Canadian Veterans – World War II (War Veterans Allowance Program)

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Purpose

This policy provides guidance on determining if an individual served as a member of the Canadian Armed Forces during World War II and, therefore, satisfies the war service requirements for the War Veterans Allowance (WVA) Program.

Policy

Canadian Veteran - Defined

1. A Canadian Veteran of World War II is any former member of His Majesty's Canadian Forces, who:
    a. having enlisted and having the enlistment attested, served in a theatre of actual war during World War II and was discharged from the service in which he or she was enlisted;
    b. is in receipt of a pension for disability under the *Pension Act* in respect of service during World War II as that war is defined in the *Pension Act*;
    c. has accepted a commuted pension in respect of service described in subparagraph (b.); or
    d. is, after death, declared to have been eligible for, or awarded, a pension described in subparagraph (b.).

Qualifying Service

2. A World War II Canadian Veteran is considered to have served in a theatre of actual war if, as a former member of His Majesty's Canadian Forces:
    a. he/she served any place on service involving duties performed outside the Western Hemisphere, including:
        i. service involving duties performed outside Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador, the United States, Saint Pierre and Miquelon and the territorial waters thereof in aircraft, and
        ii. service anywhere in a ship or other vessel, which service is classed as "sea time" for the purpose of advancement of naval ratings.

War Service Verification

3. It is necessary for Veterans Affairs Canada to confirm that an individual is a former member of His Majesty's Canadian Forces as part of the WVA application process. This issue is easily resolved when the applicant provides supporting documents, such as official discharge papers. However, if such information is not included with the application, the necessary information can be obtained in other ways. For example:
    a. The Department of National Defence completed a Statement of War Service Gratuity form for every member of the Canadian Armed Forces at the time of discharge. The Statement of War Service Gratuity form contains the following information:
        i. Name (served under), Address (at the time of discharge), Service Number, Final Rank or Rating, and Date of Discharge. Section A contains: Total Qualifying Service, Number of Days. Section B contains: Qualifying Overseas Service.
    b. On some occasions, the Veteran's file may contain a Medical Board Proceedings form, which includes the following information:
        i. Rank, Regimental Number, Unit, Member's Name and Address, Date and Place of Enlistment or Enrolment, Date of Birth, Occupation in Service, Length of Service, and whether the service was confined to Canada or performed abroad. The information on the form dealing with whether the service was confined to Canada or performed abroad is found on page 1 of the form, specifically section 9.
4. A Veteran's file (e.g., dormant file with Library and Archives Canada or Veterans Affairs Canada's Regional Office or Head Office file) may have the Statement of War Service Gratuity and / or Medical Board Proceedings forms. Either form may contain enough information to confirm qualifying service for WVA purposes.
5. If the above-mentioned documents are:
    a. Unavailable;
    b. inconclusive in establishing qualifying service; or
    c. appear to indicate no overseas service by the applicant,

    Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) will formally verify the applicant's claimed service by forwarding a VAC264 Request for Service Verification to the Library and Archives Canada.

Travel Through or Over a Theatre of War

Prior to Enlistment

6. Effective November 7, 2003, subsection 37(3) of the *War Veterans Allowance Act* was amended to clarify that a "Canadian Veteran who served during World War II" means someone who enlisted, served and was discharged from such service.
7. In some cases a recruit travelled through or over a theatre of actual war (e.g., Northumberland Strait) after preliminary documentation to a Depot in order to complete enrolment and attestation documentation (i.e., actual enlistment).

   In these cases, the recruit is considered a "Canadian Veteran who served during World War II" and satisfies the service requirement to qualify for WVA, only if the individual:
   a. was accepted for service;
   b. completed enlistment documentation; and
   c. was properly discharged from such service.
8. Individuals described in paragraph 7 do not satisfy the service requirement to qualify for WVA, if they were rejected for service for whatever reason (e.g., failed medical examination).

HMCS Cornwallis

9. A Veteran satisfies the service requirement to qualify for WVA, if, while travelling to HMCS Cornwallis, he/she crossed the Bay of Fundy by ferry between Saint John, New Brunswick and Digby, Nova Scotia. HMCS Cornwallis was a naval training centre that operated in Deep Brook, Nova Scotia, between April 1, 1942 and February 28, 1946.
10. When first hand information about the exact travel route to HMCS Cornwallis is unavailable because the Veteran is deceased or mentally incapacitated, VAC may assume the following:
    a. the Veteran travelled by ferry across the Bay of Fundy to HMCS Cornwallis, when travelling from an Inland Reserve Division or Shore Establishment west of Moncton, New Brunswick;
    b. the Veteran travelled overland to HMCS Cornwallis, when travelling from an Inland Reserve Division or Shore Establishment east of Moncton, e.g. Reserve Division Halifax, HMCS Scotian (Halifax, Nova Scotia), or HMCS Protector (Sydney, Nova Scotia);
    c. the Veteran would normally have travelled overland rather than across the Bay of Fundy, if sent to Halifax prior to serving in Cornwallis; or
    d. the Veteran most likely proceeded across the Bay of Fundy when transferring west from HMCS Cornwallis, e.g. HMCS Cornwallis to HMCS Prevost (London, Ontario).
11. Service documents must be closely scrutinized for verification of service locations as some naval Veterans may not have served in Cornwallis.
12. When doubt exists on whether a Veteran crossed the Bay of Fundy, VAC will accept a statutory declaration as proof of crossing the Bay of Fundy, if it does not contradict the information contained on the Veteran's service documents.

Receipt of a Disability Pension under the Pension Act

13. A former member of His Majesty's Canadian Forces who had service in Canada only during World War II satisfies the service requirements for WVA if that person is awarded a disability pension, or is, after death, declared eligible for a disability pension. A disability pension payment must be issued in this situation; therefore, if the disability pension applicant is awarded entitlement but no assessment (i.e. no payment is issued) this person does not satisfy the service eligibility requirements for WVA.

Other Qualifying Service

Special Operators

14. Per section 3 of the *Special Operators War Service Benefits Act*, individuals satisfy the definition of a "Canadian Veteran" within the *War Veterans Allowance Act*, if they
    a. were certified by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs as having been enrolled in Canada by United Kingdom authorities for special duty in war areas outside the Western Hemisphere during World War II; and
    b. resided in Canada at the time of enrolment.
15. Approximately 57 individuals served as Special Operators.
16. Per section 3 of the *Supervisors War Service Benefits Act*, individuals satisfy the definition of a "Canadian Veteran" within the *War Veterans Allowance Act*, if they:
    a. were classed as either Supervisors, Helpers (military helpers), or Overseas Headquarters Staff with the Auxiliary Services Personnel that were drawn from and paid by the Canadian Legion War Services Inc., the Knights of Columbus, the Salvation Army or the Y.M.C.A.
17. These four organizations entered into a contract with the Minister of National Defence. They rendered services which contributed to the welfare of the members of the Forces, preserved morale, and mobilized existing civilian agencies for voluntary service to provide for the comfort and well-being of members of the Forces.
18. Per section 3 of the Women's Royal Naval Services and the South African Military Nursing Service (Benefits) Act, individuals satisfy the definition of "Canadian Veterans" within the War Veterans Allowance Act, if they:
    a. served outside of Canada as a member of the Women's Royal Naval Services after September 10, 1939; and
    b. resided in Canada up until their service.
19. The Women's Royal Naval Services was the women's branch of the Royal Navy.

References

War Veterans Allowance Act, section 37

Pension Act

Women's Royal Naval Services and the South African Military Nursing Service (Benefits) Act