

Stand To!

Calling out the Canadian Forces Veterans community
to unite and defend veteran's rights and the sacred social contract

A report

On the dialogue by the greater veterans community
conducted between 27 June and 12 August 2013

By

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Dedication

This document is dedicated to Canadian Forces veterans and their families of all eras who voluntarily served under the terms and conditions of unlimited limited and continue to sacrifice from that service so that all Canadians can enjoy their rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This document is also dedicated to our spouses and family members who support us and hurt along with us as we struggle in our journey's to reclaim our rightful place in the civilian society where we once belonged.

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Introduction

Canadian Forces (CF) veterans are seriously outraged with how they are represented, how they are being treated by Government and are ready to do something about it! They feel abandoned by the former CF senior leadership including former Chiefs of the Defence who they readily served and sacrificed for. The Veterans organizations don't consult with the greater veterans community and are out of sync with their needs yet claim to advocate on behalf of all veterans. The organizations don't protest that their advocacy with Government is used against CF veterans in the Equitas lawsuit yet they protest the Government denouncing the sacred social contract they helped erode. The Government has returned to a willful negligence of responsibilities towards veterans not expressed by Canadian Governments since the 1930's. The three major veterans organizations, The Army, Navy and Air Force Association (ANAVets), the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL) and National Council of Veterans in Canada (NCVA) advocate a double standard of care and treatment for WWII and Korea veterans when compared to equally qualified CF active service veterans while claiming to follow the 'One Veteran' principle. The above-mentioned organizations have played a key role in CF veterans being denied critical benefits yet seventeen CF veterans associations continue to let the RCL speak on their behalf. There is no consultation mechanism between the organizations and the greater veterans community and the organizations had little to do with a greater community dialogue calling into question their discrimination against CF veterans and the families (Appendix A).

The erosion of the social contract for CF veterans extends back beyond 2005. A comprehensive review of veterans' benefits was conducted in 1994 led to Pension Reform in 1995. During that review the only ex-CF members considered were those who served in the Gulf War because ex-CF members were not generally accepted as veterans at that time by Government or the major organizations. This resulted in the removal of critical re-establishment benefits for CF veterans. In 2001 the Government defined a veteran as a person who held a military occupation code (MOC) and was honourably released giving birth to the principle of 'One Veterans'. Unfortunately neither the veterans' organizations nor the Government adhered to that principle or rights guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in creating and enhancing the New Veterans Charter that falls short of a true Veterans Charter (Appendix B), robbing disabled veterans of Pension Act benefits without consultation. It's no wonder why CF veterans are seriously outraged at the current situation. They've been taken advantage of and

caught in between the transition and decline of once powerful WWII veterans organizations, acting in isolation from the greater community against the needs of CF contrary to the 'One Veteran' principle on the one hand; and a Government intentionally exploiting the division in the veterans community to undermine the Equitas lawsuit while misleading the public about it's care for veterans to cover up the stripping away the sacred social contract and veterans status on the other hand. The greater veterans community doesn't stand a chance under the status quo and are powerless to hold Government accountable as long as the community remains divided and the infighting continues. The following report captures the spirit of recent dialogue that provided an opportunity for veterans not in the usual RCL and Veterans Ombudsman's consultation groups to respond to little known behind the scene facts that played a role in the discrimination of CF veterans and their families, the erosion of veterans status and Government's disrespect of the sacred social contract.

Wake up call

The Government recently stated that there was no longer a sacred obligation to care for veterans in Canada. Their lawyer challenged the veterans' community to vote the Government out in 2015 if they don't like it. The same lawyer used veteran's organizations work with Government against the plaintiffs representing all CF veterans in the Equitas lawsuit. The organizations don't seem to mind being used as pawns against their own community, as if double agents protecting Government's position with an adversarial position of their own. This is forcing the greater community address the following two additional serious problems in the current situation:

1. The Government is exploiting the division in the veterans Community pitting veterans against veteran;
2. The organizations are working with the Government against CF Veterans and members of the concerned civilian community.

Based on the above, it is plain and obvious that the current Government has challenged the greater veterans community to:

1. Replace the Government in the 2015 General election to restore the Country's sacred obligation to veterans and their families.
2. Unite as a cohesive veterans community to succeed in getting rid of the current Government in 2015 mission.

These are serious issues requiring immediate attention if the veterans wish to save their special status as veterans and restore the sacred obligation the people and government promised in exchange for military service. Recent dialogue reveals that veterans are ready to defend their rights vigorously and have the knowledge, skills and abilities to do so but are frustrated with the divisions in the community that have seriously weakened it. Veterans require time to reorganize to meet the Government's challenges as a cohesive unified community to stop the current infighting and undermining of the Equitas lawsuit.

Recommendation 1. That all organizations and individuals immediately stop negotiating or consulting with Government and it's bureaucracy on any matters brought before the Courts on behalf of all Veterans by Equitas and Miller Thompson. This message will be widely communicated by media release.

Mission and Vision

Mission

The Mission of this report is to unite the veterans community to defend our special status as veterans in Canadian society and hold Government accountable to the sacred social contract enshrined in section 2 of the Pension Act: ‘...that the recognized obligation of the people and Government of Canada to provide compensation to those members of the forces who have been disabled or have died as a result of military service, and to their dependants, may be fulfilled’.

Vision

The Vision is put in place strategic planning to engage leadership at the former General rank to organize and unite the veterans community under central leadership following Canadian Forces ethics and values (Appendix B) to the end that:

- gaps in communication, consultation, advocacy and critical thinking are closed,
- the true meaning of ‘Mission before self’ is restored in the veterans community,
- the concept of ‘One Veteran’ becomes a reality, and
- real meaning is given to the words of the ‘Veterans Bill of Rights’.

The greater veterans community needs to smarten up, gel as one, never again allowing itself to weaken to the point it is today, allowing Government to treat veterans as second class citizens by defiantly disrespecting:

- The special status as veterans in Canadian society.
- The sacred social contract.
- The needs of veterans and their families.

Defining the Veterans Community

The following is intended to help clarify who the Government considers a veteran and why, who's included in the veterans community and why others are not. To get a better understanding of what the greater veteran's community is, a step back far enough to see the bigger picture to look at the community and its influences is necessary. It's important to understand who's who in the veteran's community because the principle of 'One Veteran – One Standard' applies to people who VAC is responsible to provide benefits for and those lines seem somewhat blurred if Government media releases are to be believed. The Government recently tried to remove their legal responsibilities to CF veterans in the Equitas lawsuit by stating they no longer have a sacred obligation to those who served but at the same time they confuse the voting public by telling everyone how well they support veterans. Previously the Government attempted to take away CF veterans special status as veterans by not transferring the following language from section 2 of the Pension Act into the controversial New Veterans Charter.

The provisions of this Act shall be liberally construed and interpreted to the end that the recognized obligation of the people and Government of Canada to provide compensation to those members of the forces who have been disabled or have died as a result of military service, and to their dependants, may be fulfilled.

- *R.S., c. 22 (2nd Supp.), s. 1.*

They had to diminish that special status because they were also trying to market the NVC to government para-military organizations like the RCMP, Customs and Immigration, Corrections, etc. They took benefits away prior to that during 1995 Pension Reform because ex-CF members were not accepted as veterans by Government and the major veterans organizations at the time and long term care, VIP and Last Post Burial funds benefits were negotiated away in 2005 by the larger three organizations at the cost of CF veterans and their families.

The boundaries around the greater veterans community are hazy at best mostly because the Government, the Minister and his Veterans Ombudsman, the organizations and veterans include currently serving CF members, currently serving and former members of the RCMP when they talk about veterans. So why isn't the NVC called the *Canadian Forces and RCMP Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act* if both the military and RCMP

have veterans status with Government? Perhaps a look at the reason Government defines who a veteran is in Canada may clarify matters.

Government has traditionally given veterans status to people they are responsible to care for. Section 4 of the Department of Veterans Affairs Act (DVA Act) clearly defines whom the Minister of VAC is responsible for:

4. The powers, duties and functions of the Minister extend and apply to

- *(a) the administration of such Acts of Parliament, and of such orders of the Governor in Council, as are not by law assigned to any other department of the Government of Canada or any Minister thereof, relating to*
 - *(i) the care, treatment or re-establishment in civil life of any person who served in the Canadian Forces or merchant navy or in the naval, army or air forces or merchant navies of Her Majesty, of any person who has otherwise engaged in pursuits relating to war, and of any other person designated by the Governor in Council, and*
 - *(ii) the care of the dependants or survivors of any person referred to in subparagraph (i); and*
- *(b) all such other matters and such boards and other bodies, subjects, services and properties of the Crown as may be designated, or assigned to the Minister, by the Governor in Council.*
- *R.S., 1985, c. V-1, s. 4;*
- *2000, c. 34, s. 11.*

In 2001 the Government defined a veteran as a person who held a Military Occupation Code and was honourably released [paraphrased]. The sacred social contract as enshrined in section 3 of the Pension Act is a three party covenant between the People of Canada, the Government and people who served in the Military including their families. Therefore it can be reasonably stated that the department of VAC exists to provide benefits to people who ‘served’ in the Canadian Forces and their families...but it gets more complicated because VAC is also responsible for, but neglecting to provide benefits to members of all police forces and civilians who ‘engage in the pursuits of war’ as stated in section 4 of the DVA Act, the ‘pursuits of war’ being further defined as ‘active service’ in section 31 of the National Defence Act.

Based on the above information, as defined in section 4 of the DVA Act, it can be reasonably stated that the boundaries around the veterans community could be extended to anyone who served in the military, members of police force or civilians and their families who served overseas with the military under the government's control ... so it's anyone's guess why the Prime Minister, Minister and his Ombudsman mislead the public in that respect. The Minister and his Ombudsman have never really articulated who they are responsible for and the different relationships they have CF veterans (including those who served in WWII, Korea and the post WWII CF) as described in section 4 of the DVA Act on the one hand; and the currently serving CF members who are campaign veterans but not CF veterans and the currently serving or retired members of the RCMP who are veterans in their own right but defined for different purposes on the other hand. It's a picky point for sure, but extremely important to the veterans community if veterans status and the sacred social contract are to be appropriately defended. The following should clarify VAC's relationships with the various groups providing little known facts that rarely see the light of day.

In the CF example, VAC pays for currently serving members disability pensions or lump sums only while the CF pays for their care and treatment as long as they are in uniform. Upon release, VAC assumes total responsibility for their care and treatment. In the RCMP case, VAC administers their disability claims but all pensions, care and treatment are paid for out of the RCMP operating budget. VAC administers the RCMP disability applications process under section 32 of the RCMP Superannuation Act in accordance with section 21(2) of the Pension Act. In other words, the RCMP uses the Pension Act as a guide to compensating their disabled members. The same is true for members of the public service who are injured in military flying accidents except in this case Treasury Board pays for their benefits. Like the RCMP case, VAC administers the disability application process under the Flying Accident Regulations using the Pension Act as a guide for compensation. VAC's primary clients, and the reason VAC was established in 1944, is to care for CF Veterans (all eras) and their families. VAC owes CF veterans and people who serve overseas with them, and their families a duty of a full range of re-establishment benefits for all with additional benefits for the disabled (Appendix B). However, the only people who are completely funded and cared for by VAC today are people who no longer serve in the military and their families; Canada's veterans.

Therefore the Government's legislation and policies established the greater veterans community to include:

- Veterans who no longer serve in the military (all eras) and their families.
- Anyone else identified by VAC under section 4 of the DVA Act.
- Veterans members of veterans' organizations.

The greater veterans community includes the veterans' organizations who are culturally important because they mimic the units and camaraderie veterans enjoyed during military service. The community is not without its influences because it depends on Government for care and treatment purposes and the people of Canada for support. Both the people of Canada, veterans and their families have influence on the Government of Canada. It important to note that boundaries of the veterans' community are often stretched beyond the government's definition to include the RCMP and other's who've served overseas and their families for commemoration purposes.

A veteran from Ontario wrote:

*'While many veterans groan at the civilian members of the legion perhaps they are not looking at it positively?
Maybe we should look at all those "non veterans" as allies who care about the affairs of veterans. Believe me when I say the veteran community is far too small to make an impact. There is a saying there is strength in numbers. If this is true than we need all the numbers we can get. By embracing these fellow Canadians we can have a positive impact'.*

Another wrote:

'I believe that Veterans will now require the support of the Courts and the Canadian Public.

A veteran from Quebec wrote:

'The question has been put on the table of whether we can do it on our own? My God, some of you out there fought wars with your comrades but let's be honest, you needed the civilian population to get you the equipment and supplies that were needed. But in the end, it was up to us to fight the battle'.

Recommendation 2: That the greater veterans community recognize the importance of fostering strong relationships with Government and the people of Canada understanding that these relationships are dynamic and that tough love may be required from time to time to maintain the balance.

Dialogue Summary

The following dialogue summary with recommendations provides the first steps of many to assist the greater community as they move forward towards mission success. The far-reaching open dialogue was unlike any consultation process in recent times because it allowed anyone to join in the frank open discussion on issues that matter most to veterans, re-establishment and disability benefits. These benefits have their roots in the WWII Veterans Charter. That Charter was the toast of the allied world, made up of a compendium of legislation, Regulations and Orders (Appendix B) designed to cover servicemen and woman's transition needs from military to civilian life from discharge to grave. Disabled veterans qualified for life long benefits in addition to the others. To care for the needs of CF veterans who served in Korea, the Government enacted the Veterans Benefits Act (VBA) to qualify these CF Veterans with benefits of the WWII Veterans Charter. Veterans Affairs and the organizations at the consultation table working towards establishing the New Veterans Charter (NVC) were fully aware the VBA model was available for CF veterans too but ignored it. Instead of following precedent, the NVC falls far short as a result of a discriminatory agenda against Canadian Forces (CF) veterans by the involved veterans organizations and Government despite legal advice that all were equal. There was also no consultation with the greater veterans community.

Therefore this dialogue is important because for the first time since the enactment of the NVC, veterans had an opportunity to learn about and openly discuss the factors that led to the creation of the controversial Act. It is obvious that this lack of consultation has caused deep divisions, severed lines of communication and unfortunately muzzled the voice of the majority of the greater veterans' community. This dialogue is a sample of what is on veteran's minds outside of the typical organization representatives. This dialogue, initiated by email dated 27 June 2013 (Appendix A) quickly spread further into the greater veterans community than the usual consultation groups organized by Government, their Veterans Ombudsman and the RCL. Representatives of the organizations involved in the RCL and Ombudsman's consultation groups were listed among the addressees in the dialogue to ensure open access and transparency. The organizations were encouraged to participate in the community discussion discussions but most chose to remain silent.

The Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association (CPVA) wrote:

“The CPVA fully supports the spirit in which it was sent – that is to provide valuable, but little known to many, historical information and analysis, and to evoke meaningful discussion amongst Veterans and Veterans organizations”

“I urge everyone of you to read ... message and to start discussions about the issues...”

“...summary of the evolution of the NVC and its inherent shortcomings need careful scrutiny by us all...a unique perspective into its weaknesses. The NVC needs additional changes and to achieve those changes we need to heed ... clarion call for more effective cooperation across the entire veteran’s community. Our strength lays in cooperating so our numbers can become an issue that cannot be ignored by Ottawa”.

The Canadian Veterans Advocacy (CVA) wrote:

“To be fair, the CVA is quite different that traditional veterans organizations in the sense our mandate is purely mission driven, we do not have memberships and that we have been purposefully created to engage on the political level. I think that we were, and are, radioactive, that the CVA mandate of proactive engagement and dedicated focus to engagement beyond the table or department is too radical. There was also the break in period, the time required for the CVA to demonstrate to the stakeholders, once we were invited to the table, that we are not drugged out wackoes and that our representation is based on sincerity and duty, not personal ambition or profit... Mission - Team - Self.

Is the part of the role of the organizations to provide leadership in the communities on veteran's matters?”

The Canadian Aboriginal Veterans and Serving Members Association (CAV) wrote:

“The CAV’s first suggestion is that there has to be an understanding that the implementation of the NVC, is in fact an adoption of a cost effective industrial model for the management of injured workers, devoid of Obligation and the “Right thing to do”. As with a Company the company is pleased with its productive workers and when they are injured on the job they are sent off to the workers Compensation in this case the VAC.

Our approach has been not to get caught-up in all the NVC dialog, but to concentrate on the military side of injuries from the feedback we receive from our serving members.

Their main concern is having some financial security if they are disabled and release”.

“the greater Veteran Community is represented by the National Veteran Associations 400,000 + veterans if not more.

So when the National Presidents meet they can justifiably speak for all Veterans, the ones who are members and a minority of Veterans by their nature choose to stay home and leave thing to others or sit at home and carry-out endless Text dialog that go no were and accomplishes nothing but satisfies those that enjoy endless texting for something to do”.

“So your term should be – “the minority CF Veterans in the Veteran’s Community” and your efforts should be directed a getting these people off their Butts and off their

computers, to join a National Veteran's Association and volunteer time and efforts and assert their opinions at the meetings.

On reading ... remarks, I see nothing there that would bring a community together, instead a concerted attempt to turn people against the National Veterans Associations rather than encouraging them to join, take part, and be counted"

The Royal Canadian Legion wrote:

"One aspect of our consultation process is the Veterans' Consultation meeting that is hosted by the Legion biannually. This meeting brings together veterans' groups without government representation to discuss the issues concerning veterans and to reach a consensus on approach to the government. I have attached the letter which resulted from the last meeting and provides the group's consensus. This letter was sent to the then Minister of Veterans Affairs and is now provided to you and the distribution list for your information. Please note that the consensus of the group is that a review of the NVC is essential and that it happen commencing this fall".

"The issues that have been sent by email over the last few weeks have been the on the Royal Canadian Legion agenda as well. I believe if we are going work together we need to meet and discuss these issues face to face. I have always believe that there is only one VETERAN. ...we need to get together and move forward together, let's set a date and I am more than willing to host the meeting at Legion House in Ottawa".

The general discussion quickly revealed that veterans are frustrated with how they are represented by the organizations and change is required.

A Veteran from BC wrote:

"Years ago efforts were made to unite veterans for the exact purpose many of us have suggested. For what ever reason it failed as did our recent attempt a couple of year ago.

This does not mean we are doomed to failure but means we are bound not make the same mistakes as did our fore fathers and fore mothers. I am totally committed to see this happen and as i receive input from Veterans as to their ideas i am positive we can elect, appoint, volunteer, a small educated group who have no ties to government what so ever and who will represent Veterans as we should be represented. This is not finger pointing but how i express my point of view.

None of us can be in the hind pockets of government and expect to represent Veterans".

"Other vet orgs seem to meet the needs of their membership depending upon transparency to their members but i am from Missouri. The rant and rave and posturing by some of their leaders is just that, "Show". Others are crying in the wilderness. Others are just to small for government to give a damn about".

Another wrote:

“...the participation of the Presidents or representatives of the Veterans organizations is lacking. As indicated in the initial email of 27 June 2013 pasted below, the organizations are not following the concept of 'One Veteran' causing serious consequences to the greater CF veterans community. Out of respect to our community they at least owe us the courtesy of an explanation of their thinking behind the serious issues raised...”

“The RCL and NVCA's own public communiques demonstrate that they continue to advocate for two classes of veterans despite the other Organization's leaders defending them in the belief that they subscribe to the concept of 'One Veteran'”.

A Veteran from Ontario wrote:

“Deny, deny, deny. Can you imagine if 712,700 Veterans and their spouses and their families or about 3,000,000 (three million) voted the same way next time. But divided we stand and united we fail; year after year, decade after decade even though so much is owed by so many to so few, and we as comrades continue to let them keep us from working as comrades-in-arms.

Imagine what, in unity and support we could accomplish if we could work together towards the needs of Veterans and their families as comrades!? In essence never has so much owed by the many to so few been denied again and again and again”.

Another wrote:

“As a Legion member myself, organizations like to represent themselves for their self-preservation as their membership numbers are in a downward spiral, and advocating for Veterans is secondary”.

Another wrote:

“The end state would be to form a alliance/association with a concrete platform. At the moment we have a laundry list of demands. We need to pair it down into something all Canadians can digest and understand”.

Another wrote:

“...the stake holder committee will never get much from the government because they are not united so they are weak. The majority of the veterans are not involved in any group...”

“The forum is a tool to find new suggestion and solution not to promote any veterans organization”.

“The president of each organization represented their member only like you represented only yours because, I like several others veterans never gave you the permission to speak on my behalf...”

“...this forum might be the last chance we have to get all united and have a strong voice that the government will listen”

Another wrote:

“I Do believe there is an appetite for change within the RCL”.

“We also need to focus on getting people into the friendly forces column. This includes the RCL”.

A Veteran from Nova Scotia wrote:

“...perchance ... has something to be embarrassed about, as he well should, not to mention the other “groups” representing veterans without our consent or input.

As mentioned previously, anyone who sits down to dinner or shakes hands with GOC, elected or bureaucratic, is lacking in a fundamental awareness of their own contribution to the downfall and deterioration of the vets community.

In short, they are a joke, look like a joke, and I sincerely hope they reap the benefits of their handshakes and photo ops.

They feel threatened by anyone trying to unite or think outside the box”.

Another blogged:

“I suggest that many Veteran organizations are unable to identify a policy problem, analyze the situation, and solve that problem. Some organizations will claim they do this daily, but I am willing to call their bluff. Effective problem identification, analysis, and recommendations can only be made in the presence of appropriate data and trained personnel. Acting without information and training endangers the welfare of all Veterans. To make matters worse, many organizations fail to understand how policy is created or the pressures placed on policy creators. Yet, Veteran organizations continue to actively participate in the creation of policy through “stakeholder” meetings, direct advocacy, and, in some cases, endorsement of government policy”.

<http://veteranwatch.blogspot.ca/p/creating-change.html>

A Veteran from Alberta wrote:

“...there is no doubt that the ONLY action remaining to us is to FULLY SUPPORT the position of the Equitas Class Action Lawsuit. If this suit is won by the Canadian Government, no doubt will remain that soldiers will forever be discarded after the battlefields are cleared.

Any Association that does NOT support this position, will have clearly demonstrated that it does not support Canadian Veterans of any era! I hope I've made my position clear”.

A Veteran from Quebec wrote:

“... for a potential NVA/AN... meant for both CF and RCMP Veterans... Originally,...it was never meant to replace any other Veteran Organizations/Groups or Associations. It was to become a "Senior Council" with selected/elected representatives, who would naturally come together as ONE, without any biases or hidden agenda from any other Organizations/Groups or Associations...”

Please, do not let "party poopers" discourage ... from doing what needs to be done”

Another wrote:

“I have felt we are all little hamsters running along our little treadmills trying as hard as we might to get others to hear us. And what I am hearing is absolute frustration and anger, both emotions very justified.

They gave us a service number and that is what we became, a number but numbered together we can fight them, and win.

I don't apologize for my bluntness, let's get out there and try. If one way succeeds, great. If it doesn't, we try another way. We are not going to find out unless we try”.

Let's get on with the work that needs to be done and stand shoulder to shoulder, again”.

A Civilian from Newfoundland wrote:

“From what I can tell, reading the email addresses, every person on this list got involved in this fight because they were personally motivated to make things better for everyone. No one would put up with the shit routinely thrown our way otherwise. While tempers flare - we are all passionate about these issues - we must always trust the other's motivation is selfless and that we are already united in purpose. If we cannot agree on THAT, then we might as well stop here”.

Although only a sample, the dialogue illustrates that the veterans organizations are disconnected from and frustrating the greater veterans community by advocating on everyone's behalf without permission or consultation.

Recommendation 3. That the organizations commit to the principle of ‘One Veteran – One Standard’ not only in words but in action to remove discrimination against CF veterans in all veterans issues.

Recommendation 4. That the organizations accept that they are part of the greater veterans community and have the authority to advance the needs of their members only unless permission is obtained from the greater community to do otherwise.

Recommendation 5. That the greater veterans community is responsible for holding Government, it's bureaucracy, the Veterans Ombudsman and itself to the true meaning, spirit and intent of ‘One Veteran – One Standard’ and the ‘Veterans Bill of Rights’.

Recommendation 6. That lines of communication between the organizations and the greater communications be established for transparent information sharing and consultation.

Recommendation 7. That a roster of qualified, relevant professionals and subject matter experts be established to set a high standard of advisors to guide the greater veterans community and Government on legislative, policy and medical matter of concern to veterans and their families. Members of this roster should be arms length from any organization or level of Government.

Leadership

Veterans feel abandoned by former Chiefs of the Defence Staff and other former senior officers at the General rank. Outside of the leadership in the veterans' organization, there is no central community leadership to set priorities and keep organizations and individual members alike moving forward on the same agenda. As a result, veterans are upset with the current leadership through the veterans' organizations who act in isolation of the veterans' community and their own members allowing the Government to regress to 1930's level of blatant negligence and disrespect towards veterans, their families and the sacred social contract. The recent dialogue demonstrates that veterans want a change in how the community is led calling for more former Generals to engage at the senior leadership levels in the veterans' community.

A Veteran from Quebec wrote:

“Un orchestre bien discipliné commence par ne pas joué tous ensemble, a chaque instrument a sa résonance bien a lui, le son de cet instrument est le reflet du son qu'il émet, et tous les instruments en sont ainsi à travers un orchestre.....Mais avant tout un orchestre pour être discipliné, doit avoir un chef d'orchestre hors pair, d'un savoir avec de hautequalité musical sans cela cette orchestre est voué a l'échec car le chef d'orchestre doit en connaitre tous les rouages et mécanique....”

[translation paraphrased] A well-disciplined orchestra begins by people who've not played together, each knowing the sound of their own instruments to make the orchestra work...but above all the orchestra must be led by an outstanding conductor who knows all the ins and outs or else the orchestrta is doomed to failure.

Another wrote:

'The government has put us all on our little treadmills, whether veterans, spouses or younger soldiers getting kicked out with no voice. I suppose they just figure that we will tire ourselves out and give up.

How can we give up when our young service men and women are being bought out and basically told to shut-up and take the money'?

A veteran from Ontario wrote:

I hear you and agree with you to a point. I Do believe there is an appetite for change within the RCL. That said we can leverage that change.

Another wrote:

'As a member of the Legion, I was never consulted regarding the implementation of the New Veterans Charter (NVC)... Where is the leadership of the Veterans Organizations... They must know and understand that unless we unite and deal from the same page, we won't get anything done! They must know that unless they unite, their continuously

declining membership numbers will eventually cause those organizations to fail completely. Generals Rick Hillier and Walt Natincik who are now both retired, would be a good choice to take the Veterans organizations to task and wag their finger at them'!

Another wrote:

'In the spirit-of-comradeship, I hope that leadership will launch to the forefront to prevent any further division from biting us and dividing us'.

A veteran from Alberta wrote:

'...we have many PAST GENERALS and FULL BULLS who abandoned us in " THE HOUR OF OUR NEED" even though WE supported them on their way to the TOP. They, in the most part are very well "LOOKED AFTER"'.

A veteran from BC wrote:

'We are looking for leaders. You were one and are one'

'I know you gentlemen served long and hard and in some capacity still do, more than likely are tired and worn out but we who served you and Canada to the best of our abilities need one more bit of leadership from you. Namely, to lead, to guide, to represent us if that be possible at the table dealing with Government. Your leadership then and now is needed and appreciated'.

Another wrote:

'Canadian Politics is at an all time Low. I can't believe that Gen Hillier is silent'.

There is no question that there are many stalwart leaders in the veterans' community of all former military rank who could accomplish any task given them however former military rank does have it's place and advantages in the veterans community. An example is that VAC appears to have brought in LGen Walter Semianiw to chair meetings with veterans representatives using the rank structure of the military culture to establish dominance. Would the balance of power shift if Gen Hillier were at the table representing the veterans' community at a meeting chaired by LGen Semianiw?

Recommendation 8: That former senior officers of the rank of General form a strategic planning committee to develop an appropriate leadership model as a first step towards unifying and building capacity in the greater veterans community. Nominations for this committee should be put forward immediately.

Recommendation 9: That an advisory panel of qualified subject matter experts be convened to support the strategic planning committee in their work. Nomination for this advisory should be put forward immediately.

Recommendation 10: That former Chiefs of the Defence Staff voluntarily come to the assistance of veterans and their families to lead the greater veterans community during this time of crisis and into the future so that veterans are never taken advantage of again.

Recommendation 11: That the greater veterans community recognize that the current leadership model over the last few decades has seriously failed CF veterans. Organizations and individuals alike must become willing agents for change to unite and organize the greater veterans community to the necessary level required to defend against any further attempts to take away the special status as veterans or the sacred social contract.

Conclusion

The dialogue participants are to be congratulated for their courage in openly expressing their concerns and exchanging ideas in a respectful matter, communicating bluntly and to the point. It is plain and obvious that for the most part veterans care, not only about themselves but how other veterans are treated too in a ‘mission before self’ attitude that is unique to the Canadian Forces. Many creative ideas about how to move the markers forward emerged during the dialogue that will stand the community in good stead and it moves forward in towards unity.

It came through loud and clear that dialogue participants want change because the cost of staying the same is too high. The Government gave the veterans community a wake up call by using the Veterans organizations work to undermine the the Equitas lawsuit on behalf of all veterans in addition to claiming that the Government doesn’t have a sacred obligation towards people injured in military service. The Government got away with that because the veterans’ community is weak from being deeply divided and there is no central leadership to keep the community together and on task.

Veterans want leadership and Government lawyers challenged the veterans community to vote government out in 2015 if not satisfied with the their policies. Veterans made a living out of following orders, so shouldn’t this one be followed too?

This report provides the veterans community with a first step to a way forward that places the much needed leadership at the most appropriate level. The dialogue demonstrated that there is wisdom, strength and abilities in numbers and that open dialogue is essential to the Community’s growth. The of change have started turning...don’t lose the momentum...because veterans status and the sacred social contract is yours to give away if you don’t defend them.

Yours in solidarity,

One Veteran – One standard

APPENDIX A

Initial email dated 27 June 2013

Good day All,

Please give this email the widest possible distribution.

My mission is to expose you to some little known facts about how the NVC came into being and why we're denied other essential benefits with a view to opening a meaningful dialogue within the veterans community on this topic. A dialogue that will help us collectively reach an understanding of the problems before any further recommendations are made to Parliament. However first we have to get our community house in order so we can effectively apply our collective knowledge, wisdom, energy and above all our understanding of veterans issues so we can help the veterans community to the best of our ability. We must make the concept of 'One Veteran' a reality and give real meaning to the words of the 'Veterans Bill of Rights'.

For those who don't know me, I've also put in a lot of time and energy into advocating for veterans rights like so many of you over an extended period of time and offer this short introduction as background information only. I retired from 22 years service with the PPCLI and Canadian Airborne Regiment. Following release in 1992, I was an executive member of CPVA and it's National President from 1999 until being appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2005. During that time I was involved in a number of projects with VAC, DND, the Senate and Government that brought positive change for CF veterans and their families including:

- paving the way for the OSISS program and establishing the VAC 1-800 assistance line,
- establishing the VAC-Canadian Forces Advisory Council to build a suite of programs for all CF veterans including the disabled.

VAC and the Government recognized my unique understanding of veterans legislation and programs by:

- asking me to consider writing a discussion paper to help VAC meet the needs of CF veterans and their families,
- appointing me to the VRAB in 2005 (Liberals) and reappointing me in 2007 (Conservatives),
- interviewing me for the position of Canada's first Veterans Ombudsman, an office I helped others create.

The following is written from personal observations, first hand experience and after numerous discussions with veterans across the country. I apologize in advance for the length of this discussion paper because it is long and detailed. It may be easier to absorb in smaller chunks over more than one read before responding.

I'll stand by my version of the facts while appreciating that others may have different points of view. To that end, I encourage respectful, objective factually supported comments or questions to address my comments and engage in open dialogue to clear the air.

I understand that the RCL and OVO's recent consultations are aimed at providing the Parliamentary Committee on Veterans Affairs with recommendations this fall on how to address

some problems with the NVC through an incremental process; similar in scope to previous approaches that does not seem to address the fundamental problems with the NVC or the denial of other benefits. Is it time to try a new way to approach government?

I remember a discussion with the Minister of Veterans Affairs on the eve of the NVC coming into force in 2005, where I raised the fact that the NVC falls short on it's promises. The Minister said that the CDS Rick Hillier signed off on it so there should be no concerns. The Minister also admitted that the CDS was not told the the NVC took away life long disability pensions. The NVC was born in controversy.

So if the CDS was duped, who else did VAC dupe in 'marketing' the NVC? There is no question that the NVC brought welcomed and much needed benefits for both CF Pension Act pensioners and NVC lump sum recipients. So why are veterans still complaining after nine years? Why is the veterans community divided over it, not addressing the root problems and not engaging in wider consultation on the greater issues? Why is the NVC less generous to it's lump sum recipients and their families than Pension Act beneficiaries? What can we do as a community to fix the problems? I'm getting ahead of myself.

Were you aware that NVC re-establishment benefits were intended to be available to all veterans who had a 'transition' need and not just a 'medical need' as the current policy? I'm certain you will agree that it would be helpful to learn why this and other changes were made without consultation and what went on behind the scenes to get a better appreciation of why the NVC is still controversial.

During the time period leading up to the establishment of the NVC, VAC acknowledged that CF veterans including the disabled were denied re-establishment benefits since 1950 including equal access to benefits like long term care, VIP and Last Post Fund. They also acknowledged that the RCMP and civilians who served overseas were also entitled to veterans benefits but they would get to all of that later because their primary focus was on overtaking the SISIP program and meeting the transition needs of disabled currently serving CF members and their families. How did we make out?

On 23 March 2001, the late Ron Duhamel, Minister of Veterans Affairs provided an inclusive definition of who qualified as a veteran in Canada. The Government's definition of a veteran is a person who held a military occupation code and was honourably discharged [paraphrase]. It is a brilliant definition because it includes veterans past, present and future creating Canada's concept of 'One Veteran'. So why aren't all veterans treated or advocated for equally if that and the following was and is also known:

All active service veterans are equal under the law

1. in 1999 VAC suggested organizations get in stride with CPVA's research and approach that was aimed at qualifying CF veterans for existing VAC benefits
2. In the early 2000's the Justice Department (JD) confirmed that all active service veterans (WWI, Korea and CF) are equal under the law.
3. this legal opinion was solicited by VAC following CPVA's presentation to the VAC-CFAC.
4. without a visible legal opinion to contradict the JD's opinion a different standard of benefits for CF veterans was solicited as seen in the VAC-CFAC 2004 discussion paper, recommendation 16,

page 6 at the following link <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/public/pages/forces/nvc/summary.pdf>

5. VAC did a cost analysis of CPVA's findings to find that it would cost \$4 billion to treat CF veterans equal under section 21(1) of the Pension Act alone, not counting the cost of rehabilitation and other programs all CF veterans including the disabled are/were entitled to since 1950.

6. VAC admitted that they have a duty to provide benefits for all CF veteran not just the disabled.

7. the lump sum and denial of other benefits is the result of the represented organization's and other participants ignoring human rights law and the Justice Department's legal opinion.

8. disabled veterans at the VAC-CFAC table were collecting Pension Act benefits but did not protest the lump sum benefits (media broadcasts).

Long term care, VIP and Last Post Fund benefits

1. the Government has agreed since the 1990's that CF active service veterans qualify for these three benefits programs including admission to VAC's existing long term care facilities.

2. the ANAVets, NCVA, and RCL were aware but put WWII Allied veterans ahead of CF veterans and their families. The information at the following website

refers <http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2009/2009-11-14/html/reg4-eng.html>

3. the three organizations boycotted the VAC-CFAC among other things to force the Minister's hand to qualify the WWII Allied veterans and denying the same benefits for qualified CF active service veterans.

4. the DM VAC at the time advised CAVUNP, CPVA and the GWVA to distance themselves from ANAVets, NCVA and the RCL's WWII agenda.

5. VAC is shutting down the programs in veterans facilities knowing that CF veterans were duped out of them. The ANAVets, NCVA and RCL are watching it happen without intervention.

NVC

1. there were no comprehensive studies conducted by VAC, VAC-CFAC or the Modernization Task Force to prove that lump sum benefits were more effective than Pension Act benefits. In fact, they had conclusive evidence to the contrary including the VAC Gerontological report.

2. senior VAC bureaucrats like Darragh Mogan led people to believe that a change from the Pension Act benefits for CF veterans was required because Parliament's amendment to the Pension Act allowing CF members to collect disability benefits while still serving was putting a strain on the Pension Act money. There is no conclusive evidence to support that position.

3. the NVC is a duplicate of SISIP programs because VAC made it clear in the 1990's that they wanted to overtake SISIP. This means that NVC programs are based on a for profit insurance company model rather than the more generous social contract model consistent with the spirit and intent of veterans legislation meeting the test of human rights law.

4. VAC's plan was to become the disability management department for federal government agencies like the RCMP, Corrections, Customs, etc. That is why language on the generous nature of veterans legislation found in places like section 2 of the Pension Act and section 3 of the VRAB Act are nowhere to be found in the NVC.

5. I've witnessed and understand there may be more incidents where the RCL was found advocating with VAC to become service provider for NVC programs while advocating lesser benefits for CF veterans. Evidence is found in VAC documentation.

6. veterans organizations were duped by the Minister into believing that they would have an opportunity to amend the NVC during the normal legislative process of bringing the Bill into force in 2005. The Bill was rammed through the process and the opportunity denied yet none of

the organizations agreed to protest. Instead, they went before the Media and Senate committee supporting the NVC without knowing it's consequences.

7. the Justice Department is currently before the courts for not appropriately screening new legislation created under the past Liberal and current Conservative governments for human rights deficiencies as is their duty. The NVC was created during that time and rushed past any government check and balance process. <http://www.slaw.ca/2013/01/23/documents-in-the-edgar-schmidt-whistleblower-case/>

8. the NVC and Enhanced NVC Act have not gone through the necessary human rights law screening yet the involved organizations and individuals many of whom collect Pension Act benefits support the creation of different classes of disabled veterans despite the issue being challenged in the court. The Legion's 8 May 2013 letter given wide distribution stands as evidence.

9. the NVC is being challenged in the courts by Miller Thompson and Equitas to address the above Charter of Rights concerns. The RCL has a letter of support posted on the Equitas webpage.

10. veterans collecting Pension Act disability benefits are entitled to most rehab and financial benefits of the NVC and Enhanced NVC Act therefore have greater advantage over lump sum recipients.

11. The Pension Act is always legally speaking as the legislation to compensate disabled veterans and their families. Therefore there was no legal basis for the government to create the discriminatory and problematic Part III of the NVC.

12. the NVC is being marketed as an inclusive legislation meaning that all parts are dependent upon one another. That is simply not true because veterans with 100% Pension Act benefits also qualify for NVC and Enhanced NVC Act rehab and other benefits.

13. veterans organizations and individuals involved in these consultations may be contravening the Canadian Human Rights Act by advocating for incremental fixes to the NVC without addressing the greater Constitution and human rights concerns.

It's difficult to understand why the RCL will threaten to sue people over the respectful use of poppy images but won't sue the government for abusing or discriminating against CF active service veterans and their families. There are obviously good reasons and it would be helpful if they could be explained. The following story is an example <http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/2009/11/05/legion-sues-over-use-of-poppy-in-highway-of-heroes-pins>

In light of the above and anything you may wish to add, comments on the following questions are encouraged to get the dialogue going and clear the air:

1. How can veterans representing others at the consultation table justify supporting the lump sum benefits for others while collecting Pension Act benefits for themselves?
2. What do the participants in the consultation groups hope to achieve by not filtering their suggestions and recommendations through the lens of human rights laws, the Veterans Bill of Rights and the concept of 'One Veteran'?
3. Can an organization objectively advocate for disabled while supporting a discriminatory agenda or advocating to become a VAC service provider? Are organizations in a conflict of interest if they take money from the government while lobbying against it?
4. Do the representatives participating in the consultation groups have the authority to represent all veterans and their families or their memberships only?

5. How would the organizations suggest opening communications and consultations between our three social contract partners (the Government, people of Canada and us) to ensure broader inclusive participation in addressing veterans issues?
6. What will the ANAVets, RCL and NCVA do to repair the damage caused by their putting non-Canadian military service veterans ahead of qualified CF active service veterans and their families for access to long term care facilities, equality for VIP benefits and equal access to Last Post Fund burial benefits to level the playing field?
7. Has the status quo worked in addressing the greater problems of the NVC when compared to the actual needs of veterans and their families to date? What can we do as a community to improve how we are represented?

Don't you think CF veterans and their families have suffered discrimination long enough? Shouldn't we benefit from lessons learned and not repeat the same mistakes that got us into this problem in the first place? Your voice is important to help move the community forward.

We can only hope that your rich, transparent, factual and respectful feedback will expose the root problems to help fix the division and discrimination in the veterans community, make the concept of 'One Veteran' a reality and bring credibility to the words of the 'Veterans Bill of Rights'.

The bottom line is that all veterans are equal under the law therefore CF veterans and their family's deserve equal benefits. Anything less is not acceptable.

I look forward to your comments and thoughts. Don't miss the opportunity to be heard.

Sincerely

Harold Leduc, MMM, CD.

APPENDIX B

Acts, Regulations and Orders of the 1947 Veterans Charter

Allied Veterans Benefits Act
Assistance Fund (War Veterans Allowance) Regulations
Civilian War Pension and Allowances Act
Civil Service Act
Department of Veterans Affairs Act
 Treatment Regulations
 Veterans Estate Regulations
 Regulations governing grants to the Last Post Fund for the Burial of Veterans
 Regulations governing the payment of the cost of compensations in respect of certain pensioners who suffer industrial accidents
 Regulations authorizing treatment for veterans undergoing training under CNIB where not otherwise eligible
 The Guardianship of Veterans Regulations
 The Continuation of Education Services Order
 The Merchant Seaman Vocational Training Order
Firefighters War Services Benefits Act
History of Legislation in Canada
Order determining the cessation of Active Service
Pension Act
Reinstatement in Civil Employment Act, 1946
Returned Soldiers' Insurance Act
 Returned Soldiers' Insurance Regulations
Soldiers Settlement Act
 Soldiers Settlement Loan Regulations
Special Operators War Service benefits Act
Supervisors War Service Benefits Act
Unemployment Insurance Act, 1940
Veterans Business and Professional Loans Act
 Veterans Business and Professional Loans Regulations
Veterans Insurance Act
 Veterans Insurance Regulations
Veterans Land Act, 1942
 Veterans Land Act Regulations
Veterans Rehabilitation Act
 Veterans Rehabilitation Order
 Veterans University Loans Regulations
 University Supplementary Grants Regulations
 Orders respecting Reduction of Training Allowances because of earnings
 Regulations governing transfers in training under the Veterans Rehabilitation Act
War Services Grants Act, 1944
 War Services Grants Order
 Committee of Review
War Veterans Allowance Act, 1946
Regulations re Assistance Fund (War Veterans Allowance)
Women's Royal Naval Services and the South African Military Nursing Service (Benefits) Act

APPENDIX C

CF Ethics and Values

<http://www.dep.forces.gc.ca/dep-ped/code/code-eng.aspx>

TABLE 1 – ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF DND AND CF

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES	EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS
	<i>At all times and in all places, DND employees and CF members shall respect human dignity and the value of every person by:</i>
1. Respect the dignity of all persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.1 Treating every person with respect and fairness.• 1.2 Valuing diversity and the benefit of combining the unique qualities and strengths inherent in a diverse workforce.• 1.3 Helping to create and maintain safe and healthy workplaces that are free from harassment and discrimination.• 1.4 Working together in a spirit of openness, honesty and transparency that encourages engagement, collaboration and respectful communication.
	<i>At all times and in all places, DND employees and CF members shall fulfil their commitments in a manner that best serves Canada, its people, its parliamentary democracy, DND and the CF by:</i>
2. Serve Canada before self	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2.1 Making decisions and acting at all times in the public interest.• 2.2 Performing their duty or their responsibilities to the highest ethical standards.• 2.3 Avoiding or preventing situations that could give rise to personal or organizational conflicts of interests.• 2.4 Providing decision-makers with all the information, analysis and advice they need, always striving to be open, candid and impartial.
	<i>At all times and in all places, DND employees and CF members shall uphold Canada's parliamentary democracy and its institutions by:</i>
3. Obey and support lawful authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3.1 Respecting the rule of law.• 3.2 Carrying out their duty and their duties in accordance with legislation, policies and directives in a non-partisan and objective manner.

TABLE 2 – VALUES AND EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS OF DND EMPLOYEES AND CF MEMBERS

SPECIFIC VALUES	EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS
	<i>DND employees and CF members shall serve the public interest by:</i>
1. INTEGRITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.1 Acting at all times with integrity, and in a manner that will bear the closest public scrutiny; an obligation that may not be fully satisfied by simply acting within the law.• 1.2 Never using their official roles to inappropriately obtain an advantage for

TABLE 2 – VALUES AND EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS OF DND EMPLOYEES AND CF MEMBERS

SPECIFIC VALUES	EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS
2. Loyalty	<p>themselves or to advantage or disadvantage others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.3 Taking all possible steps to prevent and resolve any real, apparent or potential conflicts of interest between their official responsibilities and their private affairs in favour of the public interest. • 1.4 Acting in such a way as to maintain DND’s and the CF’s trust, as well as that of their peers, supervisors and subordinates. • 1.5 Adhering to the highest ethical standards, communicating and acting with honesty, and avoiding deception. • 1.6 Being dedicated to fairness and justice, committed to the pursuit of truth regardless of personal consequences. <p><i>DND employees and CF members shall always demonstrate respect for Canada, its people, its parliamentary democracy, DND and the CF by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1 Making decisions and acting at all times in the public interest. • 2.2 Performing their duty or their responsibilities to the highest ethical standards. • 2.3 Avoiding or preventing situations that could give rise to personal or organizational conflicts of interests. • 2.4 Providing decision-makers with all the information, analysis and advice they need, always striving to be open, candid and impartial. <p><i>DND employees and CF members shall demonstrate courage by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1 Respecting the rule of law. • 3.2 Carrying out their duty and their duties in accordance with legislation, policies and directives in a non-partisan and objective manner. <p><i>DND employees and CF members shall responsibly use resources by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.1 Effectively and efficiently using the public money, property and resources managed by them. • 4.2 Considering the present and long-term effects that their actions have on people and the environment. • 4.3 Acquiring, preserving and sharing knowledge and information as appropriate. • 4.4 Providing purpose and direction to motivate personnel both individually and collectively to strive for the highest standards in performance. • 4.5 Ensuring resources are in place to meet future challenges. <p><i>DND employees and CF members shall demonstrate professional excellence by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.1 Continually improving the quality of policies, programmes and services they provide to Canadians and other parts of the public sector. • 5.2 Fostering or contributing to a work environment that promotes teamwork, learning and innovation. • 5.3 Providing fair, timely, efficient and effective services that respect Canada’s official languages.
4. STEWARDSHIP	
5. EXCELLENCE	