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THE CANADIAN PEACEKEEPING VETERANS ASSOCIATION
Founded in 1991 by former Canadian Peacekeepers and federally incorporated in 1993, the Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association (CPVA) is a national, democratic, apolitical, non-profit, veterans-only organization open to all veterans. The CPVA is neither a sect nor a paramilitary organization. More on page 20.

COVER PHOTO
November 03, 2002; Golan Heights, United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) mission area.
Captain Lorne Plemel was a military observer with UNTSO at work in the Golan Heights. Captain Plemel was with the Royal Canadian Artillery (RCA) and was part of Observer Group Golan — Tiberius, also known as Team Eagle.
Photo: MCpl Frank Hudec, Canadian Forces Combat Camera. © All rights reserved. Photo Number IS2002-2765a reproduced with the permission of DND/CAF. (Link to photo.)
The House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs issued a news release on 3 June 2014 announcing the release of its statutory review of the Act entitled "The New Veterans Charter: Moving Forward." (Link to report.)

In particular, this report was meant to address three issues:

- Care and support of the most seriously (severely) disabled;
- Support for families; and
- Improving the ways Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) delivers the programs, services and benefits of the New Veterans Charter (NVC).

The members of the Committee have decided that most veterans who have taken part in programs under the NVC have been well served, but agree that “most” is not enough. In this report, they focused their recommendations on the needs of the most seriously disabled veterans and their families who may not have been as well served as expected.

As a result, the Committee has issued 14 recommendations, hoping to address the issues they consider most important.

The link to the report included above will provide more detailed information, but in general the recommendations are:

1. Seriously disabled military members are not medically released until several conditions are met, including the person being in a stable medical condition and that VAC already has a case manager in contact with the member and in possession of their file and medical records.

2. Include the Veterans Bill of Rights in the NVC and the Pension Act.

3. Changes to financial benefits, including transfer to the spouse after the member’s death.

4. Adjustments to the earnings loss benefit.

5. Ensuring equal benefits and support to both Regular and Reserve Force members.

6. Open up access to the Military Family Resource Centres for veterans and their families.

Learn More:

CTV News: Seriously Disabled Vets Should Get Benefits For Life
7. Grant access to VACs psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation services to spouses and families.

8. Review disability awards and rate them against awards in civil liability cases for personal injury.

9. Limit the Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP) Long Term Disability program to only those members medically released for reasons not related to military service.

10. More flexibility in vocational rehabilitation training programs.

11. Review VACs case manager training and determine if a ratio of one case manager to 40 veterans is appropriate.

12. That VAC and DND work together to research and understand operational stress injuries.

13. VAC payments change to a monthly payment.

14. That VAC and DND issue a report by 30 January 2015 outlining their progress in implementing these recommendations.

The report goes on to discuss items raised during the Committee hearings, and in particular indicates the support of the Committee for the six priority recommendations raised by the Assembly of Veterans Organizations. This group represents about 20 veteran's organizations. CPVA National President Ray Kokkonen and CPVA's Patron, Joseph Gollner, appeared before the Committee on 3 April 2014.

Those six priorities are to adjust the earnings loss benefit throughout transition to civilian life; change the eligibility criteria for the permanent impairment allowance; correct the insufficiency of the permanent impairment allowance after the member reaches age 65; ensure that the maximum disability award does not disadvantage veterans when compared to other Canadians; implement improved support for families; and guarantee equivalent financial support for Reservists.

The Committee’s report goes into some detail on these six issues, but also comments on rehabilitation and transition services, particularly in regard to two issues: case management and the vocational rehabilitation program.

Evidence was presented indicating that case management under VAC often failed to meet expectations, especially the lack of interaction with serving members about to be medically released.

Witnesses also raised concerns that only a very small number of veterans were able to receive education grants as VAC felt the desired programs were unrelated to the member’s skills acquired during military service.

The Social Contract

Pressure from operations and limited budgets in the 1990s forced a new interpretation of the principle of universality of service, with the result that many servicemembers were being released on medical grounds that previously would have been retained while they recovered. Under the types of programs offered, many of these veterans would spend more of their time trying to prove their disability was service-related rather than focusing on their own rehabilitation.

All of which would require that the social contract between servicemembers and the government be redefined to meet the needs of a new generation of veterans. Many witnesses spoke on the failures of the NVC to meet these expectations, including the needs of the families of disabled veterans.
A common theme among witnesses was that the departments of National defence and Veterans Affairs should be merged, and that the obligation of the government and country towards its veterans should include four elements: support for families; priority for the most seriously disabled veterans; support for career transition services; and access to services.

Rehabilitation and Transition Services

The Committee deliberated at length about those rehabilitation and transition services available under the NVC, focusing on two main themes: case management and the vocational rehabilitation program.

Case management, in particular, was a highly touted outcome of the implementation of the NVC with expectations that dedicated case managers would be in continuous contact with injured servicemembers from shortly after their injury and throughout their release and rehabilitation. While VAC employs about 230 case managers managing about 40 veterans each, this accounts for only about 5% of VAC clients, typically only those with complex needs.

Witnesses implied that the quality of their case management was lower than anticipated, most notably involving a lack of interaction with serving members prior to their medical release.

As for vocational rehabilitation, witnesses presented many complaints that VAC would not fund programs to rehabilitate injured veterans when the program was not considered to be related to that person's skills during military service. Missing the point that if the veteran were capable of continuing in the same military occupation they need not have been released from the military in the first place, the vocational rehabilitation program would allow for a greater range of skills and opportunities for veterans working in a new field or environment.
Conclusion

To quote directly from the report:

“In closing, we would like to stress our conviction that the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report would substantially improve the support offered to veterans with service-related disabilities, in particular those whose disability is severe. The majority of veterans were well served by the programs implemented since the coming into force of the NVC. Improvements have been made since, and this report recommends a few others. This is not the end of the road. The needs of veterans change, and other adjustments will be necessary. The New Veterans Charter must therefore remain a living document, as living as the support and recognition that Canadians have never ceased to express towards veterans and their families.” BB
The Legion has initiated a letter writing campaign as a result of the disappointing report by VAC about implementation plans for the fourteen recommendations from the House Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) about the New Veterans Charter. Details about the deficiencies of the plan are given in the attached Legion letter titled: Legion Action Following Minister VAC Response to ACVA Report. The shortfalls include the lack of concrete addressing of several serious issues in the NVC.

I feel strongly that the CPVA has to stand in support of this Legion initiative on behalf of our seriously injured Veterans. It should be noted that all of the points presented in the Legion letter have been identified and supported by the Veterans Consultation Assembly.

The Legion letter writing campaign details are in the attached email: Letter Writing Campaign – NVC. It has three options for sending, including two email methods and postal sending. There is also a link to a video by the Legion about the NVC issues.

I have tried to use the Legion’s arrangement and had some difficulties and as a result have devised what hopefully is a somewhat simpler system of getting the message out to your MPs. The attached email titled Concerns about the New Veterans Charter has the Legion letter attached and has a short message to your MP. As well, the message has as cc addressees the four Ministers, and the Prime Minister, to whom the original Legion letter was sent on 3 October. You simply have to put your MP’s email address in the message and identify yourself at the bottom of the message, and send. If you don’t know your MP’s email address, you can find it here: MemberByPostalCode.aspx <http://www.parl.gc.ca/ParlInfo/Compilations/HouseOf-Commons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx>.

If your spouse, other family member or a friend is willing to send the message, then the appropriate changes would have to be made to the beginning of the email, such as – As the spouse of a Veteran.

Naturally, the choice of emailing your MP is yours. I simply ask you to consider the Government’s response to the ACVA recommendations on the New Veterans Charter and its implications on our seriously injured Veterans and then make your decision.

Please give this message wide distribution to our members.

With best regards, Ray Kokkonen

Ray Kokkonen
National President, CPVA

The BLUE Beret CALL TO ACTION

CPVA President Endorses NVC Letter Writing Campaign
All;

As you will recall, we sent a News Release expression our disappointment with the government’s response to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) Third Report entitled: “The New Veterans Charter: Moving Forward” which was unanimously adopted and distributed in June 2014. We are now rallying all Legion members, and all Canadians, to join us in calling for action from this government. We are launching a letter writing campaign effective immediately.

Attached you will find instructions on how to participate in the campaign. We have also posted a YouTube video expressing the same sentiments. Please give this the widest distribution possible and ensure that every Legion branch is made aware of this campaign and encouraged to participate. Should you receive any media enquiries, the talking points that you will need are found in the letter (attached). If you would prefer you are more than welcome to forward any media requests to Dominion Command.

Yours in Comradeship,

BRUCE POULIN
Manager / Gérant, Communications
The Royal Canadian Legion
Dominion Command

PHOTO CREDITS
Page 5 || 6 September 2011 ; Port Weller, Ontario.
Members of the Royal Canadian Legion branch 350 in Port Weller, Ontario welcome Her Majesty’s Canadian Ship (HMCS) MONTREAL during the 2011 Great Lakes Deployment.
Photo: Corporal Martin Roy, Formation Imaging Services, Halifax, Nova Scotia. © All rights reserved. Photo Number HS2011-M013-009 reproduced with the permission of DND/CAF. (Link to photo.)

Page 7 || Undated, VAC photo
Photo: Veterans Ombudsman official website, www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca (Link to Photo)
Otawa, 18 August 2014

Recently published is the second in the series of the Veterans Ombudsman’s blogs on myth busting about the New Veterans Charter. This time, Chief Warrant Officer Guy Parent (Retired) has taken on explaining the details of the Permanent Impairment Allowance (PIA) and the Permanent Impairment Allowance Supplement (PIAS). He quite clearly states that many severely disabled Veterans cannot access these lifetime monthly allowances designed to compensate for their loss of earning capacity. He then goes on to provide more details and to analyze and explain the causes.

In a slightly different context, the Ombudsman mentions the effects of Bill C-55, The Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act, by giving the two very clear statistics about the numbers of recipients. Prior to the October 2011 and the passage of Bill C-55, 54 Veterans were in receipt of the PIA and as of March 2014, there were 1,647 recipients, making it clear that the Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act has had a hugely positive effect. It is very pleasing to see those numbers as CPVA worked very hard for the approval of Bill C-55.

It’s worth reading the blogs because even if you don’t agree with everything the Ombudsman says, he provides information which is helpful in understanding the quite complex benefits matrix of the NVC, and in particular the relationships and comparisons between the NVC and the Pension Act. BB

Distribution List:
The Honourable Julian Fantino, Minister of Veterans Affairs
The Honourable Robert Nicholson, Minister of National Defence
The Honourable Joe Oliver, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Tony Clement, President of the Treasury Board

cc: The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
The retirement of LGen Roméo Dallaire as a Senator left the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs without a Chair. At a meeting held today, the Subcommittee elected as the new Chair, Senator Joe Day of New Brunswick. The Deputy Chair is Carolyn Stewart-Olsen, also of New Brunswick. The news release about the event is attached.

More information about the Subcommittee can be found at: http://senate-senat.ca/vets-e.asp.

Obituary: Dean Lawrence

MIRIMICHI, 15 September 2014

It is with regret and deep personal sorrow that I report the death this morning of Dean Lawrence, the President of the CPVA Miramichi Chapter at the Miramichi Regional Hospital. Dean had been in palliative care for several weeks before finally succumbing to cancer in several areas of his body.

Dean was a highly active member of the Miramichi Chapter and was in the midst of his second term as the Chapter President. He was also the CPVA NB Regional Director. A retired CWO, Dean served as an MP, with his last posting being in the Toronto SIU Detachment. Predeceased by his wife Heather, Dean has two daughters. One of his daughters is married to an Armoured Corps major and they are posted to Turkey. The other daughter is an RCMP officer in Ontario.

Dean was my neighbour for the past 20 years and also a long time friend during our military service in various places around the country. I will miss him deeply.

Ray Kokkonen, President, CPVA

MVA Commendations

OTTAWA, 15 September 2014

It is a pleasure to report that two of our members have been honoured with the awarding of the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation. The recipients are Jim McMillan-Murphy and Ed Widenmaier, both of Vancouver Island.

Congratulations to Jim and Ed, Founding Members of the CPVA, for the well-deserved recognition. A photo of the proud recipients with Minister Fantino is displayed above.

West Central Alberta Chapter Report

OTTAWA, 24 September 2014

For the past 4 years, West Central Alberta Chapter has been conducting highway clean-up along highway 40, 30 km South of Hinton, Alberta. We are responsible for a 5 km stretch of this highway. Our Chapter does this as part of our commitment to the community.

This clean-up is part of Alberta Transport’s “Keeping Alberta’s Highways Clean” campaign which we support.

I am putting a challenge to other members of our chapter in Red Deer and Calgary/Cochrane, and also the Edmonton Chapter, to see if they can do the same in their area.

Our membership numbers are remaining the same even though for each member we lose, we seem to gain one.

Wayne Kennedy, Chapter Secretary
On a dark and cold day at the beginning of February, our President, Ray Kokkonen, received a call from the office of the Minister of Veteran’s Affairs advising him that the Department was going to sponsor a trip to Cyprus to commemorate 50 years of Canadian service in UNFICYP. After some busy contacts across the country, five of us were selected to join five others from CAVUNP on this trip from 13 to 20 March.


Prior to departure we were invited to Ottawa, where in addition to meeting each other, we had a visit to the House of Commons, lunch with the Minister in the Parliamentary Dining room, followed by the Speaker of the House of Commons introducing us to the House during Question Period, and then a photo op with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister presented each of us with a silver peacekeeping $20 coin from the Canadian Mint. Quite heady stuff!

As we gathered at the Toronto airport for the flight we were joined by the Minister Julian Fantino, the ADM(Service Delivery), Michel Doiron and our minders, John Desrosiers and Geoff Wood. During our time in Cyprus we were joined by the Canadian High Commissioner to Cyprus (who is also our Ambassador to Greece), our Defence Attaché Col Zaporzan, who, while he resides in Beirut is also responsible for Canadian Defence liaison with Cyprus and Jordan, along with several staff from the Embassy in Athens. We were also fortunate to meet the Honourary Consul for Canada in Cyprus, Mrs Rita Severis.

The first thing many of us noticed on arrival was the brand new four lane highway connecting Larnaca to Nicosia, which has been routed to no longer cross the line of confrontation. The other striking thing which we remarked on every day we were there was the amount of new construction which has occurred particularly around Nicosia, but also on the Turkish side of the line with huge housing developments near Nicosia and in Kyrenia. Despite this sign of a booming economy, we later learned that the island is in the middle of a major economic downturn — could that help them find a solution??
On our visit to Kyrenia we also learned the ease with which one can now cross the line. While we needed our passports, the crossing was not unlike crossing any border in Europe before the EU. The last time I was in Kyrenia there were perhaps two small restaurants with one or two tables around the harbour. There are so many today, all full, that it is difficult to walk around the harbour.

Later that day, it was also very fitting that The Minister, ADM, Alain Forand, Larry Gollner, and Ron Griffis were able to greet the arrival of our last contingent rotating out of Afghanistan, racing through the night to arrive in time to meet the incoming troops at their hotel in Paphos, have breakfast with them, and participate in the welcoming briefing.

During our visit we had three remembrance services, one at Wayne’s Keep, a Commonwealth War Graves cemetery not far from the roundabout leading to Blue Beret Camp. The Canadian graves in this cemetery were primarily aircrew from the WWII. We then had a rededication of the Canadian memorial at Wolsely Barracks, and a final one at the British cemetery at the British Sovereign Base of Dhekalia. All of the Canadian UNFICYP fatalities prior to 1970 are buried in the British cemetery in Dhekalia. There were two particular highlights to this service, one was Ed Widenmaier playing Amazing Grace on a borrowed accordion, and the second was Garry Best burying the cap badge of Cpl Otto Redmond (RCR). Cpl Redmond was killed in a vehicle accident in 1968. After the accident a local Turkish Cypriot found his beret and cap badge. That individual eventually emigrated to Canada, and happened to see Garry on TV on a show about peacekeeping.
He contacted Garry and gave him the cap badge. Garry was not able to contact the family, so requested permission to bury the cap badge while we were at the cemetery. When the British Forces learned of this gesture they decided that the occasion should include a piper and flew one in from Scotland for our service— an exceptionally gracious act. The picture shows Gary burying the cap badge at the grave.

Our visit also included an opportunity to meet the President of Cyprus and to have lunch with members of the Cypriot National Guard which was hosted by the newly installed Minister of Defence, Mr Tasos Mitsopolous, who tragically died of a stroke the following day despite being a young man.

We hosted a pancake breakfast with Canadian Maple Syrup brought from Canada for Britcon in BBC, followed by a tour of the line inside the walled city.

Speaking to the Company Commander of their immediate reaction force I commented that when the inter-communal talks began again in 1981, I used to tell my soldiers, who were doing extra duty guarding the site, that they might be witness to history if a solution was found. The British Major replied that is exactly what he is currently telling his soldiers thirty-four years later—I wonder how many other soldiers heard the same thing.

Our tour of the line was fascinating and depressing at the same time, primarily because very, very little has changed since I first went there almost forty years ago. In addition the British NCOs told us stories which indicate that both sides are still playing the same childish one-upman-ship games that they played those many years ago. And yes, the cars under Maple One are still there and still as good as new—might need an oil change and some new rubber too.

We also had the privilege to dine in the home of the Honorary Consul and to learn more about the state of the negotiations.

For those who lived in Wolsely Barracks, not much has changed although the Officers Mess is closed and derelict and is reportedly full of snakes. Members of our crew were not slow in finding an appropriate place for a libation, and some managed to be in the Irish pub to celebrate St Patrick’s day with the Irish Civpol contingent. On our last day we also found the Canada pub, and I will leave it to Ed to explain how he managed to come away with the Barmaid’s tee shirt.

A busy week left us with some optimism that a solution may be in sight. Many of us have expressed this optimism >
in the past, so hopefully this time we are not simply being naïve. We return having made special friendships with our fellow veterans and a renewed view of a very complicated Island. We were all very pleased to be thanked for our efforts to promote peace, which often came from normal Cypriots whom we met in our travels. It is clear that we made a difference.

Finally kudos to John Desrosiers and Geoff Wood — for getting us to every event on time and not losing any old soldiers! BB

PHOTO CREDITS
Pages 9 thru 12 || March 2014, Cyprus.
Photos by Tim Sparling and Joseph Gollner.
Photo by Parliamentary photographer.
For the first time ever, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) released its annual report to the public on 12 September 2014. According to Chair John D. Larlee, this report “is another way for us to better serve Veterans and Canadians... [giving] us the opportunity to share information about our activities, successes, and challenges so that Canadians can better understand our work and have confidence in the appeal process.”

This was fifth year under the chairmanship of John Larlee, one in which the Board took a closer look at the way it does business and attempted to communicate more with veterans and the advocacy community.

The VRAB was created in 1995 as an arms-length tribunal that hears appeals for disability benefits decisions made by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). VRAB provides two levels of redress for disability benefits decisions, a Review hearing, and a subsequent Appeal hearing, and holds hearings across the country.

Those appealing a decision on benefits by the VAC may take advantage of free legal advice from the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, who represent most applicants before the Board, or they may use service officers from various advocacy organizations or their own legal assistance, at their own cost.

It should be noted that the Board’s process is non-adversarial, with no one arguing against the veteran nor defending the VAC decision under review.

Review hearings are held in locations across the country by two Board members. Veterans may speak to the Board directly to bring evidence, arguments and hear witnesses. The applicants are reimbursed their travel costs to attend their hearings.

The Appeal hearings are typically conducted in Charlotte-town, by panels of three Board members who were not part of the Review hearing. While the applicant cannot speak to the Board at this hearing, their representative may submit new information and make arguments in support of their case. Appeal decisions are final and binding, but applicants may apply to the Board for Reconsideration if new, credible and relevant evidence is presented later on.

VRAB hearings are open to the public except in those rare circumstances where the applicant requests and is granted a closed hearing.

The annual report is available on the VRAB website, along with information and outcomes of significant rulings. BB
More than 5000 military members are released every year, with over 140,000 released in the past fifteen years alone. Going from a structured military life full of camaraderie and discipline to an uncertain future in the civilian world can be difficult for some.

A 2011 study on the transition of military personnel to civilian life, conducted jointly by DND and VAC, found that 62% of those released between 1998 and 2007 reported an easy transition. The study also revealed that 89% worked after their release, and 72% felt that their military experience had helped them in their civilian jobs.

Others, however, were not so fortunate. The same study found that 25% of those released reported a difficult adjustment to civilian life. Among other problems, another study reported that veteran's incomes dropped an average of 10% during the first three years following military service. More specifically, female veterans experienced a 30% decline, medically discharged veterans a 29% decline, and those who served 10 to 19 years a 21% decline.

The transition can be particularly difficult for those released for medical reasons. The CAF typically releases about 1000 people every year for medical reasons — 16,240 such releases occurred between 1999 and 2013 — not including those released for non-medical reasons who subsequently developed physical and mental health problems related to their military service. Those suffering from Operational Stress Injuries (OSI) such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) tend to face higher unemployment rates, significant declines in income, and are often unable to maintain their standard of living.

Reservists also face a difficult time, returning from the mission to find little support in a civilian world that is “ill-equipped to appreciate, recognize or deal with their needs.” In fact, many reservists face the risk of losing their civilian jobs due to service-related injuries.
DND and VAC have worked to set up various transition programs, many in response to the New Veterans’ Charter, to help facilitate the return to civilian life. The Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, chaired at the time by Senator Roméo Dallaire, conducted a study on transition and in June released their report “The Transition to Civilian Life of Veterans”, available in PDF format on their website.

The Subcommittee looked at initiatives taken by both public and private sectors to help military members find meaningful employment after their release. Beginning in October 2011, the Subcommittee held 17 meetings on these issues and heard testimony from 44 witnesses from a diverse group of federal departments and agencies, community and private sector organizations, and veterans advocacy groups.

This report is divided into six sections:

1. looking at the need for further research;
2. options for strengthening DND and VAC programs and services;
3. ways to improve transition for the injured and ill;
4. reinforcing the connection between the military and the private sector; and
5. options to enhance private sector job opportunities.

The report includes two annexes providing a detailed overview of transition programs and services offered by the federal government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

While the report goes on in considerable detail for over 100 pages, here are the 14 recommendations resulting from the study and quoted directly from the report:

**Recommendation 1:** That the Life After Service Studies (LASS) joint programs of research led by DND and VAC continue its work on the transition to civilian life of military personnel, and that a LASS study on veterans’ employment post-release be initiated in the near future.

**Recommendation 2:** That the CAF and DND, taking into consideration the results of ongoing research on transition issues, regularly review and upgrade their transition...
programs in order to continually enhance services provided to transitioning military personnel.

- **Recommendation 3:** That the CAF and DND make the VAC transition interview mandatory for all releasing military personnel.
- **Recommendation 4:** That DND and VAC reach out to federal departments and agencies and promote the hiring of transitioning CAF members and veterans into their public service workforces.
- **Recommendation 5:** That Veterans Affairs Canada conducts a review to evaluate the performance of its Career Transition Service Program and its Vocational Rehabilitation Program at least every three years and report to both chambers of Parliament on its findings.

- **Recommendation 6:** That DND and VAC implement all fifteen recommendations made by the Auditor General of Canada in his October 2012 report on the transition of ill and injured military personnel to civilian life as soon as possible.
- **Recommendation 7:** That DND and VAC develop partnerships with civilian employers with the goal of developing more direct employment placement and retention solutions to ensure meaningful job opportunities for ill and injured transitioning CAF members and veterans.
- **Recommendation 8:** That DND and VAC coordinate public sector, private sector and non-governmental efforts to assist transitioning military personnel and veterans. As top priority, the Subcommittee additionally recommends:
  - (a) That DND support the expansion of the Veterans Transition Program nationally, and ensure that serving CAF members affected by PTSD have access to the program;
  - (b) That Veterans Affairs Canada support the expansion of the Royal Canadian Legion and BCIT’s Legion Military Skills Conversion Program nationally; and (c) That DND and VAC assist Prospect Human Services in expanding the Forces@WORK program nationally and provide appropriate funding to achieve that end.

- **Recommendation 9:** That the Canadian government recognizes renewing Commissionaires’ right of first refusal on federal government guard contracts and that it also considers ways of encouraging the employment of veterans on federal government contracts with other security companies.
- **Recommendation 10:** That the Government of Canada and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, while recognizing the many differences between the Canadian and American veteran support systems, explore the possibility of establishing a program similar to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Hiring Our Heroes initiative in Canada to help connect transitioning CAF members and veterans with employers in communities across Canada.
- **Recommendation 11:** That DND and VAC increase their outreach efforts with the private sector and encourage
civilians employers to hire transitioning military personnel and veterans. As top priorities in this regard, the Subcommittee additionally recommends:
(a) That an official and centralized transition to civilian life website jointly operated by DND and VAC be created to coordinate public and private sector transition programs and services and help connect transitioning military personnel and veterans with civilian employers.
(b) That DND take a lead role in providing civilian employers with a better understanding of military-civilian job equivalencies.
(c) That DND and VAC transition programs enhance efforts to assist transitioning military personnel and veterans promote their military experiences, training, trades and skills to the civilian marketplace.

- **Recommendation 12:** That DND and VAC develop and jointly manage an awards system similar to that of the CFLC, which would annually recognize private sector organizations that hire transitioning military personnel and veterans.
- **Recommendation 13:** That the CFLC and DND consider expanding the ExecuTrek program in coming years and use it as an outreach tool to promote public and private sector hiring of transitioning military personnel and veterans.
- **Recommendation 14:** That DND and VAC sponsor the organization of military career fairs to help employers and veterans connect with one another.

The report concludes on a high note, reporting that with over 40,000 CAF members having deployed to Afghanistan over 10 years, some of whom have returned home with a range of...
disabilities, it is important to work to ensure the successful reintegration of this new generation of war veterans into Canadian society.

While the Subcommittee is encouraged to see so many organizations, governmental or otherwise, devoting time and resources to helping military personnel transition to meaningful civilian employment, they believe that more still can be done. Along with more research, they call for more outreach and education. DND and VAC should work more closely with civilian employers to provide them with a better understanding of the value added by military service. BB
The Blue Beret

About the CPVA

The CPVA, founded in 1991, is a national, all Veteran, all volunteer, not-for-profit, apolitical organization with Chapters from Vancouver Island to St. John’s, Newfoundland. It has its Headquarters in Kingston, Ontario, and is not funded by the Government in any way. Our Mission Statement is: “To be a strong and leading advocate for all Veterans and to provide a forum of comradeship for Veterans”. The CPVA is a true, stable, national organization and its Constitution opens the doors to membership to any Veteran from World War II, Korea, NATO, UN missions and any other related military or police operations and includes all varieties of veterans from World War II to Afghanistan, even with some international members.

In addition to its long-term work for Veterans, which has produced substantial gains, CPVA has a number of notable organizational strengths such as an extremely effective governance, real democratic representation of all members and a nationwide communications network which reaches virtually all veterans and a large portion of the CF. As well, the CPVA has a bona fide behavioural sciences capability and component. Below is a summary of some of the Association’s achievements and capabilities:

- CPVA’s proposal in the late 1990’s led to the establishment of the VAC-Canadian Forces Advisory Council, the first forum established by VAC to allow CF (modern-day) Veterans organizations to participate equally at the table with the traditional Veterans organizations.
- CPVA, in its over two decades of existence, has provided the Canadian Veterans community with focused, knowledgeable, innovative and cooperative leadership. This leadership has reached far beyond our own membership and has expressed itself in many ways, ways that have benefited all Canadian Veterans. The Veterans Bill of Rights, the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal, the 1-800 VAC assistance line, the Veteran’s Ombudsman, and the 9th of August National Peacekeepers’ Day being just five achievements of such benefits. The CPVA has also made several appearances at the hearings of the House Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs to provide input about various Veterans issues.
- CPVA has consistently worked cooperatively, albeit without always being in agreement, with the Minister of Veterans Affairs and senior VAC staff, providing them with innovative suggestions on a wide variety of topics. Topics such as a comprehensive method of validating VAC’s statistics, rational and reasonable ideas on how to resolve the on-going issue of cash versus disability pension, and other ways to improve the NVC and VAC support to veterans. The Association has always provided strong membership and leadership to numerous VAC committees, working and advisory groups, NVC regulatory discussions, and so on. At present, the CPVA is a member of the VAC Stakeholders Committee. CPVA, alone amongst Veterans associations, has taken the initiative to recognize the VAC staff for good support and service to Veterans with its outstanding national and regional service awards program.

CPVA’s steady and active leadership to the Canadian Veterans community, while avoiding public confrontation with VAC, has earned it a reputation for being a straight-shooting Veterans organization that has a proven and recognized capacity to reach far beyond its own membership to influence events and activities affecting all Canadian Veterans. CPVA is a staunch member of the Assembly of Veterans Organizations and fully supports the collective initiatives of about twenty Veterans groups. BB

Ms. Bridget Preston, Area Manager of the Vancouver Island Veterans Affairs District Office, accepts the Outstanding Service Award from CPVA National President, Ray Kokkonen, on behalf of her office and staff. The award is given at a national level for outstanding, dedicated and caring service to veterans.

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