

SPECIAL EDITION SPRING 2018

SALUTE!

Proudly Serving Canada's
Veteran Community

I am a
Veteran

READ MY STORY INSIDE



Canada



Leaving the military is a huge change for you and your family. As you go through the change together, you should know about all the supports available that will help you focus on your life after service.

This issue of *Salute!* highlights the six new and two enhanced benefits that became available on April 1, 2018, as well as the recently announced Pension for Life. Together, these programs support your well-being and are focused on education and training, providing additional family support and ensuring your financial security.

Our ability to provide you with timely and clear information on these and other

programs and benefits is critical. This issue of *Salute!* is only one step in a renewed communications effort to ensure that you know about what is available to support you and your family. We will continue to reach out and connect with you to ensure you know the latest information and updates.

Our mission is to support all the men and women who served, assist those who may need to re-establish themselves when they release, and support them in adapting to their new normal. In so doing, the team at Veterans Affairs Canada is guided by three principles: care, compassion and respect.

The Hon. S. O'Regan
Minister of Veterans Affairs
Associate Minister of National Defence

W.J. Natynczyk
General (Retired)
Deputy Minister, Veterans Affairs Canada



4
WELL-BEING

6
JOHN'S STORY

8
NEW AND ENHANCED BENEFITS

14
PENSION FOR LIFE

16
NATALIA'S STORY

18
YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

20
CANADA REMEMBERS

22
LEARN MORE

Published by Veterans Affairs Canada. The contents of this publication are subject to copyright. The contents of this publication may be reproduced, in whole or in part.

E-mail: VAC.Communications.ACC@vac-acc.gc.ca

Online: veterans.gc.ca/salute

Telephone: 1-866-522-2122

Address: Veterans Affairs Canada, PO Box 7700, Charlottetown, PE, C1A 8M9

Salute! is available in large print and audio formats. Should you require an alternate format please contact the above email address.

ISSN: 1926-5948

YOUR MISSION, OUR PRIORITY

We all adjust differently to major life changes. For you and your family, the transition to post-service life means big changes, and sometimes challenges. It is a unique experience.

Every year, approximately 5,000 CAF Regular Force members transition from the military to post-service life. In the 2016 *Life After Service Survey*, 52% of these Veterans reported an easy adjustment to civilian life, about 15% reported that they had neither ease nor difficulty in the transition, but 32% of Veterans said they had difficulties in adjusting to life after service. This puts their well-being at risk.

No matter who you are—young, old, military or civilian—your well-being is important.

Do you feel satisfied and fulfilled with a sense of purpose, financially secure, safely housed, in good health physically and mentally, highly resilient in the face of change, well-integrated in the community, proud, and valued and celebrated by Canadians?

Research on well-being has led to the introduction of the seven domains of well-being. All seven domains are linked.

For example, your employment can impact your health, social integration and finances. Meanwhile, your health, social integration and financial situation can affect your ability to find or retain a job.

We can play an important role in supporting your well-being. We believe the six new programs and two enhanced services now available, along with the new Pension for Life plan (effective April 1, 2019), will help.

Our mission is to help you adapt to life after service.

**NO MATTER WHO
YOU ARE—YOUNG,
OLD, MILITARY OR
CIVILIAN—YOUR
WELL-BEING IS
IMPORTANT.**

THE SEVEN DOMAINS OF WELL-BEING



EMPLOYMENT OR OTHER MEANINGFUL PURPOSE

Engaged in new work, spending time with family and/or in retirement.



FINANCIAL SECURITY

What's needed to ensure well-being in all domains.



HEALTH

Functioning well physically, mentally, socially and spiritually.



LIFE SKILLS AND PREPAREDNESS

Able to adapt expertise and manage post-service life.



SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Maintain or develop mutually supportive relationships.



HOUSING AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Safe, adequate and affordable accommodation.



CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Understood, valued and supported by the community.

Defining Well-Being

Your well-being goals are unique to you and your family.

Research shows that health alone does not equal well-being. Health - physical, mental, social and spiritual functioning - is one of seven critical domains of well-being. You can learn much more at veterans.gc.ca.

We offer a variety of benefits and services that support your well-being including new programs featured in this issue of *Salute!*

Interested in more information? Check out our website for further research, or to learn about all the supports available to you.

FULL DETAILS AT:
VETERANS.GC.CA



“THERE COMES A TIME
WHERE YOU JUST HAVE
TO REALIZE THAT YOU
NEED TO DO WHAT'S
BEST FOR YOU AND
YOUR FAMILY.”

JOHN'S STORY

AGE: 42

YEARS SERVED: 24

RANK: Master Warrant Officer

TRADE: Infantry

HOMETOWN: Collingwood, Ontario

By sharing his story, John is one of the many Veterans who help us continuously improve our processes and how we share our information. We recognize that we need to do more to improve supports available to Veterans and family members. We thank John and Tracy for sharing their experience and we hope that it will help you and your family to learn more about the services available to you during transition. Thank you John!

Share your story: VAC.Communications.ACC@vac-acc.gc.ca

John O'Neill's service record is a roadmap of places where Canadian service men and women have made a real difference over the past two decades. Bosnia in 1998. Kosovo in 1999. Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2000. Afghanistan in 2007 and again in 2010.

These places still conjure up images in the minds of Canadians, some of which are disturbing to recall. John was there.

Now, as he prepares to retire from the military as a Master Warrant Officer ("not too bad," he says), John carries those images with him still, along with the physical scars that come from 24 years of military service. A broken ankle during a paratrooper exercise. A broken elbow during physical training. A serious neck injury from an ambush in Afghanistan.

While those physical symptoms linger, the emotional injuries are more problematic for John and his family. John was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in 2014. The diagnosis came four years ago, but John believes it was building for some time.

"I think it accumulates throughout your career, undealt-with baggage. I don't really know a specific incident where it happened," he says. "There were probably a few of them."

Getting to this point has been an "emotional rollercoaster" for John, his wife Tracy and their three children: Keely, 17; Avery, 12; and Ty, 10. He continued to work for about a year and a half after the diagnosis, earning a promotion and being presented as a Member of the Order of the Military Merit.

"All these thoughts enter your mind. I'm going to be released from the military. I have a young family. But, once you research and find out everything that is available and you talk with Veterans Affairs, you start finding out that things aren't that bad, being released."

John emphasized that early intervention is key to a successful transition. "There are way too many soldiers dealing with this and we need to get to them early."

Tracy says families also need to be better equipped to help their loved ones adapt to their post-military lives.

"He was sent home to me, but I wasn't given the information that I needed to help him," Tracy says. "I wasn't educated about what I needed to do to support him."

Tracy explained that there are resources in place to help—she simply wasn't aware of them. For example, when she heard about a mental health first-aid course from her local Military Family Resource Centre, she eagerly signed up.

"I didn't even know OSISS (Operational Stress Injury Social Support) existed but now I feel as though I have a lot of resources available to me. But I really needed it the day he came home."

John is meeting with a VAC case manager, getting up to speed on what benefits and services are available to him and his family—such as education, training and counselling. While he and Tracy still aren't sure what their long-term future holds, as his retirement nears, John is positive.

"There comes a time where you just have to realize that you need to do what's best for you and your family."

**SITTING DOWN WITH
SOMEONE, AND HAVING
THEM GIVE YOU SOME
COMFORT THAT YOU'RE
NOT ALONE, REALLY
GIVES YOU A NICE
WARM FEELING."**

NEW PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

SUPPORT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

With a focus on you and your family, six new and two enhanced programs and services became available April 1, 2018. We know that well-being means something different for everyone. We all have different goals in life and different capacities to reach those goals. That is why these programs are flexible and offer a range of supports. It's about providing you and your family with choices about the supports that match your goals. For example, you can further your education. You can get help finding a new job. You can visit your local Military Family Resource Centre for support.

Our new programs and services provide you and your family with choices and are focused on the broader aspects of well-being. We are focusing on: mental health research with the new Centre of Excellence, investing in other organizations that are interested in the Veteran community, and, ensuring those who need it most get immediate help.

In this article, you will find details about the new benefits and services. Please share these details with your friends and family. We want every Veteran and family member to know what is available to them.

INVESTING IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

...SO YOU CAN REACH YOUR GOALS IN POST-MILITARY LIFE

Leaving the military is a big life change. As Veterans you have a lot of skills, experience and training. However, you might need help figuring out how to apply this experience to a civilian job or deciding the next steps you want to take. If you are ready for a new career, we are here to support you. That can mean anything from getting advice on your interview skills, learning about the labour market, or going back to school. The benefits and services described next can help.





EDUCATION AND TRAINING BENEFIT

Do you want to build on your military training and skills by furthering your education after service? We can help you.

Submit your application today and we will work with you to develop an education plan. If approved, you will receive funds needed to pay your tuition. After tuition and book costs, you can choose which living expenses to cover with your remaining money – this could mean housing expenses, food or a bus pass. It is entirely up to you.

If university or college is not what you need, a portion of the funding would be available for career and personal development courses. This could include small business boot camps, continuing education, etc.

If you were medically released before reaching six years of service, education and training support may be available through the vocational program offered by SISIP or VAC's Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance Program.

Spread the word:

This benefit is available to honourably released members with at least six years of service who released on or after April 1, 2006.



CAREER TRANSITION SERVICES

Not sure what your post-service career looks like? Not sure how to approach searching for a civilian job? We redesigned the Career Transition Services so that we can help you develop a plan and path to success.

So, what's new specifically? The redesigned program will expand current eligibilities, remove time limits to access benefits and simplify the application process. Most importantly, Veterans will not have to pay for services and wait to be reimbursed. You will never be out of pocket for this service.

All you have to do is reach out to VAC and we will connect you with experts who provide these services. You will be able to get help writing your résumé, practicing your interview skills, searching for jobs and, in some cases, job placement.

Spouses of Veterans can also take advantage of the program for up to two years after the Veteran releases. The Veteran does not have to be enrolled in the program for the spouse to join.

WHO CAN APPLY

CAF members who have honourably released on or after April 1, 2006; and:

- have at least 6 years of service to receive up to \$40,000;
- have at least 12 years of service to receive up to \$80,000.

WHO CAN APPLY

- A still-serving CAF member who completed basic training.
- A Veteran who completed basic training on or after April 1, 2006.
- A survivor, spouse or common-law partner of a Veteran who completed basic training and released on or after April 1, 2006.

HELPING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

...SO THEY CAN SUCCEED IN THEIR POST-MILITARY LIFE

When you serve, your family serves with you. That is why we are putting in place new, modern programs to support you and your family. The new benefits and services cover a broad range of assistance and with partners at all levels of Canadian society. We will continue to find ways to make the adjustment to post-military life an easier one.



VETERAN FAMILY PROGRAM EXPANSION

If you have been medically released from the military, it can be a big change for you and your family. Having support in your community can help. We expanded the Veteran Family Program to all 32 Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) locations to provide you uninterrupted access.

Visit an MFRC today to access the program. The Veteran Family Program Coordinator at the MFRC will help you with things like finding a doctor in your community, transition programs, referral services, intervention support and other useful information.

There is no time limit on accessing the MFRCs.

How to access the program?

You can access services in-person at any of the 32 MFRCs, by calling a toll-free 24/7 family information line (1-800-866-4546), or by visiting www.CAFconnection.ca.



CAREGIVER RECOGNITION BENEFIT

If you were seriously injured in service, we know that your caregiver plays a major role in supporting you. Your caregiver provides the care you need for things like daily cooking, maintaining your home and yard, and running essential errands.

The new Caregiver Recognition Benefit recognizes that and will pay your informal caregiver \$1,000 per month, tax-free.

Already receiving this benefit?

You will need to provide us with some details regarding your caregiver, so we can pay them directly. But you will not need to re-apply.

WHO CAN APPLY

- CAF Veterans who medically-released on or after April 1, 2018, and their family members.

WHO CAN APPLY

Those with a disability award, and:

- an informal caregiver helping you with your illness or injuries related to your disability award;
- your need for care is ongoing (expected to last at least 12 months);
- your informal caregiver is 18 years of age or older and is not paid for providing or coordinating your care; and,
- you are not a permanent resident of a nursing home or long-term care facility.



REHABILITATION SERVICES AND VOCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Your whole family experiences change when you leave the military. That is why we removed the time limit for spouses/common-law partners and survivors to apply for vocational rehabilitation and assistance. No time limit means no pressure to make career and rehabilitation decisions when you and your family need to focus on your more immediate needs.

As with Veterans who participate in this program, services are provided based on need. You will be assessed for a vocational need and then start in the program. If you need to stop the program for any reason, that is okay. You can simply be re-assessed at a later time that works for you.

If you are a spouse, common-law partner or survivor who was previously outside of the one-year application time limit, you can now apply for rehabilitation services.

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS CHANGE?

- The spouse or common-law partner of an eligible Veteran who is not taking part in vocational rehabilitation due to a health problem.
- The survivor of a CAF Veteran whose death was service related.



VETERAN AND FAMILY WELL-BEING FUND

Does your organization have a bold and innovative idea that will have a positive impact on RCMP and CAF Veteran and family well-being? We are investing in ideas with impact. We recognize that great programs and research to support Veterans and RCMP can be found in places across the country.

Each year we will award \$3 million in grants and contributions to fund projects that will help support Veterans and their families. We will provide successful applicants with a grant (up to \$250,000) or contribution (up to \$1 million).

Guidelines are available on our website. **The call for proposals is coming May 01!**

WHO CAN APPLY

- Non-profit organizations.
- Some for-profit organizations.
- Research organizations/institutes.
- Educational institutions.
- Public health and social service institutions.
- Indigenous organizations.



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE ON PTSD AND RELATED MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Mental health is a critical part of Veteran well-being. This is why we are creating a Centre of Excellence on PTSD and related mental health conditions. This centre will put the latest knowledge and research into the hands of those medical professionals and others who are working with Veterans daily.

The Centre will focus on research, program development, education and outreach. The approach will complement the partnerships we have with provinces to provide direct mental health care support through Operational Stress Injury Clinics and other provincially run in-patient facilities. The Centre will provide important information on the specific experiences of Veterans and the specific nature of their care needs.

NEW AND ENHANCED BENEFITS

This approach will help all Veterans from coast to coast to coast, not just those in one specific geographic location.

Like the Well-being Fund, the positive impacts of the Centre will go beyond the CAF Veteran Community. RCMP Veterans and their families and other first responders affected by PTSD and related mental health issues will also benefit from the research, information and knowledge sharing that will support mental health practitioners from across the country.



VETERANS EMERGENCY FUND

When the unexpected happens, you are not alone. The new Veterans Emergency Fund can help.

If you find yourself with an immediate need, contact us to discuss your situation. We may be able to provide short-term relief. The fund can provide you or your family with immediate financial help for things like food, clothing, shelter, necessary medical care and other expenses to keep you safe. We will direct you to supports in your community that can provide additional assistance.

Once we have helped resolve the immediate need, we will help you apply for any other VAC benefits and services that may provide long-term support.

WHO CAN APPLY

- CAF Veterans or a spouse or common-law partner of a Veteran, or a survivor or orphan of a Veteran who live in Canada.

How to apply?



Visit a local
VAC area office



Apply online through
your My VAC Account



Call us toll-free at
1-866-522-2122 during
local business hours



VETERANS.GC.CA

NO PAPER NO HASSLE APPLY TODAY

MY VAC ACCOUNT

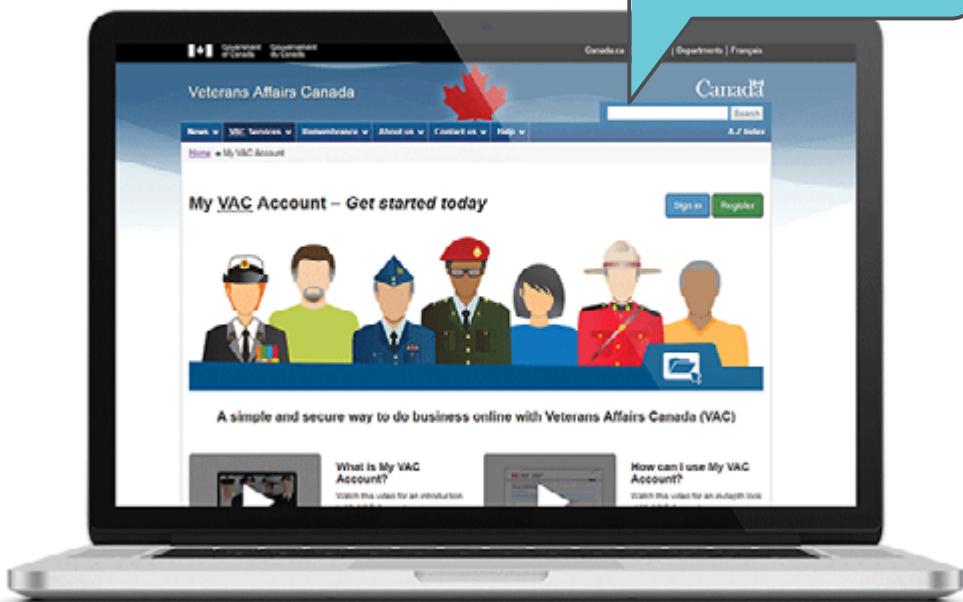
Sign up today for a *My VAC Account* where applying is faster and easier for the Education and Training Benefit, Career Transition Services. You can also confirm the status of your applications and contact us directly through secure messaging.

Family members who are receiving VAC benefits can also sign up for their own *My VAC Account*.

My VAC Account and the *Veterans Matter* mobile app allow you to stay connected with us anytime, anywhere, 24/7.

VETERANS.GC.CA.

Did you know that you can submit applications online for the new benefits and services?



ACCESS
INFORMATION 24/7



SUBMIT YOUR
APPLICATION



SEND SECURE
MESSAGES



REGISTER
FOR DIRECT
DEPOSIT

EXPECTED APRIL 01, 2019

PENSION FOR LIFE

CHOICE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

The needs of Canada's Veterans have changed significantly over the past century. Since the *Pension Act* was introduced in 1919, our programs and services have evolved to meet your changing needs. Pension for Life is part of this evolution. In December 2017, we announced an updated financial package that recognizes your service-related pain and suffering.

Pension for Life introduces three new benefits:

PAIN AND SUFFERING COMPENSATION

1 Recognizes the pain and suffering experienced by a member or Veteran with a disability resulting from a service-related injury and/or illness and delivers a maximum of \$1,150 tax-free per month for the life of the serving member or Veteran.

ADDITIONAL PAIN AND SUFFERING COMPENSATION

2 Provides additional recognition to Veterans experiencing barriers to re-establishment in post-service life due to a severe and permanent impairment. Depending on the extent of the impairment, the tax-free monthly payment would be \$500, \$1,000 or \$1,500.

INCOME REPLACEMENT BENEFIT

3 Provides monthly income support to Veterans experiencing barriers to re-establishment due to a health problem resulting primarily from service. It serves as a replacement for income that the Veteran would have earned had he or she not suffered an injury and/or illness related to service.

These new benefits, expect to come into effect April 1, 2019, are part of an overall well-being package that combines financial recognition of pain and suffering, income replacement, and a range of well-being services and programs to help you and your family in life after service.

**“SERVING YOUR
COUNTRY IS A
MISSION THAT
IS BIGGER THAN
YOURSELF.”**

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES VETERAN

MYTH vs. FACT

To help you understand the new benefits, here are some responses to a few common myths about Pension for Life:



MYTH

I have heard that the monthly payment option is just the lump sum spread over a Veteran's lifetime as monthly payments.



FACT

The monthly payment option will be paid for life, and there is no cap on the amount you can receive. This means that you can receive more than the lump sum cash-out amount over the course of your lifetime. It provides a predictable monthly income, for life.

MYTH

I already received a Disability Award, so the monthly payment option will not help me.

FACT

In fact, 60% of Veterans who received the Disability Award will receive an additional monthly payment because of Pension for Life. Come April 1, 2019, these Veterans will automatically receive an adjusted amount which will be explained to them by a VAC representative.

MYTH

I have heard the *Pension Act* was more generous to Veterans than this Pension for Life plan.

FACT

The *Pension Act* was designed in 1919 after the First World War and focused on financial needs. One hundred years later we know a lot more about what is required to successfully transition to post-military life, which is why we offer a full range of rehabilitation and well-being programs to better support you and your family.

MYTH

Veterans currently receiving the Career Impact Allowance Supplement are going to lose out on \$1,000 a month once Pension for Life comes into effect.

FACT

No Veteran will receive less than the amount(s) of the Earnings Loss Benefit, Retirement Income Security Benefit, and Career Impact Allowance Supplement to which they were entitled prior to the implementation of the Income Replacement Benefit. These amounts will be protected on coming into force and will be indexed.

To learn more about the Pension for Life benefits visit our website at veterans.gc.ca/PensionForLife.

I AM A VETERAN

Every injured Veteran follows their own road to recovery. For Natacha Dupuis, hers led back to a childhood love of athletics and, eventually, an opportunity to once again represent Canada internationally—this time, under far different circumstances.

Natacha always knew she wanted to join the military. By the time she was 18, she was in the Reserves. Then, in 2002, she joined the Regular Force, eventually serving in Bosnia and completing two tours in Afghanistan.

Natacha saw 13 vehicles explode in Afghanistan. Each incident took an emotional toll, but one in particular stands out. The date was March 20, 2009.

"We were on a week-long mission, and the vehicle behind me exploded with an IED, killing two of my brothers in arms," she recalls. "We were the first responders."

That incident triggered a serious case of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Natacha suffered from severe insomnia and nightmares, but persevered and finished the remaining two months of her rotation.

"I still don't know how I did it," she says. "Every day I thought about quitting, but I just couldn't do that to the team."

When she returned to Canada, her symptoms worsened to the point where she says she was in "total trauma" and unable to care for herself. Natacha is grateful for the help she received from the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) during those dark days.

"I couldn't even make toast. I needed a lot of care and treatment, which I got."

Education was an important part of Natacha's recovery. As a tank driver and a gunner, her skills weren't easily transferable to the civilian workforce. With help from the Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP), she earned a college diploma in security management—a major achievement for Natacha, who didn't have a high school diploma when she entered the military.

"It's really important to know and use all the support we are entitled to," she says, adding that the help

she received through VAC's Rehabilitation Services and Vocational Assistance Program made a real difference for her.

But, something was missing. Natacha's weight increased and her desire to be part of the outside world waned. She was offered a spot on Team Canada for the 2016 Invictus Games in Orlando, which gave her the push she needed.

"If I'm going to be representing Team Canada, I thought, this is my chance to regain control. Not just my physical health, but also my mental health."

She won three medals (two gold) at those games, which set the table for her inspired performance as co-captain of Team Canada during the 2017 Invictus Games in Toronto, where she earned four medals, including three golds.

"I never thought that wearing the Maple Leaf again would be possible. I thought my life was over. I thought I had nothing more to give. Going on to represent Canada once again, that made me really proud. The Invictus Games were my Olympics."

Natacha still has symptoms of PTSD, but says she is much better equipped to deal with them. She remains involved with the Canadian Army Run and the Soldier On organization. Employed full-time in the federal public service (hired through the Veterans Hiring Act), she continues to pass along her message of hope through public speaking engagements.

"IT FEELS REALLY GOOD TO USE A VERY TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE AND TURN IT INTO SOMETHING POSITIVE WHERE I CAN HELP OTHERS. IT HELPS ME MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL."

**“IT’S REALLY
IMPORTANT TO
KNOW AND USE ALL
THE SUPPORT WE
ARE ENTITLED TO.”**

NATACHA'S STORY

AGE: 38

YEARS SERVED: 17

RANK: Master Corporal (Retired)

TRADE: Amoured Corps

HOMETOWN: Gatineau, Quebec

Natacha has shared her story in the hope that others will see themselves in both her struggles and successes and will reach out for help when required. We recognize that we need to do more to improve supports available to Veterans and family members. Our mission is to provide the support you and your family need during your transition to reach your goals the way Natacha has reached hers.

Thank you for sharing with us, Natacha!

Share your story: VAC.Communications.ACC@vac-acc.gc.ca

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

In Canada and around the world, the tide is turning as we all work together to reduce the stigma around mental health issues. We want to continue that conversation and increase public awareness through our everyday interactions with you and all Canadians.

Beyond changing the conversation on mental health, we are investing to better understand mental health issues by creating a Centre of Excellence on PTSD and related Mental Health Conditions. The Centre will bring together mental health researchers and help to inform the Veteran community, health care practitioners and Canadians about mental health issues, up-to-date research and resources. For those who have been released medically, access to the Veteran Family Program Expansion will help you adjust to post-service life. Finally, VAC and CAF are working collaboratively to improve all elements of the transition process to minimize stress during an intense period of change.

It is important you know about the programs available to help support your mental health and well-being. Go to veterans.gc.ca for a list of the many resources available in your community, your province, and through other organizations, including online.



If you or anyone you know needs immediate assistance, the VAC Assistance Service can help. It is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

CALL TOLL-FREE 1-800-268-7708

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS AFFAIRS CANADA



JOINT SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY

When a Veteran or active member is lost to suicide, it is an especially painful tragedy. Suicide impacts not only the member, the Veteran and his or her immediate family, but the military and Veteran community at large. Questions immediately come to mind: What could we have done to prevent this? How can we prevent such loss in the future? The reality is that suicide is deeply complex. There is no single cause, and no simple solution.

Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members and Veterans face similar but also different stressors than the general population of Canada. The Joint Suicide Prevention Strategy identifies actions that the CAF and VAC are taking that will contribute to preventing suicides where possible. Many measures are already in place, and others are underway. The strategy combines our efforts in education, communication, health care initiatives and departmental protocols, policies and procedures to help build resilience, reduce the risk of suicide, and offer support where and when it is needed.

To read the strategy, visit our website at veterans.gc.ca.



Are you a Canadian Armed Forces member or Veteran, or the family member of someone who struggles with an Operational Stress Injury such as PTSD, anxiety or depression?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO:

...meet others who are going through similar experiences?

...learn tips on how to cope and support your loved one and your family?

...hear about helpful new perspectives?

Learn more about the OSISS peer support

osiss.ca

CANADA REMEMBERS

DID YOU KNOW?

More than

125,000

Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members have participated in international peace support efforts over the past six decades, in countries all over the world. Tens of thousands of our servicemen and women have also taken part in conflicts like the Gulf War and the Afghanistan mission during this time. These are just a few examples of their incredible contributions.

► More than 40,000 brave CAF members served in the Afghanistan theatre of operations between 2001 and 2014, with 158 sadly losing their lives. This rugged country in Southwest Asia was a very challenging place to serve.

► Cyprus has been host to one of our country's longest-lasting international peacekeeping missions. More than 25,000 Canadians have served in Cyprus over the years, helping maintain an uneasy peace since 1964. The so-called "Green Line" divides the Greek and Turkish populations of Cyprus.

► The CAF took part in United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Rwanda between 1993 and 1996. In a country wracked by ethnic strife, UN soldiers did what they could in this chaotic environment. They made important contributions with humanitarian efforts, mine clearing and refugee resettlement but could not prevent the worst of the horrific violence.

CANADIANS HAVE A SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY TO REMEMBER OUR PEACEKEEPERS THIS YEAR

August 9, 2018, will mark the 10th anniversary of National Peacekeepers' Day. This date was selected to recognize the heaviest single-day loss of Canadian lives on a peacekeeping mission in 1974 when a CAF transport plane was shot down in the Middle East.

Thank you to those who served in these peace support missions and other overseas military efforts. We are forever grateful to you and to all who continue to serve.

COMING UP IN 2018

A century ago this year, what was referred to as the “War to End All Wars” came to a close. It is said the First World War was when Canada came of age as a country. Without question, it was a defining moment in our history. Victory, however, came at a terrible cost. More than 66,000 Canadians died in the war and more than 172,000 were wounded.

Veterans Affairs Canada will help Canadians honour this important anniversary, both here and abroad. We will also shine a light on Canada’s Hundred Days that led to the First World War Armistice, and the important role Canadians played during that pivotal time.

We will also honour the 65th anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice - a vastly different war in a far different place. Canadians again volunteered by the thousands to protect the values and freedoms we hold most dear. These efforts and the 516 Canadians who gave their lives in service during the Korean War, will never be forgotten.

We will also build on recent efforts to respectfully promote inclusion and to connect remembrance of major touchstones in Canada’s military history with the service experience of younger Veterans, including today’s generation who have served in Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world.



1



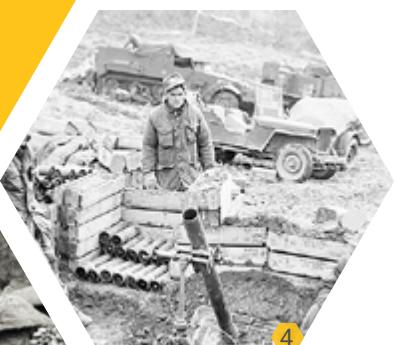
2



3



5



4



6

FIRST WORLD WAR
Photo courtesy of:
 1. Canadian War Museum
 2. Imperial War Museum
 3. Library and Archives Canada

KOREAN WAR
Photo courtesy of:
 4,5,6 Library and Archives Canada

LEARN MORE

INVICTUS GAMES



In September 2017, Toronto welcomed 550 athletes from across 17 countries for the Invictus Games - an adaptive sport event for ill and/or injured servicemen, women and Veterans. Did you watch it? Did the amazing athletes who competed at the Games inspire you? You were not alone. More than 75,000 spectators came to watch the events and 111 nations tuned in from around the world.

We were proud to support the Invictus Games. We witnessed incredible feats of athleticism and inspiring camaraderie between countries and athletes. The stories of loss, healing and recovery made us all proud to be part of the journey. One of these athletes, Natacha, is featured in this magazine. Check out her article on page 17.



INTERESTED IN
THE INVICTUS
GAMES 2018?

invictusgames2018.org

The Toronto Games were the largest to date.

Team Canada heads to Sydney, Australia for the 2018 Invictus Games Down Under.

Tune in next October 20-27 to cheer the team on!

BUDGET 2018

In February 2018, the federal government announced Budget 2018. Beyond Pension for Life, there are additional supports for Veterans in Budget 2018:



TAX CREDIT FOR PSYCHIATRIC DOGS

The Government recognizes that psychiatric service dogs can play an important role in helping Canadians cope with conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder. The Government proposes to expand the Medical Expense Tax Credit to recognize costs for these animals for the 2018 and future tax years.



CEMETARY AND GRAVE MAINTENANCE

In 2017, an evaluation by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) found that there was a backlog of 45,000 graves cared for by VAC in Canada requiring repairs. To eliminate the current backlog of repairs in the next five years, the Government proposes to provide \$24.4 million over five years, starting in 2018-19.



BETTER SERVICE FOR VETERANS

To keep up with the rise in demand and ensure that Veterans get services and benefits when they need them, the Government proposes to provide \$42.8 million over two years, starting in 2018-19, to increase service delivery capacity at Veterans Affairs Canada.

A MESSAGE FOR LGBTQ2 VETERANS

If you served in the CAF or RCMP and suffered a service-related injury or illness but didn't know you may qualify for benefits and services from Veterans Affairs Canada because of how you were treated or released from the military, please call us. **You are entitled to the same benefits and services as all other Veterans.** We want to make sure you are receiving the benefits to which you are entitled.

Call us toll-free at 1-800-487-7797.

For more information you can also visit veterans.gc.ca.



SHARE YOUR STORY!

Veteran stories, like those shared by John and Natacha, help us to continuously improve our services and how we share information.

To improve awareness, we are using new tools and approaches to reach key communities. For example, we are undertaking more Facebook Live sessions to highlight specific programs such as OSISS, Mental Health First Aid for Veterans, suicide prevention and the new Pension for Life.

We will continue to do this, and to strengthen other engagement and communication tools to ensure that you and your family are aware of all services, programs and benefits that are available to support you during your transition to post-military life.

Are you a Veteran or a family member who is willing to share your story with the community? Get in touch at VAC.Communications.ACC@vac-acc.gc.ca.

E-mail: VAC.Communications.ACC@vac-acc.gc.ca

Online: veterans.gc.ca

Telephone: 1-866-522-2122

Address:

Veterans Affairs Canada
PO BOX 7700
Charlottetown, PE
C1A 8M9



WE ARE JOHN AND TRACY.

Read our story on page 6