



Salute!

Veterans Affairs Canada: Proudly Serving Canada's Veteran Community

Veterans' Week 2011

Minister Blaney Appointed to Lead Veterans Affairs



Since being appointed Minister of Veterans Affairs earlier this year, the Honourable Steven Blaney has been busy meeting face to face with countless Veterans, Canadian Forces members and their families and participating in a number of events to honour those who have served.

"I have taken every opportunity over the past several months to learn more about the Canadian Forces and listen to Veterans' personal stories of service and sacrifice," said Minister Blaney. "This has helped me better understand their needs and strengthened my commitment to make sure those who have served have the tools and support they need to successfully move to civilian life."

First elected to the House of Commons in 2006, as the Member of Parliament for the Quebec riding of Lévis-Bellechasse, Minister Blaney was re-elected in 2008 and 2011. He has served on various parliamentary standing committees including the Standing Committee on

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. He later joined the Standing Committee on National Defence and visited Canadians serving in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

From May 2007 to March 2011, Mr. Blaney was the chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. He presently serves on the cabinet committees on Social Affairs as well as Foreign Affairs and Defence.

After graduating from the Université de Sherbrooke, Mr. Blaney became a civil engineer in 1988, and later obtained a Master of Business Administration in 2002. He has worked as a consultant, an entrepreneur, and an advisor for urban infrastructure and environmental technologies. Before his first election, Mr. Blaney worked for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

Mr. Blaney and his wife Marie Bouchard have two children.



Minister Steven Blaney welcomes home Canadian soldiers returning from the combat mission in Afghanistan, including Captain Gravelle of the Régiment de la Chaudière.

How Will You Remember?

From November 5 to 11, Canadians come together to recognize and pay tribute to the brave men and women who have served and continue to serve Canada. In the week leading up to Remembrance Day, Canadians young and old will take part in hundreds of commemorative ceremonies and events across the country.

Canada is recognized around the world for its generosity and willingness to step forward when help is needed. Whether it has been in the South African War, First World War, Second World War, Korean War, present-day military and peace support efforts, or domestic operations ensuring the well-being of Canadians, Canada's service men and women have answered the call. Time and time again, Canadians have signed up to defend our

country, to take a stand against tyranny and to help restore the peace in times of conflict. More than 2.3 million Canadians have served in the cause of peace and freedom over the years. More than 117,000 have given their lives.

Canadians remember these heroes in many ways. We wear poppies, gather at war memorials and learn our history through books, videos and by speaking with Veterans. We attend ceremonies and events that honour Veterans. We express our thoughts and reflections through social media. With so many ways to remember, it is now easier than ever to show our gratitude and respect.

Canadians will come together at events such as the Billings Bridge Veterans Appreciation Day in Ottawa, Ontario; Kin Canada's Portraits of Honour and display of the Seventh Book of Remembrance in Valcartier, Quebec; the Camp Hill Candlelight Ceremony in Halifax, Nova Scotia; and the B.C. Lions Tribute to Veterans and Canadian Forces members in

Vancouver, British Columbia. Then, of course, there is Remembrance Day, when on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, we pause for a moment of silent reflection. Veterans Affairs Canada is asking you to join with other Canadians who have made the commitment of making remembrance something you do and answer the challenge: How will you remember?

Get Involved

To find out more on these ceremonies and events, for information on ceremonies and events in your community, or to list your event, please visit the Veterans Affairs Canada Calendar of Events at veterans.gc.ca.

Do you have photos or a video from a local commemorative event? Consider posting them on your Facebook page, on Twitter or any other social media outlet. Also, you can post them on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CanadaRemembers.



Veterans Affairs Canada
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veterans.gc.ca

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Canada



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Minister's Message

It's difficult to express how proud I am to have been asked by Prime Minister Harper to serve as Minister of Veterans Affairs. I was struck by a number of things—humility and excitement at the opportunity to be in a position to contribute in a meaningful way to the country I love so dearly. Awareness of the enormous responsibility of serving those who have given so much in the service of Canada.

I have had the opportunity to meet face to face with countless Canadians in recent months—Veterans and their families as well as everyday Canadians who believe those who serve our country deserve the best we are able to provide them. It is that sentiment I take to work with me each and every morning.

Experience has taught me the best programs and services mean little if the road to access them is blocked by too much bureaucracy. That is why I intend to make it easier for our traditional and modern-day Veterans and their families—those whose sacrifices helped to make the world a better and safer place—to receive the care, treatment and service they so rightly deserve.

While there have been challenges, let me assure you, we are moving in the right direction. A vast majority of disability benefit applications are being completed much more quickly. Veterans have faster and easier access to the health benefits they need. Case managers now have the authority to approve most rehabilitation treatment plans. We now have 270 case managers nationwide. We have eliminated paperwork associated with changes to Veterans Independence Program accounts, saving time and reducing inconvenience.

Let me be clear. Programs and services will continue to be improved, evidenced by the recent enhancements to the New Veterans



Veterans André Courtemanche and Gérard Aubin, with Minister Blaney.

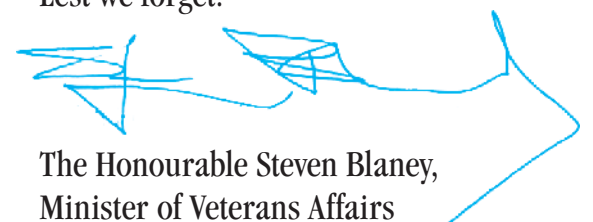
Charter. I have also directed that these programs become less complicated and easier to understand. I intend to do everything possible to make sure the interaction you have with the Department is hassle-free.

As Minister, I am leading the Department through a fundamental change in the way in which business is conducted. The focus needs to be on you and your family. Again, fewer bureaucratic processes, less red tape and a higher standard of service are my goals.

With Veterans' Week upon us, I want to share my deep appreciation, and that of my family, for those of you who have given so much in the name of freedom, democracy and the rule of law. I urge all Canadians to take a moment during Veterans' Week to reflect upon what life would be like if not for the sacrifice of countless thousands of brave souls who gave their all on our behalf.

Please take the time during Veterans' Week to thank a Veteran. Visit a cenotaph. Post a message on Facebook. Wear a poppy.

Lest we forget.



The Honourable Steven Blaney,
 Minister of Veterans Affairs



Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Ms. Adams was first elected to the House of Commons in 2011. Prior to entering federal politics, Ms. Adams established herself in municipal and provincial arenas. She served as a councillor for the City of Mississauga and the Region of Peel for seven years.

Eve Adams Named Veterans Affairs Parliamentary Secretary

Eve Adams, MP for Mississauga—Brampton South, has been appointed to the position of Parliamentary

Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. She worked for the Ontario provincial government in a number of ministries, including Transportation; Citizenship; and Energy, Science and Technology. She was also the executive director of an accounting association and has been involved with the Red Cross Board, Neighbourhood Watch and the Terry Fox Run.

She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Western Ontario and lives with her husband and son in Mississauga—Brampton South.

This Is Why We Remember

Here are a few reminders why we pause during Veterans' Week to remember those who have served Canada. These are snippets from the Heroes Remember section of the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site. Heroes Remember presents the personal recollections of ordinary Canadians who became heroes when confronted with extraordinary circumstances. You can see the video clips or read transcripts of the interviews by visiting **veterans.gc.ca** and searching "heroes remember."



Harold Lidstone

“ Life in the trenches was bad. It didn't matter whether it was a fine day or a bad day, you still had it tough in the trench. You didn't have no bath until you were relieved from the trenches and went back for a rest. And while you stayed in your trenches, you were lucky if you get water enough to drink. ”

Georgina Seeley

“ When war broke out, I was absolutely determined to serve my country. That sounds old fashioned . . . but, well it was the way that I was brought up. I wouldn't have missed the army for anything else that I've done in life . . . to be with those boys, and some of them were just boys. ”

Noel Knockwood

“ The peacekeeping event had all the characteristics of war. People died, we killed others and others killed us and that was the sad part about it. But we can't concentrate on the sad part. We gotta concentrate on the good part and we still live in one of the best countries in the world and I'm very proud to say that. ”

David Laxton

“ You're in the middle of it. We got to the camp, and as we arrived in the camp, a helicopter landed bringing in the bodies of two military observers . . . that had been killed in a mortar attack. So, it was . . . it became very real, very fast. ”

Joanna Streppa

“ That was the hardest part, was knowing that you can lose your friends. That was the first thing I realized. Oh my God, these people are the most courageous people I've ever met. And you'd see it in their eyes. You'd see it in the way they would react before going on certain operations. ”

New Veterans Charter Enhancements Official

The New Veterans Charter (NVC) is a living document. When the enhancements to the NVC came into effect this fall, a promise was kept to make sure it evolved with the needs of the men and women it serves.

These changes provide additional monthly support to seriously ill and injured Veterans and create new and flexible payment options for recipients of a disability award of five percent or more.

Do you qualify for additional support? Here is a snapshot of these important new and improved benefits:

Earnings Loss Benefit

- The Earnings Loss Benefit now ensures a minimum annual income of \$40,000 (before tax) to replace lost income if a Veteran is either in VAC's Rehabilitation Program or can no longer participate in suitable, gainful employment.
- If you have already applied for the Earnings Loss Benefit, you will not have to re-apply.
- If you are already receiving the Earnings Loss Benefit, VAC will recalculate your benefit as needed.

- If your income was previously too high to receive a benefit, you may be contacted by the Department to provide up-to-date information so we can make the necessary adjustments.

Permanent Impairment Allowance

- Improved access to the Permanent Impairment Allowance (PIA) now provides more Veterans who are seriously injured with the support they need.
- If you have previously applied for PIA but were not eligible at that time, VAC may contact you to provide an opportunity for you to re-apply if you are now eligible.

Permanent Impairment Allowance Supplement

- A new \$1,000 monthly supplement is available to Veterans who are eligible for the Permanent Impairment Allowance, have serious injuries and aren't able to return to service or participate in suitable, gainful employment.
- We are sending out application packages to Veterans who are considered seriously injured and are receiving the PIA.

New Payment Options for the Disability Award

- Recipients of a disability award of five percent or more now have the choice of a lump-sum payment, annual payments over a number of years (with interest) or a combination of a partial lump-sum payment and annual payments (with interest).
- When you receive a disability award, you will have 90 days to sign up for the payment option of your choice by filling out the form included in your package. If you do not return the form within the 90-day period, your disability award will be issued as a lump-sum payment.
- At any time, you can choose to be paid a lump sum in place of your remaining annual payments.

If you feel you may benefit from these changes, please contact us at 1-866-522-2122 (French: 1-866-522-2022). Or, go to veterans.gc.ca and search "New Veterans Charter."

VAC Reaches Out to CF Bases



VAC employee and Veteran Katherine Morrow presents to a group at CFB Petawawa.

Thousands of Canadian Forces (CF) personnel, Veterans and their families have been filling base auditoriums across the country to hear about the programs and services available to them from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC).

During these sessions, VAC staff and senior managers have been helping to provide a better understanding of the programs and services available through the New Veterans Charter (NVC).

"Our presentation clearly demonstrates how the NVC is a better option for today's Veterans. The Charter shifts the focus from a lifetime of disability to encouraging wellness—which is

what our men and women really want most," said Katherine Morrow, a VAC presenter who is also a Veteran and the mother of an injured soldier.

The presentation provides easy-to-understand case scenarios that show what benefits and services a Veteran would receive under the old system versus the NVC. Each session concludes with a question-and-answer period. Participants also have the opportunity to speak directly with a VAC staff member to ask personal questions or to schedule a meeting.

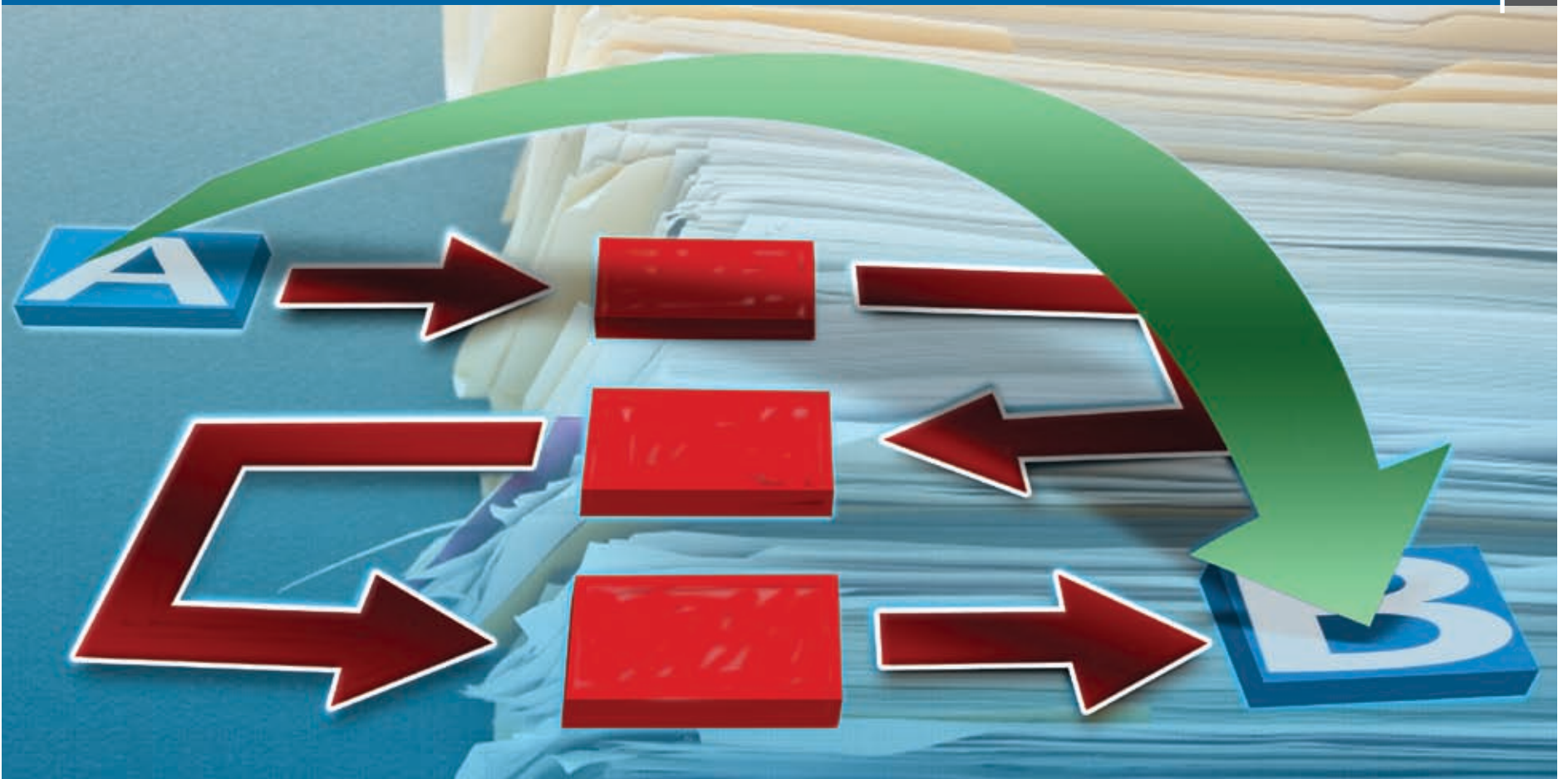
VAC has received very positive feedback from the sessions. With the support of Rear-Admiral Andy Smith, Chief of Military Personnel,

information sessions were planned for bases and wings across the country.

"I am pleased with the tremendous turnout and participation from CF members," said Rear-Admiral Smith.

After a successful start at CFB Gagetown in November 2010, VAC has provided presentations to 15 bases and wings. A total of 19 briefings were held, reaching out to more than 7,000 CF personnel.

More sessions are planned. For a calendar of confirmed information sessions, please visit veterans.gc.ca and select the *Calendar of Events* link on the left-side menu.



Making it easier to get from Point A to Point B.

Cutting Red Tape: Faster and Easier Access to Benefits and Programs

While Veterans Affairs Canada is always working to enhance its programs and services, we are also doing all we can to improve upon their delivery by making your experience with the Department as hassle-free as possible.

The needs of Veterans are changing. It's happening now and it's happening quickly. VAC has already made several improvements to its programs and policies to keep pace with the expectations of the men and women it serves. The enhancements to the New Veterans Charter are a great example (*see story on page 4*). By cutting red tape, we hope to make these programs and services easier for you to access.

We realize that for some, applying for benefits or services may be like getting lost in a bureaucratic maze. So, how are we fixing this? By reducing bureaucracy and using new technologies to provide Veterans with hassle-free service.

We have a plan to make your dealings with the Department faster and easier. The plan not only involves making our programs and policies less complicated, but involves overhauling the way we deliver services. We are also working more closely with National Defence and the Canadian Forces so that Veterans have a smooth transition to civilian life.

In fact, we're already cutting red tape and providing hassle-free services. For example, we're now processing decisions on disability benefits faster; we're working to offer more online self-serve options; we've eliminated paperwork for renewals under the Veterans Independence Program (VIP); and reduced the number of health benefits that need pre-approval. These changes will benefit more than 100,000 Veterans.

To see some of what is available, visit **veterans.gc.ca** and search "My VAC Account."

NVC Enhancing Mental Health Services

In addition to the many other programs and services available through the New Veterans Charter, it boosted Veterans Affairs Canada's ability to help and support Veterans living with mental health conditions and their families.

A personalized care plan for Veterans often includes New Veterans Charter supports such as medical and other types of rehabilitation, including psychiatric and addictions treatment, pain and anger management and life skills for independent living. These help to stabilize mental health conditions and restore basic functioning and independence. Rehabilitation benefits would be accompanied by the Earnings Loss Benefit (monthly income support). Other economic assistance may also be available.

When required, Veterans, CF members and their families have access to a network of VAC operational stress injury (OSI) clinics across the country. These clinics provide very important diagnosis and treatment services to Veterans dealing with a mental health condition. The number of these specialized clinics has doubled, bringing the total to 10. Telephone-based, or tele-health services are also available through the OSI clinics. Because VAC and DND work closely together, Veterans, CF members and their families can also be treated at one of seven operational and trauma stress support centres, operated by National Defence.

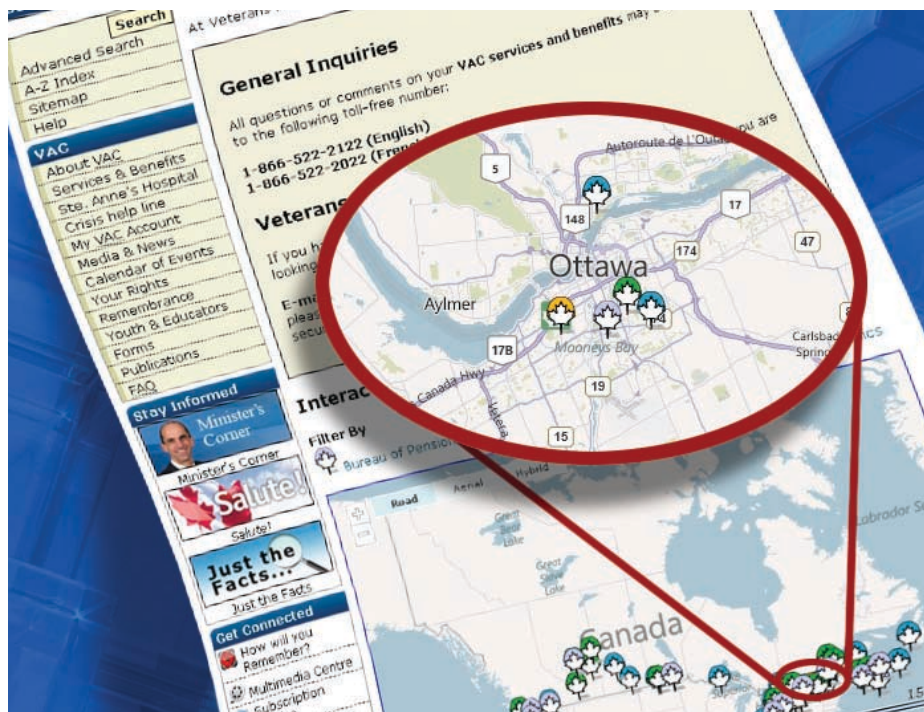
VAC and DND also offer peer support from specially trained coordinators who have first-hand experience with operational stress injuries. They can provide vital personal care and support to fellow CF members,

Veterans and their families. To contact this peer support, call **1-800-883-6094**.

The Veterans Affairs Canada Assistance Service provides Veterans and their families with access to short-term professional counselling services. Whether you need urgent support or you would like help to address other problems, face-to-face counselling can be arranged with a professional counsellor in your community. You can call the VAC Assistance Service toll free, 24 hours a day at **1-800-268-7708**; TDD **1-800-567-5803**.

For more information on assistance available to Veterans and their families, please refer to the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site, at **veterans.gc.ca** and search "mental health."

Try Our Interactive Maps



It's now easier than ever to find Veterans Affairs Canada offices or learn about upcoming events.

By using our new online interactive maps, you can find VAC district offices where you live, or anywhere in the country. You can also use our maps to find public operational stress injury clinics, Bureau of Pension Advocates offices

a community or group event? Use our online interactive calendar to see what's happening in your neighbourhood, during Veterans' Week and throughout the year.

To learn more, visit veterans.gc.ca and search "interactive maps." To find out what's happening in your area, search "events."

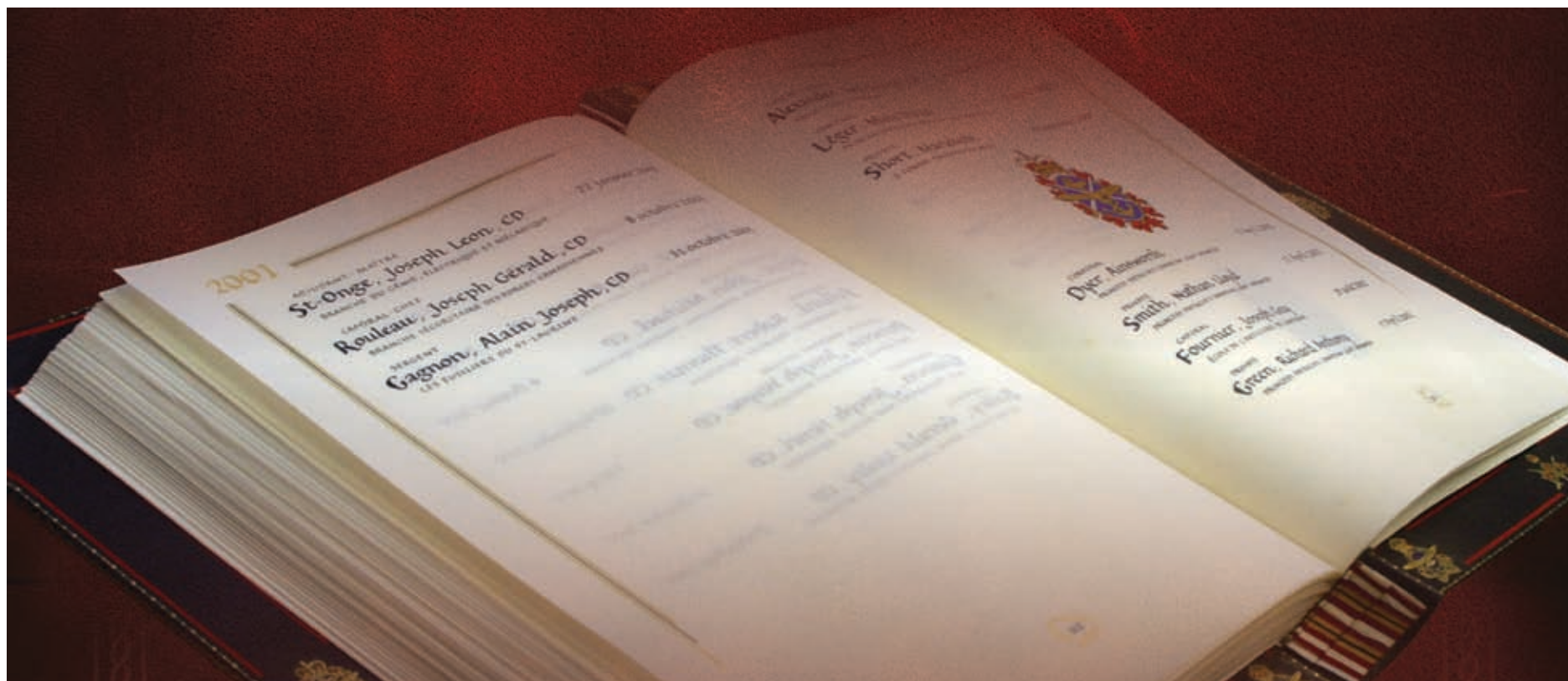
or integrated personnel support centres. You can even find monuments and cemeteries linked to a war, battle or campaign involving Canada's armed forces.

Looking for a commemorative event in your area during Veterans' Week? Do you want to advertise

Your Opinion Matters

From time to time, VAC conducts research on its own or with the assistance of a professional research firm. This research provides us with important information about the delivery of our programs and services.

We hope you will consider participating should you be asked to do so—your feedback is important to us and helps us to improve our services and programs.



Remembering the Fallen

The Government of Canada is touring *In the Service of Canada: The Seventh Book of Remembrance* across Canada with stops in every province.

The tour of the Seventh Book of Remembrance began in May 2011 and will end during Veterans' Week in November 2011. During its tour across the country, the Book has visited many communities in all Canadian provinces..

The Book will be back in Ottawa by Remembrance Day where it is normally on display in the Memorial Chamber of the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill. The tour provided Canadians with the rare opportunity to see the Seventh Book in their own communities. The popularity of the tour shows the desire of Canadians to honour those who gave their lives in the service of our country.

Veterans UN-NATO Canada – Serving a New Generation of Veterans

After experiencing the intensity of active military service, the transition to civilian life can be a major adjustment for some. It can also be an isolating and lonely experience. That is why Canadian Forces Veterans Denis Beaudin, Denis Simoneau and André Dusseault founded Veterans UN-NATO Canada in 2008, as a way of filling the gap between serving in the military and then having a successful civilian life.

At that time, the new generation of Veterans often felt they had no place to go, or any way of connecting with each other to stay in touch or share stories.

“This was a new generation of Veterans whose values did not meet up with those of the established Veteran organizations. We needed our own place to bring our brothers and sisters together and give them a healthy, trustworthy environment that offered compassion, friendship and respect,” said co-founder Denis Beaudin.

In just three years, the organization has grown to 3,500 members who meet weekly to share their stories and support each other as they seek assistance from Veterans Affairs Canada or explore VAC programs. They also call on their fellow members in times of crisis.

Veterans UN-NATO Canada fills a need in the younger generation of Canadian Veterans. Members take part in countless activities each year. From the Rolling Thunder bike rally last May in Washington, D.C., to rallies, music festivals and annual tributes, to Veterans in Ottawa on Peacekeepers’ Day, this enthusiastic group of Veterans has found ways to fill the emptiness that can come after leaving an active life of military service. Last year in Quebec alone, members of Veterans UN-NATO Canada took part in 47 commemorative puck drops and, of course, they came out in full colours on Remembrance Day.

The group has formed a foundation which raises funds to give direct support to Veterans in need. It also plans to establish temporary accommodation centres in all large cities across Canada.

Recently representatives of Veterans UN-NATO Canada met with Veterans Affairs Canada officials, including Deputy Minister Suzanne Tining, and are looking forward to continued positive collaboration in the future.

To join the group, you must have served for at least three years in a row and have been decorated on at least one UN or NATO mission. For more information on becoming a member, visit its Web site at: veteransunnatohq.com.

Support from someone who knows.



Many Ways to Enjoy Salute!

We at *Salute!* are continuing to work on making it easier for you to get access to the information you want from our publication.

Updates to the *Salute!* Web page have been very well received. The online facelift provides a new and improved product offering many interactive features to help you stay connected. You can post comments on articles and tell us where you agree or disagree with comments left by others.

For those who would rather listen to than read our articles, there is an online audio option to choose a voice to read the article to you. Of course, you still have the option of receiving an audio CD in the mail by subscribing to our audio *Salute!*.

If you have any questions, or would like to subscribe to *Salute!*, simply go to veterans.gc.ca and select *Salute!* on the left-side menu.



24/7

Supporting Veterans in Need

Veterans and their immediate families can access free, short-term, confidential and professional counselling services. If you are experiencing work-related issues, family or marital problems, or high levels of stress or anxiety, call the **24/7** Veterans Affairs Canada Assistance Service at **1-800-268-7708**. Trained counsellors are available to help you. If you are using a TDD machine, please call **1-800-567-5803**.

War Amps Service Bureau: Assisting Veterans and their Families



With roots stretching back more than 90 years, The War Amps National Service Bureau continues its proud legacy of helping war amputees and seriously disabled Veterans access disability and health care benefits.

“From our current perspective, it is important to ensure that essential services and benefits are in place to meet the needs of these individuals as our traditional Veteran population confronts the ravages of age and the requirements of modern-day Veterans are identified and addressed under the New Veterans Charter,” notes War Amps Legal Counsel, Brian Forbes.

Through the Service Bureau, many seriously disabled Veterans continue to be represented in an effort to have their health needs and their pension compensation recognized in a fully satisfactory manner. In pursuing this objective, it has a unique expertise in the areas of pensions and special allowances relevant to legislation impacting Veterans having serious disabilities, such as amputation.

Its staff has also gained the very necessary knowledge to successfully obtain benefits available to Veterans in the health care area, which encompasses the Treatment Benefits Program, the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) and the Long Term Care Program for these seriously disabled Veterans.

“The process can be difficult to understand and many disabled Veterans find themselves facing significant roadblocks,” Mr. Forbes says. “The Service Bureau is called upon

to be a vital navigator in helping Veterans understand what they need to know.

“In addition, we have made a commitment both to Veterans Affairs Canada and the Department of National Defence to assist modern-day Veterans with respect to their pension compensation and prosthetic requirements, with particular emphasis on severely disabled Veterans and war amputees.

“Most recently, we have been extensively involved in consultation meetings with the Government in the development of the New Veterans Charter, applicable to Canadian Forces Veterans, and have pursued VAC to ensure that the Government fulfils its promised commitment to address all the identified gaps and inequities in a legal instrument that Veterans organizations consider to be a ‘living’ Charter,” Mr. Forbes says.

“It is our ongoing priority to continue working with Veterans Affairs Canada to help ensure its programs meet the current and future needs of all Canadian Veterans and their families.”

For more information:
Web site: waramps.ca
E-mail: service_bureau@waramps.ca

For English services:
Tel: **613-731-3821, ext. 261**
Toll free: **1-800-465-2677, ext. 261**

For French services:
Tel: **613-731-3821, ext. 240**
Toll free: **1-800-465-2677, ext. 240**

How to Reach Us

Veterans Affairs Canada
Web site: veterans.gc.ca
E-mail: information@vac-acc.gc.ca

Do you need information on services and benefits?

Note: When you call us, please have your VAC client number ready, if you have one.

Phone: 1-866-522-2122 (English)

Phone: 1-866-522-2022 (French)

United States:

Phone: 1-888-996-2242

United Kingdom, Germany, France, or Belgium:

Phone: 00-800-996-22421

Any other country:

Phone: 613-996-2242

Do you need information on disability benefit decisions or how to request a review or appeal?

Call the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA) at: 1-877-228-2250

Do you need information on remembrance programming?

Phone: 1-866-522-2122 (English)

Phone: 1-866-522-2022 (French)

Phone: 1-800-465-7735 (Hearing Impaired)



Veterans Review and Appeal Board

P.O. Box 9900
Charlottetown PE C1A 8V7
Phone: 1-800-450-8006
Outside Canada
Phone: 902-566-8751
Web site: www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca

Funeral and Burial Information

Last Post Fund
Phone: 1-800-465-7113
Web site: www.lastpostfund.ca

VAC Assistance Line

Confidential, professional counselling 24/7
1-800-268-7708

Office of the Veterans Ombudsman

Mailing Address:
Veterans Ombudsman
P.O. Box 18 Stn B
Ottawa, ON K1P 6C3
1-877-330-4343
Outside Canada: 902-626-2919
Fax Number: 902-566-7582
Web site: www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca

To submit a complaint, go to:
www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca and click on
“Submit a complaint”

To find out about an existing complaint,
or to request or share information, e-mail:
info@ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca