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In recognition of International Women's Day, we are proud to honour Canada's women Veterans and former members of the RCMP—celebrating their past, present, and future contributions. Please visit our website for more [stories and information on women Veterans](#).

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News

Updates to Veterans Affairs Canada's reimbursement rate of cannabis for medical purposes

VAC is changing how we reimburse for cannabis for medical purposes. As [announced in Budget 2025](#), the maximum reimbursement rate for cannabis for medical purposes will change from \$8.50 per gram to \$6.00 per gram, effective April 1, 2026.

After this change is implemented, if a Veteran purchases cannabis for medical purposes at a cost higher than \$6.00 per gram, they should consider another licensed reseller or discuss available pricing options with their current licensed seller. If a licensed seller is unable to provide suitable products within this pricing, Veterans can choose another licensed seller that better meets their needs.

If a Veteran's medical authorization is still valid, they may ask their current licensed seller to transfer it to the new licensed seller of their choice. If no longer valid, they will need to obtain a new medical authorization document from their healthcare provider.

A list of licensed sellers is [available on Health Canada's website](#).

In addition, VAC will launch a new pre-authorization form in the coming months. This form will simplify the pre-authorization process and ensure we receive the information needed to make timely decisions.

If you are currently authorized for reimbursement of cannabis for medical purposes, you do not need to take action to maintain coverage under your existing authorization. We will send you a letter with further details before any changes take effect.

If you have questions, please contact us by sending a secure message through [My VAC Account](#) or by calling [1-866-522-2122](tel:1-866-522-2122). [Learn more about these changes](#) on our website.

Programs and services

Join Peer Support Activities for women Veterans affected by sexual misconduct

Women have made vital contributions to the Canadian Armed Forces. Many have also faced challenges during their service. Research shows that women experience sexual misconduct at rates much higher than their male peers—and the impacts can last beyond their time in uniform.

Reaching out for support can make a meaningful difference. Many women Veterans feel more comfortable speaking with others who understand the unique aspects of military culture, trauma and identity. To support this need, the [Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre](#), in partnership with [Veterans Affairs Canada](#), offers a Peer Support Program for those who have experienced sexual misconduct during their military service or while working for the Department of National Defence.

[Find information on current and upcoming activities and groups](#), including:

- Trauma-Informed Yoga
- Women-Only Coffee Chats
- Learning Together Peer Support Group (May/June)

These activities and groups offer a safer, confidential, and trauma-informed space to current and former CAF members, Veterans, former and current DND public service employees, Cadets, Junior Canadian Rangers and Canadian Coast Guard personnel aged **18 years and older** who have experienced sexual misconduct.

Visit the SMSRC website to [learn more and register](#).

New study highlights the transition experiences of women Veterans

Findings are now available from a new study that looks at the impact of transition on the mental health and well-being of women CAF Veterans.

Led by the Atlas Institute in partnership with the [Canadian Legacy Project](#), the study shows that transitioning out of service is a complex and deeply personal process. Many factors shape this transition, including a mix of individual, service-related and other factors.

The results are consistent with other research on women's health. They highlight the need for programs that recognize the impacts of trauma, address the specific needs of women and provide comprehensive support. These kinds of supports can help women Veterans have a more fair and successful transition.

[Read the report.](#)

Take part in a study on women Veterans' reproductive and mental health

The [Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families](#) and the [Centre for Military Women's Research](#) at Anglia Ruskin University are working together on a new study to better understand the reproductive and mental health of women Veterans in Canada and the United Kingdom (UK).

The study includes former members of the Canadian and UK militaries, the RCMP and UK police services. The goal is to build stronger evidence that can support more holistic and gender responsive health care for women Veterans.

By taking part, you will complete a one-time online survey that takes about 30 minutes. You can pause and return to it at any time. The survey includes questions about fertility, contraception, menopause, sexual health and mental health.

You can take part if you are:

- A woman (female sex at birth) Veteran of the Canadian or UK military, or a former uniformed member of the RCMP or UK police
- Age 18 or older
- Able to read and write in English or French
- Living in Canada or the United Kingdom

Help improve understanding of this important issue by taking part in the study and sharing it with women Veterans. [Take the survey](#).

Gender equity timeline 1900-2025

Women and Gender Equity (WAGE) works to promote equality regarding sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression by involving people of all genders, including women, in Canada's economic, social and political life.

[Explore WAGE's timeline](#) to see how gender equality has evolved in Canada, including in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Free help with your VAC forms

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 My VAC 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.

If you're applying for any [Disability Benefits](#) or need to appeal a previous decision, security-cleared Dominion and Provincial Command Service Officers with the [Royal Canadian Legion](#) can also assist you with your application, including helping you get all the information you need to support your application. The assistance is free of charge.

Engagement

Veterans' stories

Bettina Fuchs: Enduring strength



A force to be reckoned with, Master Corporal (Retired) Bettina Fuchs served almost 25 years in the military, deploying to the Gulf War, Cambodia and Bosnia. Released in 2009, this soldier's strength continues to shine through.

Bettina Fuchs joined the military in 1985 to get her life in order and gain some financial stability. Her love of driving and the outdoors led her to a career as a Mobile Support Equipment Operator (MSEO).

"It's such a huge trade, there's so many things you can do. (...) We drive everything from tractor trailers to buses – anything that has a job. Heavy equipment, VIP, troop carrying vehicles, air drone vehicles."

Her chosen trade would take her around the world and make her a pioneer.

She was one of the first women drivers in the field platoons at CFB Petawawa in 1989. "At first, the boys didn't want us there, but we gained a lot of their respect. Our sister/brotherhood took off like wildfire."

The next year, following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Canadian Armed Forces members deployed to the region. They joined the largest assembled international coalition of military forces since the Second World War. It would be the first conflict where Canadian women served in combat roles. Bettina Fuchs was one of them.

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

Atlas Institute shares women Veterans' stories

The following stories, shared through the [Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families](#), highlight the leadership and lived experience of two members of VAC's Women Veterans Council. Their voices bring attention to the realities of trauma in both policing and military service, and to the ongoing efforts to promote safer, more supportive environments for all Veterans.

- Corporal (Retired) Sarah Lefurgey is a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Veteran, Chair of Veterans Affairs Canada's Women Veterans Council and a member of the Atlas Institute's Athena Project working group. [Read her story](#) on the Atlas Institute's *Perspectives* blog, including the inherent risks of policing, the exposure to trauma and what this means to families and the clinicians who care for them.



- Colonel (Retired) Telah Morrison, OMM, CD, joined the Atlas Institute's *Mind Beyond the Mission* podcast to talk about the personal and professional impacts of military sexual trauma (MST), the crucial role of leadership and community in supporting those who are impacted and the urgent need for cultural shifts within the military to address and eliminate MST. Telah is a proud member of Veterans Affairs Canada's Women Veterans Council, a member of the Advisory Group on Families and board chair of the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families. [Listen to her story.](#)



[Find more stories from Veterans and families](#) on the Atlas Institute's website.

Commemoration

A look back: marking the 35th anniversary of the end of the Gulf War



Commemorating a historic milestone in Halifax and Ottawa

This year marks the 35th anniversary of Operation Friction and the end of the Gulf War. A series of commemorative events in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Ottawa, Ontario, recently honoured the service of the more than 4,000 Canadians who served in the Persian Gulf region as part of the international coalition from 1990-1991.

Together with our partners, the Persian Gulf Veterans of Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces—we were proud to host these events. The anniversary gives us a chance to reflect on the mission's lasting impact, more than three decades later.

A historic milestone

The Gulf War marked a turning point in Canadian military history. For the first time, Canadian women served in combat roles—changing the face of our military forever. They served across the Navy, Army and Air Force; aboard ships in the Persian Gulf, at headquarters, with the air task group and in the Canadian Field Hospital.

On the East Coast

Halifax holds deep significance for Gulf War Veterans, as it was from this port city that many military members departed for the Persian Gulf. An official delegation of about 25 Veterans attended and took part in commemorative ceremonies and initiatives across the city between February 25-28. This included a visit to the Naval Museum of Halifax, a Veterans' open mic night, a guided tour of the Shearwater Aviation Museum and, finally, a signature ceremony at the Jetty NJ and the HMCS Scotian on the anniversary date.



These gatherings promote connection, remembrance and recognition for those who served.

In the National Capital Region

From March 3-4, commemorative events continued in Ottawa with a ceremony at the Beechwood National Military Cemetery, a wreath laying at the National War Memorial and a documentary viewing at the Canadian War Museum.



Supporting community commemoration



Our Commemorative Partnership Program provided more than \$100,000 in funding to projects focused on recognizing and honouring the service and sacrifices of the brave Canadians who served in the Gulf War.

We honour the bravery, dedication, and sacrifices of Canadian Gulf War Veterans. Their contributions continue to shape Canada's proud military heritage.

[Learn more on our website](#) about the 35th anniversary of the end of the Gulf War.

Canada remembers.

Roxanne Coutts Gulf War deployment tested her training and her courage

Master Corporal (retired) Roxanne Coutts and her corporal were on their way to deliver missiles to the F-18 flight line when the alert sounded in Doha, Qatar.

It was the early 1990s, and the eerily familiar whine signaled a possible incoming Scud missile or chemical attack, so they abandoned their truck (with the trailer still hitched) and ran for cover in an abandoned building. Several military planes waited on the nearby tarmac for their load.

While they sought safety, Coutts realized the truck radio was their only source of information, so they had no way of knowing when the coast was clear. One of them was going to have to leave their shelter and take the risk to retrieve the vehicle.

"I was going to do it," Coutts remembers. "But my corporal said, 'No. I'm the corporal. *You tell me to go.*'"

She explained to him that she had never been a fan of pulling rank.

"I wouldn't ask you to do something I wouldn't do," she remembers saying to him. "You have a young family. I don't."

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

Commemoration calendar

April

April 9-12:



Battle of Vimy Ridge (1917)

April 12:

Canadian forces liberate Westerbork Transit Camp, a collection point used by the Nazis to deport Jews from the Netherlands (1945)

April 13:

No. 417 (Spitfire) Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force, is transferred from Great Britain to Egypt to help defend the Suez Canal and the Nile Delta (1942)

April 16:

HQ Canadian Forces Middle East (CANFORME) in Manamah, Bahrain, closes and the end of Operation Friction (1991)

April 24:

The 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry stop a Chinese assault at Kapyong. (April 22-25: Battle of Kapyong) (1951)

April 22-25:

The Canadian Expeditionary Force participates in the Second Battle of Ypres (1915)

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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