

# Care • Compassion • Respect

## Veterans Affairs Canada Strategic Plan • 2015-2020



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# Care•Compassion•Respect

## Veterans Affairs Canada Strategic Plan • 2015-2020

The mission, objectives, principles in this five-year strategy frame a set of activities designed to put the Veteran at the centre of all we do, while facilitating a smooth and seamless transition from military to civilian life and providing excellent service.

**Care, Compassion and Respect  
for our Veterans**







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# CANADA'S VETERANS: EXTRAORDINARY CANADIANS

Veterans are a highly diverse, highly skilled group of people who reflect the remarkable breadth of Canada's contributions to world peace and security around the world. As was the case in the past, this strategy also takes into account the needs of others we serve: Royal Canadian Mounted Police members and former members, families, spouses, and survivors.

## SECOND WORLD WAR AND KOREAN WAR VETERANS

Today, war service Veterans (Second World War and Korean War) number about 100,000, with the majority of them more than 90 years of age. About 40% of these Veterans currently access services from the Department, many of them coming to VAC for the first time in recent years as they begin to feel the effects of aging.



## CANADIAN ARMED FORCES MEMBERS AND VETERANS

There are more than 600,000 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Veterans, many with military careers of 20 years or more, living in Canada today. Their age range spans five decades, with an average of 56 years. About 82,000 CAF members and Veterans are currently served by Veterans Affairs Canada, more than doubling the number of traditional war service Veterans we are serving. Research has shown that while most CAF Veterans adjust well to civilian life, approximately one in four experience difficulty. Regular Force Veterans experience higher rates of chronic conditions (both physical and mental), and activity limitation than other Canadians. On the other hand, they have lower rates of low income than other Canadians.



## ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE (RCMP) SERVING AND RETIRED MEMBERS

For more than 60 years, the RCMP has partnered with VAC to assist their serving and retired members, both regular and civilian, and their families. They are unique in the world, serving as a federal, provincial and municipal policing body. More than 10,000 RCMP members and former members, with an average age of 59 years, access VAC programs and services.



## FAMILIES, SPOUSES, SURVIVORS

Families play a key role in supporting Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans. Research has shown that the most seriously injured men and women who served rely on their families and caregivers to support them. Without the family unit being strong, the Veteran will not be strong.



# OUR MISSION

Veterans Affairs Canada will evolve and improve its support to Canada's Veterans and their families.

## OBJECTIVES

To fulfill our mission, we must achieve the following core objectives.

### 1. VETERAN CENTRIC

Veterans are at the centre of everything we do, our philosophies, our ideas, our operations. To be Veteran centric means we are proactive, responding quickly and compassionately to the emerging needs of Veterans, and ensuring they have all the benefits and services for which they are eligible. A Veteran focus means we are continually assessing whether Veterans are getting the support they need and acting immediately if they are not. By commemorating the achievements and sacrifices made, we are keeping those who served in the hearts of Canadians.



### 2. SEAMLESS TRANSITION

Seamless transition means that barriers to success are addressed before the CAF member releases from the military. With our focus on health, family and civilian employment, CAF members are successfully transitioning to civilian life. Seamless means we are more closely aligned with the services provided by DND, our policies and processes are better integrated with those of the CAF and DND, and we are leveraging common systems to better serve Veterans.



### 3. SERVICE EXCELLENCE

The needs of eligible Veterans, especially those with service-related needs, are anticipated and fully met in a timely manner. Service excellence means that Veterans are always treated with care, compassion, and respect. Veterans' outcomes are maximized through policies, practices and processes which enhance service excellence. Our culture, which engages and inspires employees to their highest possible levels of performance, makes VAC a workplace of choice.



# PRINCIPLES

A strong set of principles is essential in building and maintaining a world-class service organization. The following principles enable employees at all levels to keep the Veteran front and centre in all we do.

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS
<i>One Veteran Community</i>	We respect and value all Veterans. Our focus at all times is on their well-being and that of their families.
<i>Care and Compassion</i>	We are compassionate in our care of Veterans and their families. Through strong interpersonal relationships with them, we understand their needs and ensure they are supported.
<i>Respect and Remember</i>	We are proud to honour and recognize Veterans in the manner they prefer. Government, stakeholder and international partnerships enable us to appropriately commemorate the service and sacrifices of Canada's Veterans and their families, and their role in shaping our national identity.
<i>Timeliness</i>	We are engaging with military personnel as early as possible in their release process. For those medically releasing, we triage immediately to begin case management and accelerate access to services and benefits. Direct contact options and easy-to-complete paperwork also facilitate timely service.
<i>Connect with Stakeholders and Canadians</i>	Through consistent engagement with various Veteran and stakeholder groups, we thoroughly review and consider their advice and recommendations. Input from traditional membership-based organizations, groups caring for Veterans, and peer-to-peer groups is regularly sought and given due consideration.
<i>Delegate, Empower, and Trust Employees</i>	In our workplace of choice, employees have the training, authority and power to make solid Veteran centric decisions and provide excellent service.



# NEW DIRECTION

## VAC FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

### CLEAR DIRECTION

- » Studies and research
- » Departmental mandate, plans and reports
- » Stakeholders
- » Veterans Ombudsman
- » Parliamentary committees

### MISSION

Veterans Affairs Canada will evolve and improve its support to Canada's Veterans and their families.

### GUIDED BY PRINCIPLES

- » One Veteran Community
- » Care and Compassion
- » Respect and Remember
- » Timeliness
- » Connect with Stakeholders and Canadians
- » Delegate, Empower, and Trust Employees

### RESULTING IN CARE COMPASSION RESPECT

- » Veteran centric
- » Seamless transition
- » Service Excellence

# MOVING FORWARD

The “Care, Compassion and Respect” strategic plan sets our overall direction for the five-year planning period of 2015 to 2020. This plan reinforces the Veteran centric priority while focusing on seamless transition and service excellence. We will focus on improving the Veterans’ experience and be unwaveringly committed to Veterans and their families receiving caring support from their government, and respect from their community and their country.

As with previous strategic plans, “Care, Compassion and Respect” will set the context for organizational priorities identified in the *Report on Plans and Priorities* (RPP), complement our Program Alignment Architecture (PAA), and take advantage of other Government of Canada and departmental planning tools. Further, we will continue to identify targets and deliverables to link our strategic directions with the concrete actions needed to deliver them.

Through the annual *Departmental Performance Report* (DPR), the Department will demonstrate the tangible results of our progress in achieving the key priorities set out here in “Care, Compassion and Respect.” VAC’s Senior Management Committee will re-evaluate the key priorities annually with stakeholders and adjust them as required to ensure that we continue to anticipate and respond to the needs of Veterans, the RCMP and their families.

At Veterans Affairs Canada, we have been entrusted with the most noble of missions—serving our nation’s Veterans and honouring their contributions to our Canadian identity.

