



Salute!

Veterans Affairs Canada: Proudly Serving Canada's Veteran Community

Veterans' Week 2010

A Week to Remember . . .

Each year from November 5-11, Canadians pause during Veterans' Week to reflect on the brave Canadians who have served in the cause of peace and freedom.

Canada has never sent our military overseas to fight for new territory or treasure . . . but time and again, Canadians have gone into harm's way to help those whose peace and freedom have been threatened by others. Whether in the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War or in many international peace support efforts over the past six decades—right up to Canada's engagement in Afghanistan today—more than 2.3 million Canadians have put their lives on the line to help those in need. More than 117,000 of these brave men and women died, giving their lives so that others may live in peace.

The heavy toll taken by the Canadian Forces efforts in Afghanistan has made Veterans' Week and Remembrance Day extra special for many people in recent years. Keeping the torch of remembrance burning brightly is important. How can we be good citizens and truly appreciate the free and peaceful country we have today without knowing about those who have served to protect our rights and values? Freedom is not free—and the peace we enjoy today has been paid for by those whom we remember during Veterans' Week.

Canadians remember in many ways. We wear poppies, build war memorials, attend community ceremonies and line the Highway of Heroes. Veterans speak to young people, students hold school assemblies, sporting events have special pre-game ceremonies, and Veterans' Week programming appears on television.

And as society has evolved, the way people remember has also evolved. Today we can also remember by using social media tools like the Canada Remembers Facebook page and YouTube channel. The more ways we have to remember, the easier it is to show our gratitude and respect for those who have served and continue to serve our country.

Veterans' Week culminates with Remembrance Day, when on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, we pause for a moment of silent reflection. This year, make remembrance something you do year round and answer the challenge: How Will You Remember?



This Veterans' Week, Canadians are encouraged to participate in one of the many commemorative ceremonies, events and activities taking place across the country. Find out what is happening in your community or list your event using the Calendar of Events on our Web site at www.vac-acc.gc.ca.

Do you have photos from a local commemorative event? You can post them to our Facebook page. Learn more on our Web site at www.vac-acc.gc.ca.



24/7 Help When You Need It

For help in difficult times, Veterans and their families can access free, confidential, professional short-term counselling services **24/7** by calling the Veterans Affairs Canada Assistance Service at **1-800-268-7708**. If you are hearing impaired, please call **1-800-567-5803**.

Whatever your need, we want to help.





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Your comments and suggestions are welcome and should be sent to:

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Minister's Message



Minister Blackburn lays a wreath during the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate Memorial in Belgium. The Minister visited Canadian First World War commemorative sites in France and Belgium in August.

Again this year, during Veterans' Week, Canadians will flock to local cenotaphs and Legions to remember the dedication, the successes and the sacrifices of Canadian Veterans. We remember Veterans from the First World War, Second World War, the Korean War and Afghanistan. As well, we remember the many peacekeeping missions in which Canadians have participated in the name of liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law—in other words, the values that cement the Canadian nation.

We will proudly remember their achievements in countries where time has not diminished the gratitude of those they helped.

To serve one's country is a feat of tremendous generosity. To be willing to give so much of one's self on behalf of a cause, or a people, or an ideal, is the truest definition I know of the word heroic. The one thing our Veterans all share, no matter where or when they served, is a sense of contribution to the greater good—doing selfless things, risking their lives so others can experience peace,

a freedom they may not previously have known, or a life free of persecution.

Since being named Minister last January, I have had the privilege of meeting many of you. I can't begin to tell you the impact your stories have had on me. I felt the passion in each and every one. I invite you, dear Veterans, to share your stories with all Canadians, as you have done with me. Share your rich experiences with them. Each of you is an important part of our history—each of you has contributed to making the world a better place. Because of this, you deserve our utmost admiration, our gratitude and our respect.

During this Veterans' Week, we will remember dangerous peacekeeping missions you have led in places such as the Suez Canal, Cyprus, Somalia, the Balkans, Uganda, Rwanda and countless others places where your heroism and dedication to duty deeply impacted the lives of

those people who needed your help. We remember those who went to war and came back. We remember those who didn't. But, most of all, we remember.

This Veterans' Week, as we have in recent years, we will all pause and remember the exceptional contributions of those who have served and those still on the ground in Afghanistan. We owe these brave Canadians more than our thanks, although they have that, to be sure. We owe them and their families the best help we can offer upon their return. As Minister of Veterans Affairs, that is my pledge to them.

Lest We Forget.

The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn,
Minister of Veterans Affairs and
Minister of State (Agriculture)

Significant Increase Announced in Support for Our Veterans

On September 19, 2010, the Government of Canada announced important measures to increase the financial support given to seriously injured Veterans. This includes an increase to the monthly income for severely injured Veterans who are unable to return to work and a boost in the minimum annual income for Veterans released at lower salary levels.

The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture), and the Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of National Defence, said these increases are only the first of a series of measures to be announced, which will improve the support and care provided to our Veterans and their families.

Minister Blackburn said it is his intention to propose amendments to improve the New Veterans Charter this fall.

“We have been listening to our Veterans and their families, and we are determined to do whatever it takes to serve them as they have served Canada and all Canadians—with courage and distinction,” said Minister Blackburn. “We have already made sweeping

changes to our programs, services and benefits. These new measures will make a real difference in the lives of our nation's heroes.”

These improvements are expected to help more than 4,000 Veterans over the next five years. The announcement provides a total of \$2 billion to ensure Veterans who have been seriously injured have access to the support they deserve.

- Veterans who have suffered a severe, service-related injury (e.g. quadriplegia, paraplegia, multiple amputations) and who as a result, suffer permanent effects are eligible for the Permanent Impairment Allowance (PIA) benefit under the New Veterans Charter.
- The proposed changes will improve access to the above PIA financial assistance for severely injured Veterans by revising program eligibility requirements and removing barriers so that more than 3,500 additional severely injured Veterans will now be eligible.
- Veterans who are eligible for the PIA and who have experienced serious injuries and

aren't able to return to service or work again will receive \$1,000 more a month for the rest of their lives. This amount will be added onto 75 percent of their salary, as well as an allowance in the amount of \$536 to \$1,609. Within the next five years, 500 Veterans will be eligible for this extra monthly amount.

Ensuring an adequate monthly income for Veterans by enhancing the Earnings Loss benefit

The Earnings Loss benefit provides monthly financial assistance to replace lost income for Veterans who are either undergoing rehabilitation or cannot return to work. The proposed changes will increase the minimum monthly income for these Veterans by changing the formula for the Earnings Loss benefit to ensure a minimum income of approximately \$40,000/year before tax. Approximately 2,320 Veterans will benefit from this change over the next five years.

Part-time reservists will see their benefits calculated based on \$2,700 a month, versus the existing \$2,000 a month.

Jake Gaudaur Veterans' Trophy Unveiled

The man whose story more than any other embodies the historical link between Canadian football and Canada's Veterans now has a Canadian Football League (CFL) trophy named in his honour.

Jake Gaudaur was a Canadian hero. He was a Second World War Veteran, who served proudly as a pilot and flight instructor in the Royal Canadian Air Force. He was also part of the RCAF Hurricanes—the team that captured the 1942 Grey Cup—who went on to have a distinguished career in the CFL as a respected player and team executive. He eventually became the longest-serving commissioner in the history of the league.

The Jake Gaudaur Veterans' Award will honour the contributions of all Canada's Veterans. The trophy will be awarded for the first time this November and each year during Grey Cup Week. It will go to the CFL player who best demonstrates the attributes that have always defined Canada's Veterans: strength, perseverance, comradeship, courage and contribution to community.



The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture), unveiled the New Jake Gaudaur Veterans' Trophy with members of the Gaudaur family and Mark Cohon, Commissioner of the Canadian Football League.

New Homeless Initiative for Greater Toronto Area

In Toronto, on any given night, there are over 5,000 people either living on the street or in shelters. But, did you know most homeless people don't live on the street? More than 80 percent of Canada's homeless aren't properly housed or on the verge of eviction from where they live. Many are sleeping in temporary beds—with friends or relatives—and in other places away from the public eye.

Building on the success of the Montréal and Vancouver homeless pilot projects, Veterans Affairs Canada's Sunnybrook District Office, in partnership with The Royal Canadian Legion (Ontario Command), is currently operating their own homeless initiative.

Since September 2010, Dion MacArthur, a case manager from the Toronto Sunnybrook office, has been working from an office

located within the Good Shepherd Ministries Homeless Shelter. She has been tasked with:

- coming up with a way to identify Veterans who meet the departmental definition of homeless.
- meeting and assisting Veterans based on their individual needs.
- entering into partnerships with the community to close the gaps.

The Royal Canada Legion has created a Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund, the mandate of which is to provide help to those who are homeless and those who are at risk of becoming homeless. Eligible people include Canadian and Allied ex-service personnel and their dependents, as well as others. Currently, the fund is limited geographically to the Greater Toronto Area however there are plans

to expand the program throughout Ontario and, eventually, across Canada.

In addition, Susan Ray, (Assistant Professor/ Associate Scientist, School of Nursing, University of Western Ontario/Lawson Health Research Institute), in partnership with the London District Office, is conducting a homeless study among Canadian Forces (CF) Veterans. She is looking at experiences of homelessness, what causes it and what's needed to prevent and reduce homelessness among CF Veterans of the Regular Force, and/or Reservists who have served in special duty areas.

It is hoped all this activity will help to better identify, address and resolve the underlying issues that lead to homelessness within our Veteran population.

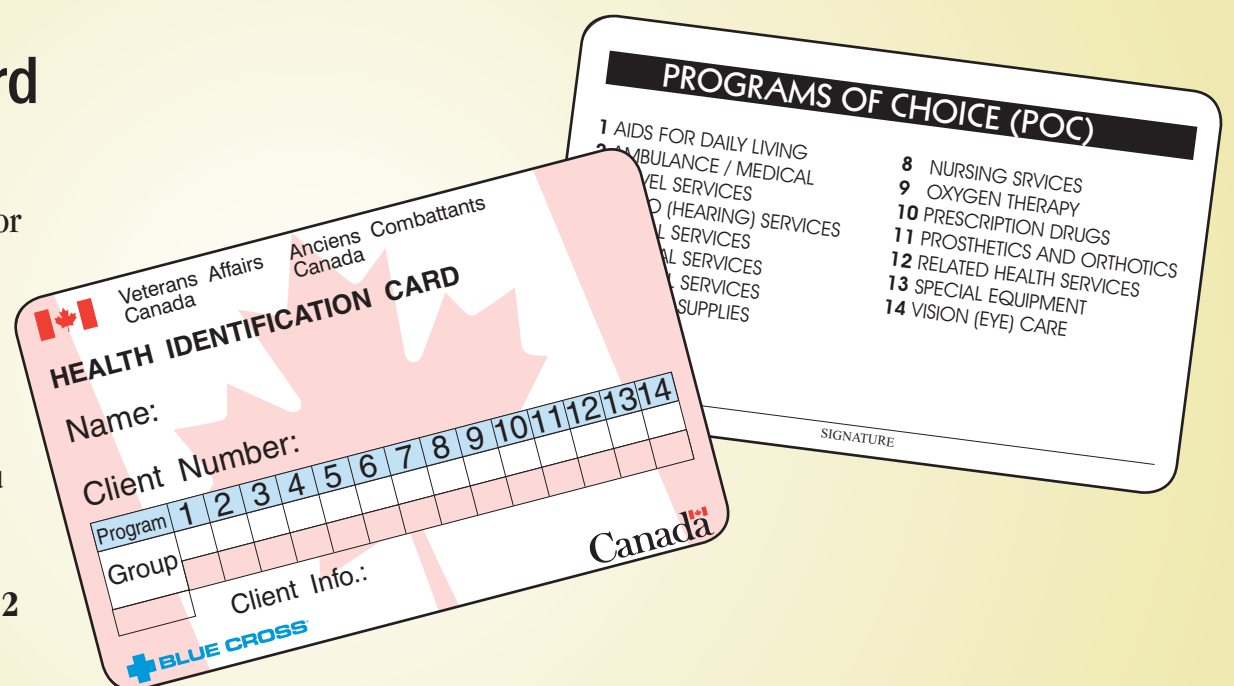


Use Your VAC Health Card

There is a simple, fast way to access approved treatment benefits or services without paying for them out of your own pocket.

Using your Veterans Affairs Canada Health Identification card at a registered provider allows the provider to quickly confirm you are eligible, get authorization, and supply what you need with no effort on your part.

Please contact VAC toll free at **1-866-522-2122** to find registered providers in your area.



Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation Award

Commendation Recognizes Teens to Celebrities

They come from large cities and small towns. They range in age from 13 to well over 100. Some have never worn a uniform while others are too young to enlist. Many served their country in the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War and beyond. Some still serve.

What do these Canadians have in common? They are recipients of the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation Award.

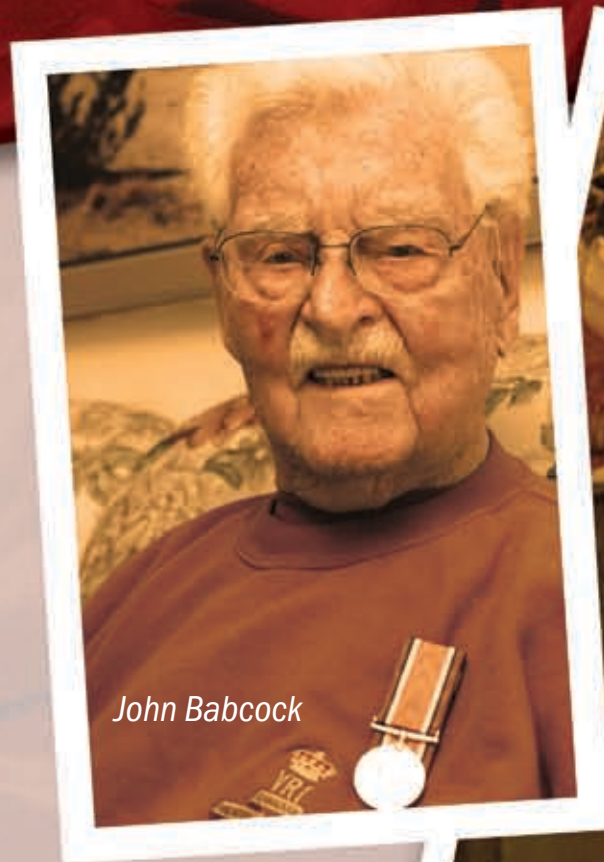
Created in 2001 as part of Canada's Honours system, the Commendation consists of a certificate, a lapel pin for civilian wear and a bar for wear with decorations. Recipients are recognized for their outstanding efforts to keeping alive the contributions of their comrades and/or providing assistance to Veterans.

Civilians have received the award, like young Amanda Neil, who was only 13 years old when she was recognized in 2006. She had a mission to purchase

grave markers for unidentified Veterans who are buried in Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery. Amanda raised hundreds of dollars and inspired others to do the same. The first recipient of the Commendation was Ottawa's Paul Métivier, one of only two First World War Veterans to receive it. The other was John Babcock, Canada's last surviving First World War Veteran.

Most recently, two noteworthy recipients were presented with the Commendation—actors Paul Gross and R.H. Thomson. Both of these gentlemen have shown they are ardent supporters of Canada's Veterans and are helping Canadians understand our military history.

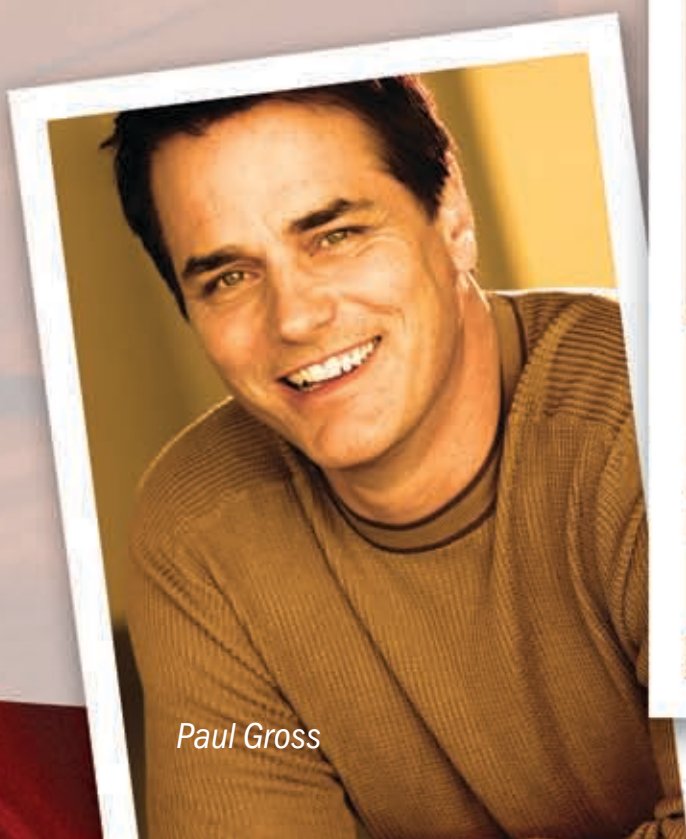
Each year, Canadians are encouraged to nominate individuals they believe are worthy of this honour. The nomination sheet can be found on the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site – www.vac-acc.gc.ca. There is a sample form to help guide you. Nominations are reviewed annually, early in the new year.



John Babcock



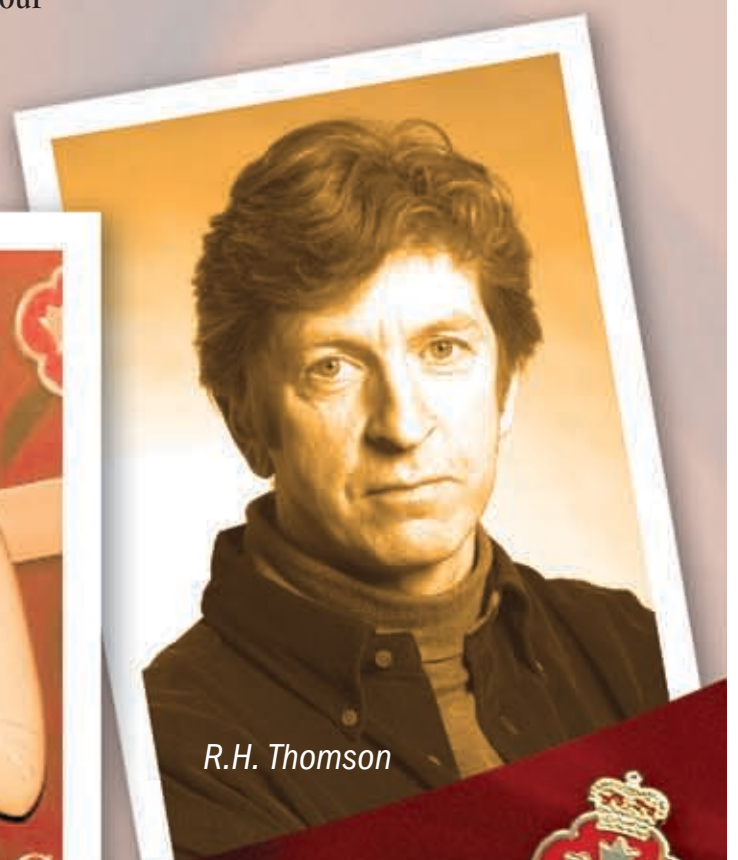
Paul Métivier



Paul Gross



Amanda Neil



R.H. Thomson



Getting Connected to VAC

In today's modern technological age there are many new ways in which we can communicate. Most likely you have heard about YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, and perhaps you have even visited our "Canada Remembers" YouTube and Facebook pages.

Veterans Affairs Canada is now taking steps toward making it easier for you to find the information you need and share your thoughts with us in new and interesting ways. And, *Salute!* will be a big part of these plans.

Salute! will be getting a facelift to bring you a new and improved online product that will offer many interactive features to help you stay connected. Updates such as a newsletter subscription service to notify you about new *Salute!* issues and a more attractive online format are part of this change. For those who would rather listen to than read our articles, there will be an audio option to choose a voice to read the article to you. You will be able to post comments on articles and tell us

where you agree and disagree with comments left by others.

There will be many more updates to our online product, over and above those to *Salute!*. For example, we will begin using geo-mapping, a tool that will allow you to see specific pin-point locations on an interactive map. You will be able to view memorials throughout the world or, maybe, find a specific location to talk to someone about VAC's programs and services throughout Canada. The map will also provide you with turn-by-turn directions from your location with a simple mouse click.

As Veterans Affairs continues to move forward with technology, there will be a number of new additions to make it easier for you to find the information you need.



Client Satisfaction – What You Told Us

In early 2010, an independent consulting firm conducted our fifth National Client Survey. In total, 1,401 war-service Veterans, Canadian Forces members and Veterans, survivors and still-serving and retired RCMP members participated.

This survey provides us with valuable information and helps identify the issues important to those we serve. This year, we changed the survey questions to learn more about health and well-being, the level of satisfaction with our programs and services and how well our programs and services are meeting needs.

The results of the survey indicated that VAC continues to do very well in many areas including:

- providing service in the language of choice (98%);
- being respectful (93%);
- being clear in our written communication (87%);

- being knowledgeable and competent (86%); and
- delivering Canada Remembers programming (88%).

Equally important, Veterans and others we serve pointed out there are areas where satisfaction is lower, including:

- providing information on how to apply for a service or benefit (82%);
- going the extra mile to make sure they get what they need; (77%); and
- being timely in our service delivery (75%).

These are areas we will work to improve upon.

Overall, 80 percent of those surveyed told us they were satisfied with VAC's programs and services, and 85 percent said they were satisfied with the overall quality of service delivery. However, more needs to be done to be fully responsive to the diverse and changing

needs of those we serve, particularly Canadian Forces members. We have already begun the improvement process. Over the next five years, we will simplify our policies, processes and practices, overhaul our service delivery, strengthen our partnerships with National Defence and others, and deliver on the objectives of the New Veterans Charter.

We would like to extend a special thank you to everyone who took the time to provide us with this very important feedback. The final report of the survey is available on our Web site at www.vac-acc.gc.ca.

For more information on VAC's National Client Survey, please write us at:

Veterans Affairs Canada
Program Performance Unit
PO Box 7700
Charlottetown PE
C1A 8M9

Help Us Reduce Wait Times for Disability Benefits

We are working to reduce wait times for disability benefits. In a recent issue of *Salute!*, we told you how you can help us do this by providing all the necessary information when you apply. Here are some reminders.

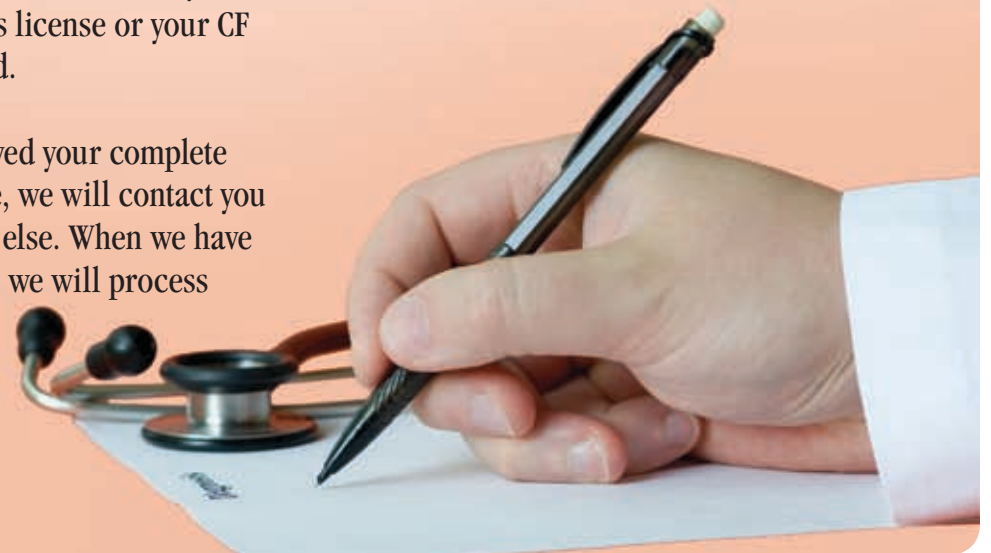
Please submit a complete application package, which includes:

- A fully completed application form.
- All necessary medical documentation.
- Completed forms allowing the release of information from other areas, including the CF.

- If you are a new client with VAC, you will also need to provide proof of your identity, such as a COPY of your provincial driver's license or your CF identification card.

Once we have received your complete application package, we will contact you if we need anything else. When we have everything we need, we will process your application and make a decision as quickly as we can.

If you need help deciding what information we need to process your claim, please call **1-866-522-2122**.



Surviving Spouses Have Priority for Public Service Jobs

On May 12, 2010, the Public Service Commission (PSC) announced that surviving spouses or common-law partners of public service employees, members of the Canadian Forces (CF) or the RCMP who die in the line of duty now have the right to be appointed in priority to positions in the public service.

If the death was a result of the performance of their public service, CF or RCMP duties, their spouse or common-law partner has the right to be appointed in priority for any position in an advertised, external appointment process, if they meet the essential qualifications for the position.

The death must have occurred on or after October 7, 2001, the date when Canada began its military actions in Afghanistan.

Priority rights for CF and RCMP

CF and RCMP members who become disabled and who are released or discharged for medical reasons also have priority rights. Further changes to the regulations specify the conditions in which they are entitled:

- (a) The person is certified by a competent authority to be ready to return to work on the day specified by the authority within five years after the day on

which the person is released or discharged, as the case may be;

- (b) The day specified is within five years after the day on which the person is released or discharged, as the case may be; and
- (c) The person requests the priority within five years after being released or discharged, as the case may be.

For more information

There are a number of conditions and terms of eligibility that must be met for the priority rights to apply. To find out more information, contact a PSC Priority Administration Advisor for your region, or consult the PSC's Web site at www.psc-cfp.gc.ca.



CNIB Helps Vets with Vision Loss Live Life to the Fullest

Michael Brodsky lost his vision overnight—literally. One night in November 1973, the then-54-year-old Veteran who saw action at D-Day checked into the hospital with what appeared to be a terrible case of the flu. The next morning he woke up completely blind.

When he got home, he contacted CNIB for help in learning to live with vision loss. With the organization's support, Mr. Brodsky was soon able to resume working, volunteering and his leisure pursuits. Almost 40 years later, he's still using CNIB's services to help him lead an active, fulfilling life.



Michael Brodsky prepares a meal with the assistance of CNIB specialist Sandra Luckenhaus-Young. The 91-year-old Second World War Veteran lost his vision in 1973. Photo credit: Mark Nicol.

“Without CNIB, I don't know how I would have even started,” he said. “CNIB gave me confidence.”

The organization has a long history of helping Veterans. In 1918, CNIB was founded by a group of men—several of whom had served in the military—who recognized the need to support returning First World War Veterans who had lost their sight.

Today, CNIB continues to help Canada's Veterans overcome the challenges of vision loss and reclaim their independence. Whether their vision loss is complete or partial, combat-related or simply a result of aging, Veterans of all ages have access to practical and emotional support, tailored to their

unique needs and delivered at home or in community settings.

Along with its unique programs and services, CNIB offers a host of specially designed products such as magnifiers and talking watches. For Veterans, the costs of many of these products are covered by Veterans Affairs Canada.

CNIB also offers a library of books specially made for people with sight loss—like audio books, electronic books and braille. According to Dawn Day, manager of Veteran Services at CNIB, the service is popular with Veterans

“It opens up a whole window that enables them to escape into one of their favourite books again,” she said.

But Day adds that many Veterans are reluctant to come to CNIB because they've gotten by for so long on their own—and she has a message for them.

“You don't have to struggle,” she said. “You put your life on the line for the rest of us, and you should use the supports in place . . . even if you just want help to read the newspaper again.”

She says that many of the Veterans she meets have lost track of their weekly routines with old buddies because they have trouble finding their way.

“We want to get them there,” she says, “either by walking them down there or finding a device that will work.”

Now 91 years old, Mr. Brodsky uses a range of devices to help him live independently, including a talking watch, a GPS system and a computer system that scans documents and then reads them aloud. CNIB even helped him sign up for Facebook so he can stay in touch with loved ones.

CNIB helps Canadians with vision loss by providing one-on-one support in their homes and communities. To learn more about CNIB or find a location near you, visit www.cnib.ca or call, toll free, **1-800-563-2642**.

How to Reach Us

Veterans Affairs Canada Web site:
www.vac-acc.gc.ca
Veterans Affairs Canada E-mail:
information@vac-acc.gc.ca

Do you need information on Services and Benefits?

Note: When you call us, please have your VAC client number ready, if you have one.
Phone: 1-866-522-2122 (English)
Phone: 1-866-522-2022 (French)
United States:
Phone: 1-888-996-2242
United Kingdom, Germany, France, or Belgium:
Phone: 00-800-996-22421
Any other country:
Phone: 613-996-2242

Do you need information on disability benefit decisions or how to request a review or appeal?

Call the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA) at: 1-877-228-2250

Do you need information on remembrance programming?

Phone: 1-866-522-2122 (English)
Phone: 1-866-522-2022 (French)
Phone: 1-800-465-7735 (Hearing Impaired)

Veterans Review and Appeal Board

P.O. Box 9900
Charlottetown PE C1A 8V7
Phone: 1-800-450-8006
Outside Canada
Phone: 1-902-566-8751
Web site: www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca

Funeral and Burial Information

Last Post Fund
Phone: 1-800-465-7113
Web site: www.lastpostfund.ca

VAC Assistance Line

Confidential, professional counselling 24/7
1-800-268-7708

Office of the Veterans Ombudsman

Mailing Address:
Veterans Ombudsman
P.O. Box 18 Stn B
Ottawa, ON K1P 6C3
1-877-330-4343
Outside Canada:
1-902-626-2919
Fax Number:
1-902-566-7582
Web site:
www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca

To submit a complaint, go to:
www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/complaint/introduction-eng.cfm

To find out about an existing complaint, or to request or share Information, e-mail:
info@ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca