



Canadian Veterans Advocacy

One Veteran One Standard!

Web Site: <http://www.canadianveteransadvocacy.com/>

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Canadian Veterans Advocacy Situation Report – Sep 13/2006

Canadians Veterans National Day of Protest, 5 November, 2011.

Clarification of the issues. Veterans and Canadian patriots will be gathering once again at their Member of Parliament's offices or making the veterans pilgrimage to Parliament Hill on November 5th to address the consequences the New Veterans Charter has imparted on Canada's sons and daughters who have suffered the consequences of war on Canada's behalf.

Priorities. Nothing can be more important to us at this time than taking steps to halt the Canadian government's proposed five to ten percent cuts to Veterans Affairs Canada operating budget. This is an extraordinary amount of funding, a potential annual decrease of over three hundred million dollars. Last spring, the Canadian Government acknowledged veterans concerns about inadequate support through the passage of Bill C-55, in essence, the provision of 2 Billion dollars of enhancements to address NVC shortfalls. Bill C-55 was rushed through parliament and senate without time for proper debate and the consequences, as demonstrated by Royal Canadian Legion Dominion President Patricia Varga's extraordinary accusations about discrimination against WW2, Korean and Peacekeeping veterans, are not surprising.

Of the two billion, we have confirmed that 189 million dollars will be committed to veterans over the first five years, equating to 38 million additional funding dollars per year, a rate that will take over 50 years for the \$2B to be committed. Although the award is based on a war-time disability, a majority of the new enhancements are fully taxed and will return hundreds of millions of dollars to the government's coffers. Let us also put this in context of the proposed cuts to Veterans Affairs Canada's budget and accept the fact that while the government claims to be willing to address the profound inadequacies of the New Veterans Charter via Bill C-55, they are concurrently planning on a 5-10 % reduction from the Veterans Affairs Canada budget. DO the math. Add 38 million dollars compliments Bill-C-55, and then deduct 150-300 million from VAC's operating budget. How does this serve our wounded warriors? Should not their treatment be considered in the same vein as politicians salaries, exempt from any draconian austerity programs? Is it right for politicians to pay off the national debt on the backs of disabled veterans they sent to war?

The CVA is encouraging veterans, their families and all Canadians to proactively pursue this matter with your elected minister of parliament. Do not delay, please, all it takes is a phone call, an email, a



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letter, perhaps dropping by the riding office for a personal chat. Inform whoever you speak with, preferably your MP, that you do not feel it is acceptable to deprive funding from the ministry responsible for the nation's war wounded, that any potential budgetary cut backs to Veterans Affairs Canada merely to pay of the national debt is profoundly disrespectful. Ask them; was not Bill C-55 to improve an acknowledged crisis? How does providing 38 million when concurrently planning to withdraw 150-300 million dollars from Veterans Affairs budget serve those who have suffered the consequences of war?

These are our children, Canada's children. These valiant men and women have been horrifically wounded/injured during war and peace, nothing is more important to their future welfare than our willingness to accept our duty as veterans and patriotic Canadian s to fight to ensure that their treatment and physical/mental plight does not fall prey to the consequential repercussions of national-debt based budgetary cuts. There are many ways YOU can help our disabled veterans; telephone, email, send a letter, better yet, talk to your MP about the moral, life-time obligation Canada's parliament has to those who have sacrificed so much in Canada's name. Remind them that this obligation, to the nation's discredit, was abandoned by parliament in 2006 through the enactment of the New Veterans Charter. We have an obligation to restore this dignified, nation representative standard.

The Five Principles. The five principles can be attributed through a dedicated consultation process inclusive of hundreds of veterans who served from WW2 to Afghanistan in all branches of the service. While there are many other issues (PTSD/OSI, the VRAB, the lack of recognition for those who were deliberately exposed to chemical agents at CFB Suffield or who sustained carcinogenic exposure aboard HMCS Kootenay,) the five principles are priorities established by factors over which we have no control. The repeal of the lump sum award is vital in the sense that this is the one issue that affects those who are serving today; this is the one direction that we, those who passed the torch to this generation, can affect political change in their favour.

The Lump Sum Award. Tragically, this situation has become even more critical with recent announcement defining DND retention policies for the wounded. Contrary to General Hillier's proclamation in 2008, DND will not be providing wound-accommodating positions within the Forces and those who cannot pass the Universality of Service fitness tests due to their medical restrictions will be released to the L(Ch)ump Sum Award. Prior to 2006, a wounded veteran's patriotic commitment to Canada would be acknowledged through a Veterans Affair Pension for pain and



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suffering, not income replacement. This special award was not subject to taxation and was dispersed over the course of the veteran's lifetime in monthly payments, a policy that ensured the veteran's well being after age sixty-five when injury related LTD or ELB benefits cease and the veteran's service pension is clawed back.

The disparity between the two programs is obscenely unjust. Those who were injured prior to 2006 were accorded a dignified level of lifetime compensation, and standard of respect earned on the battlefields of WW1, WW2, Korea and a dozen bloody peacekeeping missions. This standard was maintained by successive generations of Canadian governments until 2006 when, just when Canadians troops deployed to Afghanistan assumed an pro-active combat posture in Khandahar/Panjawaii valley that would culminate in 149 combat fatalities, an undetermined number of suicides and hundreds, if not thousands wounded.

Scenario. Two veterans sustain catastrophic injuries in Afghanistan. One applies to VAC for the war pension prior to April 1, 2006, the other, injured a month later on the same tour, claims one month after the New Veterans Charter's implementation. Due to the severity of their injuries, multiple amputations, VAC assesses each veteran with a one hundred percent award for pain and suffering. Both are 25 years of age, married with two very young children. Both live to the age of 85.

Veteran A, receiving approx 4000 per month for life, would be provided well over 2.5 million dollars over the sixty years remaining. Conversely, Veteran B, who sustained the same catastrophic consequences of war yet applied for VAC benefits one month later, received a lump sum award of 280 000 dollars. The disparity is over two million dollars. Let there be no doubt, those who have been horrifically wounded after April 1th, 2006 bleed the same, experience intense pain and incredible suffering the same and must live with the same, life time consequences of war as those who fought at Dieppe, Pachino, Ortona, Juno Beach, Kapyong, Chai-Li, Hills 355 and 187, dozens of bloody peacekeeping missions, former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan prior to April 1st, 2006. As do their families! Is it not our responsibility to stand up to the government when such great injustices have been accorded to those who stand on guard for thee? Is it not our solemn duty as Canadians to insist that the Canadian government abolish this contemptible Lump Sum Award policy and restore dignity not only to our troops and veterans, but to the very parliament that abandoned the Sacred Bond between Canada's sons and daughters in 2006 with such profound, sometime fatal, consequences?



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The Widows Tax – During CVNDOP 2010, veterans focused on the unfair policy of taxing the pensions of the deceased and the tax-based problems inherent to the widow's taxation levels. We have now had sufficient time to properly assess the situation and believe that Canada's Memorial Cross Widows deserve much better, that they have also been subject to a much lower financial/support standard through the New Veterans Charter. The lack of supportive programs such as VIP services, once offered, now denied, is profoundly unfair for those who have sacrificed so much while supporting their loved ones as they served in Harm's Way on Canada's behalf.

SISIP CLAWBACK – Tragically, this issue was not addressed by the NVC or Bill C-55. During the past five years, the Conservative government has spent millions of taxpayers' dollars in legal fees fighting to block over six thousand disabled veteran's right to unite under one banner to launch a Class Action Suit against this profoundly unjust policy. This issue was recently resolved by the Supreme Court of Canada in veterans favour and the law suit will move forward in Halifax this November. To clarify, the VAC pension is awarded for pain and suffering and as noted in the legislation is not to be considered income replacement. The Manulife SISIP program, however, does consider this pain and suffering award as income replacement and simply deducts the sum from their Long Term Disability payment leaving the veterans with little, if any improvement, in the quality of their lives.

Agent Orange – One can only imagine how many veterans exposed to this cacogenic toxin have succumbed to cancer since the government announced its woefully restrictive compensation program wherein veterans who were exposed for a mere seven days between 1966-67 have been provided relief when records confirm that Agent Orange was used in Gagetown for over two decades and thousand of military and civilian personnel were exposed. The consequences to this deadly defoliant have been severe and while many have been afflicted, only a few have been compensated. One veteran, one standard, we must fight for those who have been abandoned by our government!

Age 65 Pension Clawback. Regardless of the fact that this issue was decided by parliament in veterans favour, Mr Harper refused to provide Royal Assent, ensuring veterans pensions, once they reach the age of 65, are reduced. This issue will once again be addressed by parliament by MP Peter Stoffer, who will once again present a bill to the House to end this unjust practice. Veterans are encouraged to contact your MP during this period and encourage him to vote for the speedy passage of this bill.

God bless Canada, our disabled veterans/families and those who stand on guard for thee.
