operates a hospital in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec, and maintains battlefield memorials in Europe. **Figure 9** on page 79 shows the organizational layout of Veterans Affairs Canada.

The ***Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program*** is delivered by the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, a separate independent administrative tribunal. The Board renders decisions in reviews and appeals of disability pensions and final appeals of war veterans allowances. These activities were delivered by 103 full-time equivalents which in 1999-00 included nineteen full-time members in Charlottetown and fifteen full-time members located in major cities across Canada. The Board holds review hearings in over 40 locations across Canada and appeal hearings primarily in Charlottetown. The organizational layout of the VRAB is shown on page 80, **Figure 10**.

The formal program structure of the Portfolio reflects the required independence between the Department and the Board as an administrative tribunal. It emphasizes the autonomy each has in representing the rights of clients and serving their needs.

Figure 9: Veterans Affairs Canada Organization

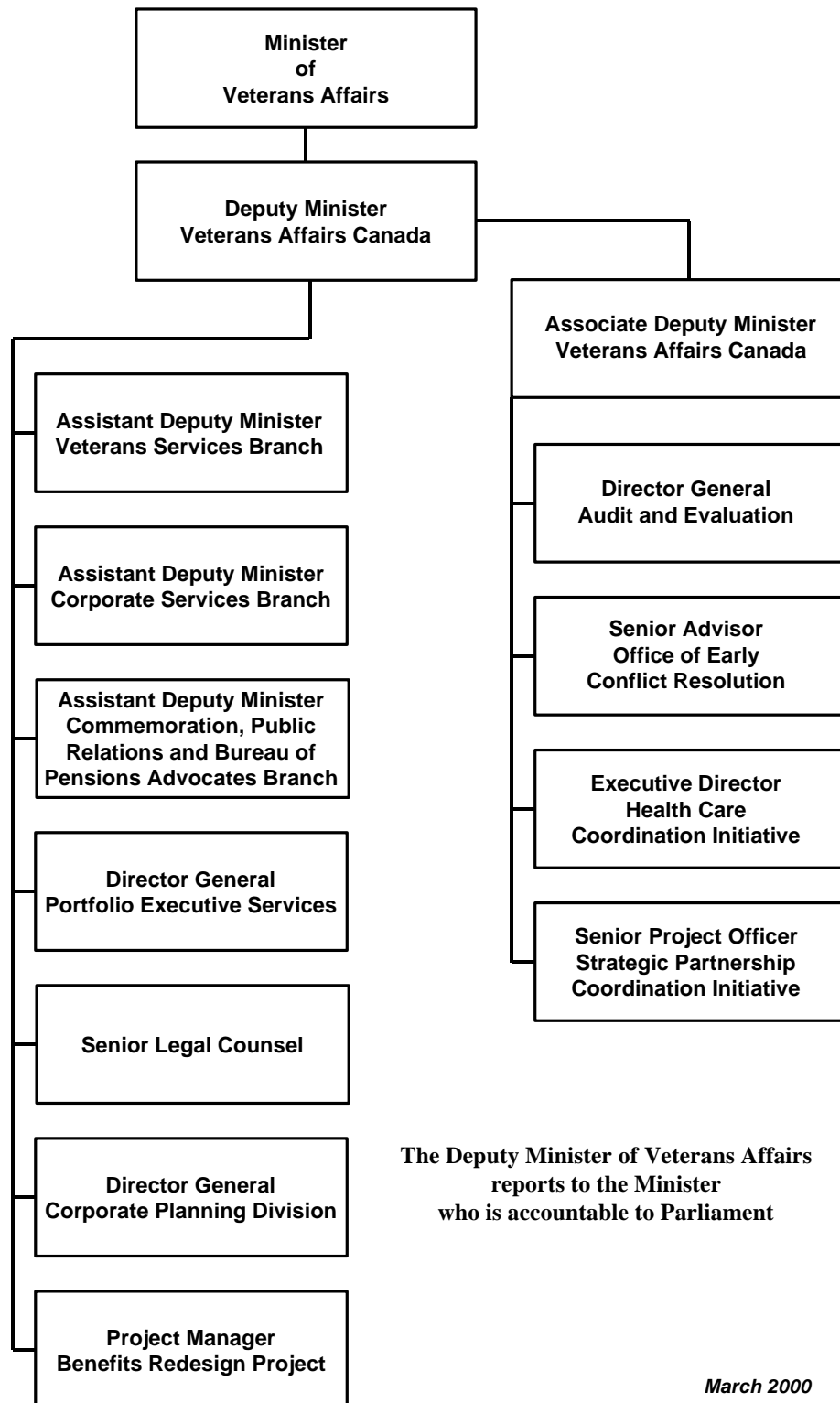
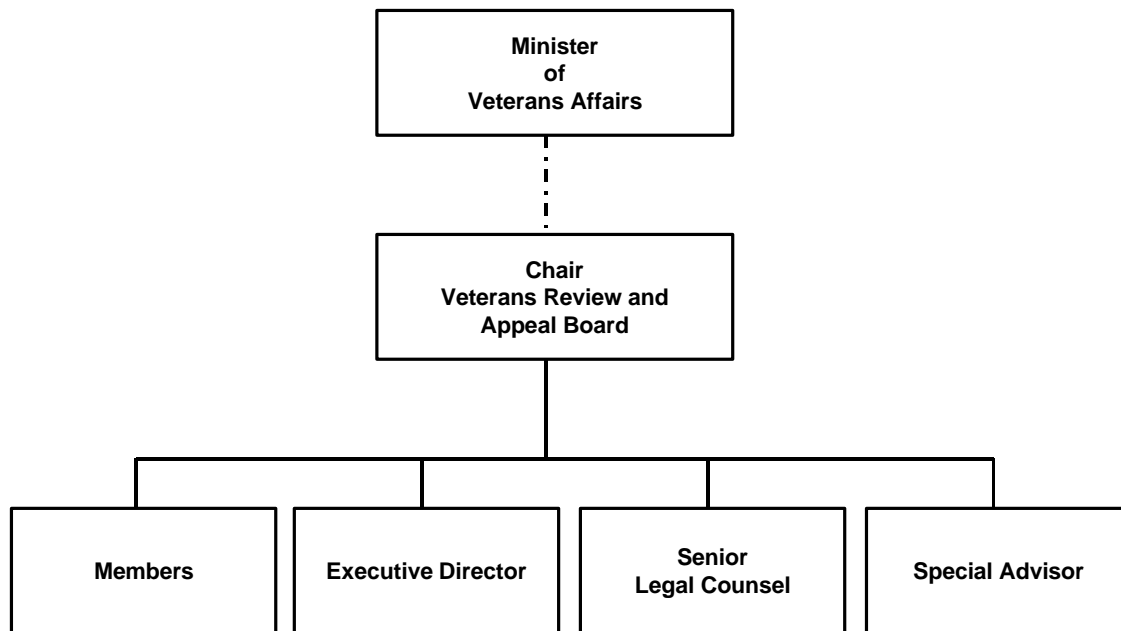


Figure 10: Veterans Review and Appeal Board Organization



**The Chair of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board
reports to Parliament through the Minister
and is accountable to the Minister for the use of the Board's
resources**

March 2000

1.0 Business Line Descriptions

Under the Portfolio's Planning, Reporting and Accountability Structure (PRAS) approved in October 1997, Veterans Affairs identified three distinct business lines to support its program delivery. Two of the business lines, ***Benefits and Services*** and ***Corporate Administration***, fall within the Veterans Affairs Program with accountability falling to the Department. The third business line, ***Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line***, supports the Board's activities.

1.1 Veterans Affairs Program

1.1.1 Benefits and Services Business Line

In recognition of their sacrifice to the nation, the ***Benefits and Services Business Line*** provides departmental clients with benefits and services that contribute to their financial, mental, physical and social health and well-being. It is also responsible for commemorative activity with a view to keeping the memory of their sacrifice and achievements alive for all Canadians.

This business line has four service lines: *pensions and allowances*; *pensions advocacy*; *health care*; and, *commemoration*. A brief description of each service line is provided.

Pensions and Allowances: Provide veterans and other eligible clients with disability pensions, prisoner of war compensation, special awards (attendance allowance, clothing allowance, exceptional incapacity allowance), war veterans allowance, survivor benefits and other economic benefits. In providing these benefits, the following services are included: counselling, assisting in the preparation of applications, medical exams, adjudication, payment, account maintenance and client information and referral. In 1999-00, the Department spent about \$1.2 billion in direct client pension and allowance benefits.

Pensions Advocacy: The Bureau of Pensions Advocates provides free legal advice and representation to veterans and other eligible clients for reviews or appeals of unfavourable or partially favourable entitlement or assessment pension or allowance decisions rendered at the first level of adjudication, or for final appeals of war veterans allowance decisions.

The Bureau, alone or in conjunction with other organizations, represents approximately 95% of veterans and other eligible clients appearing before the Veterans Review and Appeal Board.

Health Care: Health care and social programs and services are designed and implemented that anticipate and adapt to the evolving needs of eligible clients, including their smooth transition into an appropriate institutional environment, if this becomes necessary. It includes the administration of Ste. Anne's Hospital, a 600 active-bed hospital in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec. These Health Care Programs provide funding for the Veterans Independence Program, Health Care Benefits and Long-Term Care. In addition to program benefits, key services such as assessment, counselling and health promotion are also provided. In 1999-00, the Department spent approximately \$560 million on health care program benefits.

Commemoration: Education, special events, programming and other commemorative activities are carried out at the field level, across the country, under the direction of the Commemoration, Public Relations and Bureau of Pensions Advocates Branch. Commemorative activities are aimed at instilling in Canadians an appreciation for the sacrifices made by veterans and others during periods of conflict. They strengthen the nation's cultural identity and ensure that this legacy is not lost for future generations. The Commemoration Program expenditures (including grants to the Last Post Fund, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea) were approximately \$31 million in 1999-00.

1.1.2 Corporate Administration Business Line

The ***Corporate Administration Business Line*** is comprised of the following corporate functions: Offices of the Minister, the Deputy Minister, the Associate Deputy Minister, the Assistant Deputy Minister (Corporate Services), and the Office of Conflict Resolution. It also comprises the executive secretariat services (including legislation and regulation), corporate planning, finance (including property management), Year 2000 Project, human resources, information technology, communications, information, access and support services, audit and evaluation, security services and the Knowledge Economy Partnership Secretariat.

These functions provide the corporate management and administrative support that enables the organization to set direction, manage change and assess performance.

1.2 Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program

1.2.1 Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line

The *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line* provides clients with full opportunity to request review and appeal hearings to ensure a fair adjudicative process for disability pension and War Veterans Allowance claims.

The Board provides applicants with two levels of appeal for disability pensions and the final level of appeal for War Veterans Allowance claims.

Cases at both review and appeal may be presented to the Board in two ways - by way of a hearing or through a written submission. Clients are primarily represented before the Board by Advocates from the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, however, they may also represent themselves or be represented by the Royal Canadian Legion, the War Amputations of Canada, a private solicitor, or any individual of their choice. A key opportunity at the review level is that clients may attend their review hearings and have the option to provide oral testimony. Costs associated with review hearings are reimbursed by the Department. Appeal hearings are conducted in Charlottetown and, as oral testimony is not allowed, clients do not usually attend and should they attend, it is at their own cost. The Board also makes effective use of technology by offering teleconferencing and video conferencing for hearings, and services its clients in the official language of their choice.

Review hearings are held across Canada in over 40 locations and usually require two board members for each review panel. Appeal hearings are held in Charlottetown and require three board members on each panel who have not participated in the previous review hearing. Activities supporting the hearing process include preparation of documentation, scheduling of members for hearing, legal and advisory services, policy, members' development training, adjudicative support, quality assurance, systems support, communications/inquiry services, and administration.

Section VI: Other Information

A. Contact List

Corporate Planning Division is responsible for coordinating the development of both the Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP) and the associated Departmental Performance Report (DPR). For more information about these reports, please contact:

**Director General
Corporate Planning Division
Veterans Affairs Canada
P.O. Box 7700 (I.B. 046)
Charlottetown, PE
C1A 8M9**

**Telephone: (902) 566-8150
Facsimile: (902) 368-0437**

Reader Feedback:

Your comments and suggestions for improving the information contained in this Performance Report would be appreciated. We invite you to forward your comments to the Communications Division at Veterans Affairs Canada. Our address is listed on page 86. Should you prefer to use electronic mail, we may be reached at: plan@vac-acc.gc.ca.

Contacts for General Enquiries:

Additional information on the Portfolio may be accessed at Veterans Affairs' award-winning, multi-media web site at: <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca>.

Should you wish to make a general enquiry about the Portfolio, its programs or services, please contact your nearest Veterans Affairs district or regional office. Their location and telephone number may be found in the government pages of your local telephone directory.

Portfolio Publications:

The Portfolio produces a variety of publications on its programs and services. Copies of publications are available on our web site. They may also be obtained from Veterans Affairs' district or regional offices across Canada or by contacting:

**Communications Division
Veterans Affairs Canada
P.O. Box 7700
Charlottetown, PE
C1A 8M9**

Reviews, Audits and Evaluations carried out in the 1999-00 fiscal year:

- ▶ Financial Control Framework Audit
- ▶ Review of the Action Plan for Institutional Long-term Care
- ▶ Audit of Risk Management of the Year 2000 Project
- ▶ Help Desk Service Optimization
- ▶ Review of the Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN) - Release One
- ▶ Local Area Network/Wide Area Network (LAN/WAN) Backup Audit
- ▶ CCSA Project Management Audit
- ▶ Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN) Assessment
- ▶ Post Implementation Review of Release 1 of the Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN)
- ▶ Evaluation of CCSA Pilot Project Implementation
- ▶ Organizational Framework for the ADM, Commemoration, Public Relations and Chief Pensions Advocate, BPA
- ▶ Corporate Services Branch Survey
- ▶ Overseas Service Veterans (OSV) Wait-list Pilot Evaluation Framework
- ▶ Follow-up Review of the 1995 Trust Arrangements Audit
- ▶ The inclusion of reviews conducted by other parts of the organization

B. Legislation Administered and Associated Regulations

| The Minister has sole responsibility to Parliament for the following Acts: | |
|---|--|
| <i>Army Benevolent Fund Act</i> | R.S.C. 1970, c. A-16, as amended |
| <i>Children of Deceased Veterans Education Assistance Act</i> | R.S.C. 1985, c. C-28, as amended |
| <i>Department of Veterans Affairs Act</i> | R.S.C. 1985, c. V-1, as amended |
| <i>Civilian War-related Benefits Act</i> | R.S.C. 1985, c. C-31, as amended |
| <i>Pension Act</i> | R.S.C. 1985, c. P-6, as amended |
| <i>Returned Soldiers' Insurance Act, The</i> | S.C. 1920, c. 54, as amended |
| <i>Soldier Settlement Act</i> | R.S.C. 1927, c. 188, as amended |
| <i>Special Operators War Service Benefits Act</i> | R.S.C. 1952, c. 256 |
| <i>Supervisors War Service Benefits Act</i> | R.S.C. 1952, c. 258 |
| <i>Veterans Benefit Act</i> | R.S.C. 1970, c. V-2, as amended |
| <i>Veterans Insurance Act</i> | R.S.C. 1970, c. V-3, as amended |
| <i>Veterans' Land Act</i> | R.S.C. 1970, c. V-4, as amended |
| <i>Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act</i> | S.C. 1994-95, c. 18, as amended |
| <i>War Service Grants Act</i> | R.S.C. 1970, c. W-4, as amended |
| <i>War Veterans Allowance Act</i> | R.S.C. 1985, c. W-3, as amended |
| <i>Women's Royal Naval Services and the South African Military Nursing Service (Benefits) Act</i> | R.S.C. 1952, c. 297 |
| The Minister shares responsibility to Parliament for the following Acts: | |
| <i>Aeronautics Act, section 9</i> | R.S.C. 1985, c. A-2, s. 9, as amended (Minister of Transport) |
| <i>Appropriation Act No. 10, 1964, National Defence vote 58a</i> | S.C. 1964, c. 34, Sch. B, National Defence vote 58a (Minister of National Defence) |
| <i>Halifax Relief Commission Pension Continuation Act</i> | S.C. 1974-75-76, c. 88, as amended (Minister of Finance) |
| <i>Indian (Soldier Settlement) Act</i> | R.S.C. 1927, c. 98, as amended (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) |
| <i>Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pension Continuation Act, section 5</i> | R.S.C. 1970, c. R-10, s. 5, (Solicitor General) |
| <i>Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act, sections 32 to 34</i> | R.S.C. 1985, c. R-11, s. 32-34, (Solicitor General) |

| The Minister has sole responsibility to Parliament for the following regulations and orders: | |
|--|---|
| <i>Army Benevolent Fund Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 358 |
| <i>Assistance Fund (WVA and CWA) Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1578, as amended |
| <i>Award Regulations</i> | SOR/96-66, as amended |
| <i>Canadian Volunteer Service Medal Order</i> | SI/94-62, as amended |
| <i>Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island as Head Office of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, Order Designating</i> | SI/96-66 |
| <i>Children of Deceased Veterans Education Assistance Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 399, as amended |
| <i>Civilian Government Employees (War) Compensation Order</i> | P.C. 1944-45/8848 |
| <i>Deceased or Former Members Dependents Payment Order</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1599 |
| <i>Delegation of Powers (VLA) Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1588, as amended |
| <i>Execution of Purchase of Property Documents Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1590 |
| <i>Gallantry Awards Order</i> | SI/90-95, as amended |
| <i>Guardianship of Veterans' Property Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1579 |
| <i>Infant or Person of Unsound Mind Payment Order</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1600 |
| <i>Last Post Fund Regulations, 1995</i> | SOR/95-468 |
| <i>Memorial Cross Order (World War I)</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1622, as amended |
| <i>Memorial Cross Order (World War II)</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1623, as amended |
| <i>Merchant Seamen Vocational Training Order, The</i> | SOR/49-533 |
| <i>Pension and Allowance Adjustment Regulations</i> | SOR/91-620, as amended |
| <i>Pensioners Training Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1581, as amended |
| <i>Prescribed Persons and Organizations Regulations</i> | SOR/96-68 |
| <i>Returned Soldiers' Insurance Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1390 |
| <i>Vetcraft Shops Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1582 |
| <i>Veterans Allowance Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1602, as amended |
| <i>Veterans Burial Regulations, 1995</i> | SOR/95-467 |
| <i>Veterans Health Care Regulations</i> | SOR/90-594, as amended |
| <i>Veterans Insurance Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1587 |
| <i>Veterans Review and Appeal Board Regulations</i> | SOR/96-67 |
| <i>Veterans Treatment Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1585, as amended |
| <i>Veterans' Land Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1594, as amended |
| <i>War Service Grants Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1601 |
| The Minister shares responsibility to Parliament for the following regulations and orders: | |
| <i>Flying Accidents Compensation Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 10, as amended (the Minister of Transport) |
| <i>Special Duty Area Pension Order</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 350, as amended (the Minister of National Defence) |
| <i>Special Forces Superannuation Regulations</i> | C.R.C. 1978, c. 1586 (the President of the Treasury Board) |

C. List of Statutory Annual Reports and Other Portfolio Reports

| Veterans Affairs Canada | |
|--|---|
| VAC Home Page | http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca |
| VAC 2000-01 Estimates Part III - Report on Plans and Priorities | http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=Department/reports |
| VAC Performance Report for the Period Ending March 31, 1999 | |
| VAC Sustainable Development Strategy | http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=Department/reports/sustainable |
| Treasury Board Secretariat | |
| Quality and Affordable Service for Canadians: Establishing Service Standards in the Federal Government | http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/oepubs/TB_D3/OQUA_e.html |
| Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada | http://publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/res_can/rc_e.html |
| Modernization of Comptrollership in the Government of Canada | http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/partners/download/rirp-e.pdf |
| Financial Information Strategy | http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/fin/fis/FIS_SIF_e.html |
| Government On-Line | http://www.connect.gc.ca/en/610-e.htm |
| Service and Innovation | http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/home_e.htm |
| Results Measurement and Accountability | http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/database/database.asp |
| Estimates of the Government of Canada and other Supporting Documents | http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/repproj_e.html |
| Other Links | |
| Social Union | http://socialunion.gc.ca/menu_e.html |
| Sustainable Development | http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/cesd_cedd.nsf/html/menu_e.html |
| Information Technology | http://publiservice.cio-dpi.gc.ca/home_e.html |
| Speech From The Throne 1999 - Building a Higher Quality of Life for All Canadians | http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/sft-ddt/doc/index_e.htm |

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