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Programs and services

If you served, you are a Veteran



Look for Jocelyne and Clint Eastman, Francesca Colussi and Al McFarlane in our [Services for Veterans ad campaign](#), now seen across a variety of platforms and media. These four Veterans — sharing over 100 years of combined military service — were selected from a diverse group of Veterans and serving personnel who expressed interest in taking part.

While each person's transition out of service was unique, they shared common ground. Adjusting to civilian life can be challenging and learning to navigate available services takes time. And all agreed that continuing to support and advocate for fellow Veterans remains a meaningful part of their journey.

Our ad campaign helps us to raise awareness among the Veteran community regarding the services available for Veterans. We also try to remove barriers that may hold them back from contacting us for support. These barriers vary, but may include:

- those who have served do not see themselves as Veterans.
- they are not aware of the range of services.
- they assume they won't qualify.
- they believe the level of support is not worth the time and effort.

If you served, you are Veteran. [More information on our services and benefits.](#)

The Services for Veterans campaign will be shown across various platforms in February and March. Veterans and serving members interested in contributing to future outreach initiatives are encouraged to watch our channels for upcoming opportunities to get involved.

Or you can [send us an email](#).

Why Veteran-identified health data matters



Veterans often face unique health challenges linked to their military service, such as chronic pain and mental-health issues.

To address these needs, researchers need accurate data. Yet, many provinces and territories do not collect information about Veteran status on health insurance forms. When they do, it's rarely linked to other health data like treatments and outcomes. This makes it hard to study Veteran health.

A study from Queen's University, funded by the Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence for Canadian Veterans (CPCoE), looked at how provinces and territories collect Veteran health data. They found gaps but also examples of progress. For example, Ontario

already collects Veteran status. They link it to data on chronic disease, mental health, and home care. [See a summary here.](#)

Linking Veteran status to health records can strengthen healthcare for Veterans. It helps researchers find gaps and make policies that truly support Veterans. [Watch this video](#) about Veteran-identified health data or [learn more on the CPCoE website.](#)

Measuring Veterans' financial well-being



Transitioning out of the military can be a big change. It affects many parts of life, including your finances. Researchers are working to better understand how to measure financial well-being in ways that reflect Veterans' real-world experiences.

Many tools used today were not designed with military culture in mind and may miss important details or need further testing to make sure they are reliable for Veterans. New research is working to change that.

The Chronic Pain Centre and the Atlas Institute have [developed a Well-being Measurement Tools Directory](#), which brings together a number of research tools and explains how they work. The directory helps researchers, policymakers, and others find the right tools for measuring Veteran well-being. A recent article published in the *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* [highlights four tools](#) from the directory that are especially useful for measuring Veterans' financial well-being.

Better tools mean better information. With stronger data, researchers can build programs and policies that reflect what Veterans really need. You can [learn more about research and Veteran well-being](#) at the Chronic Pain Centre's website or by [visiting the Atlas Institute's site](#).

Reset, Refocus, Reconnect: Start your year with balance

A new LifeSpeak campaign is looking at small ways to bring curiosity, energy, connection and rest into everyday life. Join the Reset, Refocus, Reconnect campaign and experiment with what helps you feel balanced and focused, one small step at a time.

The campaign includes four modules:

- [The path of curiosity](#)
- [The path of energy](#)
- [The path of connection](#)
- [The path of rest](#)

Each module has videos and expert blogs that share simple techniques and insights. Start your year feeling refreshed, focused, and ready to thrive.

[Log in to LifeSpeak](#) from any computer or mobile device using Access ID: canada (lowercase). You do not need to have an account. [Visit our website to learn more about LifeSpeak](#).

New peer support activities for people affected by sexual misconduct



This winter, the Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre's (SMSRC) Peer Support Program, in collaboration with Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), is hosting new activities for individuals affected by sexual misconduct and military sexual trauma. These activities provide a safer space for peers to connect, share experiences, and support one another.

What's happening this winter?

- **Trauma-informed yoga sessions:** These classes offer a safe, trauma-informed, and supportive space to move, breathe and reconnect with your body. They are led by a certified yoga instructor and adapted to all experience levels and physical abilities.
- **Virtual coffee chats:** These informal conversations are guided by your needs related to your trauma experience. They are hosted by a peer supporter and a mental-health worker in a casual and supportive environment.

How to join the activities

- Activities start on 12 January 2026.

- Groups include women only, men only and all genders. More groups will be added depending on resources and availability.
- Sessions are held virtually on MS Teams in English and French.
- Registration remains open and ongoing for both activities.

For more details, [consult the schedule](#).

To register, [email the SMSRC](#).

Get free assistance with your VAC application



We are here to help you. Call us toll-free at [1-866-522-2122](tel:1-866-522-2122) (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. local time).

Send us a My VAC Account secure message. Need a MyVAC Account? [Register today](#).

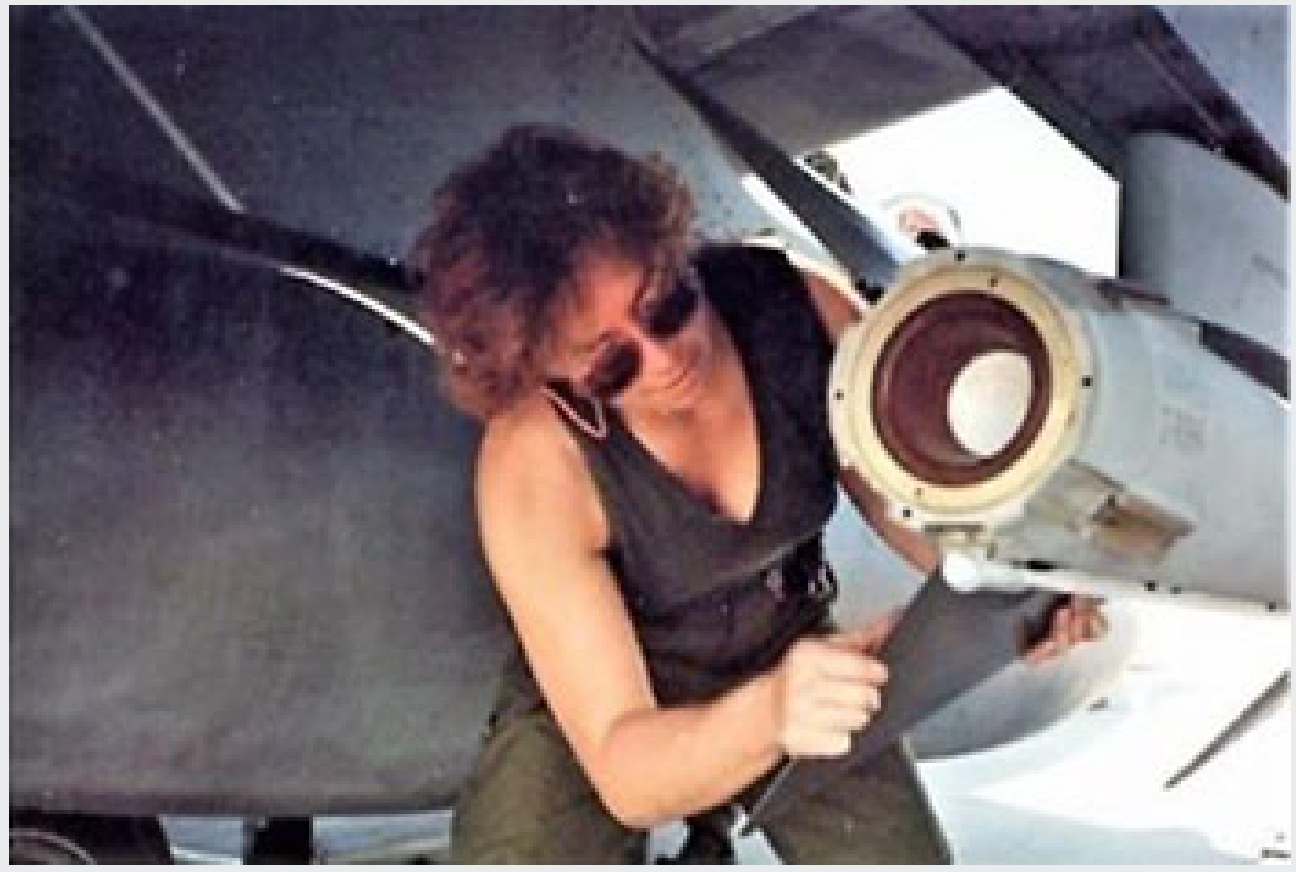
[Request an in-person appointment](#) using our online booking form or by calling [1-866-522-2122](tel:1-866-522-2122).

Please note that our service locations offer in-person services by appointment only. Our staff at any Transition Centre can also assist you.

Engagement

Veterans' stories

Maria Vidotto: Service over self



When Maria Vidotto joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1983, there was no grand strategy, family pressure or dramatic calling. It was a Yellow Pages ad in a St. Catharines, Ontario, phone book that caught her eye.

“I was a good student,” she said matter-of-factly. “I had options.”

Her initial plan was to become a military police officer, but she started realizing her aptitude was leaning toward the Royal Canadian Air Force, into a trade few civilians ever see up close: Air Weapons Systems Technician.

It was a role that put her in the middle of the machinery of war—missiles, bombs, aircraft weapons systems—long before she experienced life in a theatre of it.

“We dealt with all of the weapons and support equipment on the Air Force side,” she explained.

[Read Maria's full story.](#)

Commemoration

Canada remembers and recognizes CAF in the Middle East



Veterans and Canadian Armed Forces members have upheld our values of peace, freedom and respect in the Middle East since the 1950s. At every step, whether at sea, in the air or on land, they reflected Canada's commitment to positive change and a better world.

In 2026, we are highlighting the efforts of Canada's military in the Middle East. We will feature Canadians' stories and their diverse experiences while serving there:

- in the Gulf War and the Golan Heights
- as military observers
- in peacekeeping and peace enforcement
- in support of international cooperation

For more information, [visit the CAF in the Middle East web page](#).

**In 2028, we will mark Canadian Armed Forces in Asia which geographically includes Afghanistan.*

Upcoming events



This February and March, Veterans Affairs Canada, along with our partners, including the Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada, will commemorate the 35th anniversary of Operation Friction and the end of the Gulf War with events in Halifax and Ottawa. More than 4,000 Canadians served in the Persian Gulf War, where Canadian women first played an active combat role.

[Visit the end of the Gulf War web page](#) on the war's 35th anniversary to learn more about this important chapter in Canadian history and explore our wide range of learning resources, including videos and the Gulf War recognition card.

Commemoration calendar

February

February 14:

Five Motor Torpedo Boats of the Canadian 29th Flotilla are burned in an accident in Oostende Harbour (1945)

February 15:

CF-18 Hornets conclude a year and a half of airstrike missions as part of Operation Impact, completing over 1,378 sorties against ISIS (2016)

February 18:

USS Princeton hits a mine. HMCS Athabaskan provides aid by escorting a tugboat to the scene, arrived on site the next day (1991)

February 18-27:

Canadians participate in the Battle of Paardeberg during the South African War (1900)

February 21:

The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry participate in one of the first trench raids of the First World War (1915)

February 24-28:

Major Coalition ground offensive in Iraq, Canadian CF-18s participate with ground attacks (1991)

For a more complete listing of activities please [visit our calendar of 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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