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In this edition:

News

[Jill McKnight new Minister of Veterans Affairs](#)

[2024 VAC National Client Survey results](#)

[Federal Health Claims Processing Services contract awarded](#)

Programs and services

[Resources available for military or Veteran spouses looking for employment](#)

[Discover Creative Coping: A Peer Support Program Event](#)

[Veterans sought for cannabis study](#)

Engagement

Spotlight on Women Veterans

[A mother's love and a soldier's legacy](#)

[Coming soon—Women Veterans Research Plan](#)

Veterans' stories

[One Veteran's mental health journey](#)

[National Nursing Week—A tribute to Canada's military nurses](#)

Commemoration

[Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands and Victory in Europe](#)

[Remembering the 80th anniversary of V-E Day here at home](#)

[25 years later: Tomb of the Unknown Soldier](#)

[When disaster strikes, the Canadian Armed Forces strike back](#)

[Commemoration calendar](#)

News

Jill McKnight new Minister of Veterans Affairs

The Honourable Jill McKnight is the new Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence. We welcome Minister McKnight and look forward to working with her to serve you and your families.

Minister McKnight proudly points out two of her grandfathers served in the Second World War and members of her husband's family also served, adding that immediate family members currently serve in both the CAF and the RCMP.

Minister McKnight was born and raised in Delta, British Columbia. In addition to her background as a business owner, Minister McKnight is a long-time community volunteer, having received the King Charles III Coronation Medal, Queen's Jubilee Medal, and a 2019 Volunteer of the Year Award.

Her commitment to community and public service will be valuable assets as she takes on this important new responsibility.

We would also like to thank Minister Élisabeth Brière. The time she spent with Veterans, especially overseas during the 80th anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands and the end of the Second World War, left a strong impression. We thank her for her work.



Minister McKnight

2024 VAC National Client Survey results



The 2024 VAC National Client Survey shows that while most Veterans and their families are satisfied with our programs and services, there is still some work that needs to be done.

More than three quarters of respondents (78 percent) were satisfied with the quality of our programs and services. The survey found that Indigenous respondents rated parts of the application process lower and that persons of colour tended to be less satisfied with our service. These are areas on which we will focus our efforts for improvement.

While the survey showed areas of concern, it also shows that most people we serve believe we are delivering on our mandate to support their well-being. This year's survey results, combined with new data from Statistics Canada, will help us better understand your needs. The findings will help us identify opportunities to improve programs and better deliver our benefits and services.

We conduct this survey every two years to learn more about those we serve. In 2024, more than 3,800 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Veterans and members, and their survivors told us about their experiences, either by telephone interview, online survey, or paper survey. We thank everyone who took part for their generous feedback.

[Read the full report](#)

Federal Health Claims Processing Services contract awarded

Following an [open, fair and competitive process](#), the Government of Canada awarded the next Federal Health Claims Processing Services (FHCCPS) contract to Medavie Blue Cross on 7 March 2025. The contract will go live in August 2027.

You don't need to do anything—simply continue to use your [VAC healthcare card](#) and submit claims as usual. The healthcare benefits and services you receive will not change, nor will how you qualify for them.

This contract helps handle the processing of claims for most healthcare benefits and services that CAF and RCMP members, Veterans and their families get through their respective organizations.

This contract is also designed to improve how these important services are delivered. We plan to offer more digital features in the portals and make the process easier for participants, healthcare providers and employees.



We thank everyone—Veterans, CAF and RCMP members, employees, industry and other stakeholders—who provided feedback and helped us reach this outcome. For more information, [please refer to our frequently asked questions page](#).

For questions or feedback, [please email the FHCPs project team](#).

Programs and services

Resources available for military or Veteran spouses looking for employment

If you are a spouse, common-law partner or survivor of a Veteran and you are looking for employment, there are a number of supports and services available to you.

[Career Transition Services \(CTS\)](#), and [Vocational Assistance](#) can help Veterans and their spouses reach their career goals after service. Both provide participants with career counselling, educational resources and job-search assistance.



If you are a spouse of a still-serving CAF member, the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) offers multiple resources such as:

- [CareerCOACH+ program](#),
- [Military Spousal Employment Network \(MSEN\)](#),
- Group career development workshops.

These services provide career counselling, skill building, access to digital resources and up to ten personalized online coaching sessions.

Start researching your career options today.

Discover Creative Coping: A Peer Support Program Event

The Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre (SMSRC) and VAC invite you to take part in Discover Creative Coping, a free, two-part MS Teams event for individuals affected by sexual misconduct and military sexual trauma. To join, all you need is a pen, pencil and paper. Colour pencils are optional and no prior art skill is needed.



You will learn a new coping skill: the Zentangle®, an easy-to-learn, relaxing art method, to reduce stress and bring calmness. There will be group discussion, art, personal reflection and peer support. The sessions are open to current or former members of the CAF, Veterans, DND employees, Cadets, and Junior Canadian Rangers, and you must be 18 years and older to take part.

You must be available to attend part one to register, however attendance in both parts is not required. Each English and French event has a limit of 10 participants.

English

Part one: July 10, 5:00-6:30 p.m. EST

Part two: July 24, 5:00-6:00 p.m. EST

French

Part one: July 17, 5:00-6:30 p.m. EST

Part two: July 31, 5:00-6:00 p.m. EST

For more information and to join this event, visit the [Discover Creative Coping webpage](#), send an email or call 1-844-750-1648 before 27 June.

Veterans sought for cannabis study

A new study is looking for Veterans dealing with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or an operational stress injury (OSI) to compare the effects of cannabis on those who use it with those who do not.

This research, by scientists from the University of Ottawa and the [Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families](#), also examines how cannabis affects things like sleep and chronic pain.

To take part in this online survey, you must be:

- a Canadian resident,
- a Veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, and
- have been living with PTSD or an OSI at any time since March 2020 (even if your symptoms are gone).

You do not need to use cannabis to take part. This research compares Veterans who use cannabis with those who don't. Both perspectives are welcome. [Visit the study webpage for more information about the survey](#) and to learn about compensation for your time. Explore supports for PTSD or OSIs, by calling us at 1-866-522-2122. For immediate psychological support, call 1-800-268-7708 to speak to a mental health professional.

A mother's love and a soldier's legacy

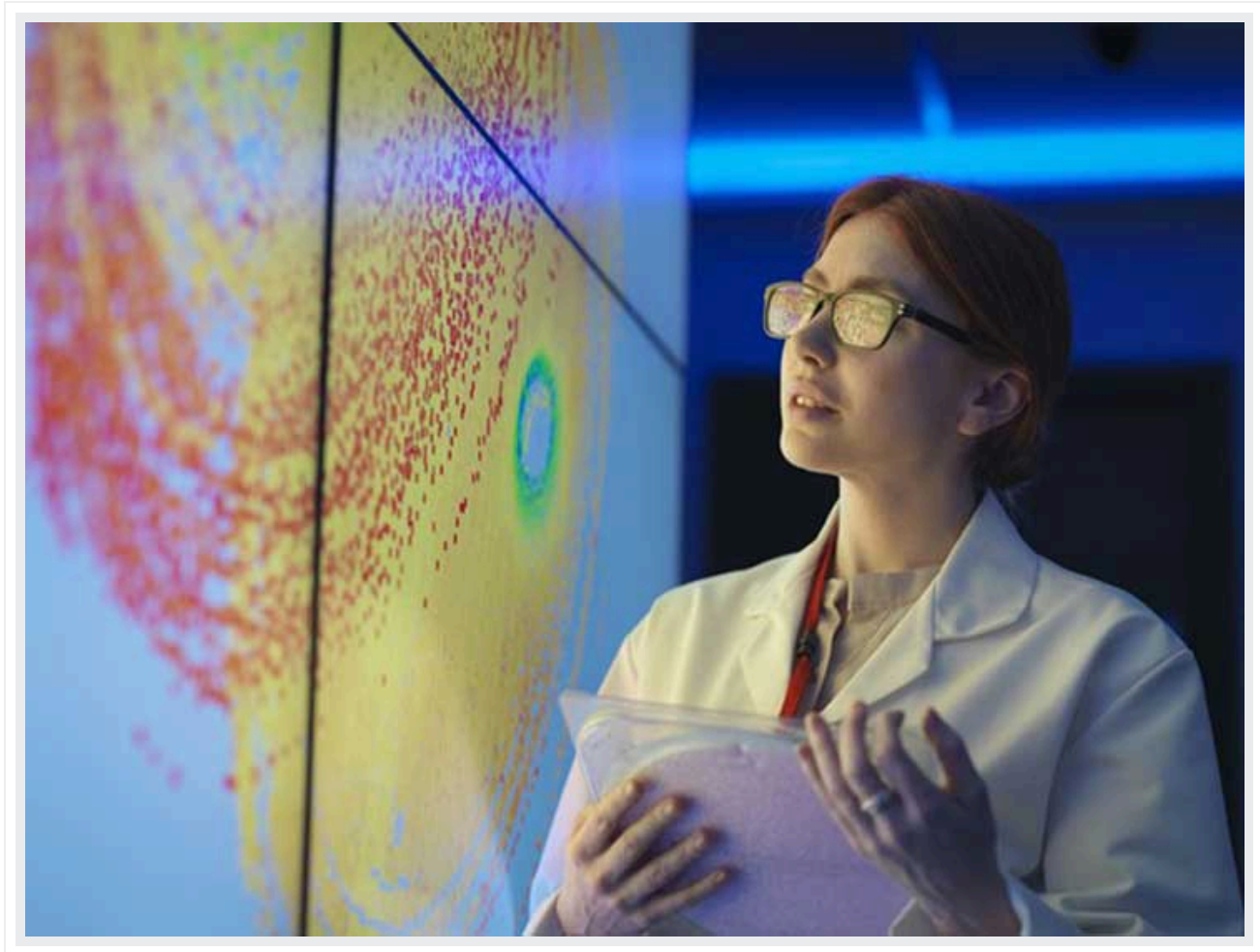


Every spring, the loons return to Ontario's Buck Lake, their haunting calls echoing over the water. For Reine Samson Dawe, it is more than a sign of the changing seasons—it is a sign that her son, Captain Matthew Dawe, is still with her, in spirit,

memory and love.

The Dawe family heard their first loon of the season on an Easter Sunday as they stood on the deck toasting Matthew, who was killed during his deployment to Afghanistan on 4 July 2007. [Read their story.](#)

Coming soon—Women Veterans Research Plan



We are developing a research plan to gain more information about the experiences of women Veterans in Canada. This plan will help us decide where our research investments and efforts are focused and how we collaborate on women Veterans research across the country.

The Women Veterans Research Plan is based on six months' worth of input from women Veterans through roundtables, a questionnaire, discussions with the [Women Veterans Council](#) and a workshop at the [Women Veterans Forum](#). Together, we

developed the plan's foundation, which will help improve the lives of women Veterans in Canada.

Stay tuned for the release of the Women Veterans Research Plan later this year.

Veterans' Stories

One Veteran's mental health journey

Al McFarlane from Georgian Bay, Ontario, has faced challenges following his long military career, but his story is one of incredible bravery and generosity.

Al gives hope to others facing similar challenges. He is an advocate for mental health awareness, showing how important it is to have community support and to seek help when needed.

His story is a powerful example of how, with determination and the right resources, it is possible to overcome mental health obstacles. Al's journey inspires others to reach out and get the support they need to improve their mental well-being.

In recognition of Mental Health Week in Canada, May 5-11, [read Al's story](#). Warning: this content involves graphic subject matter that some may find disturbing. Reader discretion is advised.



National Nursing Week—A tribute to Canada's military nurses



During wartime, nurses in Canada have played an important role, showing courage, strength, and kindness in the face of extremely harsh challenges.

Whether on the front lines, giving essential care to wounded soldiers, or providing emergency help and caring for trauma victims during disaster, the work nurses do is vital for saving lives. Besides medical care, nurses are well known for the comfort and emotional support they give to those injured, giving hope during the toughest times.

Canadian nurses have also helped improve medical practices and patient care during conflicts, often making do with limited resources. Their hard work and dedication go beyond the battlefield, helping with public health efforts and recovery after wars. As we celebrate National Nursing Week, May 6-12, we remember and thank these brave healthcare heroes.

Here are just a few of the incredible nurses we have profiled on our Facebook page.

[FNSO Marjorie Hallé](#)

[Colonel Marielle Gagné](#)

Second World War Nursing Sister Ida Crocker

Commemoration

Commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands and Victory in Europe

If you ever need a true understanding of what gratitude looks like, watch how people in the Netherlands respond to Canadian Veterans. From the fall of 1944 to the spring of 1945, Canadian soldiers played a major role in liberating that country town by town, leading to the eventual surrender of the remaining German forces and ending the Second World War in Europe.

From May 1-8, we remembered the 80th anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands and Victory in Europe with two Government of Canada delegations—one in the Netherlands and a second in Toronto, Ontario. On May 8, we marked the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (V-E) Day with a ceremony at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

In the Netherlands from May 1-6, a Canadian delegation, including 20 Second World War Veterans, attended events across the country. Somber ceremonies were held at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery and Holten Canadian War Cemetery, where thousands of Canadian soldiers are buried. The Veterans paid their respects to their fallen comrades and visited the graves of old friends.

On May 3, in Apeldoorn, the Canadian Veterans were treated to a hero's welcome as they took part in the local liberation parade. The Dutch people greeted them as liberators, cheering and handing them flowers to celebrate their bravery.

In Wageningen, on May 5—Liberation Day—Canadian Veterans and a Canadian Armed Forces contingent joined current military members and bands from other Allied nations in a freedom parade, passing through the square in front of Hotel de Wereld, where the German troops surrendered in the Netherlands.









80th anniversary of VE Day here at home

On May 8, we marked the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (V-E) Day with a ceremony in Toronto, beginning with a wreath laying at the Sunnybrook Cenotaph, with Second World War Veterans and others. The Boots of Remembrance travelled from Halifax and were presented as a symbol of the journey Canadians took to return home after the Second World War.

We also took part in ceremonies at the Ontario Veterans' Memorial and the Victory-Peace Monument in Coronation Park. The Second World War Veterans in attendance—Jack Boeki, Percival Smith, and Fraser McKee—are living testaments to that time.

The national ceremony at Canada Lands Square, in the heart of Toronto, was a final, powerful tribute. The CN Tower and landmarks across Canada and overseas—including the Canadian National Vimy Memorial—were lit in red and white.

Lest we forget.











25 years later: A national symbol of collective gratitude and respect

This month, we marked the 25th anniversary of the entombment of Canada's Unknown Soldier.

Overseas in France, at the Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, VAC staff and Student Guides placed a wreath at the original gravesite of Canada's Unknown Soldier on May 25. That same day, Student Guides also placed wreaths at the Vimy Education Centre, and a special message was featured to commemorate the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

On May 28, a series of events took place in Ottawa, including a guided tour of the Room of Remembrance, where Canada's eight Books of Remembrance are kept, and the lighting of the Canadian Remembrance Torch, which symbolizes how the past still shapes the present.

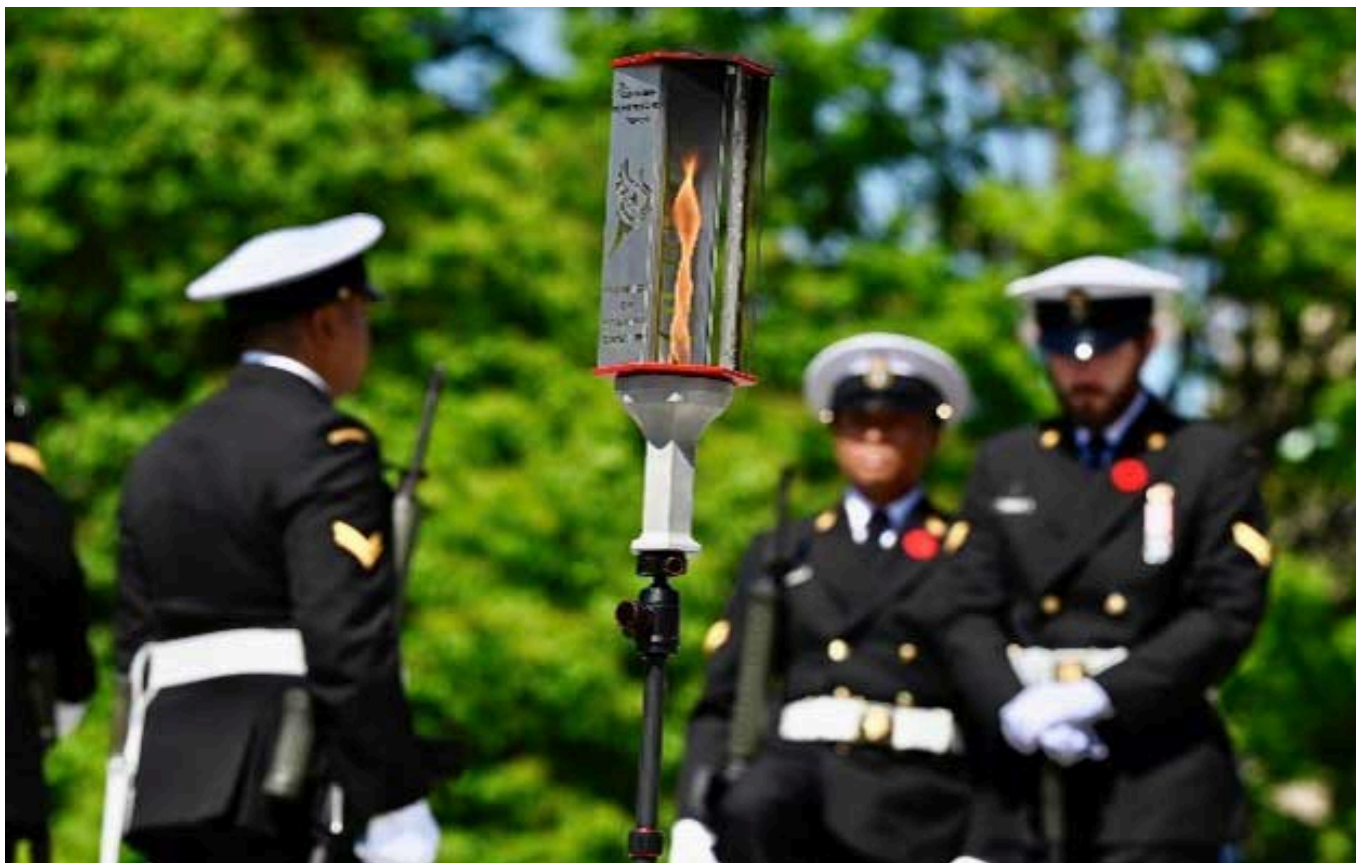
Afterwards, a wreath-laying ceremony took place at the National War Memorial, where the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is located.

The Tomb represents all Canadians who have served and is a unifying symbol of respect, hope, and our shared heritage. It is a focal point for national remembrance and a place of reflection for Canadians. All Canadians were encouraged to place poppies or a red rose at their local war memorials to honour Canada's fallen in their own communities.

We will not forget.



The headstone of the Unknown Soldier in Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, France.



The Canadian Remembrance Torch surrounded by Sentries at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.



The Canadian Remembrance Torch surrounded by Sentries at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

When disaster strikes, the Canadian Armed Forces strike back



Aerial view of the Tremont Creek Wildfire during Operation LENTUS 21-04 in Kamloops, British Columbia, 11 August 2021. Photo: Lieutenant-Commander Tony Wright, MARPAC/JTFP

Canada is a huge country with many types of landscapes. If local authorities are unable to manage large-scale natural disasters when they happen, the Canadian Armed Forces are ready to help. The CAF operate domestic disaster responses through Operation Lentus. Our military can mobilize quickly and provide relief to Canadians in dangerous situations.

From the [Red River floods](#) and the [1998 Ice Storm](#), to the roaring wildfires in 2016 and hurricane Dorian in 2019—natural disasters can happen any time of the year. To help students learn more about Canadian service in uniform, we have developed learning resources and activities. Check out our new [Build an emergency kit](#) lesson plan for teachers. [Learn more about Canadian Armed Forces in the Americas](#).

Meet Veteran Josh Bowen

Captain (Retired) Josh Bowen joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 2004 and became an expert in domestic disaster response. His first experience was in 2008 when an unexpected snowstorm hit, downing trees and powerlines. Other disasters Josh has played a role in include the 2011 Manitoba floods, the 2013 Alberta floods, the 2015 Saskatchewan wildfires and the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfires. [Read Josh's story](#).

Commemoration calendar

June 2025

June 7: Dedication of the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial in France (1925)

June 11: Battle of Diamond Hill between Boers and Canadian mounted troops (1900)

June 11: HMCS St. Laurent and HMCS Restigouche evacuate military personnel from Le Havre, France (1940)

June 15: Canadian troops of the 1st Canadian Division fight in the Battle of Givenchy (1915)

June 16: a CC-130 Hercules from 426 Squadron delivered aid and supplies to San Jose, Costa Rica (1995)

June 21: The National Resources Mobilization Act was passed to aid conscription for home defence by registering all adult men and women in Canada (1940)

June 25: HMCS Fraser is lost after colliding with a British warship, HMS Calcutta in the Bay of Biscay (1940)

June 30: Canadian Parliament supports the government motion to assist the United Nations in the conflict in Korean (1950)

June 30: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) ends (2005)

For a complete list of activities, please visit our [calendar](#) of commemorative events.

Do you know other Veterans, family members or others who would benefit from the information in this newsletter? Feel free to share it with them.

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