



National Association
of Federal Retirees

Association nationale
des retraités fédéraux

VETERANS SPEAK



2017 | **Input from Veterans**

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INTRODUCTION

The following is a compilation of input received from twelve town hall sessions held coast to coast as well as online survey questions. The town hall sessions were sponsored by the National Association of Federal Retirees during fall 2017. This document is the companion document to *Listening to Veterans*, which summarizes the responses that follow.

The input we received from veterans and their families is roughly grouped by the questions that were asked; however, most veterans spoke to multiple questions when they told their stories. To add clarity to the results, the comments have been grouped by theme and sub-theme.

In doing this initiative, Federal Retirees wanted to understand what veterans feel is working, in addition to service and support gaps that exist. To that end, comments have been colour coded with **positive input highlighted**.

The veterans came from two separate areas of service, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) or (CF per some of the respondents) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Where the type of service is known, it is indicated. It is also indicated if the service release was voluntary, and the year of release, when this is known.

Finally, the comments that compose this document were recorded by a transcription service or shared via a web-based feedback tool. This document is a true record of what was shared.

French language comments have been translated to English and are included throughout this document. We have also appended the original French language comments in their entirety.

The comments are verbatim and have not been edited for syntax, pronunciation, grammar or other corrections, in an effort to preserve the integrity of what was shared by veterans and their families. References, such as name or specific injury, that would identify individual respondents have been removed to protect the privacy of the veteran or their family.

THE RELEASE PROCESS: WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T?

PENSION PAYMENT PROCESSING

2016 ■ I got out in June of 2016. A year and a bit ago, after 30+ years of service to the day. One thing I found very frustrating is delays waiting for things like pension, health care plan and dental plan to kick in. I was told that by the day I got out the same day that I understand [off microphone] the data.

I found the whole process extremely frustrating. There should be a calculation at the four-year enrollment, so once released, don't go back on the services and, once they have, the first, 80%. Go back and should be taking 80% and the calculation and the other thing that I really see is I have no idea other than I'm getting who gets it and why – the fluctuations. The office to deal with, I'm extremely, one day, being transferred from individual to individual so – and go back to 45. Shopping around for five hours and seems to be a huge lack of concern and at one point I was told well you should find, the previous, what's the problem? But I mean you are releasing lots, six and seven years and of the knowledge while they wait for, took over five months. Was told I should have planned better. No pay stub no idea where my deductions are going.

Takes way too long to receive pension cheque. Treated terribly.

They stopped persons pension while they were trying to figure out what he was properly owed. A young person with a family, no money.

If the CF looked after their own pensions, it would be much quicker rather than being lumped with people.

1997 voluntary ■ I've been retired since '97, so things have changed a lot. When my generation retired, it went very smooth. My last day in uniform, regular force, was the (date), and I received my first pension cheque on the (date). It happened that smooth. Listening to the young fellas retiring now, with 20 to 25 years' service, they're waiting up to six months to get their pension cheques. They're basically on the welfare line waiting for it, and that is not right. It's all to do with this new Phoenix Program. I think somebody has to step forward and sort it out, because this is wrong. My transition, dirt simple. Packed it in, let my hair grow long till Labour Day, and said I need a haircut and got into reserve, and finished my eligible time with the reserves here in (city). That's the one thing I've noticed since I retired.

1993 ■ I officially got out in 1993, and my transition, no problems whatsoever. Officially I was out end of (month), and I had my pension cheque within a few months. Everything went easy that way, but I've talked with some of the young fellas as well and I've heard some horror stories, people losing their homes because they're still waiting for their pension cheque. I find things like that very, very upsetting, because there's no way that should happen, not with what some of these young guys have gone through.

I thought from my 20-year career, all the things I did for the military, I thought I was so important until I got out. You know, there it was, go three months without pay, all the money was gone. All the payouts were gone trying to pay bills, because the banks don't care that you don't have a paycheck or a pension check.

Got out in March, received cheque in June. Received severance and buy back all at once.

One of my buddies retired in May last year and it was six months before he got a check, now it is down to a couple of weeks. It is getting better, getting better.

Pension calculator was accurate within a few dollars. Just took awhile to receive my pension cheque and have no stub.

2015 ■ 6 months after release before I saw my first pension check... pretty stressful... since I'm single. Mortgage still due... car payments etc.

Just reiterate a few of the cons, public service health care plan, for example, mine still hasn't kicked in at almost 6 months. I don't understand the reason for that because I applied for it a good if you did months before I released.

PSPC taking on administration of CAF pensions is a simple process that is moving in the right direction.

Shared an individual who has been waiting six months and their PSHCP hasn't yet kicked in.

Pre-2012 ■ I was in (CAF) for X years. I retired from Camp Fumble being National headquarters, we are on transition, so I will stick with that. I thought it went well, I gave them four months warning I was being released. My first paycheck, after I was released was 16 weeks after being out. I dipped into my savings, so I was not impressed obviously.

Pre-2012 ■ I realized, who looks after us when we get out? Governor of Canada Pension Centre. My wife died in June and I called an 800 number, again initial part was great, they sent me forms I needed to change medical coverage and so on. Seems like 16 or 14 weeks is a magic figure for service, I use service with a bracket behind it. I notice with my latest pay stub that came in, that I'm still being charged for two people. I called the 800 number again and fortunately, like my release papers and everything else I kept copies and I said well I have copies of what I sent people in June. They said *oh we found them*, so basically somebody has been sitting on it, doing nothing or whatever. And I said, well when can I expect something to occur *the lady said well November*. Being, I said November of what year? So that's, that is my experience, I served X years like most, everybody else here sort of, you know, and I don't feel reciprocal thing coming back, at least to myself. I know I'm not alone, I know had the same situation here. I don't know if it is incompetence for people in the Navy, maybe don't give a shit down there or under-staffed.

2009 ■ I received my first pension cheque in August 2011. I'm a retired teacher and was already receiving pension income – so the delay was not a problem for me. But for a regular force member with no other income the delay would be disastrous.

2013 ■ My process for retirement, as far as monetary stuff, I retired (medically) in December, I delayed my paperwork going in, hoping, following this, takes six to eight weeks to get any money at the most, at the earliest and I put it in late November and hit my bank 28th of December, costing me more taxes.

Following that, with SISSP the follow-up for the next couple of years, numerous people calling me, encouraging me to use the programs that were available, the funding that was available, took advantage of some of that. And other than, the early money going into the bank, everything was pretty smooth.

I was a supervisor, I was a major before I left, and especially here in (city), we pushed all our people to take advantage of the programs available, get them the contacts, even, you know, not through a release process, but even a supervisor to get them out there. Just a balance.

2016 ■ Terrible. Bounced around from June 16 to March 17 trying to get my pension finalized. And as my pension was not immediately available, I couldn't access my PSHCP benefits. My pensioner's Dental plan was only finalized in Sep 17!

2017 RCMP voluntary ■ I just retired this year from RCMP after (years) of service. We had two retirement seminars, before I retired. I had to research everything before I retired, which was fine and went quite smoothly for me. Things have changed again, much improved from what I'm hearing from the past. Got my first pension check right on the button, just like they said, and it has improved vastly and went very smoothly for me, whereas my buddy had retired seven or eight years prior and they said it was a nightmare for him. It has, it is coming around, they are listening, just so you know.

2017 ■ Hi, I just released from the service on medically, on the pension side of things. It's been about approximately (?) since I received my last pay. SISIP Of course, because it's medical release just agreed to give me my 40% but it's the same thing nobody gives you any time line as to when you can actually expect your pension they said 6 weeks and I phoned, after five weeks I phoned they said I was lucky because I was done 6 weeks on the military side. They tell you 6 weeks, but no one knows. But again, assistive has been good in that regard.

Related to my issue with pension after I released, one thing I would like to see is on the reserve side it's been recognized for many, many years there's a problem with working out the issues with pensions for reservists and getting them given to the individuals in a timely manner. Dating back to 2007 when the pension program first came in for reserves. What I would like to see at these transitions is particularly for reservists they're given a time line on when they could expect to receive their pension in the normal process after they retire. Because it can vary from anywhere from 4 months to a year or longer. And they need to know that up front. So, they can plan accordingly especially financially if you're relying on that pension. That's what I would like to see for that kind of data to be presented particularly for reserves.

Possibly a year ago we had service, intense, now had a job and, she was extremely, then all of a sudden, these amounts and \$400 flux and then \$500 flux. There was no explanation whatsoever. So, after same number in Ottawa – when they find out someone else, oh that's so and so, where else – so after calling for seven days got through someone else's line, turns out find that extension, but the extension, again this is – all the income while you decide how much.

The transition experience, services and programs and gather the input. Get a chance, just go there and use it, the application. This was something that worked, it is basically – it is fairly close. We do have access to it

and I calculate it and, what I eventually get at the end of the month, but just because I calculate it doesn't mean they are actually going to put it into, as I said I got, month of June is really good because I got my severance my pension and (?) between March and June it is a little questionable.

1998 ■ Wait times are a big issue, while someone is collecting a paycheck at VAC to look after us, we are starving, hurting and going without.

RCMP voluntary ■ I retired after 38 years. I waited six months for a pension processing when I put in my paperwork six months in advance of my discharge and the disconnect occurred because the churn within the bureaucracy that's looking after pensions. So, people who clearly didn't understand either the regulation, how the calculations were, or whatever the case may be. I have since learned from several other people that had a very similar experience. The churn related to pay and superannuation regulation and everything has got to the point because they got rid of all the staff related to Phoenix coming in, so I went six months without a pension. I carried myself, I had the financial ability to do so. Lots of people couldn't in that position. Not so much as a thank you, or sorry this happened or anything else. It was just my battle to fight. So okay, through that, got my pension, quite happy. There was no – to get through it. But there has to be a better way than the way that process is working. Putting in the wrong people or there is so many job opportunities people are just, nobody has anything anymore.

2012 ■ I left in 2012, at that time, I don't know if it's still the same, but there was a lot of unhappiness with the pension. I was lucky, I left in January and got my pension cheque in March. It took a long time. Those who leave, I know... That was the Canadian Armed Forces pension, not a pension from Veterans Affairs Canada.

2006 ■ I released 2006 and it took me seven months to get my pension. That was 11 years ago, and this process is still going on. If you don't have the wherewithal to save money or if you're living paycheck to paycheck or don't have spousal support you're in trouble. We are seeing that almost all veterans.

RCMP ■ Prior to retiring, a lot of our pension stuff was done by Morneau Sheppard which was private sector. Absolutely fabulous, absolutely fabulous. Well, I'll tell you, they did great work, they were responsive, if you called them and they would pick up in a couple of rings they were back to you inside of 20 minutes and things just happened. Great documentation and great software and so on. They understand you, they know what the issue is and they are on it and then you move over now to the public service and frankly I got to say, who cares. Like I mean there is no sense that they are caring about a service they are delivering or the fact that there is a human being on the other end of the line that needs some support. I don't think that's asking for too much.

I also suggest that perhaps the RCMP pension advisory committees be made aware of the issues here as well as the employing departments.

1990 ■ Got out in 1990, had been a (trade). When went to get release I got 50% contributions back because I was a volunteer but was told the other half was vested as part of the plan and when I turned 55 I could apply for either a lump sum or monthly income. Who do I contact to apply? I have not been getting answers on this after 6 months of calling. I've been asked for my service number but don't have one because we used to use our SIN #.

2015 ■ I served 20+ years, retired two years ago, summer of 2015. Retired as a full time reservist, the transition was interesting, to say the least, it was not what I expected. As a reservist, you may know the pension for reservist was inputted in 2007, the recent pension system for that aspect of the military. So, I thought it had improved by 2015 and it seemed to have, so I took the leap. Completed 25 years of service, got out, the main challenge I found was not necessarily with Veterans Affairs or anything like that, it was with DND, particularly the reserve pension system. I was led to believe, they give you a number of how many months from day you left to time you got first pension benefit, and I was told approximately three months. That means that, prior to retiring, you have to save up some money and all that stuff to get through that lag time, which I did. It turned out it was seven months – seven months of no income, but life continues, right. There is a house, kids, all that stuff. That honesty left me with a very bitter taste in my mouth about my service. Because CF had told us, since 2010, I was primarily a primary reservist, full time was assured that we are one service. Really doesn't matter who you are, reserve, CF, we're all one happy family, happy team, okay. What I found was upon leaving there were two types of personnel, the regular service folks who got their pension benefit within three to five weeks, around there; which is normal. 97% of PSAC, if you are non-uniform, you get pension benefit within 30 to 45 days upon leaving, last day of service. Except if you are wearing a uniform – particularly if you are wearing a reserve uniform. That leaves a lot of challenges, primarily financial based challenges which have a domino effect on life, as you can imagine, it is not great. I guess I'm fairly lucky because since then, I have heard of stories of 18 months or whatever, and it just seems to me there is a lack of resources at the pension processing system. I know there is a big effort and has been since last two years or so, to rectify that, but it is just incredible that we're in 2017, that you have given the best of your life to the government in a uniform, in a particularly demanding occupation usually, and this is how you are rewarded. I should say not rewarded, because you should be able to step out seamlessly, get on with your life. Because it's not just financial aspect, you have to put your life on pause, when you have plans, you want to get going, you want to see what's out there type thing, but you can't because you are hamstrung by lack of support, which you were told you had, but you don't have. It's a giant case of cognitive dissonance. You're told one thing, but reality is totally different. That was a transition for me and has since brought out other stories, quite horrendous from other reservists, roughly got out same time as I did or afterwards, and it is just appalling, truly appalling. Have you picked up this across the country, primarily reservists getting, okay? (Response hearing this from Reg forces as well). I'm sure it's not the greatest for the reg forces as well but it is particularly egregious with reserve pension system.

2016 ■ No one prepared me that it would take over 6 months to get my first pension cheque.

So, I would like to ask a question to the RCMP Officer, so you have had 38, 39 years? You stop paying into your pension? Response, you pay for some. You pay a maintenance fee on it, but you stop paying in on the pension, so you have a gentleman with over 35 years of service and can't pay more into the pension (is capped), so why does it take six months to calculate he is entitled to a full pension. Same in my situation, 35 plus, I stopped paying into it, why is there that delay? It can't get any bigger, all they have to do is figure out how much the best five are and pay it off.

2012 ■ I'm another reservist, 30+ years' service. I was forced out medically 2012. The first indication I had I was being medically released was a letter from JPSU Ottawa. The only thing in there I recognized was a phone number, because everything was in French. The paperwork from SISIP also was all in French. I phoned them up, okay, what's this French stuff? They then sent me the stuff in English by e-mail. You for your pension, you are doing good – I still got over two years wait for mine. 2020 before I see mine. So, mine for the most part, I was playing everything by ear and I consider this big snafu.

I got out ten years ago in Ontario. I got out decade and – so from our city and because of a volunteer, see your fund, from everybody. When you turn 55, which is, I have to apply for it and I will get either some payment or a monthly, the extent I did receive was just, so I just wanted to know, again I spent the past six months, mutual and you know on day one. I worked, everybody had seen, never so six months.

2006 voluntary ▪ If you start planning early enough things go OK. There is no reason that pensions, leave pay out, or in my case Severance pay is not available at time of release! I gave six months' notice, what was that for!

2013 voluntary ▪ The fact that I requested release and was "retained" for 6 months then only to find that it would be an additional 6 months before anything would be complete or ready in the way of pension/return of contributions. This is appalling. Could you afford to move to a different province and set-up a new or return to a different live without income for 6 months?

2017 RCMP ▪ Just to update things. I retired in 2017. Haven't got a pension cheque yet. Also with the RCMP. Different format. Thank God, I don't have to deal with Phoenix. So, I'm expecting that eventually I'll get a cheque sometime in the next couple months.

Public Service Health Care Plan. You are told it takes three months to get it in place. And that makes sense, but the deduction starts right away. You can't access it for three months, that doesn't make sense. I decided I am going to cancel my public service health care plan, no, no, it is okay, I did this because I wanted to see how long it was going to take them to cease the payments. Logically if the cease state is July 12th, then that's when they have to stop legally taking payments. It took them three months. So, there is six months, \$600 that they have for two months of actual service. That's pretty unethical. I don't know how to change that. I don't know if anyone in your circle knows how to change that, but there is no reason for families that are nickeling and diming it as it is, to be stuck paying for a benefit that they are not actually in receipt of. If they are not going to start it for three months, that's fine, but you can't take a payment until that third month, because when you take that payment that means there is a service in place.

2015 ▪ Other than the wait time for severance and pension, everything associated with my release from the CAF was flawless.

2017 voluntary ▪ The release process was straight forward, however some of the transition of services are ridiculously slow. For example, I completed all of the paperwork to transition my PSHCP coverage (along with Dental and SISIP) prior to my release (May 2017). It is now November and I still do not have PSHCP coverage! I have called and have been told it is being processed, but 6 months is ridiculous.

2016 ▪ I was lucky I had a little savings as I did not receive my severance, pension or LTD for at least 2 months post-release.

MEDICAL INFORMATION AND COVERAGE

1990 ■ One of the things that I talked to one of the case managers and advocates through Veterans Affairs after I was getting out. One of the things that would go a long way for everybody would be training for the doctors and medical staff doing release medicals. Veterans Affairs looks for very specific diagnosis on your medical file (injury), (injury) and (injury) those sorts of things. But if the doctors don't put that down they're going to skim over it and you're going to be in, people are in for a bigger fight to try to get pensions. Training would be a big asset to see what Veterans Affairs and looking for and what sorts of things that they need to do.

There are certain members in the military that have security clearance, that not get medical or psychiatric care. They don't, because the medical doesn't have the security clearance.

1995ish ■ I tell you one thing, I was there for most of my career, the last medical I had in the military, I could have given it to myself, thank you.

I also wanted to flag the importance of a proper medical on release. There are way, way, way too many, reservists whether it be Army, Navy, that are getting the ceremony, thank you for serving, thank you for your 20+ years and simple things like thyroid, your, all kinds of things you can test for, and catch the heart attack long before somebody needs to actually suffer one. I really believe that if she had that proper medical, a full medical, not a half-assed one, wouldn't have had to suffer having the heart attack.

Mid 80's ■ I have 12 years military service my transition was very smooth that was in the mid 80s. If you've got the CF 98 which is the accident report from the military, then it's a pretty smooth process (with VAC). If you don't, it's a lot more work. All I'm saying is, they (VAC) are there to look after you, they're not there to deny you anything. But sometimes process to get what you need is rooted in the lack of documentation coming from National Defense. Thanks.

2008 ■ I received my medical release three years after my release, after a grievance, the CF has no doctors, members are not looked after, you have to get out to access real medical doctors and find out what is really wrong with you.

I want to talk on behalf of a friend. The force let him down, he had a chronic condition, each year he had X-rayed taken, and at no point in time do they compare what was happening to his lungs. We watched over a ten-year period, become just critically injured, couldn't be with his, they said well you have a chronic condition, and finally, a group of us that worked in the office said you have to go and see a private doctor. His internal organ has only had 10% left. When he finally got the X-rays that had been taken over the last 15 years, they show the progression, they could have done something 15 years earlier to help him out. Left him with a poor quality of life with his family and his children and he left way too soon, where he couldn't celebrate the things that his children are going through. It was disgraceful.

1984 ■ I'm with the reserve and I left in 1984. So, what happened was they never had given us any medicals during the time I was in service, I only had one medical it was an enrollment medical. So, what happened was that when it was time to release from the reserve or when I decided to leave, they had, they asked me what

happened was I was sent before an administrative clerk, not a medical officer, and I was asked to sign a waiver and she asked me if I was, if I was okay or not okay. And I said well I think I'm okay. I'm not sure.

But in the meanwhile, what had happened is I was forced to sign waiver and years later a condition came up from an injury I had while I was in the service, and what happened was the, I had signed this waiver and the Veterans Affairs is using this waiver against me. Now, this is fast forward so many years later that the (condition) came up.

Had a heart attack shortly after releasing. Was fit but was dealing with all the stress of not knowing what civilian life would be like.

2017 ■ Very good. I got a family doctor before I retired with the Canadian Forces program and got my first appointment with the civilian doctor within 15 days of my retirement.

Released after 15+ years on medical with no assistance on getting help for my medical condition!!

2012 ■ I had X years in the force I retired in 2012. Now the release system that was working back then was we're in growing pains back then so what happened back then hopefully is changing and it's improving. But some of the things that I've gone through is dealing with Blue Cross now dealing with Veterans Affairs, dealing with Revenue Canada, Canada pension disability, dealing with the other pensions that I'm allocated also. But the problem is this past summer as this young fellow was saying about medicals this summer we discovered that I have (injury) and (injury) which I was diagnosed in 2011 but never told by the medical system it was withheld from me. Not only that particular conditions but (?) that were withheld. This is the problem that we're having in our medical system. Release in the forces I see. When there is an injury occurred to us they're not up front, coming to us and saying you have a serious injury here. If I knew I had the (injury) I certainly would change a lot of things because that diagnosis came about in 2011 when I was released in 2012. Now, finding this issue and discovering it, it certainly changes my (condition) also because that's part of the (condition). I don't blame the government, I don't blame DND. I love my uniform I lived for my uniform. I'm an injured soldier and just trying to carry on with my life the best I can.

But the other problem is the specialists that we go see they question us either they agree or disagree, or they make up new diagnoses that aren't part of the IC 9 or IC 10 and this is especially going on in our Canadian medical system and what I find is I have to fight for everything I need. I just had to put \$100 today to go see a (condition) specialist. Now, the Dr. said well why haven't you been sent to a Dr. you've been a (condition) for 6 years. I was in the forces at the time and my doctor didn't see it very important. But today I put out \$100 in order, so I could see a specialized Dr. even though I had a prescription from a specialized doctor.

But these are the things that we're going through. I'm certainly hoping that the system is improving but one thing I have to say is that taking the voice from JPSU and putting them back into their work environment is the wrong thing. I certainly believe that once the boys get put back into the work environment the injury that occurring in our body is invisible and certainly if most people knew that the (injury) is damaged they would certainly change things. So finally, last week my doctor finally said that is my injury that is my (condition).

So, we are abstaining we do have an injury that's occurring so all I want to say it's a battle my cognitive issues, I have those good days where I can handle everything that's being thrown at me even today my sense of remembering and that is sort of disrupted at times, but I can see the guys that are releasing because if we only knew our prefrontal is damaged it certainly would make things change wouldn't it. A lot more help would be out there for us. But the, the sense of mental injury is a two-year pension. If it was a physical injury it would be age 65. So, with two years, we get the boys going to school, get the boys working, working more than 15 hours a week, so they can get back on the road and they can show improvement, but you see what happens is the deregulation that occurs to our body. So, the injury that might have happened while we're in the forces isn't full blown until later on. It's just happened I had 30+ years I did 10+ tours consequences is the end right. So that's all I wanted to say thank you very much.

I was (?) after X years mostly all jet flying, and my hearing was deteriorating as I got to the end of my career. I was out of country and I was tested for hearing on an annual medical and it was noted that I had a considerable decrease in hearing ability. However, when I came time for release I got it at CFB (city) having been moved there for final location and I was not even tested for hearing which was strange because every year as a (trade) you had to have a hearing test.

I have one last thing I would like to add, mainly because everybody I work with has PTSD. There is a huge gap in what happens when somebody with PTSD has a mental breakdown. One of our guys did, we worked with him, he had his dog with him, which really helped. We phoned the crisis centre. They phoned the crisis team, the crisis team phoned us, they said *we are sorry, it is five after six, we can't help you*. I was told I had to take him to the hospital to be assessed. If I didn't take him to the hospital to be assessed I had to phone RCMP and they would come and take him to the hospital. So, I phoned the military crisis line, and said I'm in (base town) is there not a military mental health team up here? "No". I said *do you have a number for anybody up here?* "No. The base hospital is open from 9 to 4:30", so I took to this gentlemen to the hospital, where I found out no mental health up in a military town. They released him, and we kept him alive. When you start talking about all these things, you have to fill in all the gaps, not just one or two gaps, all the gaps. Can't just release somebody and go, "well it is after six, we can't help you."

Gentlemen over there with the other service dog, bunch of people mentioned that when you are transitioning from military to civilian life, some people do fall through the cracks. Now I don't want to sound like an ass here, but we have lost more military people to suicide than we lost in Afghanistan. Because I was there, I've seen it, I've seen a lot of things, I've seen some of my friends go. So, they will have to learn to transition. I was reading book about Jodie Mettic, I don't know if you have read it, it's a really good book. He is sharing the shortfalls that he had coming back. One of the nurse captains told him, *"we don't know how to treat you"*. You know, and then when you get to Veterans Affairs and you think it is all doctors sitting on the boards and such to take care of your situations, and you find out that, Joe Blow who doesn't even know we have a Navy let alone an Army in Canada, and he goes *"oh, don't worry about that, that is no good"*. You have to keep fighting, fighting, and fighting. It's very frustrating. The reason I'm here is because my wife, if my wife wasn't here, even with my service dog, I wouldn't have shown up. It is a case by case persona you have to go through. People have to realize that once you go through all these battle things that nobody has ever done before, even my father-in-law, he did 38 years never once been through any action, and he told me, *"I don't want to be in your shoes"*, he's 85 years old, and says *"I wouldn't be in your shoes if you paid me"*. Thanks.

When I did get hearing tests in there I was Army and I remember one particular case was in Germany and we were stuck in the MIR and meanwhile outside the APC's and tract guns had come into use and they're holding a hearing test. I don't think, I really don't think the medical personnel were trained. I think somebody said (rank) VAC take this box run a hearing test I personally don't think qualified people ever ran a hearing test. I've seen medicals where I stood in the doorway (rank) looked at me prior to going on junior NCO course he said how do you feel. Fine. You can go on the course. I think there was shortage at least in my mind in the military medical side how things were approached and handled. Time line again for that, it was the 80s? We're talking back into the 60s and the 70s and that. It's not I was never impressed with the medical service in the Canadian Army when I look back on it. It took the (another country) hospital to save my life not the Canadian Army.

1995 voluntary ■ The release medical was a joke and I can only hope my concerns were recorded.

1994 ■ Medical issues were ignored.

2013 ■ DND/VAC doesn't work together. I was recommended for treatment by an Osteopath, after seeing one for several weeks, VAC refused to pay as they will only cover Osteopaths in Quebec and Ontario, not BC where I live. The CF covers Osteopaths, as serving military personnel were seeing the same Osteopath as me and were covered. Why are there differences in what DND and VAC will cover and why did this cause me so much grief? I ended up going to Physio for 2 years and it did not help. Still looking for the proper treatment 4 years later.

1993 ■ Did my own f.o.i.(medical, dental ,& personal file)-signed off the base and never heard from them again. A friend helped me apply for a disability pension.

1998 ■ Because of a HCV diagnosis on release I was found unfit for further service.

2012 ■ Still do not have a family physician. OSI clinics are no good as they only provide a band aid for veterans to help cope with your disabilities.

1994 ■ There wasn't one at that time, six months after my release I found out through a friend that I could access my military medical files which I had my family doctor but that was it.

1988 voluntary ■ The only thing, beef I had is I had a medical problem, a dental problem when I was in the Air Force in 1958. The Army doctor, did a number on me. He thought he was doing the right thing and years later I found out he wasn't doing the right thing.

When I went to Veterans Affairs, it will say that then 55 years ago, did the right thing. How the hell am I going to do that? Then I found a doctor, e service, he was all keen on it, that he examined me and found out that right what they shouldn't have done. Then they sent me it a specialist, I paid \$400 to get an assessment and Veterans Affairs they just said, find go back 50 years to prove that, anyway, I just wanted to make the comment.

2017 ■ No issues obtaining a civilian doctor (the MFRC was a big help), however it takes far too long to obtain medical records so that they can be transferred.

2008 ■ Excellent, civilians have it much better, they have access to 2nd and 3d line medical care without needing financial approval of a base surgeon who only offers 1st line of care, and budgets for everything else. In a few words, releasing from the CF and having access to civilian medical care was a great blessing, and saved me from developing serious medical issues which were being ignored by the CF CALIAN contractors.

1995 ■ Quite bumpy. It took a while to get used to the public system way of doing things. However, I appreciated having only one family doctor, instead of many different MOs and medical staff depending on posting locations.

2012 ■ I've been in the Forces for 30+ years and through a discharge process, I've been discharged for five years now, I don't have a family doctor, and then you know how it is in the Forces, we don't need our health card and all that, and on release I could say it's messy to have a family doctor.

1993 ■ Once I received my medical file from DND it went smoothly, unsure.

Not about me. Another reservist who served 25 years, wasn't given a medical. She was released without that. It was delayed, you know, so that and her release ceremony ended up being at a Christmas dinner at the reserve unit. Shortly after she was released, she suffered a heart attack.

2013 ■ I released 2013, so relatively fresh. I've compiled something that I will send to you guys after tonight. The notes version, I was told that I was being released because of (condition). I was treated once. I had been put on two temporary categories and then the third, but the third was denied, and a permanent medical category was requested. Here is where it gets really good, I have 31 pages from first ATIP request and, low and behold, the person who denied that TCAT, who was hell-bent on me being released ends up as senior filing medical officer on my file at federal veteran's affairs. I wouldn't have known this if I didn't put in for my ATIP request. The release process; when I was going through the release process, my first appointment was made with a very new junior CF personnel, then it was covered off by a regular CF person.

1998 ■ Difficult as I was released as disabled, my release being changed to a medical release after I was already released.

2013 ■ You talk about the exit medical (military), I had an exit medical, however it was can you breathe, you have a pulse, everything is good. There was nothing, they didn't go over my medical history, didn't go over I had a claim with Veterans Affairs, they didn't even go over that.

2013 ■ Thankfully the CF case manager assisted me in finding a Dr. however VAC refused to talk to me about ongoing treatments until I was physically released from the CF. This caused many delays in carrying on with physio and other therapies. For several months I had no BC Care Card / account and no PSHCP coverage, causing me to pay out of pocket for ANY medical services and trouble with Drs. insisting on billing me. My understanding is this was caused by delays in the processing of my CF pension, as all of the paperwork I was to do was done 6 months before my release date and my pension was not paying for the medical or dental until the CF finished with whatever they were doing that took months after my release date. CF pension office and VAC issues.

2008 ■ Proceeded with immediate release and no Medical Personnel Holding process despite a potentially terminal Cancer diagnosis. UNSAT.

2003 ■ I was able to switch to our family doctor on release and he was happy with the release of my medical documents.

2009 ■ "It took me over 2 years to get a Dr. so there was NO transition for me. I was medically released, needed (procedure) and no one would help me. SISIP cut me off because I could not get a Dr. to fill out required reports. I was released in 09, VAC started to help me in 2012... 3 years is too long!! As for being dentally fit that was a joke too. I served 20+ years. Got a civvy dentist no problem. First thing the dentist tells me after first appointment is that I need at least three crowns, a bridge and periodontal surgery. It has cost me thousands of dollars in dental bills since releasing. I was on retirement leave when one of my molars cracked. Went to base dental and they just filled it again... UNSAT!!"

1982 ■ Easy.

2014 ■ Fairly straight forward. Some extra paperwork because we are in BC.

2008 ■ Civilian medical treatment was outstanding immediate and top-notch. CAF medical featured a potentially fatal and woefully inaccurate diagnosis. Poor.

2007 ■ I retired as a (trade) back in 2007. My issue was when I retired I went to my medical release with a young doctor he was just fresh there, and at the time the very last day he told me he thought I would be getting a medical release and I said okay I already have a job lined up I don't really care I just want out of here. And six months later I get a phone call from MW on base saying that I was fit for duty, my medical release was in come sign it, but you've got a clean bill of health. I had a (injury) (injury) and a (injury) and I'm going how could I have been fit for duty with all of this. And they go well I'm out of the military so have a nice life and I never came and signed the medical. So that's my story. I got a regular pension.

Veterans Affairs, when they were in service as a member, our medical issues are all taken care of by this.

We do not share, in Ontario, once you retire, you have to apply for medical, for these issues.

When from the Veterans Affairs, to have these two years. We follow that.

That's the issue for RCMP and for Veterans. We are, as long as we are in our uniforms, we have no home; our home is our uniform. But our families are still, they still have these cards if it you are in this Ontario or if you are in Nova Scotia, have Nova Scotia or Quebec. You don't and when you get out, like my military care ended my last day of the military. I still have to do all of that. Like you say, the RCMP is the same thing, you are this person, you have no home. I came out and applied for this (medical card) and they said, "where have you been living"? I said, in Ontario. "How come you don't have a card". I was, military. Oh" I have to make sure you lived in Ontario for the last so long." Not to put a fine point on it, but you are treated worse than a refugee, you are not told here you go. Welcome, thank you for your service. It is like you have to prove to us you were here. So I'm here, I was born down the road.

Right now, they are trying to work to have a Veterans file, the thing that we're going through. In the 80s, I was a medical assistant. There are people coming back with Yellow Fever, people coming back other illnesses, and nobody knows your name. This is complex, post-traumatic stress, didn't happen. So, you talk about some stuff that people who haven't different security levels and different experiences than you have, and you are trying to explain what happened it's very overwhelming for a civilian to understand, the 16 or 20 years of your life that it is in, out of context of little. Then you are arriving with your military and you are trying to get services and it's hard enough to even have access without others, you still have to go through emergency, trying to explain and I mean we went, then I have post-traumatic stress. Half of the people in the planet, say "so you are good", no you cannot touch, can't, so when it comes to taking care of people, Veterans. The whole system, this is, not to their fault, they are amazing people, and they have the families, they have personal, but when you, with that very overwhelming past then file like this, don't know, so sometimes it is almost like a mechanism that like right so stop thinking about it. I think we have to understand that we need this, because specific things have happened to us. If we understand we need, services, social workers and psychologists that are understanding of the medical problem, but again, with chest pain it is not just because I have anxiety, there are other things that relates to that, based on where I've been in my career. If you don't know that, you don't ask right questions, and you have, a very frustrated veteran. And that's coming up at the end and, look at me, I don't think it is, all the resources, but I think the problem comes from way, not covering that, not probably taking care of medically, because we don't have staff that complex, complex, if that makes sense.

As for training for the medical staff for release medicals, I think they are trained and tried to opt to confuse the issues. I think there's, I had a problem, and it's not on my records. I don't know where it went. I can remember the day it happened. I could hear the snap that cracked and my MIR it's not on my medical records.

My piece, in my case I had seen two civilian doctors. Getting back to what I was saying before reservists their policy is to see civilian doctors so lots of times their medical information is not put on the military file. Their medical information is still at the civilian doctor's office. Unless the CO tells them when he gets the doctors note from them to go to see this doctor otherwise that information is kept in the private doctor's office. I had two doctors supporting, three their letters and two doctor letters said what the diagnosis was, and Veterans Affairs fought me on all of them. And I had two doctors, three doctors, first doctor said what it was, said it's not a diagnosis. I go to a second doctor, he says it's a diagnosis and he says (injury) he's going that way. I go to a third doctor the third doctor I was lucky it was a military doctor retired out he supported the other two doctors saying that it was a diagnosis. But Veterans Affairs denied, denied, denied each time until finally I had to go to federal court and it was thrown back for it to be reheard again. So, there are a lot of areas in the law when I went to court and there's a privacy issue that you need to be aware of and this is one of the main reasons I'm here and that may be coming in the last and final question you're going to ask and it's important that I get your attention on it. And you need to bring this up and it's to do with privacy.

2006 RCMP ■ Some of the other gentlemen might be able to help us out with the Canadian forces discharge but in the RCMP there's not a medical prior to you being discharged. There's not a medical or a hearing examination. And that's a big point of contention now with a lot of veterans in the RCMP because of a lot of the disabilities are hearing related and if you can't prove that it was RCMP service that caused the majority of your hearing disability, then it's a very tough for that to come into effect.

1995 ■ I found out the military purges your medical records, so you don't have supported claims.

2008 ■ Excellent, after my release I was able to access medical care through civilian walk in clinics such as Appletree. These clinics were able to quickly resolve medical problems that had been bothering me, had been reported, but were never addressed by the CF medical system.

2012 ■ I kept copies of medical documents to prevent the delays however still waited 16 weeks without pay to receive approval for disability.

RCMP ■ I'm from the RCMP, I'm alone in my group. Thank you for inviting the RCMP. There are still many members who join you when we go on a peace mission and when we go abroad. Two comments or two points about us at the RCMP, when we retire at the end of a mission – not at the end of a mission, but at the end of a service – it's similar to you, no medical examination, and you, similar at the family level.

RCMP ■ One thing that has come up lately and I would like to put an addendum on this because I don't know if it's exactly right or not, but I requested my service file and my medical file from the RCMP because if they say if I had a stroke or heart attack and couldn't speak for myself my wife wouldn't be able to access that I think it's like 20 years or until my death or something like that.

I've taken that precaution to go and access those documents because if you don't have your health file from the RCMP you likely can't get your hands on it for a long time. I don't know if it's the same as with the Canadian forces or not. But I know that's what I ran up into so that's why I've taken that route. (Were they willing to provide the files to you or did they just provide them to your family doctor?) No, my service file I've got it, it's on a disk and I haven't received my medical file yet. And that was, and it's a privacy to go through the privacy I forget what it's called. Yes.

1997 ■ When we got out of the service, we had access we had to do was give written notice requesting whatever files we wanted, medical, dental, administrative, everything, and there were no problems whatsoever. We received everything within about two weeks. And it was absolutely no problems.

Well, anyways, there were more things that were going on in between and I had gone through the whole system already with a review and appeal and judicial review, so I have some things to say about privacy that I think you should know about. Anyways, I believe that I should have one other difficult issue here in the past was when a reservist is injured they were told to see a civilian doctor and they were not allowed to see a military doctor, base military doctor unless the CO sent them there.

So, I fell through the cracks basically. And I didn't, and because I'm not a medical person, I didn't know that my injury which happened to be chronic. I didn't realize it could lead into (condition) I had no idea down the road that would happen.

So, basically, I just want to say I fell through the cracks and I'm sure there are a lot of other reservist that would fall through the cracks because today they're still under the same policy they're to go see a civilian doctor, when they're injured.

We were fortunate when we come out here, my wife's family is in touch with their doctors and they approached the doctors and asked if they would take us on as patients, so the transition was nonexistent really. It really went well but I think that's because we had family out here and they intervened for us and so the reports of contact and we went from there. It worked out quite well I think.

2011 ■ Civilians actually talk to you not telling you what they want and prescribing a cheap medication. Military dentist did the absolute minimum to prevent tooth filling loss. In service I had fillings lasts decades. Upon release the fillings lasted only a few months.

2013 ■ Very difficult as being in Saskatchewan, you have to demonstrate residency in order to be eligible for services. This took 4-5 months of working in Saskatchewan to obtain.

2015 ■ Extremely heart breaking, especially when the decision has been enforced against the soldiers will

2002 ■ It was difficult, but not an insurmountable task.

2009 ■ When I retired in 2009 I was told had to do everything on our own. I started, even before I arrived at (city), I was in (city) and posted so I got my husband to go and start calling all the local family practice clinics in the (another) city. He went a year and a half, almost two years before even got to (city), I was, we were separated, I had to finish working in (city). A year and a half to two years went to every clinic in (city), put my name on the list. By the time I got to (city), I retired I had a family doctor, again there was absolutely no help for that, we were completely on our own.

2003 ■ Very poor, and again I was never made aware of any of it, released on a 3b medical and tossed aside for years.

2012 ■ I was able to get a civvy Dr. right after release, partially due to my list of medical conditions. What is hard is that these civvy Drs., at least the ones I have gotten, do not have any idea of the military, or what our bodies went through during our careers. Yeah they've ""heard it can be tough work"" but have no clue as to what that ACTUALLY means. No amount of me trying to explain it will really get them to understand. And the wait times are a HUGE difference. When still serving and a referral was sent to a specialist I was seen within months. Now as a civvy I've waited anywhere from 8 months to over a year."

1994 ■ Was lucky to find a Dr. who would take new patients, so had no delay.

1994 ■ Fairly seamlessly.

1996, 1997, 2005, 2016 ■ No problem (4 responses).

2016 ■ It has been very difficult. I don't have a family doctor so my treatment plan for long-term issues has been totally disrupted. It's good that my wife could guide me on how to navigate the civilian system. I have seen a doctor, in a walk-in clinic once.

1983 ■ I was on my own.

1994, 1996 ■ Good (2 responses).

2009 ■ As a class A reservist – not applicable.

2012 ■ It was good because I was a reservist the final six years of my 36 year career and had gone out and got civilian doctors.

2017 ■ Unknown. I've been released for 3.5 months, not sure what to do. I've had a disability benefit claim on step 1 for 3 months.

1988 ■ Medical care was good however the administration of the costs is bad.

2006 ■ Very problematic. After 30+ years of service trying to suddenly find someone willing to take on a new patient was very difficult. A list of Drs. accepting patients provided by the Base was out of date and useless.

2017 ■ No problems but only because my wife got her family physician to commit to take me on as a patient upon my release.

2017 ■ Poor, I was released 3B and moved province upon release.

1994 ■ Release medical documentation should be reviewed to see if medical entitlement exists (hearing loss) and act administratively during the release process to assist the member to entitlements at that time.

2011 ■ Very hard to find a family doctor ended up using walk in and ER. Took 5 years to get a doctor.

The biggest problem we encountered from moving from (base) here to (base) is getting medical help. Like my husband, we have to travel to (different major city) for one thing, every three months, and when we go over there we have to get approval through Blue Cross every time, where before we were totally approved we didn't have to do this, now we have to. He had a (medical need), so we went to VAC, sent all the appropriate paperwork with all the estimates, and they approved to have it done, no problem because he is on (?) category, doesn't matter what he needs, they are going to pay for the rest of their lives, no big deal. Well, he got the (medical device) done and it took twelve claims from the health care office here in (town) to Blue Cross and me fighting them and fighting them to pay this bill. That's just not acceptable, especially when you have a paper that's already been approved and here they are turning around saying "no we are not going to pay it, go screw yourself", basically. I told them how they could go screw themselves basically, because they were paying for it, simple. It is all this kind of stuff here, that I find really bad, and it is really hard when you transition from military into civilian life, when it comes to the medical aspect of it. Because you don't have family doctor. These members, even RCMP, don't have family doctors, well maybe RCMP do, I don't know, but the military don't. They go to military doctors they go to.

If you don't have a family doctor you have to try to find one, good luck, in (this town), good luck, as it is, across all of Canada, it doesn't matter. They are all retiring and they're not bringing anyone in because the government won't pay the money for the doctors here in this country, sad but true. How do you get people ready for this? Because this is a total living nightmare. So that's about it.

2017 ■ The case managers on the healthcare side really knew the entire process. A mentor or supervisor with insight from past experience would seem to solve the problem.

2015 ■ When medically releasing going from under CAF to VAC is not easy if you do not have a case manager in both places. I was lucky I had one in both departments but many others who did not felt lost, abandoned or forgotten.

2010 ■ I find medical coverage to have dramatically dropped. My annual Personal medical expenses that are no longer covered are between \$20,000 and \$35,000 annually for me and my dependent son.

1997 ■ I got released in 96/97, was early transaction, military. I can't hear, largely due to 3000 hours flying, and those days no ear protection, no defenders, just a headset to hear what someone was saying to you. People don't realize, the fighter aircraft, inside the cockpit is completely silent. Cruise along at 500 miles an hour, all you hear is the motors shutting down, anyway, however if it is still hard on the ears because of large pressure changes, if you know you are catching a cold, your ears don't clear, usually on the way down, they clear on the way up, they don't clear on the way down. Suffer some pain and after that remember, doctor looked at my ears and told me my eardrums were like a pair of funky nylons. Also at the airport in the early 80s, I started application to see if I could get some support. They sent me to their dedicated person, who I think hated the military, and the report that said that I had a hearing loss and it could be from military, or it could be just age. That killed any possibility of getting anything out of that. I then went on for many years making my own way. A little over a year ago I came across a letter to the editor in the Legion magazine where she says things were getting better. I went back to the Legion, reapplied, and they did reinvestigation, they talked with woman who sells the hearing aids and said, cost \$4000, and they acknowledged that 30% of my hearing loss would be from my military service. Should have been 90% but I'll accept 30% because at least it is something. They sent a nurse to examine my situation and eventually gave me a check. I don't think I have any complaints, for hundred thousand dollars. It makes a big difference between living in poverty and living in OK, I sure appreciate that. They also, provided funds and support for housekeeping and so on.

2009 ■ Luckily, I found a doctor whose practice was full, but he was willing to take on retired military personnel as he was a veteran himself.

2015 ■ A pretty big surprise. I was lucky in a way as I found a doctor taking patients 4 months before I retired. They were very accommodating as they simply kept on pushing my initial visit with the doctor forward. Hard not to be able to just walk into the MIR and see someone. Waiting lists are now part of my life.

2004 ■ Horrible. Military retirees should remain on federal coverage. We exposed ourselves to danger and injury, the federal government broke us, taught us nothing about provincial health care and tossed us on to it without a thought for our service; we should be covered without question, for life...

2014 ■ I was fortunate that my wife's family doctor accepted me as a patient without any hesitation or delay.

2012 ■ Difficult – I could not find a Dr. who was taking patients (I am single). I ended up with the former Surgeon General who had retired – not satisfied. I finally found a superb female Dr. through civilian friends. My other military friends had similar difficulties.

1991 ■ Not a problem. Had a civilian doctor who was familiar with military life.

2016 ■ I found my own civilian doctor within 2 months.

1995 ■ Difficult still looking for a doctor.

2009 or more recent ■ I guess I'll get up because a number of different medical conditions that I'm suffering from. So, when you have a doctor in the forces that's withholding information from you on diagnosis of pathology conditions and as you're progressing through the end of your terms of being in the military, when you discover things outside while you're serving, my case being that I have (condition), and (another condition), that's a real frustration. Because this was withheld from me while I was still serving, and they knew this. Not only do I have that, but I have (condition), (condition), (other) issues that I'm affected with all because of (condition). All of this has all been diagnosed and verified. So, what happens is when a doctor sends a consultation out and says we had like you to take care of Mr. (name), sorry shouldn't have said that, but, you know, and then they do their investigation and they discover well I have (other) issues also occurring in my body, deregulation, (condition) in my body is screwed up that's even being denied. After a specialist diagnosis with a condition my GP is denying me the condition. But I was told on my release that my medical system and the care should be very easy for the medical system on the street to deal with.

But all it is has been frustration after frustration and I can see us guys from our tours in (country) I did multiple tours over there I did 6 tours in (country), I spent X days from 2001 to 2009 in country that's all I had. The rest of it was over in (country). Almost a year in (country). That was my life for nine years almost and my (condition) occurred over time. But the problem with the system there has to be something, one is the forces has to acknowledge our injuries that are occurring and by acknowledging our injuries can make our life a little bit more simple.

Our quality of life and trying to figure out what the hell has gone wrong with ourselves and getting this balance back into place. It's taken me five years to figure out what the heck is wrong with me only through my own discoveries and having to go out and buy programs and review my MRI and then go back to the doctor and say hey, how come you didn't tell me about this.

Why didn't you tell me about the (condition) and the (other condition)? I'm lucky I still have the same doctor I had in the forces that withheld that information from me. So, I went back to him when I got back this year and I placed it softly on his desk, showed him the image of my brain and I said why didn't you tell me about this. This is what we're facing. Deny, deny, lies and lies. And something has to improve here. So that's it.

I applied in 2014 for my doctor and I'm still waiting for a family doctor. When SISIP tell you that you have to go get that form filled out, you don't have a doctor, what am I supposed to do? I don't have a doctor. I explain that I applied. I registered online with the 811, I did everything. I called every 6 months to make sure my name is still

there. They have not forgotten me, and no, there is no doctor. There used to have doctors at Veteran's Affairs to help out, but that got squashed a long time ago again because of money because DND were bickering who was going to pick up the tab and, guess what, we all paid the ultimate price because they squashed it completely.

So now a guy like me and many are being thrown out of the forces, medically released because of service reasons, and they are not holding their responsibility to take care of us and they put hurdles in front of us that hurt us, because I can't access some of their programs unless I have a doctor that will prescribe or will give you a document to say that yes, he supports that training plan or that VOC Rehab or what have you. Everything basically is surrounded around a doctor. If you don't have that, what do you have? To look after yourself and feel bad that's what you have. You're going to be fighting all the way.

In civilian medical care, more effective and more responsive.

1995 voluntary ■ Since I retired, I imagine the release procedures have changed a lot. I wouldn't recognize half the faces in different services that are available. I applied for voluntary release and halfway through my release I was surprised to find that out that I was going to be medically released. There was a glitch in the information chain there which surprised me because I was new medical.

2011 ■ Very difficult! When we have known the accessibility of military health care, the transition to the civilian system is atrocious, especially when we are released for medical reasons. The fact that I didn't move after my release made it easier for me to access a family doctor because she already had the children as her clients so she agreed to take me. However, the multidisciplinary follow-up I needed was cumbersome and, above all, time-consuming because my civilian physician does not understand in detail the many questionnaires required by Veterans Affairs Canada. In addition, many of these forms are invoiced to me because the doctor's office does not accept deferred payments.

2014 voluntary ■ During the release interview, the Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) office provides us with forms to request a disability claim but without further details, but the military members do not have access to the medical file to properly complete these forms. It is important to prepare this application with all supporting documentation. My request for care and invalidity was refused due to a lack of documents to support the request. Upon release, a copy of the medical file is not given but a copy (electronic copy via a CD) is sent about 6 months after release. In my case, some of the documents in the medical file were missing (mental health record). Meanwhile, the Bureau of Pensions Advocates of VAC tells me that my application is not well formulated and that I lacked information. A request via access to information was made without success. They said I didn't go to the clinic. Note: In 2014 or earlier, the mental health file did not follow the medical file. I filed a formal complaint with the Privacy Commissioner to find my file. An investigator was appointed. They found my mental health file in June 2017 (about 3 years after my release). Now in possession of my mental health record, I applied again to VAC for my mental health issues with the support of the Legion. The request is being processed. Also, having my mental health record, informed me that since I did not apply within the prescribed time limit (2 years), I am not entitled to VAC services but that I could still have access to rehabilitation programs even if it's been three years since the release. Three years after my release, a case manager was appointed. Also to be noted, my voluntary release was in September 2014 and was modified by the CF in September 2016 as a medical release. The Canadian Forces are almost two years behind in rendering the decision of a medical release. This has a negative impact on released members, because we are not entitled to the services

required to facilitate our transition. In short, in my case, the Canadian Forces did not give me access to my mental health record and VAC did not want to provide services without proof of my mental health record. During that time, I paid with my own money to access health services related to mental health issues. This was a source of frustration and has not helped my condition.

Medical regards. I applied for my medical records to be released. They were very nice, they sent me a letter saying due to a backlog they weren't going to be able to make the 30-day statutory requirement but would get back to me and that was back in March and I still have no medical records.

I really missed the military, it was family. I would have benefited from psychological training before I retired, they were my family. Adjustment was very difficult.

2012 ■ Good over all yet the medical system are not user friendly to cases like mine.

1993 voluntary ■ OK. Found another job and there was a health plan offered.

1998 ■ Complete hell. I went years without proper medical treatment, causing things to become a lot worse for me in all aspects of my life.

2006 ■ Absolutely shit. I was pregnant and still on narcotics which the army doc had me on for 3+ years and I was released with no doctor. Totally dropped the ball.

2016 ■ This was a welcomed change for me. I find the care level (civilian) much more professional and relatively easy to access.

2006 ■ It was extremely difficult to find a doctor. When I did he refused to give me the drug cocktail that the military spent 7 years putting together for my conditions.

2005 ■ It was a bit scary however I made sure that prior to my partners release from the military I had them grandfathered in with my civilian family doctor.

2012 ■ The military medical care I received was most great especially my last 5 years.

2012 ■ Civilian care is terrible in comparison. Hard to get a civilian Doctor, nonmilitary doctors don't know what military people go through, so really hard to show military connection. Medical services are not readily available as in the military. Civilian Dr. don't have time to review a 30 year career medical file.

No system is perfect. I can't complain about the medical handling that I had in the service. One thing I have found in civilian life that it is assembly line medicine when you go to the doctor in civilian world. I think the longest I've spent with my doctor is about 15 minutes, and she leaves.

Help getting set up in provincial healthcare systems, including records (moving records over).

Reference the transition between military doctors and civilians I had a hard time with military medical staff but when I transitioned my first doctor out of the military he did not believe any of my military issues. I brought in a copy or synopsis that the doctors gave me of the injuries I had, and he looked at me and said you're what do you call it (condition) and I had him about two years. I now have a good civilian doctor he listens and send me out and gets the checks and everything else. Now I'm in a good place. The transition was a rough. Do you have a doctor? I got one of their doctors and he was an idiot.

1992 RCMP ■ One thing that I found very disheartening, and I knew about it, was make sure you have a medical, a full complete medical, before you retire. Because I had a number of members that had retired and were trying to receive treatment or compensation for their injuries and there was no record of it and the stupid annual medical we had to take didn't cover it. I talked to my doctor one time and he says this; this form is ridiculous. It is not telling us, from the tests they are asking for, it is not telling us prevented measures that we can take to treat you to improve your health.

Released after 2006 ■ I was medically released from (condition) as well from my first tour in (country) in 2006. My experience is different I do believe there has been an improvement specifically relating to the OSI clinic, they have a trial basis going on now where they have a medical practitioner that's works at the clinic, once you're medically released you usually go for therapy for everything else but now you actually have a doctor who will see you for other things related that are unrelated to your medical condition that's released from the military or psychological condition. So, I think that's a really great program it's a trial basis right now in (city) I'm hoping they will be implement it go across the country so from my experience being out of the military recently going downtown and dealing with civilians is a very difficult, its an eye-opening experience put it that way. So, having a nurse practitioner a doctor et cetera at the clinic that can see you as a family physician is a great idea and I hope they carry it on.

2016 ■ It is a good process now. Only thing I would like to see them add was the medical and dental. I continued on with it. The problem I had was I filled out the forms and I sent them to the wrong place, because one goes one place an one goes another. I would like to see the release section fill the forms out if you want and right there all your other paperwork. Have them send it to the correct spot. The other thing is, once we're covered by the insurance company, the insurance company should let us know that okay, I can go to the dentist now and my wife can go. Because she went to the dentist and she was covered. I went to the dentist and lo and behold mine had not kicked in a month later it paid for it. Some people can get into financial problems. If there is a way that the insurance company can say okay, you're going to be covered as of this date, it is on paper. It makes it a lot easier for guys.

2013 ■ Hard so used to having it available to having to start all over and figure out the system.

2005 ■ Nightmare.

2015 ■ not at all helpful, it took 8 months for me to get my medical file and 4 months for my dental records, and then took an additional few months to find a doctor that was accepting new patients, plus having to pay for medications that were not covered under VAC, was a huge financial burden.

2004 ■ It was horrific, I was told by release centre that they would carry over my health care and dental care through PSHCP only to find out that they did not and had to go to my MP to get it re-instated after I had to prove to him on my release papers that I wanted to keep both. Very traumatic when you have a wife and 2 young children.

1990 ■ I was able to connect with a local doctor at the city where I retired. My records were sent for, and in reality there were few problems in this regard.

1997 ■ Longer wait time for civilian. No help for at all for either long term with regard to PTSD, short term about the same, no exit strategy to drug solutions. This remains unchanged 25 years later.

2015 ■ Piss poor... try and find a Dr. in NB. Try and find a Dr. in NB who understands VAC paper work.

Military was great for the medical, but in civilian, you wait forever. That's the only problem I have is that I must redo my surgery on my (body), and I figure it's probably going to take two years. Just a guess.

2016 ■ The other thing I had a problem with is if anyone is getting out medically, a year later SISIP wants paperwork saying yeah (issue) is still bad and (issue) is bad, well my doctor has no clue. They've got to come up with a way that when you leave the military, that if it is not going to be better ever, they should put it in writing when you get out of the military. I have four different doctors in the military for different parts of my body that are never going to get better. For me to go to my civilian doctor she doesn't know me from a hole in the ground. She did fill out the paperwork with the paperwork I got from the doctors I'd see in the military, but I was lucky that I had those forms.

2009 RCMP ■ I had to see a doctor and I had to get post-traumatic treatment.

RCMP ■ Was a member of the RCMP in the 70's and 80's. It was apparent that medical information regarding work related injuries was not adequately recorded by doctors nor requested by DVA. Lasting injuries have resulted in some hardships.

Well still serving the medical center gave us great assistance in what applications to apply for and where and how to sign. I must be honest without the MIR we would've been lost.

2008 ■ For medical process: the worst.

Voluntary ■ As far as the medical part of it, I'm healthy, so I'm not a medical release. I've had people that have had problems with that as well. If you are not in military oriented town such as (city), even here in (city), doctors don't understand, they don't understand what is going on when you say you need this or that to go on your paperwork.

2005 voluntary ■ I was taking a volunteer release and I was given a medical exam on exit, they found all sorts of abnormalities with me. Release, overall quite positive except for the one beef, is I was diagnosed with (a disease) and (other) disease, two incurable diseases, despite that I was told I would be put on a

temporary medical category and that to wait six months for the category to be permanent. Once you are labeled (disease), you are labeled for life. That was the most aggravating thing, being told I'm on a temporary category after being labeled with a mess, obviously I still have (a disease). But in my case, I have to say 90% was positive, the frustrating part was just this temporary med category that made no sense with what they gave me.

2016 ▪ Extremely poor. I was released with several "ongoing" medical issues that required frequent care. The civilian medical system is presently backlogged and as a result, slow. I actually ended up in hospital for over a week because of my poor transition. I was released with PTSD, (condition, condition and condition) and no doctor would take me as a patient.

2008 ▪ Horrible. No help provided.

2013 ▪ Good.

2014 ▪ Availability of doctors is a major issue.

1981 ▪ Not bad could have been better.

1976 (medical transition) ▪ none.

2014 ▪ Easy. Gets odd when you go from near 0 wait time to waiting forever. Also paying for things like prescriptions, glasses or dental is nuts.

2015 ▪ I transitioned without a hitch, my spouses GP took me on as a patient.

1998 ▪ Transition was good however waiting 1-3 months to see a surgeon.

2004 (medical transition) ▪ Disaster!!! Enough said!!!

2015 ▪ Primary Reserve, so I kept my civilian doctor.

2014 ▪ Sure wish I was back in the military. Civilian doctors suck the big one.

2010 ▪ I was luck found a Dr. right away.

2014 ▪ None existent it was all up to me.

1992 ▪ Poor.

1989 ▪ Found it hard to deal with.

2015 ■ Sucks... VAC should have x CF docs on staff in each VAC office to sign off on VAC disability applications. Some vets wait 5-10 years on wait lists to find a civvy doc. Then that civvy doc has no military experience or history with members. Scared to sign off on VAC paperwork, or takes up to a year to fill out and send into VAC. Meanwhile, the vet is in limbo waiting and depending on age can miss out in services, i.e. releases age 60. So, things need to be in place before age 65. Seen many vets (45 plus years) don't get VAC help until age 70. Miss out on ELB, CIAS, etc.

Each VAC office should have own MH specialists on staff vice waiting 3 years to see one down town. Took 6 years for me to have my meds reviewed on civvy street. A general GP couldn't do this.

Doctors should be offered an incentive to take on a veteran. We should be top priority as many of our injuries are time sensitive i.e. lung damaged, cancer, neuro.

2016 ■ It was difficult. I had a long wait for a physician, and a tough time to get any refills for my prescription medications. I lucked out with my current doctor. She had several patients move away and had an opening. It took over 5 months to find a doctor.

1993 ■ Very troubling due to a complex case.

2010 ■ Poor and difficult to obtain a civvy DR.

2011 ■ Horrible. Treated like a drug seeker once I give my medical history. A lot of eye rolling when I say I was involved in multiple IED/explosions. Then when I say PTSD, I get put in a room and forgotten about.

1994 ■ It was fairly easy for me as my family doctor for my wife and dependents took me on as a patient.

1999 (medical transition) ■ Terrible.

2000 (medical transition) ■ It was easy.

2008 (medical transition) ■ Almost seamless but had its issues, but nothing major.

1999 ■ Totally unprepared for this transition but muddled thru it.

Problems arose (for VAC) when you applied for support on a medical issue and it hadn't previously been noted on your file while in service.

1996 ■ In my case, when I left the Canadian Forces, I consulted a psychiatrist (National Defence Medical Centre) for (issue 1) and (issue 2), he prescribed a medication and no follow-up afterward. I was left alone struggling with coping with civilian life and surely followed by an onset of depression. Transition process did not prepare me for life outside the CAF. No, it was only 20 years later and with my veteran card that I went to get help. During those years, I lived in despair and depression after depression and the year after my release I was divorced, my wife

could no longer live with me due to my (issues). Today I am <60 years old and I am well supervised by Veterans Affairs Canada, but I feel a great sense of shame and a low self-esteem; all of this to conclude, I would have liked to die in service rather than live what I am experiencing. Adapting to civilian life is always a challenge for me, I am becoming increasingly isolated. Not easy to change my life especially at <60 years old. Very hard on mental health, civilian life is changing too fast. You'd have to be a psychologist to survive, and even then.

1993 medical transition ■ OK.

1983 ■ I got all my information reference my medical condition. I was not given an opportunity to receive a posting to a shore training establishment. On November the 11th I entered a local hospital and received an (procedure).

2010 ■ But, as has been said, we heard a lot of things, access to information is very difficult, and I am a pretty enlightened young man, when I was released, in 2010, it took a year to process my medical file before I received my decision to: "You're discharged on medical grounds."

Having access to the information following my release was painful, I was getting tired. Somebody was talking about Asterix earlier, I felt like I was in there, and fortunately I understood my medical condition, I had a good psychological follow-up, I had good appointments, and I was sufficiently aware to take charge of my case. I was able to go online, my VAC file, manage the paperwork, and my wife supported me in that. If I were an older, medically unfit person, I would never have had access to those files. It's by joking with one of my friends, military with me: "Hey! (name), you can make a claim for disability, compensation and all that." "Well, let's see!"

I say to myself, there is a lack of personnel involved in the discharge, competent people, as was said by the gentleman, to have access, to have the right time: what happens when I am discharged? Not just to give us a 2,500-page file, but to explain it to us and have someone follow it up and tell our families and our wives about it, because the day I won't be medically well enough, I won't be able to make any more claims, I won't be able to call and process my file: "How is my pension, my disability file, are you progressing?"

2015 ■ Although they did provide a contact sheet, it was not always easy to navigate especially being released 3b Medical Release. Pain and medication often got into the way of completely seizing who I needed to call for each item.

2017 ■ It takes way too long to process, and no info forthcoming as to what I should be applying to and how to manage my medical care.

2015 (medical transition) ■ Non-existent. Took me 2.5 years to find a doctor.

2002 (medical transition) ■ Poor. Pretty much had to start all over again...

2014 ■ Nothing... I had to find out on my own, and I still have not received my medical docs for my civilian doctor.

1982 ■ What transition? There was none.

2006 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ Not at all. Once released I had to address my injuries on my own while trying to find a doctor.

That was also something very interesting, you said you went to a private doctor. The military, in the old days, wouldn't let you see a private doctor. If you go back into your records, an awful lot of that stuff is disappeared. This is another thing that I think the military should be able to get to a private doctor without the military knowing about it. Because I actually was in the military and stripped files and it was interesting how our job was stripping files. There was something you should always tell your kids if they are going into the military, keep track of every single day. Have witnesses at that time write up paperwork and make sure you get your write-up on your paperwork all the time. Sorry, just helps with the report after.

Well that wasn't medical records that was people, anything ten years before they got it off, like one officer that ended up in front of a 707 acting out and I notice he got promoted. But I have, I always ask for my husband medical forces records every two to three years, because I find things appear that weren't there the last time and other things disappear are, so, you know, I just keep asking for them and they come in paper like this.

I like that lady there can expand on stripping the records like what, why where did the records have to be stripped? Why did medical records have to be thrown out and who authorized that?

I felt that they were very helpful, and it was a world of information. One of the things that helped me a lot was the occupational therapist. The occupational therapist sat down and explained everything, as well as I won't mention any names this gentlemen over here, the shop he worked in they have a group of people to look after injured veterans et cetera, injured soldiers, people with medical conditions. They were just far too willing to help and they would not only give you the information, I'm not sure they're all like that – the individual I dealt with was, and he would ask you questions and require you to answer him.

He made sure you understood what he was saying. I've gone through three occupational therapists. The first one helped me get out of the military and tried to figure out what was happening so fast to get me into that condition. I had one come to my home and they put a lot of aids for living in my home to try to assist me, I guess live a normal life. I had another occupational therapist that checks base with me every four months I would say. She seems to be very much concerned with what I'm doing and how I'm doing, and sometimes she will ask very direct questions to make sure that she is comfortable in her mind that I am being treated the way I should be. I don't say that everybody necessarily has that type of treatment, because I've talked to a lot of people and maybe I just ended up on a blessed path. But I was looked after very very well. And there was some people who helped me out and people at the JPSU and IPSU (city) were very good.

2015 ■ There was some stumbling with Veterans Affairs, and one of the things I found that is a little difficult is the transition, the transition for something as easy as how do I go get family doctor. Is there some process that they might try and help people a little better in how you get a dentist, how you get a doctor? Some of the local facilities that are there to help you whether it be to list them or company that competes with them. But overall it was very good. Sometimes the explanations were so fast, where people were asking me questions, "how is this going for you?", I was unable to answer them. I was provided for very well personally, except for I found a lack of trying to help you get the services you might need like getting a family doctor or dentist etc. Thank you.

I don't know what it is like in Canadian forces, when you see a doctor you should get copy of records right away. I realized I got my two volumes when I retired, but I was in the Air Force and I served X years in the US and every time I saw a flight surgeon, I got a copy. For my X years I saw what I had, Canadian forces, it goes much of the medical problems then when they strip your files you don't know what they have taken out. I'm going, it is my body, our bodies, why can we not get copies of what the doctor is writing. I think that would make things easier towards the end.

2009 (medical transition) ■ Hard, to find a doctor and when we did they didn't want to know anything from my military service.

2012 ■ I retired 2012. Nine months before that, I knew I was retiring because I did not meet the universality of service and I accepted that. Then I started asking for continuance of medical help once I left the military and many times they said to me, *"yes we'll make sure when you leave the military is that the reason why you're leaving we'll continue to make sure help will be there for you"*. The next day (date), it felt like there was nobody there and if it wasn't for my community and other related people that have nothing to do with Veterans Affairs and nothing to do, no problem. The release program, I wouldn't have got the help I needed. *"We'll get you the help, but you have to travel to this location and it will be six weeks or before we do this, ten weeks here before that happens."* and I needed the help that week.

I guess, I was a lucky one I was able to talk to the right people in the community and they got the help for me that wasn't related to Veterans Affairs. I mean now Veterans Affairs, after a period of time, up the slack and is helping me. But when I left the military it was just terrible is all I will say. Terrible on the medical help that was promised to me on the military side but was never delivered and not followed up by Veterans Affairs.

2016 ■ Hah. It took 9 months for the PSHCP and the dental plan to be activated. Lots of misinformation and conflicting info given. Depending on what dept you talked to you got a different answer.

2017 ■ I was disappointed that it took 6 months for PSHCP to kick in for my family. Fortunately, we did not have any major medical issues that required addressing during that period and there was no need to backdate health care premiums once they were started. I find the fees for family health care to be high as the deduction from my pension is over \$300 a month which seems excessive when the majority of my health care needs are covered through awarded conditions by VAC. Paying \$300 a month to keep my family covered when the majority of months it truly only saves us about \$30 a month for prescription medication is unreasonable, but I've been told that if I cancel PSHCP it cannot be reinstated, so I must continue to pay this excessive amount in case my family has some health issue in the future. While serving I had almost unlimited access to my appointed physicians. It was difficult to lose them and have to find other specialists. I was "one of the lucky ones" to be able to be taken on as a patient by my wife and children's doctor, but the requirement to have him refer me to specialists to begin a process anew was met with some difficulty. My service injuries are plentiful and complex which leads to specialized care that is met by excessive waiting periods (ie. am yet to receive acknowledgement of a referral to one specialist 9 months ago). My health is expected to deteriorate, and it worries my family and myself that delays in treatments I had been receiving while serving will cause irreparable harm.

1996 ■ Seamless. I had no pre-release medical conditions, thus had no call for continued treatments as many others did have.

1995 voluntary ■ I found another employer and got medical care at that point, but I don't recall there being any assistance in how that might work. There was also no advice on how you might go about finding a family physician. As for health and dental benefits, a few things. One, if you are going to work again, you usually have medical coverage, but you have to pay the one for retirees, even if you won't use it for years. I've been retired for 23 years and have had very little use for it, so I've paid a lot, just to stay in. Also, on retirement, I'd never paid for dental care. So, I never opted into the dental plan. I think if you got better advice on the cost you could incur if you retire and are not working elsewhere, the better.

1992 ■ I found that because the military was so good at enforcing mandatory medical and dental check-ups, that when I got out of the military, my dental and medical check-ups were up-to-date.

2016 ■ The medical side needs a lot of work. The "releasing" of members without a means of foreseeable income (the ironic part of severance pay is for the person to better bridge the employment gap and still be able to support their family).

2008 ■ When I joined the first thing they tell you to have is make sure you get those accident reports. Well, going through what Veterans Affairs has sent me when I was released from the military you're supposed to acquire your medical file. That took forever. They (CF) were so backlogged I contacted them and they said well we don't know when we'll send it to you. Again, without that information, Veterans Affairs can't do anything because they can't access it. And then you have to sign papers for them to access it. When I joined the military, they were always insistent about having accident reports. Although most of the time the supervisor said to you that unless you died at your desk they're not going to look at you. You could have injuries all through your military career and fill out those accident reports but how many times did they go missing or, I was told by medics that they had that option whether to submit it or not, and when the paper was sent in, it took forever, or it got lost. If you didn't have a copy of something you couldn't prove it.

2013 ■ Medical releases should be done separate from the regular system.

You also need your doctor's assistance to go through all and my doctor is going blind with all the paperwork. And it's one of the things where he has 3,000 patients with Veterans Affairs, and sometimes it's three, four months later he finally gets to it. It's one of the things where it's again if you're not a doctor you're in big trouble because you don't have that medical standard of care to having a health professional advocate on your behalf.

RCMP ■ There is a good point, being in RCMP in Canada, so therefore we did have access to private doctors and dental and all the rest, if you are in Ottawa had to go to the hospital but if you are stationed anywhere else across Canada, you did have access to private doctors.

2014 ■ Release process was long for me as I was dealing with ongoing medical issues. The CF leadership did a great job ensuring I had valuable work to do while I was being treated.

2014 ■ My release and transition went well for the first three years and then out of the blue, I received a letter informing me that my Release Category was changed from a 5A to a 3B. It took NDHQ/Med Pol three years to review my file and render a decision based on a (medical incident) I had four months prior to my release.

Now I am waiting to hear from Manulife (Halifax) about what benefits will still apply. And I am not the only one in this situation; Manulife has informed me that my file has been received, they have all the information they require to make a determination, but NDHQ, SISIP and Manulife have yet to meet face-to-face to work out the necessary policy and financials to address the hundreds of files that are sitting in the Halifax offices. My complaint is that my file could have been fast-tracked while I was still in uniform to make the Release Category 3B determination. Then I would have been processed as a Medical Release candidate vice a Services No Longer Required candidate. I feel NAFR needs to insist that Manulife reps attend the meeting(s) that are scheduled for the near future that will discuss how to better treat releasing or released members of the CAF. It's been ten months since my category was changed and nothing has been addressed.

2011 ■ It works ONLY if the casualty is mentally capable of managing it. The process is for the military to check off boxes not transition the soldier.

Of course, you have to apply for your government if you stay in the military you have to apply for your government (health) card, and they tell you there's a waiting period. Well, you find out if you do a little legwork there's actually short cuts, because you're told you won't get your card for four months that means for four months you can't go to doctor, every place asks you for a medical card. But what you end up finding out is that if you went to Ottawa you get it faster, which they don't tell you, or at the service here in town if you stay until the end of the day they'll give it to you.

Still serving ■ Just to touch on medical services here, we've been posted here five years and I don't know how I'm supposed to get a doctor. I have zero intent to retire here. One of my closest friends medically released and she played it smart, at least we thought she did, she bought a house in the woods in her hometown away from everything and all her triggers and distractions. Unfortunately for her, being in a small town, her therapist has no understanding of military mental issues, her physiotherapist has sent a letter to VAC saying she should be fixed right now, it's all in her head. So, they pulled her acupuncture and chiropractic. Her actual therapist looked her in the eye and said I've been treating you for four years, you should be fixed by now. It's not only are you accessing a doctor, she got a doctor, they only have one in town, but now are you accessing the right medical service. If I move anywhere that has less than 20,000 people, I'm hosed. If I God forbid I deploy again and something goes sideways, or I'm not able to take care of myself or I have serious injuries due to my job and therapy locally that is available locally isn't prepared to deal with me I'm kind of roped.

2008 ■ Having a family doctor when you leave from the military you have that last final checkup with your doctor that they're supposed to indicate on your file, especially if you're being medically released what you're being released for, because if you're not able to do your job and it's a medical, it should be stated on your document. Veterans Affairs is saying a couple of months later, especially if it's a condition that's not changing and you don't have a family doctor which I didn't, and the clinics will not fill out your paperwork and I replied saying hey, I don't have a family doctor. So how do you send in stuff to Veterans Affairs because the clinics won't do the paperwork on you? I got out in 2008 on medical and I didn't have a family doctor until 2013. I was fortunate because the list has been long for getting family doctors and again, family doctors you have one or two things you can go and see them and when you go along especially releasing from the military I had over 25 years in the military.

Transitioning out ■ The other problem is between VA and CF it's very incestuous. I put in for an (injury) that I sustained back out west and they wanted me, they said okay we need you to go back to your flight surgeon and get that looked at; this is the same guy who told me don't worry about it dude you're okay it's all in your head. So how am I supposed to go back to the same guy who is the only flight surgeon we have and get him to give me an honest assessment? The same flight surgeon looked me in the eyes and told him about my (other injury) and said I wouldn't say at that too loud you might get your flight category pulled. This is the guy who is writing me off to VA but when I talk to them is there a third-party physician I could speak to get a better understanding, I'm told no, that's, you're not within the public medical system right now you're still in DND, you don't pay into the public medical system so we can't put you into a third party physician. So, you're stuck. I love my job I legitimately wake up every day and I would be crushed if I lost my position but, you know, this incestuous environment where they're more concerned about your BMI or neck or back or shoulders which I mean I can walk around tubby for the rest of my life, grandpa lived to 90, but having RPG around my head for hours every night, my necks done my shoulders are popped my back is popped and having stuff blow up around me, that's the stuff I worried about but as long as I make my fitness every year they don't seem to be too concerned. So, tell the VA and DND they're supposed to be separate entities for a reason.

2007 ■ I got out in 2007 on a medical release, a (#). I had (injury). One thing that I didn't like, I went to see a major doctor. The guy supposed to work your behalf, if you look at me, look at my (injury), oh, you're getting better. Nonsense! I have a (chronic issue). All I'm going to do is get worse and worse and never get better and this guy lied in my face and this is a guy supposed to help you out.

I think it was Sunlife, gave me some money to compensate my wages and what I was making, a month or two I was able to find a job. Soon as I find a job, I wrote to them. I said, okay, I got a job, and almost right away they wrote back to me they sent me an email, oh, we're happy for you, you got a job, but really if you read between the lines, they're saying thank God, we don't have to take care of you anymore. You're not our problem. **But my transition went fairly well, like I said.**

I stayed home about five months, I was going nuts, my wife was going to kill me, so I decided to find a job, I had several interviews to find a job, I was able to go through the program. I had a chance to have several interviews to find a job, and I finally found a job at (government) Canada, I've been there for nine years now, and it's a good job. So that's what I have to say.

2007 ■ My problem started in 2000 when I was in (city). Nobody cared, as long as I could walk to the office and do the job, they couldn't care less. Nobody ever filled up any paperwork. I came here in (city). That was the time everybody was supposed to go to (another country), and of course didn't like me so they said, okay, you should be released now, and the process took about seven years before I got out of the forces.

If the DND flight surgeons or doctors are, I realize it's not, we don't have a mix issue here what we have a medical system failing soldiers and then it's failing our veterans by passing bad information. These are not the greatest surgeons and doctors on the planet. So, we're kind of at an impasse where keep applying for things and I've had health problems and every time it's, "well you meet the universality of service so you're good. We'll worry about it when your ankle becomes arthritic and the pain then or worry about it when we have to fuse your spine or worry when you can't feel your fingers anymore or your shoulder. This is a very big problem.

1987 RCMP ■ No final medical 30 years ago and about 15 years ago not. Even, if we were supposed to get one every three years and that was never done, they were periodic. If you go back on any, for myself, (body) injury, it is hard to find stuff because you could go 10 years before you have a medical.

2017 RCMP ■ I had a full medical, I was going to be a reservist, unfortunately put in my papers a year in advance, in October and I was injured in November of last year. That's gone by the wayside. So, but I did have the full medical.

It seems that the American military and the Canadian military don't seem to jibe when it comes to exposure to chemicals. In our trades whether you're Army Air Force Navy, we're exposed to a lot of chemicals that are recognized as having effects on personnel. In Canada we're not recognized as having those effects even though our American counterparts have it written up. If they say I've been exposed to this chemical they're not looked at as oh, "did this happen while you were in the service", which seems to be the case in Canada. So thereby Canada military and Veterans Affairs needs to come together in looking at the American system and seeing that if I'm doing the same job as an American and their medical system recognizes that this is the environment you're working in, you're exposed to certain things that's a standard whether it's lifting whether it's chemicals, whether it's wear and tear, that it should be standardized and shouldn't have to fight to it and prove it. Especially it's such a farce when they say, "did this happen when you're in service". It's one thing if you've been in one or two years or not in war, but when you have time in the military it's going to, the places you've been the environment you've worked at how do you prove it? Because you're there. The time off when I'm in the military when I first joined they said you work for the military 24/7 and the only time you're off is when you have a leave pass in your hand. So that being the case, I've spent a lot of time working for the military. If some of these wear and tear and exposure to chemicals, why should you have to prove it when for your American counterparts in the military it's recognized.

2016 ■ The medical side let me down tremendously.

I hurt (injury) in 1988 and 1992 for tours and when you're young was told to suck it up and carry on. And it's not until later that you have all these issues and you have to chase down the first person the documents and tell them why you didn't do things because if you're forthcoming with injuries you're Tcat or Pcat so sometimes you have to hide things just to keep going for treatment or (?).

SUPPORT

Training for new job was only recourse at the time of release.

1979 ■ It was 1979 when my husband was medically released before ten years, I had a child coming up, one year old, middle of the winter, the military told us PMQ were for military only, getting kicked out in the middle of the winter. He built a truck with a big huge square box to put our furniture in, but we gave some furniture to a, going to Winnipeg with my parents were, a freezer which we gave my parents and a fridge and stove on it, the military seized the furniture, called it an illegal move, they closed down an exercise and between Ottawa, and Winnipeg, everything just stopped, got closed down. His boss said finally going to have to do something. They eventually paid, we had asked would you pay us where he signed up, somewhere in Quebec and they kept saying no, no, no, at the end they paid for it, we came here, and we just found this out today, no yesterday, that from the Veterans Affairs lawyers in Charlottetown, if he had gone to welfare, welfare, the Provincial government would have told the Feds to do something with him. He ended up struggling right for many, many years on it. It was a bad experience all the way around.

2011 ■ I have had good experience with services and information about my retirement.

There was no information. I was broke, had no job, no vehicle, no place to live, and was still seeing and under the care of the same doctors during the service and after. One day they said they were giving me a medical discharge. There was no help, so, I sat outside the base waiting for help.

Heaven forbid anything happens, you have to get that on the paperwork. For support, have that taken care of.

They offered me the VOC rehab program (SISIP), so I'm on long term disability for a couple of years, I only have four months left to go. With VOC rehab they offer you 27 thousand dollars to be able to retrain and one of the things I wanted to retrain for, I won't get into specifics they said, "no we can't do that", although it was designed to help you have a job or move into a position. Some of the things they offered me were probably very interesting if I was interested in carrying on in a different career and could spend a lot of time traveling.

But I was offered the opportunities, and not only once, but I was met on three different occasions with the VOC rehab representative and they kept saying, "are you sure have you looked at this and have you looked at that." I had mentioned one little side line I was interested in and he actually contacted little businesses and the person said, "if you're interested come on in we'll look at you". Again, I don't want to be somebody that's totally up on the VOC rehab program.

The way it sits, from when I got out, I am still eligible to go and take some more training if I want. I've taken zero, but I can say that the people that I dealt with were very well trained and wanted to explain it to me very well and whether or not I had very little questions on what was available to me, except for the one program that wanted, and I didn't understand why they weren't able to answer that question, so I guess it's definitely not perfect but service is being provided.

2003 (release process/what worked what didn't) ■ It didn't work in 2003.

RCMP ■ In peace missions, in our country there are two classes of people, one class that are like you, when they leave the country they go in contingent, peace missions, war missions. I never left Canada. I left Canada for many years, but never as a member of a contingent of soldiers. I left Canada to travel abroad as a head of a peace mission or negotiator before the army arrived for peace treaties; before the war ended, there were negotiations going on.

So here is the difficulty that exists. I am comparing myself a little bit to General Dallaire because he was the leader of the military group, I was the leader of a group of police officers on a peace mission, I was a special representative as well, but mostly the leader. So here, when something happens in the troops, the Canadian government, the Blue Cross, Veterans Affairs Canada are looking after. It's the same thing with policemen (?).

It's the same with our police officers. I agree with you, there are a lot of guys from the RCMP who complain, and complain, I would very much like them to be here too, to testify and support you in the things that are going on and to share their difficulties. They certainly have similar difficulties.

If there is a problem with the troops, they have the support of their government; unlike us, when we are in charge of a mission, we report to the United Nations, so we have a Canadian flag on our shoulders, but. So, when Canada comes to support our troops, like me in (place), I lost (#) of my men in a (incident), Canada immediately sent psychologists for the Canadian CAF contingent (a small contingent of 25-30 men). When I showed up to sit down and talk to the psychologist and talk about my adventure and he listened to me, they politely said that they weren't there for me, that if there were problems, that I had the United Nations in New York and then (?).

All this to say that there are still many difficulties. When we have experiences like this, when my (incident) and we lost 15 to 18 of our soldiers, it was a joint military-police mission, it always leaves scars. When there are civil disturbances, but there is nobody looking after us when we return to Canada.

2017 RCMP voluntary ■ But as to the question we're talking about here, family supports. One of the things that I found is that there seems to be a very clear separation between the RCMP, at least, and any support mechanism afterwards. We get the nice little letter that says, you know, get involved with the Veterans Association, but there isn't any reach into the organization for people planning to retire. Most of us give a few months' notice before we go. I retired with X years of service, hung around a little longer maybe than I should have, but I think there's a great opportunity for these transitions and I'm not aware where you're going with these transition groups, but I really think they need to be reaching out into for sure the RCMP and from what I've heard today, the CAF has similar challenges.

We should be reaching into these organizations and helping people who are getting ready to go, and it should be a coordinated effort as opposed to here's your piece of paper if you want to follow up with one of these people and if you don't, well, it sucks to be you.

2012 ■ Mine was cold. That's really how it was. The release section was very quick in explanations, and pretty much a blur, there was no DWD, no luncheon, no nothing. On my last day I signed my release paperwork and drove away. Not one person gave a shit. Thanks for coming out. We broke you but won't ever admit it, now get out. 6-months later a JPSU WO dropped off my certificates and such at my house. Half of them were wrong.

2015 ▪ Release was sad, no hand shakes, no DWD. Very cold. Release clerk didn't even say thank you or shake my hand. New province, new home, new doc if I find one. No idea on VAC paperwork, what I should apply for etc. No follow up.

All I would say is somebody should be honest with a veteran that's going to retire, tell them they will never be a civilian, you will always be ex-military. Once you become a member of the armed forces or any organization like that, you'll never be a civilian. When the door hits you in the rear end as you release, you got to realize you are always going to be different than everybody else and that's the fact. Once you become aware of that, early, then you can start protecting yourself and going forward into society.

1972 (release process/ what works what doesn't) ▪ did not and probably does not now.

1994 (release process/ what works what doesn't) ▪ Was a little challenging because of the distance between my site and the administration site of some 500 km.

2009 voluntary ▪ I think the unit had a check list of items to be completed. Helped guide me through the process. A lot of my kit was issued through CFB Esquimalt Base Supply, luckily, I was retired from my civilian work, so I was able to go down during regular working hours. However, if I still had my civilian job I would have had to take a day off work (at my cost) to turn in my kit. Would be good once a month to have Base Supply open on a Saturday to allow reservists to clear.

2012 ▪ It was very poor if you were home sick on your release date.

2005 voluntary ▪ I retired from the forces 2005 after (number of) years of service as a (trade). It was a volunteer release initially and I withdrew it because there was strong indication I would be released on medical grounds. The process overall went well. I already had a substantial education. It was offered, and I took advantage of it.

1988 voluntary ▪ I was with the RCF retired in 88 and I had a good transition, but didn't have, I was in Victoria. I was on my own and I found work, worked for five years.

My experience was that when I joined the military, it was no life like it. But whether I got out I really found out what that kind of life was, I was definitely dealing with scrooge not Santa Claus. To make things even worse, imagine you have no income, you are sick because you are medically released. Now you apply for UIC, which paid for many years and even disqualified me for collecting UIC. Put it all together, right, that flag may be waving, but it isn't me moving it, right. There is nothing to be proud of.

2006 ▪ Process was flawless for me.

2016 ▪ I never knew what my pension amount was going to be when I was retiring. No one could tell me because I am divorced. I found out my pension amount when I got my first payment 6 months after I left the military. The system in the military otherwise worked well. Once I was out I had to rely on phone support. It took me a long time to get the answers I needed. During the transition to PWGSC, it was difficult to get a hold of anyone that could do anything. Total chaos.

1983 ■ Embarrassed, I was ordered to report to an office in (unit) and had my ID taken and cut in pieces by CAF person in front of me and then told to leave the base.

2015 ■ I was medically released in November of 15. I was a little disappointed by that, but the system itself left more questions than answers for me. However, everything seemed to happen in a whirlwind fashion. They looked after me pretty well and when I finally had time to sit down and evaluate how it went, I was surprised as a lot of my friends that was very, very easy for me. It all seemed to fall into place which is not the case with everyone.

2009 ■ I released in 2009 from reg forces. Over the last ten to twenty years they have come a long way. In 2009, when I got out there was little to no support at all. For a military release, they did the paperwork and that's all – no support at all. My last two years in the military, I was (?). When I asked for the process there was something (?). As for my release process, I know people who have released after I did, and it has come a long way. (?).

1994 ■ There were no hiccups for me.

1988 ■ One day you are a member the next you are not – see you – bye.

2017 ■ The only aspect of the process that was ineffective was the designation of my “release clerk”. Although one person was designated early in the process, at both my Part 1 and Part 2 release interviews, and for a couple of email exchanges, I ended up dealing with different people.

2011 ■ My release was well done but I put in paperwork well ahead of my release date. But then my final paperwork from medical came in 11 months later and changed my release to 3b. Was too late for any benefits from SISIP.

2010 ■ Fairly smooth on the military side, where processes are all very standardized, military staff dedicated, understand and adhere to high standards. I felt completely in my own to figure things out on the civilian side. It has gotten much much worse with HR centralization, for all matters – leave, pay, medical, pension, all pers admin.

2011 ■ I was released in 2011, so I do not have the same struggle as some of the people have. My portion, with the military was awful. I guess I'm not one of the only ones here, Veterans affair. I'm actually the Chair of an organization for service post traumatic stress disorder that we actually had to close, a fund for Veterans services. So that but have to accept what it is. At my worst, when I had, we have to have two years in the military where you are transitioning to this and two years with this which really, really, really want to have second, doesn't work very well. I started huge training, and after this I was kind of on my own and two months after. I'm still there, but I was, somebody actually called the VA, and VA came over to my place within 48 hours, so if you ask, very, very nicely, then but actually came to my place with an Occupational Therapist and a social worker, trying to figure out what was going, since for transferring to civilian. Everything on paper looks like I'm doing well, inside the whole bunch of other issues, I was not. And when they figure it out they sort of call the program and so I guess, so help me answer the question.

1972 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I wasn't, I was expected to die.

1994 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Somewhat, I took several of the retirement seminars which helped.

1988 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ No I did that myself by training for another job.

2006 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not sure there was a transition process? Went to work on Friday said goodbye and was retired on Monday.

2010 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ No. My departure was sudden – I seized a great civilian job opportunity. I'm very happy that I did, but it would have been easier if I had taken a retirement seminar earlier in my military career or had some financial planning advice throughout the transition.

2017 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ At this early stage, I think I'm adequately prepared. Time will tell.

2017 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not really, but I don't think that goal is completely achievable.

2011 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I didn't have transition process left military got a job then changed jobs a few times. I ended up working with other veterans I knew. I did a resume work shop and the 2 days of briefings that's about all I did in transition.

1997 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I took care of myself.

2016 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I was ready to go. I was prepared. It was just more work getting support than I thought it would be.

1983 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I was lucky, I was able to attend a program supported by Employment Services at Camosun College in Victoria but that was cut short by surgery. Since then I found work on the waterfront in Sidney BC and The Institute of Ocean Sciences in Sidney BC. I have now been elected to the Town Council of Sidney BC for 21 years.

1994 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Somewhat.

2017 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ For the most part.

2015 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Nothing can really prepare you when you have spent 30+ years of your life in the CAF then end up in more of a dog eat dog situation...

2004 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Of course not...

2008 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not totally, however I did not expect it too. I had plans and things have turned out great for me...

2012 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not fully – I went back as a casual civilian employee with DND for almost 5 years and that was a great way to transition.

1991 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Did not have a process provided. Did the transition on my own without unemployment insurance that I had deducted from my pay for years.

2016 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Mostly yes.

1995 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not really, it was akin to learning how to walk again.

2005 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I didn't see much help; however, I didn't need it.

1995 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I remember getting assistance on preparing a resume. That was a big help.

1992 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Yes, overall was prepared for the transition from military to civilian life.

1998 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ No, they basically dumped me in the ditch. I spent years alone, struggling to survive, watching everyone I know get ahead in their lives while I was stuck, hurting, wanting to die.

2006 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not in the slightest. I loved serving my country and I was always a top soldier in my rank. As soon as I got sick I was isolated and treated like a useless piece of shit. I was a medic, and it was fellow medics treating me this way, so I can only imagine the combat arms troops.

2016 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ NO, NOT AT ALL. For over a year I felt like I was nothing... alone, ashamed and forgotten.

2005 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Kinda, When you're being released you kind of have no choice but to except it.

2012 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ No the transition process did not prepare me for life outside CAF. I did all the leg work myself.

2005 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not even close.

2015 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not at all, in fact I believe the military sucks at the transitions in every aspect, for example, when I returned from Afghanistan, there was no real transition, a 2 day TLD to decompress and get hammered, then kicked back to battalion where you just want to get over with the Dplus stuff to get your leave pass and head home. It was as if they just gave us the boot back into normal life post tour and expected us to just coexist in a country that had no idea the hardships we faced and suffered. In fact, you'd be hard pressed to tell that Canada was even in a war, nobody cared, and most were ungrateful. Then come release, it felt like they were just trying to give us the boot and dump us out of the forces as we were no longer "their" problem anymore, let alone if you're permanently injured, then when they realize that you cannot be rehabilitated they treat you like disposable baggage and want to give you the boot. For me that transition was the hardest as I felt completely betrayed by everything I gave for this country.

1997 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not at all, I ended up with no income fighting for pension amassing tens of thousands in debt that I am still paying 25 years later. The only reason I am still alive is because of social groups like the KofC and the only reason I have employment are from the same and business training from Princes Operation Entrepreneur.

2015 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I was never offered or given a transition – so epic fail from the Military.

2016 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Absolutely not.

2002 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Nope. Transition difficult.

2009 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not really, going from working in the military to doing nothing is hard on some people.

2017 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I was not prepared to release when I was released. I had been offered and accepted a 3-year retention period in the CAF. My original release date was to be in 2018. However, I suffered a medical set-back which required a modification in my work hours, which ultimately breached the retention contract that dictates soldiers to work full-time. I argued that I was being punished for a medical issue that I had no control over and was being penalized by disallowing my retention to continue. D Med Pol (at the suggestion of my CO) determined that I was in breach of my retention contract and I was given a new release date in 2017 (I was notified of this change in October 2016). I was never offered my release message by my unit (I received it by "fluke" when I visited the release office to ask if there was anything I should be doing while awaiting a decision). I was not offered VOC Rehab prior to my release to determine IF there was anything I could do as a job once released. I was initially given wrong information about the amount of my pension after release which caused my spouse and myself great distress as we were unsure how we could live off of the amount quoted. My initial assigned release clerk went on maternity leave a few weeks after my first meeting and I was not given an alternative person to speak with for almost a month. When I told my chain of command that my release was pushed up, I was not believed as they had not received my release message (so I had to get a copy from the release section and take it to them). I was consistently asked if I would go back to

work with the unit after my release as a civilian as there was “need for my skill-set and knowledge”, but there was no recognition for what I had accomplished while serving nor understanding of my medical limitations. I honestly have no idea what transition means – for me it was one day I had to wear a uniform and the next I did not. It is now almost a year after my release from the CAF and I still run into military members who ask me where I’m working now. I have to tell them I am no longer serving and am not working which hurts me on too many levels.

2016 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ No. I was financially overloaded, not to mention mentally. If you are living pay to pay in the CF, due to a nasty divorce, or low pay compared to the cost of living market demands, there is no way to save 6 months pay, to tide you over. Don’t post Privates or level 1 Corporals, to expensive cost of living areas like Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, or Esquimalt, ESPECIALLY if they have a stay-at-home spouse and or children.

2011 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ Absolutely not.

1999 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) Not even close.

1999 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ Took a long time.

2016 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ Not fully. There were a few elements of my release process that were extremely effective – the SCAN seminar I attended introduced me to Pauline Thomas, who helped me on several occasions transition into the Public Service.

2008 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ Horrible. No help or preparation provided.

2014 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ No. And yes. The little things sure. Not the big ones. Money, benefits, fight with VAC, taxes, health care insurance.

2015 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ No, and I don’t think anything really can.

2004 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ No where near 5 percent out of a 100. Definitely a failure, my experience.

1989 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ I had no transition when I released as a matter of fact they sped it up usually one gets 6 months to prepare I got weeks due to cuts in budget and changing of rules. Nobody gave a damn, you’re out.

2017 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ Yes, however, I do not feel that in 2017, with all of our automation that it should take 2 months for pension payments to kick in, or 6 months for PSHCP coverage to transition. Those transitions should be almost seamless provided the paperwork was done on time.

2008 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I prepared myself, it was my responsibility, no one owns that but me. Education is required especially among the PS to showcase veterans' skills and qualifications; that would be helpful.

1995 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ After a 30+-year Army career, it did not fully prepare me for life as a civilian (nor did I expect it to). The biggest challenge was getting to know and understand the broader civilian culture (the ways of doing things, expectations, norms, etc.) and adjust. It took me much longer than I had expected to become an adult civilian.

1993 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Nope I had been there before. I went EI found work and carried on.

1998 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ No it derailed my release plans.

2003 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Fortunately I had planned my financial situation to retire with no debt (fully owned home, no car loans, no unpaid lines of credit etc). Financially there was no loss of economic stability and did not require employment after release.

2009 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ No not even close. I felt tossed out like trash.

1996 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not fully.

2014 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ No. I actually think this is an expectation that cannot be met. The transition process provided lots of help and people were very supportive. Ultimately, this was a huge change for which it is difficult to be fully prepared.

2008 voluntary (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Nope. Lots more could have been done by way of training for consulting & small business opportunities. Those I learned on my own and from colleagues instead of the transition team.

2013 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Not at all. I was not offered any transition services prior to release and I have been struggling to obtain how the values provided pre-release of my pension lost \$70,000 upon payment. I have never been provided any information to this. I was not the only one subjected to this as many of my peers suffered far greater losses without any substantiation at all. Disgusting to treat those willing to sacrifice so much but the second you depart get stabbed in the back by those you used to represent. And any support mechanisms you knew (Ombudsman) can't assist as your no longer a serving member. I have great distaste for the government supporting this practice.
<https://globalnews.ca/news/791818/veterans-devastated-after-pension-payouts-plummet/>

2015 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ Absolutely NOT.

2002 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ▪ I don't believe so.

2003 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ Was tossed aside like a broken beat up used and abused soldier.

2012 (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ No. I was not prepared at all. Due to my conditions I was/am/will ALWAYS be permanently disabled. But was on my own to flounder through the process, not really understanding what was going on. And by the time it was all said and done the CF had washed their hands of me, VAC denies all claims, and I'm left trying to figure out on my own how I'm to make ends meet on a small 10-year pension. But thankfully, unlike VAC, I didn't have to fight CPP (disability) for approval or qualify for Manulife's extended LTD.

2000 RCMP (Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) ■ No – I was an RCMP retiree.

Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) (1996, 2012, 2012, 1993, 1990, 2013, 2015, 2014, 1982, 2016, 1994, 2014, 1995, 1981, 1976, 2015, 1992, 2012, 2013, 2013, 2011) ■ No (21 responses).

Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) (2004, 1993, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2014, 1994, 1979) ■ Not at all (8 responses).

Did the transition process prepare you for life after release) (1994, 2009, 1996, 1982, 2000) ■ Yes (5 responses).

2016 ■ Nothing prepared me for the confusion trying to reach people by phone.

2005 ■ Adequate.

2017 ■ I'd like to talk about the good stuff later. There is some good stuff. When you go out, there's SCAN seminars and the like (?). But they are there to answer and then... you don't know what's ahead, so the questions you could have asked there are not in your mind. There's a lot of us coming out of here damaged. I have 40+ years of service, I went out this year, we put up with a lot, we hid a lot of problems, because when you had a problem in the old days, either you were thrown out, you were branded, we just wanted to do the job, that's all. With the new system, with all the nonsense they make us do, 13 kilometres with weight on our shoulders, the guy is at 50+ years old, he's still good, he's still working well, we're going to scrape him up, let him do what the kids do, so we take a big hit on the last 5 to 10 years, the body takes a good beating.

Once we got out, that's when it gets a little screwed up. Canada has invested a fortune, they have trained us, educated us, it's incredible the qualities of work we have, and the majority of us, we have a hard time getting back on our feet, because it's complicated, you're too old, there's no system to say "Hey! Businesses, we have invested millions in these people." Dammit, we are still useful, we don't say that we want to have wages like everyone else, etc., help us to have something.

Me, I was working, I was 10+ years in operations totally involved at 100 miles per hour. We don't have a lot of support on this side, prepare us to leave, they do what they can, but, money, knowledge and skills are being lost in the world of work in Canada, the military are being trained, we know where we are going, but it looks like once we leave, it's over.

1995ish voluntary ■ One other thing, when I got out, it was FRP, the people on the base and the release centres got to be better trained for passing people onto civvy street.

1993 ■ Don't let the exit door hit you on the ass. Getting virtually ignored thereafter.

2010 ■ The limited services the time to access and have services start.

2011 ■ Nothing about it works. JPSU was a joke and VAC CM never knows what I'm entitled to. So quick to take things away.

2015 ■ very difficult, I had to connect with the **IPSC who actually helped out greatly**, had I not had their assistance I would have ended up being forced onto the streets post release with no income.

2017 RCMP voluntary ■ Our organizations, the RCMP and for sure the Canadian Forces, we build fantastic citizens for this country. The opportunity to reemploy them in a different, in multiple different formats is dirt simple, I think somebody said a minute ago. We've really got to leverage this better than we have been. I don't think there's a Canadian out there that doesn't have a level of respect for the people who choose to serve in uniform. Why would we not continue to use the resources that we've built up over the years, the multiple courses taken both inside the RCMP and the CAF and allow these people to continue to contribute to society in whatever format they can. Rather than have them stew around in a transition format where there isn't a lot of support, and some of them don't do well in that format. I'm very interested as to where you're going with the transition groups, and I even volunteered to be involved in that kind of stuff, but once I get a pension cheque.

1983 ■ I was released as I was considered to be unfit. I was given an interview by the CO. I have found recently the CO sent a message to the CAV division Commander that he would not serve with me.

Vocational rehab. I was of the (rank), the surgeon she allowed me to go JPSU get over the mental hurdle to start my re-education so I'm going back to the University full time. Once I got out of the service you take SISIP that's when they'll start looking at me once I'm done with SISIP. I'm going to be done my University within my first year with SISIP I'm looking at graduate work at the University right now, but it won't be completed within the SISIP time. VAC won't touch you they won't help you it's about a year that I have to sit around and wait. I wish they would come up with a solution for that option.

1997 ■ I was released in 1997, was pretty hard core. We had lost a lot of guys and things were happening. It was a really stressful environment. I got out and my whole experience was, "don't let the door hit you in the ass as you are leaving, see you later". In those days, if you weren't strong enough to stick it out and soldier on and suck it up, they didn't want you. That went right from top to bottom. I'm guilty of that same attitude, you know, "suck it up buttercup get on with your job", until I started to (muffled) and I went I can't do this anymore, I have to leave. I got out. I didn't have any contact with former comrades. People I considered my best friends, I didn't speak to them for ten years, I couldn't.

As for the military, people transitioning out, I hope they have a better time than I do. Because it was sign here, sign here, you'll get your last paycheck in six weeks, see you later. And that was my protocol.

2004 (release process/what works what doesn't) ▪ The government dictates that the question and the processes are unworkable. They are cheap to the military vets and their families, so that they can serve their corporate puppeteers.

1992 ▪ The release process worked well for me in my case.

2012 ▪ It was horrid. Army unit personnel are done in EDM not here in ESQ. OH how I wanted to say, one force or one large farse. Records were shown as I was F not M for two year after. DO you see a concern?

1998 ▪ Well my unit lied to me, I lost family over it. I went years without mental and physical medical help I needed because of it all.

2006 (release process/what works what doesn't) ▪ Too fast, uncaring and did not address my injuries. It was more like we broke that part get rid of it as quick as possible.

2000 ▪ A recently retired member helped with the process.

2008 (release process/what works what doesn't) ▪ Honestly it has been almost 10 years and the overall process was outstanding.

2012 ▪ It worked for me, but I had to do a lot of legwork on my own for instance finding out about the services offered by the FSNA – travel insurance etc.

1991 voluntary ▪ There was no process. I eventually found employment on my own.

2016 (release process/what works what doesn't) ▪ It works at the base level – no surprise there. Medical, dental, return of kit, clearing out was all timely and professional. It doesn't work at the Ottawa level – no surprise there. Passed around from person to person trying to get my pension and severance sorted out. It was only when I sent a polite, professional complaint to MND that traction was gained on my file.

1995 (release process/what works what doesn't) ▪ Confusing to say the least I would suggest that better training for release center personnel coordinated by both the CF and VAC could solve some of the recurring problems that were noted at the session I attended.

2005 (release process/what works what doesn't) ▪ Easy.

1996 voluntary (release process/what works what doesn't) ▪ I had no problems, as I said earlier, I was prepared.

1995 (release process/what works what doesn't) ▪ I don't recall issues, not noted above.

1999 ■ My time frame nothing worked everything was a challenge.

1999 ■ I Remember it wasn't too bad.

This is to do with the transition process that's coming in hopefully it will improve and looks like it will if they're doing exactly what they're going to say where you have the military will not release people until they have identified all the issues for that individual whether its physical, mental, whether it's pension, any issue that's there has to be settled first before they leave the military in other words they're still in play, then they're handed over to another organization which I'm not too clear on how that's going to work yet, and I think that's important to identify that. And then they will take over and follow it through until that individual is looked after. I guess the other thing I'm concerned about is that once this process is in place, what happens after that? How does a person get their problem identified if they're still having problems after? My concern is that we do have an Ombudsman, a Military Ombudsman very frustrated if you go on line and read about some of his issues, and he has to report to the Defense Minister. So, I mean this doesn't quite make sense. He has said he would like to be able to report to the parliament an individual separate entity all together. So, I would like to go on record saying that is very important because after this is all said and done there needs to be an avenue for people to know that they're going to get action. So that's all I have to say for now.

1994 ■ Difficult, since I was in one area and administered by another area over 500 km distance.

2011 ■ I don't get any services other than my pension and this year numerous changes in amounts.

Voluntary ■ But the moment that my release became effective, I was a nobody. I was literally a nobody. I still lived on the base, my daughter was going to college, and so I was, I was fortunate I was allowed to stay in PMQ for a few extra months. In reality I became a non-entity. Again, when I moved here, and I had questions, like I said, like I mentioned before with the transition services and stuff like that, there is absolutely nothing. Like there is no help when you go to ask for services. When you talk about Veterans Affairs, I don't need them, I'm healthy, nothing for me to go to, absolutely nothing there, I became a non-entity and had to fight for everything on my own. So that's basically all that I have to say. There is lots before, nothing afterwards.

1997 ■ Pretty good, for those things I knew of.

1991 ■ Not required and not available.

2016 ■ I kept getting bounced around from the CF to PWGSC as I released in the middle of a transition.

2005 ■ Considering I have nothing else to compare to, makes it acceptable.

1988 ■ What services? I have been retired almost thirty years and find little or no help – trying to get expenses for glasses or prescriptions is impossible.

2006 ■ I was technically released in 2006, physical injuries, psychological injuries, and so forth. The same folks, the last gentleman was talking about, they were sending me to this person and this person. On top of that, I don't see anybody that, more paperwork. When you are suffering from mental illness, very difficult military service, this is a daunting task. Absolutely daunting task. 90% I'm finding, veterans that are coming through, choose not to do the paperwork because they just can't handle it. It is a feeling that you get that the get us to do this paperwork, go away. It's complicated, the paperwork. On top of this, trying to get down civilian after, from my support group, to determine what they deal with transitioning, is actually foreign to us. Absolutely foreign to us and we get outside, from the military, might as well be on Mars. After 20 years' service, some people 15, some people 25, it is absolutely foreign to us. Because what the world looks like when we went into the military isn't the way it is now. And after that, makes you feel like a criminal, from national defense or any of these other support groups.

1996 ■ The proposed transition groups sound like a good idea. They should have a centre or telephone number so that we can get advice, or they can give us appropriate resources, such as a CLSC (French acronym for "local community service centre", but for veterans or retirees. Transition process didn't prepare me at all.

2014 ■ Re proposed transition groups – I believe that trying and correcting what doesn't work is going to make things better.

Actually, if I could just add onto what was just said, I totally agree. Totally agree with what was just said. Basically, what happened with me specifically I was getting close to my release date it was considered complex needs operational stress injury, so you're given a case manager with a (body part). My (body part) case manager quit the week before I released so there was no transition on the end. I have my case manager who was very, very helpful she was upset with the service I received. The gentlemen before me was saying there's a bit of a gap there, nobody is going to call you the day you get out of the military or week unless back is doing their job they are the ones supposed to take over. I was supposed to have a transition interview with my previous case manager. Never happened. There needs to be a recourse for the individual to take. That's all I've got to say about that.

1982 ■ I spent six years in there and at the end I got kicked out medical release. I call it a kick out. The reason was in (year) I was in the (trade) and I had an accident and after that it just, it went downhill. When they released me another fight came on. So why am I being released I can still do my work? I was an (trade) by trade. So, 6 months down the service says okay you can stay in. But you've got all these restrictions. Restricted postings. It was good ones on there too but no promotion nothing, but I got out in 82 and I joined the reserves the three years. Any way that's it.

I absolutely had little support, no way to get anything to his current rehab, so now I'm giving everybody in rehab information and that's how you to deal with it.

Your home is your uniform because we are simply military and can be sent anywhere in the world tomorrow. But once that is done and we are home, then we've got to figure out how we are home. You know like said one of the gentlemen said we have lived in a bubble for 10, 20, 30, 35 years and went, no longer part of the bubble. Hang on, everything I know is part of that bubble. I don't know what I have to do to get, I don't know what we don't. It is not just the grunt or, you know, I talked to that went I was lost, you know, people are lost. And so, you're withdrawn? There you go. We have spouses and if it wasn't for my spouse, there is other things that can happen.

1982 ■ I had to do all my own research into resume writing, how to find a job. I had to research my own transition period and everything for my family. There was no final move to a choice of my location, no funds to assist with the move, it was “good-bye” and I even left my forwarding address on my own so that the Canadian Armed Forces could send my Certificate of Service, my NDI75 card and CD. Welcome to my world!

I used to be director of administration at Staff College some years ago. One of the things we found in Toronto that did help some people is, when there was a SCAN seminar, we tried to get people to come every five years. Okay there was a time when it was only available last three or four years of service. Hogwash. You need to take people who are going to stay in for a long time, and you need to start them young and say, this is how things work, and this is where you are going to go over a period of 20 or 30 years. And the time to start preparing for the next stage of life, because you will run out of military time eventually, although when you are 25 it never seems to be that way. But you need to know where you are going to go. A guy named Benjamin Franklin, everyone here would have heard of, once said if you failed a plan you plan to fail. It is worth putting up on the wall in every orderly room in the country and every commanding officer's, office, teaching people how to plan.

Just a short point, just to say that the transition phase will be different for every single person transitioning. So, you cannot have and expect like, you know, a certain standard, like an average of whatever. Every single person will be different. It is reverse of getting into the military. You come from different situations, but we want a single standard, generally speaking, of how you are going to behave and function in this new culture called military. It has to be the reverse thinking when you leave, that it is going to literally explode different rainbow, directions and all that stuff for every single person. It has to be a very robust, open, comprehensive system. Probably bit on the expensive side, but that's just the way it is, I guess. Obviously, there's probably minimum levels of standards, but I think the country owes it a bit more to the newly minted veteran and those types of folks that strive for more and strive for a much bigger picture of what it means to transition.

Just to endorse that last point, the military takes years to create a military person out of an individual. Individuals from all across the country, all different types of backgrounds, languages, and turns them into some kind of a team member who works in a formation or a unit. So, the military needs to create almost the same amount of time to de-mob them. Not two stupid SCAN seminars, where they say you have to this, you have to do that, but nobody knows how to do it. You need to have that advocate that somebody mentioned. You need the case by case one-on-one, and it needs to start way more than ten years early. People need to understand. I'll just leave it at that.

2010 ■ What I liked about my career in the Forces, although it was short, was the social side, you know, having a beer in the mess, the human side I liked it, and when I was released, it was said by many: a number. That's what I remember: a number.

I work in (city) as a peer helper, and in most cases when I walk into a shed to defuse a dangerous situation, the guy always says that he's tired of fighting, that he fought on the other side and that he's still fighting against Veterans Affairs Canada to get his due, to finally get a pension that's reasonable, to mourn leaving the army. It's a mourning to leave the army. There are two big things that give us a shock when we leave the army – those who have just come out, you'll look at me and you'll nod your head – when we go to the QM, and they hand us back our stock, and then they hand us back our ID card. That's what guys find hardest, plus the lack of camaraderie.

2006 voluntary ■ As for myself, I left the CF in 2006. I did have a good transition, but I will give myself a bit of credit, because I spent a lot of time, years ahead, asking a lot of questions and poking around and doing a lot of homework, preparing myself with information, financial planning. Generally, I think the best advice I would give to somebody is, to do your homework before you make the jump. Try to go out on a good note, when you are feeling good about yourself, not bitter, and go out with dignity, if you can.

2003 voluntary release ■ Good day my name is (name), 20 years in a row Canadian Navy I retired in 2003 I just want to speak a little about the transition I went through. This is not a medical this is more of a just a transition. I was preparing to leave with a plan of course and I started my studies with the University of (province). There's a program that the military has with the University of (province) previous learning accreditation program where courses and time in the military transfer to the University credit and that's where things began in my favour. When I was upon retirement everything went rather seamless and again I followed my script. House hunting trip to (city) and my last move to (city) selling my house and everything all fees paid lawyer fees were paid for, so I can again my studies at (university). Of course, and prior to beginning part of my studies in (year) the government said you have 20 K. That's for you to use for your training, for your whatever you need to start your new career and I said 20 K great I've got two years to spend I couldn't spend it all in two years because I was on active in my path. But after I completed my BA at (university) and I went to (city) and I completed my master's in education and I'm a teacher today on my second career, so I don't think I have a lot of problems because my plan was narrow, was focused and I availed myself of what was offered, and I was blessed with good health of course, that it was I can't say I really had any problems with the process.

It worked very well. And I've benefited financially ever since (year) and I'm hopefully looking at my retirement in about five years. I'm currently double dipping of course as a Baby Boomer should be doing after you get out of the military I'm in the public service I'm with (agency).

All in all, it was a pretty good experience and notwithstanding I guess I could talk for hours about the problems the Royal Canadian Navy may offer misogynist, sexist, philosophers don't apply, it goes on and on but overall, I was, it was a good go and the transition was fairly seamless and that's what I have to offer. Thank you.

2017 ■ For long-term reservists like myself, it still took a lot of my personal time and I relied on my extensive administrative experience to make sure everything was in place. There is a great lack of support to help reservists reach retirement, especially those who have worked full time for more than 20 years.

2015 ■ My unit received my release information in July and they sat on it till November before they gave the paperwork to me. My release date was the following May so six months later.

1996 (release process/what worked what didn't) ■ Quick... very Quick.

2014 (release process/what worked what didn't) ■ It was fine.

2010 (release process/what worked what didn't) ■ Utter BS.

2013 voluntary ■ The part that I really had a problem with wasn't so much the exit part, it was the afterwards. I wanted to work. I wanted to have a job, but I never had to write a resume before. I never had to, you know, go out and search for a job. I was in the military for (number of) years, I knew what I was going to do from one day to the next, and there was nothing there for me to go to. I was on a SCAN seminar, they mentioned transition services and had this plaque card and everything, I went to it. It is a website. I go into it and then what they have is they say well here is a template to write a resume. I don't need a template to write a resume, I need to know how to write a resume. There was nothing available to me. I ended up going to what we call UI. They had a fantastic service there for three-days, they sat with me, they worked with me, it was free and I'm thinking, the military is paying this company God knows how much money and they are not doing anything.

The other thing I had an issue for is when I'm looking to are a job, there is places that said oh we value military searching member, give you priority. You put your name in to that, didn't get any call back from any of the companies, banks, no stores, but I got a lot of spam. They got me a lot of spam back, but I didn't get anything back. I'm wondering these guys are saying they are partners with the military and, yet they are not doing anything. It is easy to put something on a website saying you are a preferred customer or preferred employee, it is not there.

The other thing I'm finding too as far as jobs, searching for a job, right now I had a really good job, in (city), I had to give it up, kind of going back and forth between here and Alberta because my daughter has an injury, if not in a military oriented town, it is very difficult to explain what your qualifications are, very difficult to get that across. I don't have anyone to talk to or work with to help translate that. That's the kind of service we need as far as transition is concerned.

2014 (release process/what worked what didn't) ■ Nothing works, its sink or swim. If you're having a tough time claim a condition and fall back on VAC.

2000 ■ I had no problems with my release process.

1979 ■ Better than it was.

1995 ■ Overall, the release process was very good. I knew pretty well what to expect as I was an officer with bags of experience in the bureaucratic "system".

1992 (release process/what worked what didn't) ■ Most were great.

2003 ■ Release process is relatively easy. However, when I first approached a low security gate to access a NPF activity I was told that my record of service card (NDI 75) wasn't worth the cost of printing them. I soon realized that I was no longer a member of the military and the military didn't care.

1982 (release process/what worked what didn't) ■ Very easy.

I personally had experience with not having a lot of success or any success really with the veterans hiring act. It has been two years now, I've applied for a fair amount of public federal jobs. I had one interview with Veterans Affairs, to be a (position) and was told I was too blunt. Anyway, I was trying to give back. Apparently, they don't want that.

Then I asked roughly what percentage of military folks work in Veterans Affairs, lady said about 20%. It was kind of shocking to me. It should be a lot more, right. Anyway, one might think that you want to higher percentage of qualified military folks helping veterans in Veterans Affairs. You might want to think that, because a civilian who has never served, who has a vague awareness of what it is like to be in the military, is my case manager. God bless her, she's doing an OK job, but I've tried to prompt her and go visit a base or go see the reserve unit here, the Army unit here, whatever. I don't know if she does that or not, but just to get out to say okay this is what the military does. There is a lot of good intentions it seems, but just the execution which could be maybe a bit more of a common-sense approach to this, I'm not sure. But I like that at least someone is recognizing with this transition group, that it is a dog's breakfast it sounds like, and they're trying to put some order, out of chaos, and make it just a better process for all. That's what you want. You don't want bitter recently retired military folks. You just don't want that, it's not healthy, not good. Anyway, it (new transition groups) seems good on paper like I guess the proof will be in the pudding and we will see what happens.

2012 ■ I didn't have any issues with my release process.

2005 ■ Very inexperienced and not proactive in getting a smooth confident release and transition for members.

1982 ■ The release process in 1982 was terrible. There was no process. Today's release process is better and needs some "tweaking" but is better.

2009 ■ It got me out like they wanted, it was fast, and they need to slow it down and have the wife there with me so they can understand also.

2016 ■ The release process needs a lot of work. I ordered my own Certificate of Service along with others as my HQ did not. My release file wasn't processed properly which meant I was still active in HRMS even though I was 60. Every detail had to be followed up on a weekly basis.

RCMP ■ I don't know about the military; but the work is not recognized. The psychological aspect is difficult for the individual, your colleagues believe that you are on vacation or that you have gone abroad, and that life has been good for three, four, six years, etc., so that's what's difficult too.

2017 ■ In regard to my last 6 months of service, I was dismissed by my chain of command who seemingly held no interest in assisting me with my release. I had to rely on my spouse to assist me in returning kit and escort me to appointments including clearing out of the unit and base. It was especially difficult to have a release date soon after Christmas holidays as buildings were closed and members were on leave instead of being available for clear out signatures. As my final pay could not be released without the clear out sheets being completed, I spent my first 4 days of release leave getting signatures and waiting for people to be available. What was easy was getting a (provincial) health card issued. As I was releasing in (province) and owned a house close to my release base, it was fairly straight forward to get a health card issued, which was relieving when I feared not having access to medical care immediately upon my release.

1990 ■ The Release Process was purely administrative. I was obliged to make my own way into civilian life with no help from the Release Centre.

1997 ■ Be prepared to fight for every scrape that you are supposedly entitled to and expect little to no support from government programs intended to support you. Rely instead on Veterans organizations lead by veterans like True Patriot Love, Wounded Warriors, VETS, VTN etc.

2015 ■ It would be nice if the was one stop shopping. Manulife should be fired.

2016 ■ None of it has worked for me.

2015 ■ Pension benefits and briefing on taxes, deductions, etc. was mediocre.

2002 ■ Confusing at best.

Voluntary ■ I got out, I got lucky, I got out okay. Also, when you go out, I went into the forces at (teen) years of age, I went out after almost 30 years of service, it's clear that when you go back to civilian life, as the guy said, you're nothing. You went up in the Forces... The only fact that I got out is because I was tired of being transferred, I didn't want to be transferred anymore. When you go out, you go into civilian life, you have to make your name again, start over from scratch, and try to sell yourself, negotiate a salary. These are all things you haven't learned. When you join the army, you go to the recruiting centre, you don't negotiate wages, you don't do anything like that. I know that in my time there were courses on how to make a resume, things like that. These are things that could be improved.

2015 ■ No one to guide you through the process with the exception of IPSC and JPSU, my chain of command put the onus on me to sort everything out to make all the deadlines, Better communication between the organizations are needed as well as the medical side of the house who were going to release me under normal release, and I had to fight tooth and nail for my medical release due to the injuries that I had sustained.

2004 ■ It was too rushed and release clerks did not have much expertise as with most service members they get moved around from section to section and become somewhat knowledgeable on most thing but experts on hardly anything, this is not a good scenario when you are dealing with something so important.

2017, 1994 ■ Good (2 responses).

2004 ■ Fairly good.

2000 ■ Okay.

2008 ■ For myself.

1987 ■ I retired in 87. I had a case worker, had for about five years then all of a sudden, no answer, why?

2012 ■ Very Good.

1993 ■ Few services. Transition process does not work.

2015 ■ I retired in December 2015 after X years of service half of that the last half with the reserves and my release process went very well. No particular big issues everything went according to how I saw it going. It was after that and the pension issues that is not part of your question, so I won't get into here, but my release process went very well December 2015.

1982 voluntary release ■ Okay. I just went over the base orderly who put my release in went down in manpower at that place (avenue) looking for a job I was going to retire bit of a run and he was retired military and met a certain colonel who was a good friend of his I don't lose sleep. I found all my own jobs. This is great this is fine, and I was gone. There was no true assistance, but I didn't need assistance I think in the sense I had a good trade which was not a problem still not a problem if I wanted to go back to work.

1996 RCMP ■ Difficult to manoeuvre with little assistance from RCMP.

2014 ■ Felt like I was a used piece of trash that was being taken out to the curb.

2008 ■ Horrible. No help.

2013 ■ Slow poorly organized.

1976 ■ SCARY.

2014 ■ Prepare to be poor for 3-12 months. Nothing relates to civilian life. Money is the biggest issue.

2012 ■ The whole system needs to be modernized.

1994 ■ It was fast but that was on in their favour as well. I was threatened with a document that I was made to sign, with jail if I ever spoke about my service in Yugoslavia.

Voluntary ■ I just have to reiterate what I said earlier, is first of all when you transition out that there is someone that you can go to afterwards and again, not everybody is going to retire, put their feet up and drink Piña Coladas all day long, some of us have to work and want to work, how to write a resume, how to do an interview, how to do follow-ups, this is all foreign to us. They, what it seems like well, thank you for your service, there you go, there is a wild public out there and also how to, how to change your vernacular to a civilian way of life.

I was very fortunate, got a job, I was in the Air Force, got a job working for a helicopter company, even there I would say things and they would look at me and say what are you talking about, then you would have to explain it. And I had to transition from, from where the military way of doing business to Transport Canada, which is, was a bit of a leap. But those are the things that we need to have available to us, especially if you are a long-term in the military.

Still serving – starting release ■ The other concern is that my employment I'm so specialized that the civilian equivalent would require obscene amounts of money to have you to get certified. So, our American counterparts don't have that problem, so these are not offered to us north of the border.

2006 voluntary ■ Actually, there was a career transition that lasted about two years and budget was cut. I used it and I thought it was great because there was a person attached to my file case manager if you will, she did my military resume and transformed the acronyms into civilian terms. I got a job because just like that, and I was a specialized person too. I was working there three years and a bunch of cuts and change in government and poof they went.

2009 ■ I wanted to add something good about transition, the education program. I found that was excellent. The service was great, the response was great, the financial support, the entire program that was, and I would have to say in 2009 it was phenomenal. So that's a good point, let's not cut that back.

2011 ■ I greatly appreciated being able to participate in the transition program towards release during the last six months of my military service. It allowed me to work with civilian colleagues and live quietly without uniforms while contributing to society.

In terms of the telephone service, at the federal level, I think it's excellent because everything is centralized, the people who are there are extremely polite, they listen, and I think it's extremely important, they try to direct us as well as possible, but the problem is after that. Once we are directed as best as possible by these people, they switch us to the other person, there the problems begin. There's a document missing, it takes this, it takes that. I'll give you an example, I applied for my file with the program that we have there, I don't remember the name.

About integration and the return to work, many of us during their careers have probably done what we probably did, went to the university to pick up courses to improve their lot a little bit when we are going to retire or, speculatively, to gain ranks, to rise in the hierarchy. But when we get out of the army, I tried to apply in several jobs, at 50+ years of age, to go to work at 13 bucks an hour, 14 bucks an hour, and finally when I'm going to earn a buck, 42 cents will go to the tax man.

Right now, unless I'm mistaken, there are a lot of frustrations among veterans. When we look at our government, which gives \$10 million to a guy like Omar Khadr, and the rest of us are struggling to get paid for the war wounds we have had while defending Canadian values on the other side, when we have the mayor of the metropolis who says that each and every one of us... We are not here to have a political talk... No no, far from it, but when you have the mayor of the metropolis who says that all Syrian refugees will have a family doctor as soon as they get here, that's the frustration of the veterans.

So, my suggestion, and I think everyone would agree with that, is that if we go out medical, that our pension be frozen at the tax rate of 28 or 30%, completely independent of the new salary we are going to make. Would that make sense to you?

2006 ■ For a person who is currently serving, you can go be a hero to a zero like that. Because, you know if you are re-mustering or releasing you go from being the go to guy or the girl and all of a sudden boom you're nobody. Then what happens is all the support goes because you're not, because if you're not with us you're against us – that's the mentality of the military. It's very challenging if you have any health concerns otherwise to deal with that. And subsequently you have health concerns, your marriage is not stable, and your wife leaves you or husband leaves you, whatever, you are in a very bad place. Because you don't have the support.

2015 ■ For a soldier's whose nature, identity, passion has been to proudly protect his Country, their families and troops safety, this doesn't shut off overnight. You can take the soldier out of the army, but you can't take the army out of the soldier. They quickly lose their identity, feel crushed and then anger, disappointment kicks in. It pushes vets to a breaking point and forces them to isolate. The truth is to all new vets, your fight for your Country is one thing, but be aware the real fight begins when they boot you out or when you retire. The fight after military doesn't measure up to the one you experience in the military. So, brace yourselves.

I'm still upset. No, their VOC rehab was pretty good. Like, six months prior to me getting, releasing, I utilized that, so I started at NAIT. The only problem I had was they changed the budget last year. Now they top up to 90%. Nobody call me from my case manager, so I put in a claim to top me up, because I got a letter saying this is what you're required to do. They sat on it for (many months), and I asked them, I said, I didn't get the top up. They told me because I was off the VOC for VAC, I wasn't on the system. I'm saying I thought that's why the case manager was there, because I could have opted back into, but I didn't know that, and they SAIT sat on it for (many months), so I'm still mad about that. But I said the program was good of the like I say, I know they changed.

Now you can get a degree. Because for me, there is only a diploma. But there's always ways around it. Because if you're taking classes in the same program, you can actually get everything paid for in two years. But you say, I was a (rank), so I know the question to ask. But these other guy, friends of mine are infantry. They don't know, and they're struggling. That's why I started a club at NAIT, military help and military, because we know each other better and we can share our experiences.

2015 voluntary ■ I transitioned from the military in 2015. I was a (rank), so I was in the knowledge with all the paperwork, but literally had a case manager and by the time they look after me, I did everything myself. I said, what are you guys going to do for me? I did it all on my own. I transitioned to NAIT. I went to school however what they failed to tell us that, they gave us credits for our time in. I was struggling, because I'm in year 2, communication, others in the class said oh we took this in year 1. I said to the guy that's the liaison between the military, have you ever think about giving the soldier and option, so he wouldn't have to struggle as much? So, yeah, this is the pros and cons. We've given you credit, however, if you take them, then you're going to be struggling because you don't know what the program had to offer. Then I tried to get EI after I finished school because it took four, five months for my security clearance to work at (government) Canada. However, you want to talk about the feelings because the only thing that's right is my pay. They haven't started my dental, because the new one has to be apply for current, and then the back-up is the old one.

There's got to be a better way to transition people out. I know for me now, I'm at (government) Canada, but I got out as a (rank), I'm too direct. So maybe they could offer better programs, like, I'm taking (trade), and they're sending me on the right course because I'm using all the resources to make me better. But I'm saying the downtime and the transition getting out, they can offer all those stuff and say these are the pros and cons, so the soldier is more equipped to survive out there.

As I think going back a little bit, we were talking about transition, and I haven't been involved with this, but what I have heard is that since about the late '90s trades training has been modified such that if you have a recognizable civilian trade you get enough training that you can qualify with an apprenticeship program and get a journeyman's certificate in your trade. Officers, advanced courses have been geared up, so they can get a degree or a master's degree from taking staff course. The difficulty is, if you're in the (lower rank) like I was, the (duty), I remember the soldier saying, well, what trade are you? And they'd say, (duty). I guess that means if some trades can be converted easily, a (trade) aren't quite so easily converted unless you have a (other) connection or something else like that.

EXPECTATIONS RE PROPOSED TRANSITION GROUPS

Nothing (15 responses).

No effect on myself since it's so long since I retired.

I will be unaffected.

1996 ■ Proposed transition groups – Without a doubt there will something positive.

I don't know about it (8 responses).

N/A (3 responses).

Which ultimately you want that, I mean it is like the blind leading the blind. You can't have military people saying this is what is going to happen, for military releasing, if they don't have any idea what they are talking about, realistically.

Hopefully a more coordinated effort

Nothing for me but a much easier transition for those CAF members retiring in future.

I'm unaware of any announcements of "transition groups".

I haven't heard anything.

Don't know.

I am not expecting much. I am mostly through my transition so it won't matter to me anyway.

Support and agreeance from government.

Not much for me as I retired over two years ago but I hope it streamlines the process for others

Nothing. They are only in it for themselves.

Don't know anything about them.

No real expectations now that I have been retired for some time.

Although a pipe dream smooth transition from the military to VAC programs would the ideal result.

Seamless transition and ideally Veterans and VAC would be a subset of DND so there is no transition from CF to VAC required.

I would like to see more respect given to retiring members with regard to access to serving military, i.e. honorary membership in messes, access to facilities for family members etc.

That no veteran slips thru the cracks like happened to me.

Seamless transition and ideally Veterans and VAC would be a subset of DND so there is no transition from CF to VAC required.

Fair, predictable services that recognize the individual needs of each Veteran. A simplification of the processes around application for benefits. Streamlining the number of agencies involved which can be somewhat confusing at times.

I want an improved and caring process. In my case the Service was totally focused on getting me out, regardless of the complications my medical condition presented.

More support for the people who need it. I worked as a civvy at the Edmonton Garrison Release section in 2003, and I saw some fragile people who needed support. I don't know what happened to them.

Not a blessed thing! That way I am not disappointed or surprised.

You should have a provincial health care card for your intended place of residence prior to release. You should have all pension or return of contributions calculated and made payable on the date of release. You shouldn't have to wait 3-6 months for your money.

More consideration on the short and long-term effects and impact the changes and transitions have on soldiers and families. The same conditions will apply in the future as in the past until "we" clean out Veterans Affairs. Those people are running their own little kingdom and need to be replaced with persons who really and truly care more about the vet rather than their own jobs.

I think the real story and information is being used for the wrong reasons. NCM like me as an MWO LOG are not enabled to speak or told it is an officers role when NCM below my rank are unheard too.

More detailed information with options. Get rid of the threats of no coverage if unable to enroll in a given time.

I think General Vance mentioned in response to that, henceforth, the ultimate plan is a member would leave, have everything set up in terms of, you know, pension and all that stuff, before they walk out the door. So that's good that would be fantastic, you know. Learning from thousands or tens of thousands who have not had that seamless process. I guess working towards seamlessness is a fantastic thing. There's no reason why you can't

have greater linkage between Veterans Affairs and DND, for example for medical challenges, why can't Veterans Affairs just believe DND, and say okay, this person got legs blown off in Afghanistan, that's an injury. Then the veteran seamlessly rolls into Veterans Affairs with whatever scale of services you need for that, and off you go. You don't have to go then, from one system, then to the other system, when there literally should be inter-linked like that. There should be no stoppages in that process. Because it is just common sense. Are there going to be civilians in this group? For example, if you are transitioning you, alluded to earlier about the SCAN, where it's essentially mostly military, if not at all military providing information for the military. Hopefully in transition group going to be civilians like career counsellors, coaches to tell you about the job prospects for whatever you are. How to work on your benefits, extra strengths and approach the outside world like that.

Nothing. Proposed and in place are 2 totally different things.

That no one will suffer like I did.

It's a start. I'm hoping that they structure the process in a less chaotic fashion and have independent representation to explain processes as well as benefits that the layman can understand and navigate.

Ha ha ha, really.

Not sure.

More BS.

More help. Service officers that know what they are doing.

They better fix that broken system, even after considerable help from my chain of command, IPSC and JPSU, I still had to ask the PPCLI Benevolent fund for a loan as my credit was weak before leaving the forces, when I was released there was close to a month and a half from my last pay with the military and my first pay with Manulife (ELB) and I ended up having my car repossessed which has since doomed my credit for the last 2 years, this transition service better rectify the many failures that I and many others experienced.

More information and hopefully give service members more civilian accredited courses to allow us to transition more smoothly.

I have been retired from the military for 25+ years. I have no such expectations.

Nothing different, more of the same, Decisions which are disconnected from the veterans' reality and often driven by bureaucrats that have no exposure or experience in the veterans' culture.

I haven't heard anything about them or who they are.

Nothing, too late for me, but it's good that the Government is doing it now.

Only time will tell.

Not much!!

I am expecting that i will be taken care off and get the mental health help that is needed for myself and family.

Nothing for myself, and chances are they will fall short.. Our government is good at falling short on promises to us Veterans.

To be honest, every time I hear the government speak of "successful transition" after service, it makes me feel as if I am excluded from this demographic. My service injuries are so excessive that I am unable to work in any capacity. The majority of transition services are geared toward retraining and ignore those of us that cannot consider this as an option. My only focus is to enjoy the time I have in whatever capacity that offers at the moment as I don't know what tomorrow holds for me. I would like to see the government (VAC) recognize quality of life more by asking me and other veterans what makes us happy and find ways to provide that for us. I do not want to feel like a failure because I cannot work. I don't want to put my family at financial risk, but I worry that if I go and do an "odd job" (to appease the government in their goal to get me back to work), and hurt myself more than I'm already hurting, it could destroy me. I don't "expect" anything from the government. I simply wish they'd stop putting unreasonable expectations upon me.

Follow up, hold handing. Once out, no doctor – we cannot get our meds renewed. ER departments don't understand our history! One stop shopping. Get out VAC programs approved, started before release. A doctor on hand, or allow Vets to see CF doctors, open this up to families as well, especially when moving to a new province.

1. Reducing the hassle from JPSU. Get good, experienced, stable employees posted to every JPSU/IPSC. Stop posting people in that don't know what the CF release process is, what rehabilitation entails or no idea what is required of them.

2. Give the members time to start and work on their SISIP education programs. If you tell people they can start their education 6 months before release, don't tell them they can't attend because their course is "during working hours"!

3. Stop treating people to a double standard. If a releasing Junior NCM has to attend a JPSU parade, so should the Senior NCMs and Officers!

Wait & see, hopefully they will significantly out perform their predecessors.

Nothing, like everything the government promises, useless and doesn't get the follow through.

Nothing, as is continually displayed by this and past government. All talk.

No expectations.

Re new transition group – They've had colonel's and general's leave every six months for the JPSU program. Colonel now general Misener, now you're in charge of the program. Six months later they get out, that's happened the last four generals the last two years. The problem with DD is that long term thinking is a year, possibly two years, maybe possibly 18 months. Because it depends on the tenure of the commander. Because the careerism is so rampant so pervasive across the board in NCOs and the officers that they have a two-year window to get to the next level. So unless you have a civilian or the military making decisions who has no concern about making an advancement; the "give a shit factor" if you will is very limited to the person in charge because he or she is worried about their advancement. And when the person in charge looks at "how is it good for me" and over a period of time, people are realizing it appears to be the last four commanders, it appears that they see they suddenly hit a wall and then they suddenly retire. So, there's a trend there that's not helpful for people are trying to transition to the programs.

Hope they work.

2011 ■ Proposed transition groups – expect improved access to civil health care SPECIFICALLY in the event of health release. An assurance that we will not be left behind for an indeterminate period of time when we leave the Forces.

I would expect that soldiers with medical issues be evaluated and released into civvy-land accordingly. Some may be able to wait a while, others may need to be referred to a civvy practice... or something like that.

Help.

We will get noting.

Nothing. Don't see much usefulness coming about from this as nothing ever does due to morons and bureaucracy. I am expecting soldiers, sailors and aviators to be able to transition easily. At no point should anybody be released from military service without having a medical, financial plan fully implemented. A retiring member should not have to wait for severance, or pension. You should be paid from the military on your last pay, then your pension should be available at the end of the next month. NO DELAYS.

I'm hoping that people transitioning remain in a military unit, until their finances are straight, the Veterans Medical Conditions are all documented, and specialist/family Dr. Assigned to Veteran. Nothing worse than a bunch of money, no purpose in life, to mess one's family/home setup, let alone the trap of addictions. Old Pension should be re-instated for all Veterans, not just a select few! I come under old pension and I'm financially secure.

I hope it is not going to create more confusion.

Nothing. All talk and no action.

Nothing they have demonstrated they are only interested in sound bites not substance.

Fairness & honesty.

Without fellow veterans assisting the next bunch of veterans I doubt it will be much good.

At that time there were none, upon date of release you were on your own.

Assistance in obtaining follow-on employment and adjusting to civilian life.

Nothing. I hope the CF never decides whether or not members should have access to a VAC benefits, leave it to VAC to decide. This separation of power is absolutely essential to ensure fairness.

Frankly, I'm expecting very good research-based reports and recommendations, which will be submitted and sit on shelves until forgotten.

INFORMATION

Here is (?) mostly transition groups together. Folks to be aware of that, the policy. End up, part of what we are doing here is, so the creation of that. And then basically provide, some feedback on, go out and share this.

1996 ■ No information has been given to me!

2013 ■ I'm speaking up because I think it might be providing a balance perspective here. I retired medically after (?) years. I was on a restricted category for a couple of years, on a ground job. I had opportunities to attend SCAN, I did not, because I thought I was too busy at work. I had briefings through medical people as to what my options were. I had briefings through SISIP as to the education programs available to me six months prior to departure and all that sort of stuff.

When we retired, there was nothing told to us. My husband basically sat around for three years waiting for what he was supposed to be doing. He got taken out of (military) uniform, there was no ifs, buts, maybes, he has PTSD and he has a (body) injury. And when we retired there was nothing told to us what we were entitled to, for the family, for my kids, anything.

1988 voluntary ■ Another thing, when I did live in a military environment in (city), after I retired I came down here and of course being in military environment a bunch of ex-military people, who do you mix with? And we're all just like, we all hear things. We all join together. I don't know how many people I have known, didn't know about all the benefits. I spent quite a bit of time helping guys. We all help each other actually. I think the biggest problem, I notice is communications. There are no communications between what is going on, what we are entitled to, what we actually have. I think they should have some kind of group some kind of group program, veterans can get together, and Veterans Affairs can sponsor them and brief us. On yearly basis.

1992 RCMP voluntary ■ I don't want to dwell on what was going on in years past, put it online, so anybody anywhere in Canada, regardless of their posting, can find it. And go through the checklist and like this lady said, tell me what alternatives there are out there for me to write a resume. I'm gone through that process myself but tell us those things that are available to us, to help us along the way in it the transition. We need to know that months in advance. If you are thinking about retiring, likely thinking about a year or so or maybe you said I'm going to be out at such and such a date. It is the communications that needs to be improved upon. What services are available, what is DVA got to offer for us? You are certainly not going to get it from the RCMP after I retire.

2013 ■ I retired from the military about four years ago, after (number of) years of being in the military. The transition was very difficult. I found that the package when you are being released, it is come, it is complete, unfortunately with my release it was like all of a sudden, I was being released. The next thing I know I got all this information coming at me and really no time to digest it.

The SCAN program, no, a lot of people didn't have it. I had to go from (city) to (city) to get mine, because I was going to be on parade when they were in camp at (city) at the time, but that's neither here nor there. The SCAN program is issued and given too late in a full career serviceman or Mountie, and the RCMP should have the

same kind of program. It's what's available out there? That's all we had, and I got it three years before I retired when I should have got it ten years, after a person has gotten years in, in one of the forces, he should get it then, because by ten years you've made up your mind you're going to stay in forever, because you're going to lose too much. And it should be at the ten year mark, 15 year mark, so you can keep current, so that when you say, take this job and shove it, okay, you're up to date. Because the best lesson that I got that whole day was the financial counselling at the end of the day. Some of us bad habits sitting and critiquing, mentally critiquing, and two of us went up and said, well done. The best presentation the whole two days, one problem. What's that, sir? 30 years too bloody late.

I retired a few years back. I would like it to know how long, you said we can get courses at retirement. How long does that last in this gentleman here, he retired two weeks ago so if five years can he go get training, you know, paid to help? As a Veteran, how long did it last? I'd like to know.

1997 ■ I keep on hearing about SCAN seminars. I took one SCAN seminar at Edmonton and it was about seven years before I got out. The only thing I remembered from it was the pension advocate guide that said, *"if you think you have a problem, get it established before you get released"*, which I did. The only thing I remembered about what we were given at the time, 89 or 90, was the pension advocate guide because I had a hearing problem.

Online information is worth what it's worth, sir. It's worth what it's worth, we watch online and then in the time it takes to say it, we get lost. And then when you talk or write to a machine, there should be more people, sometimes you call, and it's long, it's a long time before you have the line.

For online information, when you're dealing with a 92-year-old veteran who doesn't have a computer, he doesn't have a computer, so if no one in his family does things for him, he's completely cut off from the system.

Let's see, in any case transition, transition service, all this, that, you know, after our two years with the RRM, the SISIP, that I went back to school and everything, to make sure that, you know, there's a follow-up and that if I'm finally not fit for work... You know, it's because I got my information on the Internet, in the adaptation section there's a psychosocial and professional section, I was able to continue my studies, it was paid for by CANVET, if I wasn't clever like that, if I hadn't gone on the Internet, I wouldn't have had access to these resources.

It takes human resources that will help the military, give them information and it would take a family kit with phone numbers to call and all that. There you go. These are my suggestions. I'm going to give the floor to other people.

2000 RCMP ■ I retired from RCMP in 2000, I got nothing. We were told nothing, you got no information what you were entitled to, what you weren't entitled to, thanks for showing up, your pension check will start on this date and that was it. Anything after that I found out basically through friends of mine in the military. What I could apply for through Veterans Affairs, came from guys in the military, not RCMP, because their attitude at that time, I doubt it has changed, is that's the individual's responsibility, you are supposed to go find all this out. I don't know if they have a package now, but I don't think so.

Not too long ago, I took care of my old Army buddy and when he passed away I was the executor of his will and being an ex-military individual, there were things that he had no idea what he was entitled to, and I would lay a \$100 bill that I would go and probably ask ten people serving in the uniform now and ask them how much do they contribute toward their SDD, they don't know what their SDD is and that stands for supplementary death benefit. And that supplementary death benefit is still provided and paid for when you leave the military or civilian job at the government that you work for. If you still pay for it, you'll be entitled and if you pass away before you reach age 65, two full years wage, taxes free, if, and this is the word if comes in, if it goes towards surviving individual and not your estate. If it goes to your estate, then it's taxed on that money. If it goes to an individual, it's tax free. And I had to do a lot of research to find out if my old buddy Bill continued to pay to the supplementary death benefit after he left the forces. And he did, but because of the fact he was in his 80's when he passed away, his supplementary death benefit was only \$5,000 and the problem with that was Bill didn't leave it to an individual, it became part of his estate. That's all right, the supplementary death benefit only gets taxed when it's left to your estate if it exceeds \$10,000. So, Bill was lucky, the estate was lucky his brothers and sisters were lucky because they got the estate and \$5,000 SDD was not taxed. And I can assure you that if you went to some of the serving members of the forces they would not have a clue what you were talking about with the SDD and I don't say that to belittle them it's just a fact as the two gentlemen say information forth with is pretty slow. It's pretty slow to say the least. I'm ex-military and I served my time I served 40+ and a half years so I know that the information is slow in coming and if you don't take the bull by the horns, sometimes you won't even know about it what you're entitled to.

1987 RCMP ■ I retired from RCMP. I was up in (province), retired, they said *"we will send it to you in the mail"*. I got them in the mail, I phoned anybody to contact, no. Send the papers in, no discussion, then suddenly got my check. No dialogue with there or to help you, what are your benefits and detail, if you want to move or housing, everything just void. I hope this changed for those retiring later on.

Still serving ■ I'm sorry we've been told about there's this fantastic up to \$80,000 for post-secondary education. We've heard nothing about it as service personnel coming close, I would love to have (?). The other overlying maybe is the Canadian forces is now starting to get civilian equivalent authorizations, so provinces are now recognizing military driver's licenses and allowing them to transfer to truck driving. Canada is one of the few countries that doesn't recognize any aviation maintenance qualifications, so Canada has 20,000 air men prepared to start fixing aircraft tomorrow once they retire, but although we need parallel licensing they're not prepared to give a Transport Canada authorization. I don't know whether that comes down to money or just because (inaudible). But we haven't, as servicemen still in the service, we haven't heard jack about this fantastic money we're supposed to get to be going tech.

1999 ■ I got out in 99, and there is no SCAN seminar, they, well there was, but they told you nothing. You get out, nothing, the gate hits you in the rear end. You have to make, I think you have to make retirees aware, that when they go out that door the armed forces doesn't love them anymore.

SCAN seminars are about the majority of the information you get. They're a pain. they're always done in work hours, so you can't go to it if you're on exercise or this or that, and when it's delivered, it's delivered in a vary sterile environment it's like reading stereo instructions, all the information is in there it's just hidden. And the individuals that deliver it are reading from sheets. So, you're not getting what you need, you're getting what they're prepared to give you. If you have somebody who isn't a gifted speaker then it's worse. And you can

get somebody with marking time – this is just what they do, it gets worse. So, the information is not forthcoming, it's not quick. The CF has become addicted to emails so that's the only way we get our information anymore. So, finding out about the SCAN centers, if you've told the computer you don't want to get information from PSD anymore because you get spammed with tons of information every day, you're not going to find out about the SCAN seminar so that's the way it's coming to us right now.

2006 ■ My whole process was shit. No info. I hope that since 2006 (and that they have had an increase in 3Bs) they have learned to make more info available.

The administration because military officers change every six months to a year so you're trying to figure out what's going on. So, if our trying to use the military chain of command for soldiers it's broken at every level. And so the only way forward is to use alternate means, Facebook, Linked-In, whatever, because troops are trying to figure out what's going on and what is next is crazy.

2016 ■ As being released with PTSD, I found I could not remember every step, failed to understand what I had to do next, and felt completely stupid with the process. I could not understand why so much information was delivered so quickly by so many different representatives.

2016 ■ SCAN seminars are a great tool. I found them useful. But lately SCAN seminars are not as accessible either from the member's CoC or not enough room because half the people attending are only there to get out of work. The assistance of a release case worker works very well – as long as you have a knowledgeable and dedicated worker. I did.

2016 ■ The 2-day information retirement/release seminars, need to be 4 days. Too much information and issues to deal with in too short a time. To hand-over, do Unit processing, figure out pension, loans and investment plans, final appointments and find/transfer to new care provider/s, turn in kit, close out your PMQ /sell home, find a place to live, try to pay for first and last rent or get a new/transfer mortgage, arrange for school, find a doctor/physio/chiro, follow-up and get records for medical, dental and specialists, do SISIP, VAC, and insurance paperwork, transfer personal information to the new Province/Territory/Country to set up banking, auto, career and licensing, pack, load, clean, move, unload, unpack, etc. You need a year, not 6 months and the flexibility to do what you need to.

1981 ■ No information.

2010 ■ Adequate from federal retirees' association but woefully inadequate from anyone in the Public Service (i.e., virtually no information or understanding of the unique circumstances of a former CAF member).

2017 ■ Timing – OK. Volume – a bit intimidating. Clarity – generally good but I am unclear, having opted to continue my membership in the PSHCP and to enroll in the dental care place, both to be paid out of my retirement annuity, as to my status in both plans immediately after my release. I was released less than a month ago and I've not needed to use either plan, but I don't have a PSHCP card or dental plan card. I will have to reach out to confirm my current status.

2017 ■ Very voluminous, often repetitive and usually not particularly clear.

2005 voluntary ■ I did a SCAN seminar, I felt it was quite useful, there were, when I went through, but I wasn't in a bigger military location, I was in (city), despite retraining as an officer.

1995 voluntary ■ I retired in 1995 after 20+ years of service. The transition period, nobody had I attended the SCAN seminar, but I noticed that everyone that was talking at the SCAN seminar was still in uniform. I noticed this well after I was out on the, pounding the pavement with my tie and jacket and briefcase full of resumes. Fast-forward to when I did catch on with (an employer) and was in a position to do some hiring and I actually took a course called "Writing the Remarkable Resume", where you find out that you pour your heart and soul into resume, and you've got all these qualifications you got in the military, and they say "gees Jimmy that's pretty good, I would hire you", then you go, and apply somewhere and they say, "thank you, we will keep your resume on file". And you wish that they would at least wait until you left the office before they shred it. Then, I was in my 40s and not with a minimal amount of computer training, this is was in the 90s now. What I think they should do, and they are not doing it yet in these SCAN seminars and preparing people to become civilians, or retired military, is to explain what a resume is, how you take a job description and bullets and so on. Because when I took resumes home at night to look at, I might have spent 15 seconds on them, and scoring them I need twelve bullets, anyone that scored ten out of twelve or better, yes then we look at them and we'd bring them in for a test, other than that, nothing. The generic resumes didn't help at all. I just found it frustrating. I went back to BPSO and asked if I could speak and tell them the real story and what it is like after you are out, and you are trying to look for a job and you think you got qualifications and you are going against, well a lot younger people and more computer skills and so on. I wasn't lucky enough to be in your old-fashioned tech trade that came out of the base, spun on your heel, back in, now back on the base and everything was smooth. I didn't get to do that, I know a few people that did, but many that didn't. My position for the transition is, have people that have made the transition successful and unsuccessful, come and talk to the people that are about to go through it. Things like budgets, holy cow. When you are in, they are making really good money. Get a spreadsheet and write down every single penny you spend at Tim Hortons, golf balls, anything, find out what am I going to need when I retire. Because it is a shock. I don't get into things about the bridge benefit, back in the olden days nobody was told about it. It was 2% per year of best six years and that was it. Well now people are referring to it as a claw-back, it is not a claw-back, so on. It is very frustrating, but I found that when you did get out of uniform, there wasn't any help for you. You've just got to put your nose to the grindstone. I was told after a day of frustration, if you are going by a place that you look at it and say oh gee I wouldn't mind working there, go in and apply, doesn't matter what it is, I did that and wound up working at (local employer doing selling). I didn't really want to do that. I wanted to get in and do (other work there), but that taught me a lot. I pumped gas, I cut lawns, I recalled a course I took in 70's for ice making, so got to run an arena and I finally caught on with (government job) and eventually in pensions, which opened my eyes about the pensions. But the bottom line is I feel that people in uniform, about to retire, should be briefed and not just, well if you want to become a long-distance trucker, yeah we can do that in the SCAN seminar, well prepare them.

2015 ■ I've been out for two years. There is a trial I took two weeks ago, it is called Shaping Purpose and essentially what it is, for those transitions in life and, organization is based in the New Brunswick, had a very successful civilian to civilian transition program. They hooked up with this Afghanistan veteran and then they added a military component so transition from military life to civilian life. This is the first, sorry the second version of this course they run. Its four-days long. It is like a very intensive boot camp. The whole concept is,

you have spent primarily a large chunk of your life in the military. That's a separate society, separate way of doing things, separate culture. You are now leaving that and going into another culture called civilian world, almost like two different countries. So how do you get back into the civilian world? That's what this boot camp does. I found it personally very, very, enlightening, an excellent program to go through. We suggest for the wrap-up, this should be added prior to a member releasing. Not exactly sure the time frame, could be six months to a year let's say, if you know you are getting out this is a fantastic program. Hopefully it will get funded. We were part of, one more group I think there will be one more next year. They will do some sort of examination of its effectiveness and hopefully it will be rolled into the transition program, so you won't just get the SCAN stuff, which is interesting, I've been to a couple of those myself. But this process, it gets down to who you are, even after X number of years in the military serving. It sets you up for success in what you want to do, with excellent tools to overcome the challenges of transition, which we all met one way or the other. So that is something called Shaping Purpose, shapingpurpose.com is the Website, you can take a look at it. So that's just something you may not have heard of, but it is there and hopefully will be improved upon and hopefully there's some linkage between VAC in Charlottetown just because of location between there New Brunswick is close, so hopefully that will happen.

2013 ■ I had questions that I needed to be answered by the (agency) rep, but she didn't answer my e-mails. My questions were never answered. I was told I wasn't entitled to a move back to where my family is. I wasn't entitled because I had been a reservist working out in (town), then I got married there, then through his move we came here.

2011 ■ I receive somethings via email. I hear things through the grape vine from others.

2015 ■ Lots of information provided in a very short time. Quality really depends on the experience of the clerk who is providing the information. Lots of paper.

2004 ■ Decidedly obtuse and intentionally vague. It felt like I was being misled and driven out, whenever I tried to get medical files or guidance to apply for SCAN assistance or VAC benefits.

2000 ■ I had to ask for it – and not really clear to understand. The financial section was not helpful.

1997 ■ I found it OK, but there seems to be a lot of info myself, and others were not made aware of.

Still serving, starting release ■ It's the previous two subjects we're talking about are completely rough for us like you're actually working on base we're just mushrooms, and the information doesn't flow freely. Accidentally on Facebook I'm finding a lot of information through chat groups and stuff like that. Apparently, VA just came up with an employment assistance program they announced at the Invictus games that nobody knows a thing about. Like the VA actually has a unit specifically for finding employment and I found that accidentally because my friend was offered a job the Invictus games. So, this is not freely handed information.

2008 ■ It was done in very good time, frequency and was very clear.

2012 ■ Excellent.

2008 ■ Good information flow; responsive to my needs.

I think for, me and from speaking with other veterans, I think the best way to give information is in multiple ways. By that I mean, face-to-face with stuff to take home and read at a later date for what you don't retain during that face-to-face meeting. And because you really need to hear the same information presented from different angles, multiple times, before you have the best chance of retaining those important details. Anyone who is being medically released, that isn't retiring by choice, it makes you very resistant to absorbing the information that is presented to you. The more ways that you can give that information, and maybe checking in with the person ahead of time to find out. For me paperwork is really overwhelming, I just see red, it is just this big red target. I want to take that paper and shove it somewhere other than the shredder. Everyone is different, you know, some people might really appreciate that, so they read that at home in their own time.

2014 ■ Very difficult and a lot of research.

1972 ■ Horrible did not exist.

2000 ■ My transition was fine.

1979 ■ Slow.

1991 ■ Received no information.

1996 ■ Difficult at first. Unable to due to wrong numbers, I got the drift soon after.

1995 voluntary ■ I was released under FRP and the whole process was a sausage machine. Much of the financial information was poorly presented regarding terminal leave vs payout and as a result many dollars were clawed back in 1996 as my payout was counted towards my 1995 income.

2005 ■ Adequate.

1996 ■ All information was timely, clear and answered all questions.

1976 voluntary ■ I got out early. On the afternoon when I was throwing my uniform in the garbage can I got a call from the base personnel officer asking me can you come in and discuss why you're getting out of the Armed Forces. I was out of the Armed Forces at that moment so that's all I have.

1982 voluntary ■ When I pensioned off I was only X years old I pensioned I was going to a job the very next day. But I was just to explain I was working at a base and I got two phone calls from an officer in Ottawa who insisted that I shouldn't take my six months rehab leave which I wanted to take because it took me, that gave me 5% less penalty. You got a penalty for each year under 25, a 5%. And he says I should take a buyout. So, I explained to him I was going through a divorce with my first wife I was getting out of the military and I wanted a 15% penalty not 20%. And he said that's not true.

Well, I joined up in (year) two years military prior to that and every now and then you would get at that time a signal course to kill time they bring over a pay officer and he would explain to you, benefits and wills and what you should do, and they always told you about this penalty benefit that you had by staying one day over your enlistment date and this guy insisted it wasn't true. So, I went to the pay office and this was good, they laid out the form, they gave you the facts and figures and you figured out your pension. I figured it out at 15% penalty. And here on the base I remember the name of the sergeant and the warrant officer they insisted 20%, 20%. So, I just said fine I did a 20%. So about three or four weeks before I officially went on pension in (month) I got the same form it was a pink form or mine was white same form, same facts same figures 15% penalty.

So, to my estimation a master warrant officer in Ottawa was looking to get scalps. He got enough he got promoted. I don't see any other benefit for anybody out of it. For all of these years that's always bugged me, and I did keep the paperwork and I have it somewhere but it's just otherwise my release was quick, it was good, it was efficient outside of that and they did come back and ask me filled come back in the Army, but I had lost my sense of humour by then.

2000 ■ At the time, resources were not what they are now, but the info I received was helpful and valid.

1997 ■ Not much. I received a good briefing from a Sgt. in my unit, as he had worked in the release section at NDHQ. The base didn't offer much. No mention of FSNA, at all.

1994 ■ Information during release seemed satisfactory other than procedures or steps to pursue assistance in hearing loss attributed to military service. Firstly, I wasn't aware of any benefit to me.

2012 ■ I received a letter.

Yes, since you've been talking about case managers, remember, you have a pension officer who takes care of you. What the case manager does not know about pension entitlements, the pension officer should know.

2009 ■ Not very much, I was a Reservist with 40+ years of service. I was one of the first ones in my unit to qualify for the Reserve Force Pension plan. Releases were not very well done by reserve force units, I think it is better now.

1996 ■ Limited.

2012 ■ Terrible. I was released with (illness).

2017 ■ The release process was explained. As a medically released member, I have no idea how VAC is to play a role now. I've been awarded a disability benefit, but I'm unsure what else VAC does.

2017 ■ Going back to your original question what I'd like to see through the transition service specifically is it needs to be more streamlined. I was going through the system for two years knowing my medical release was coming going back to school full time but almost a full-time job for me to make sure that I have all my benefits,

make sure the paperwork is filled out properly, make sure I talked to, my income is going to come from SISIP, the back and pensions office. It's a full-time job for me to do this and figure out what's required. It needs to be JPSU was awesome, but the people are knowledgeable, and they tell you what needs to be done but it's too much information for one person to handle and you need an assistant, somebody to assist you through that process is my biggest point I would like to put across.

1972 ■ None existent.

1972 ■ There wasn't one.

1994 ■ Had some good personal to explain things, otherwise it would have been a difficult transition.

1994 ■ The release briefings I had were timely, informative and prepared me for my retirement.

1988 ■ Confusing.

2006 ■ No problems.

1997 voluntary ■ I'll go back to when I got out and I took a buyout. At the time quite a bit was involved, and it was confusing about what you could put aside of what you could have to claim in taxes, all that stuff. We were assigned financial advisors. These people came to our home, sat down with my wife and I, explained everything, deferred taxes what we had to pay, what you didn't have to pay, what you could put in RRSP, what you couldn't, we had all our annual leave that was in indiscernible. That was all part of the package the buy back. They were helpful, and I would hope that it can change today with members getting out but whatever having to deal with finance matters. We weren't involved in that all our lives and all of a sudden, we're getting out we've got this bun did he will and what do we do with it. They couldn't be more helpful. For us it was a benefit and I have no complaints whatsoever.

1993 ■ Nothing.

2014 ■ I'm a former administration clerk, so things went pretty well, because I knew how it worked. But I believe that for a job other than my own, there are things that should be more detailed, and we should leave a lot of time to help a member. And that the return to civilian life may well take place if you prepare at least one year before your departure. There should be more specific sessions to help you get through the transition stages in an easier way, because I've met many people who would have liked to have some help planning some of the transition steps earlier.

1995 ■ Everything was easy to understand and to the point. No issues.

1992 ■ I received the information I needed in a timely and clear manner.

2012 ■ It is clearly a case of the younger and employable under 55 are able to obtain transitions. I was 50+ and the case that I am pensionable as a reservist was a serious difficulty. I am now PTSD and (injury) pension for life. Yes, I can speak as an advocate for a lot of NCM who need a voice as a mentor and strong person with skills to offer.

2009 ■ Getting information on post retirement education opportunities was poorly understood.

1993 ■ Poor at the time. No counselling at all. Kept the dental but turned to civilian health plan.

1998 ■ My unit screwed me over with a bunch of lies, took years to get things straight, (almost decades – yup that’s decades with an S). First case manager was useless and caused more problems than she ever tried to help.

2006 ■ Horrible.

2016 ■ Horrible, convoluted, chaotic and difficult to manoeuvre.

2011 ■ Too much waiting. Answering to their time line not mine. The whole out routine was for their benefit of checking off the box NOT helping me.

2013 ■ Very difficult. I have made several freedom of information requests to obtain records and got back either nothing or not what was requested.

2015 ■ Overwhelming, and difficult to stay on top. A better more efficient process should be in place to assist injured vets and their families.

2002 voluntary ■ I do not remember much support in any way upon release. My regiment (certain senior ranks) were in fact angry that I was leaving. I was told that I “was abandoning the regiment and its time of need”. Despite the fact that I had secured another job outside the Armed Forces.

2003 ■ I was never aware there was any services to help me or my family until recently.

2006 ■ Too little too late and too generic.

1992 RCMP ■ When I retired, the package they give you, coming out of RCMP was absolutely abysmal. I upped, or the theory, is don’t come to me with a problem, come to me with a solution. My solution to that is, in this day and age, this would have probably caused all the military and RCMP, put it online. I don’t need to wait for some petty little bureaucrat to send me a paper package. If I don’t live near a center, that means I got to travel there with the Internet, the package is there, and it can be written specifically to each of the branches, whoever.

2005 ■ I as the member’s partner was able to understand it however my partner would never have been able to figure it out their brain was just too messed up.

1997 ■ DND – It's a positive. I don't know if they still do it or not. When I was about with my out routine in (base) there was a week put aside where the member and his spouse attended meetings with financial advisors, other advisors, real estate, all of that, that whole gamut and it was very helpful. I don't know if they still do it or not, but my wife and I found that very informative and it really helped when we sold our home and other things when we made our move and what to expect what not to expect. Where to go for help. Who to call. Things like that. And we found it very beneficial. And that was a common thing for our release at the time. And I would recommend if they haven't got it going now they should start it again.

2014 RCMP voluntary ■ My transition would have been in 2014 for that aspect of it. And I dealt likely with the very same person that (name) did. The RCMP was also in a transition between the people that did the, all the health benefits and the service stuff and so we were kind of getting flipped back and forth a little bit, but we still had contact numbers for all of it, so it still that part of it went well. If you couldn't figure it out on an email, there was always a phone number that you could call. So that part of it went well.

2014 RCMP voluntary ■ I guess going back to 2014, I would have dealt with the same young lady and she was very knowledgeable on the procedures that were in place because that's what she had done for a long, long time. She was transferred out of there shortly thereafter because why would we keep somebody with a vast amount of knowledge in the same job for a long time. She was transferred out of there, but she supplied me with a lot of answers, (city) supplied me with a lot of answers, and the paperwork was fairly straightforward. You told them what you wanted to do with your golden handshake and that part of it went really well for that part of the transition.

2006 RCMP voluntary ■ I made contact, I wish I could remember her name, she was wonderful, she gave me all the information I needed she told me the websites of different options. I did a lot of research on my own. I guess the difference is I had already decided I was going so now I just gave them notice that I'm leaving. The biggest discussion is how long do we have, how long do we get to keep you before you leave. So that's where the bit of negotiation took place. But the information was there, I was able to get it, this woman worked in Winnipeg head office I wish I could remember her name she was remarkable. Any member of the RCMP that left the division before me and probably still now she's obviously the pointer person and everybody will probably speak very highly of her.

2017 ■ It was a lot of information slammed into my final 6 months of service prior to my release. It was hard to understand and difficult to keep straight. When I received my release package, I was given wrong information on where to send the documents which delayed the process. I was generally confused and over scheduled in that final 6-month period of service. In looking back at my calendar of scheduled appointments, whether medical (final medical appointments, case manager) or administrative (SISIP, release clear-out), I had 68 appointments. I was ill advised on many avenues of my release and my unit was unhelpful. There was some clarity offered by a service manager at IPSC, but it was often difficult to schedule an appointment as their workload was high.

2015 ■ Nothing, I had to go ask, do the research. Track down personnel etc.

2016 ■ The volume of information was a lot to absorb, especially in a two-day pump-and-dump seminar. When you deal with low concentration and high anxiety like many of my college's, it was too much too fast.

1993 ■ Poor to fair.

2010 ■ Terrible rushed and not a lot of time to prepare.

2011 ■ Received none.

1994 ■ Between slim and none.

1999 ■ No definitely not. Lost my house and truck waiting for funding.

1999 ■ Clear as mud.

1995 RCMP voluntary ■ My experience has been, when I retired in 1995 from the RCMP, there was no transition plan. When I retired from the (level) government in 2004 there was partial, certainly not as comprehensive as what is afforded to retiring military personnel. So I would like to see that they do the same thing for RCMP.

2016 ■ Timing was fair. There was a lot, however I think I was one of the luckier ones in this regard – clarity wasn't so great bit. I had a very good case manager at the MIR. I had to see her several times to ensure I was still on the right track and making the right appointments. I have over 25 years in – I can only imagine the frustration of those with considerably less time that I attempting to navigate THAT mess on their own.

2008 ■ Horrible. No info provided what so ever.

2006 ■ Pretty good, attended SCAN seminars.

2010 ■ Civilian HE was useless in my new organization. I learned everything through personal relationships with others/friends who had transitioned from CAF to public service before me.

I think one of the services that could be provided for a person exchanged to (?) in the military, provide them with a comprehensive questions package. Because the things that other people have gone through are there. You can read beforehand what some of the common stumbling blocks are then you go to the SCAN seminar already aware of where you need to pay attention and where you need to find out some detail, where things are when you need help (?).

1982 & 2013 voluntary ■ I think this is kind of interesting because I retired a couple of times from the Armed Forces and I didn't get no package. In '82 I retired from the regular forces. I had just become a (title) officer and I was posted to (city). I went down with my family and I thought I don't really want to live in (city), so I went on Friday and I worked on Monday and I think my commanding officer said to me, "*well (name) you have thought it all out and I'm sure you know what you're doing, all the best*". A few years later, I got a call from the Armed Forces asking me to come back and write a paper. I went back and wrote a paper; spent two years, increased my pension a little bit which really helped, and then I transferred to the reserve force. (2013) When I turned X years old I thought it was time to retire. Thanks for a good person that's in this room here, I got my paperwork

all done, filled it out, and said good bye. Here I am four years later standing here (?). What information, I know they're doing a lot better job now, but I like that idea you had about a questionnaire so that people would know. I had no idea that if you had medical problems that you could have it renewed every two years or reviewed every two years. I just found that out.

There's a line of information somewhere along the line, and that questionnaire idea, I think would be a good idea. You can only do so much, right, and when you're going to retire you're going to retire. I like the other thought we have here about just (?). I have been very fortunate I didn't have that cold Turkey quit, because I always had time for closure.

My advice to anybody who retired from the service is don't retire until you have something to go to. I don't know whether that is helpful to you or not, but I even had a cool down period, where I only worked a few days a week, until I made up my mind I was going to sign on the dotted line. As far as information, I think it's still lacking. Thank you.

2017 ■ Confusing and at times misleading; however, I expected this and with patience I was able to work through most of the issues.

2009 ■ Confusing, the terms around pensions. "Coming into force date", "vesting", "buying back service". As a long-time reservist, it took about six months to figure out how much it would cost to buy back 33 years of service. I was retired in 2009 (I aged out at 60).

Currently in release process ■ I can tell you right now the process I've gone through is very, personnel, it is just that when you start off with the SCAN seminar and moving forward, they try to jam a year's worth of information down your throat in two days. The first is a very general information session, it is geared for people who are getting out. The second day is there for personnel such as myself, medically getting out. You find along the way that you have to do a lot of homework on your own. In my particular case I'm already receiving a pension while I'm serving, because of injuries. I notice some of the promises. But I would say close to 80% of the personnel don't. There is a lot of literature out there, but it is very hard to talk through, to find out the information that you need. Right now, I'm retiring back in this area, and just to get here it took me five months from the beginning to now and typical time, once you start, this process can take up to a year. For some people who are waiting for jobs and to start their second education and what not, it is very frustrating because you are waiting for other people to do their paperwork. You are constantly waiting on other people to do their jobs. The IPSC concept for members releasing for their injury going back to work, is designed to help going back to work or transition out of the military. They don't have the personnel to help out. They're revising the administrative processes they just got rid of ten years ago. I've been here 28 years and this is the 4th time I've seen this process through. Right now the CF is in a process where they don't know what the left hand is telling the right hand what's going on. It is affecting how I transition out of the military and if I didn't stay on top of the process and had support for my spouse, I wouldn't be here right now. That's no position to put somebody in when you are underway so to speak. I sincerely hope that administrative personnel, or NDHQ in Ottawa can get their act together. In my case I try to get folks to process here. I had to force the issue with my commanding officer to come here, and they hesitated until the very last second to get me off the board. All it can take is one signature and it was gone, now the career manager did not want to intervene. That's a career manager's job. There is a lot of revamping that has to go through between DSFC and departments because there is more people like me coming through a system, and if they think they are having a nightmare now, wait until the boomers start coming off. They are coming fast and furious, like I said they don't get act together, they are going to be hurt really bad.

2016, 2017, 1982 ▪ Good (3 responses).

2005, 2015, 2002, 2013, 2005 ▪ Poor (5 responses).

1995, 2003, 2003 ▪ Very good (3 responses).

1997 ▪ Abysmal, there weren't any.

2009 ▪ Too much and way too fast.

Voluntary ▪ The initial release package that I received was good. It was one-on-one, I went, I had to go to different sections, did one-on-one with me and we talked about different things.

2016 ▪ There really was none as my unit was not located on a base.

2017 ▪ I basically relied on my spouse to get information and request clarity when I was unable. If my spouse had not been so diligent in her willingness to assist me, I would not have been able to release without major complications.

2015 ▪ Tons of work. I had to run around to find resources.

2016 ▪ I had a hard time getting things done, as I was required to work through to my last day. The JPSU kept pushing an early transition, instead of just giving me time away to process paperwork, turn in uniform and issued items, close out my PMQ and arrange for my move. They wanted me to go to my medical/dental/psyche appointments, then to work, then to the transition seminar and sign out paperwork with them in a week! It was ridiculous. I have never felt more stressed!

2015 ▪ They are available?

2015 ▪ Didn't know that revives are available. Are their services available?

2002 ▪ Poor then now OK. Information was poor or unavailable.

2013 ▪ Quite a bit confusing.

1993 ▪ Almost non-existent.

2010 ▪ Was difficult.

2011 ▪ Next to impossible and continues to this day.

1994 ■ It was hard to do and there wasn't much info out there and the Internet was just starting.

1999 ■ Terribly felt like they were upset with me getting anything.

1999 ■ Other than the De briefing before release, NADA.

2008 ■ Horrible. No info provided what so ever.

2013 ■ Poor to nonexistent.

2014 ■ JPSU was understaffed and not well trained, not helpful at all.

1995 ■ You have to find it (information) yourself.

1981 ■ Not great.

1976 ■ NONE.

2015 ■ My experience was painless, any questions we had were answered to our satisfaction, and to a point where a decision could be reached.

1998 ■ The access back in 1998 was terrible.

1995 ■ No issues.

2004 ■ Terrible.

2013 ■ OK.

1990 ■ There were SCAN seminars at some military locations. These were helpful but limited in their scope. There was dependence on volunteers to come forward from financial institutions to speak, not a great deal of content dealt with future employment prospects.

1992 ■ I had no trouble getting the information I needed for me.

1993 ■ Poor at the time. No information provided unless requested. Felt a little lost.

1995 ■ Being single on release I didn't have to go for many. As a result of and earlier SCAN seminar I had the pension already established for hearing loss (which incidentally took over 3 years including appeal.

1996 ■ No problems at all. I was a Transitions Counsellor (Personnel Selection Officer) for 15 of my 30 years, thus I was preparing for my own transition all my career.

(2015 ■ Not at all helpful, felt like a quagmire of nonsense with no one really there to aid in the transition, in fact for me, it was beyond stressful, aggravating my PTSD to such levels that I ended up having to self-medicate to not get in trouble at work.

2004 ■ Terrible, rushed out at release centre.

1990 ■ In that era, there was very little in the way of programs that were set up to assist the transition from military service to civilian life.

1997 ■ 1 SCAN seminar with little meaning or help for a medical release.

2015 ■ No info was passed along. I asked for info but was told Reserve F person don't qualify.

2016 ■ Did not receive any.

2014 ■ Very little information about anything.

1982 ■ What information, there was none at that time.

2009 ■ Overwhelming.

2016 ■ Fortunately, I was a clerk, so I could research everything myself. As a reservist we do not have career managers or a team of people. You either look out for yourself or you lose out.

2014 ■ The information given was enormous, for the dates I had no problems, but given the amount of information given, the clarity was not too bad. Despite all the information that was given, I still had to do a lot of research.

2014 ■ Terrible No one seemed to know who to go to for anything. There should be one section that controls everything, or at least knows where to go.

From other vets, I ended up hearing about this organization and ended up signing up. Charged for veterans (?) and veterans emergency transition services. A thing called honour house. One of our honorees is set up in Vancouver and getting medical treatment and their families stay in metro Vancouver area to get that treatment they can stay in this house for free if there is a veteran, and other similar house in elsewhere in the country. I just think maybe exposing some of those services either in a SCAN seminar or in packages when people get out.

Retiring in next few months ■ What worked for me is having a case manager. We came up with a nice list, which we have followed step by step, so we get everything and don't miss anything of importance. I know this is different from past processes that some of you followed for retirement a long time ago. The process is much

better in my view, there is great support from the staff. I am now proceeding with VAC and there is a lot of support there too. The process is getting better as I find out for veterans.

I just recently retired and the information I was provided was very good. I found from starting with the SCAN right through to the release clerks through other avenues (?) delay or lack of training, experience and staff that you are dealing with.

2011 ■ Before taking my release from the Forces, I attended the pre-retirement conference several times. Although the information received was clear, the volume of information was enormous and difficult to digest.

1981 voluntary ■ I would like to strengthen what the previous two speakers said. I retired in 1981. I started with (government agency) before the end of my terminal leave and that was always a nice term. I'm sure there's another way of saying it. There was no particular problem that I had. I recall some group sessions prior to retirement that was available, and I thought that was interesting, but it just seems to me, it can't really be difficult to figure out now you're in uniform, now you're not. This is your entitlements. Here they come. I just don't know what the problem is, unless people are making it a problem. Now, I think we've all heard about the computer problems that are confounding much of Ottawa, and people in civil service haven't been paid or overpaid or whatever. The Senate is apparently opting for a whole separate pay system for themselves. The computer world should be able to handle this if it's well done, but what are we seeing, and we've heard it's not working well.

Yes, the information is good. I did a SCAN seminar just before I left appeared it was good, but they were very tilted towards people who are retiring and not going for a second career. There's not a lot of focus on people medically who are doing that.

1988 ■ I got out in '88 and (?) a damn thing (for information), but now they try to get people to ask questions and see what happens.

2009 RCMP ■ Access to service/information – none = bad, I've been grieving alone with my wife. The process does not work. Each RCMP pensioner should be met with for more follow-up.

I'm not sure if this is what you meant by ours was all personal. Nothing electronic then it was all one on one with professionals that were part and parcel of the package and they were from all walks of life, financial like bankers, investors, others and it was all one on one. I find electronic mail trying to find out information on it today really a burden. And had we had it back then I'm sure it wouldn't have been as easy as it was. I think one on one is better than punching keys.

2014 RCMP voluntary ■ I transferred out of the RCMP in 2014 with # years' service with the mounted police. I would say that my transfer out it went fairly smooth because I had enough outward planning to have all the paperwork in and have it checked over before and that was I started that process likely three to five months ahead of time to ensure that it was done.

2006 RCMP voluntary ■ I guess my decision was done very quickly to leave the RCMP I gave them just over four weeks' notice which was needed my new employer wanted me to give them two, but I was working on big files at the time, so I gave them just over four weeks. I had some conversations with I don't remember her name,

it was a specialist that worked in (city) she was an administrative assistant. She was probably the most help I got. She was an employee of the RCMP. She was excellent she gave me all sorts of advice and options and explained them quite thoroughly. I'm quite comfortable with the Internet so I was on the website as well did a lot of pension calculations prior to doing this and I was comfortable doing it and so the transition from that aspect was quite well or went quite well.

1997 voluntary ■ I took a buyout. I had my time in as far as rank went, time and service and the opportunities were there for a buyout, so I took the buyout. In fairness, you couldn't ask for much more than I was in the Navy. You couldn't ask for much more than what they offered at the time. As far as help and we had two years to pick a new trade, train, or whatever. In my instance it worked out great. I had really no complaints at all as far as the exit went. I did my out routine in (base) from (other base) we made our move the wife is here she wanted to come home. It took me about six months from arriving here to go to (base) to complete my out routine. For whatever reason the administrative staff had something to do whenever I showed up to do my paperwork I must have been back and forth ten, 12 times.

I got tired of it all and after about six months I phoned the command chief and asked him to make a call for me which he did. Suddenly, I had it completed in about two days. I shouldn't have had to do that, and it wasn't the service, it was just the attitude of some of the members. It wasn't a big thing for me, but it was just bothersome I guess. Other than that, I found things went quite well at the time. I don't know what they're like now, so I can't comment on that. But at the time things worked out well.

2006 RCMP voluntary ■ I was very fortunate, I was X years old, tired of working for bad bosses with the RCMP and another job opened up, so I took my early pension. My transition went very well I still work for the province as we speak for the province. The documentation process went quite well. My biggest beef is when I change banks and I could not do it over the Internet to change my financial information for my pension check to get deposited couldn't believe it took a month and a half. My transition probably because of my age was better a little younger, I didn't move from one province to another. I just stayed in (city) and this is where my new job was, so it was easy for me.

Retiring in next few months ■ The one thing that is missing, that I found out now that I am in the new work rehab (do any of you know of the work rehab?). The VOC rehab is the system where you go for six months to the employer of your choice, hopefully to learn some new abilities new skills to provide you some job when you retire. For me my VOC rehab six months was through a (agency name). For me it is the social interaction that is needed. You get to talk to people that have retired and that has really opened my eyes. By talking to people who have retired, I found out that we are in the same ball park. One lady said you know, six months into retirement it is like being on holiday it is great, but after this I look around and nobody around, I felt lost, depressed, without hope. And that is my experience right now. Feeling lost after X years and starting a rehab cycle. I don't know what to do. Talking with these people has helped me greatly. That is the one thing that is missing in the whole process of retirement for the soldiers. We cannot, you know there is no group that you can talk to. Retirees talk to retirees and find out story. Facing retirement. As you are facing retirement it is important to know that. Some of the buddies I know just retired and they're in the dark, they're lost, they don't know what to do. That is the worst scenario. I wish we had a group like this where we could discuss or find out about other great stories out there. Retiring and joy.

2014 ■ Very poor.

1995 ■ Limited.

1981 ▪ Not great.

1976 ▪ NONE.

2014 ▪ Timing? Gauge. Volume? Overload Clarity? A river after a storm.

2015 ▪ Perfect.

1998 ▪ There wasn't any really.

2004 ▪ None available to a PTSD/severe chronic pain veteran! No clarity, no timing and a volume of mis-information.

2015 ▪ Timing: Unit resisted approval for SCAN seminars. Would be nice to have up to date information on what is available. Volume: There is a lot of information thrown at you at once. Clarity: Releasing members should be able to attend at least two SCAN seminars before release.

2014 ▪ What information?

2010 ▪ Poor poor.

2014 ▪ Garbage.

1992 ▪ Excellent.

I feel bitter about the way I have been treated and about the way I see a lot of my people that work for me over the years, poor people that are my friends or people that, you know, I just knew were struggling and I tried to help them because that is my nature. I always tried to look after my men in the military and I'll continue that now that I'm retired because that is important, and we need to look after each other.

There is so many things that need to be fixed right now with the transition programs, it is not even funny. It is sad to see that people say well we can't politicize this. Well, you can't talk about veteran issues or transition issues or military issues unless you talk politics. It's interconnected to the hip. If you're a veteran, we're the only group right now in Canada that are not allowed to negotiate our benefits. Isn't that a shame? We're the people that fight to allow other Canadians to have that freedom and that choice and we're the only group, ironic isn't it, that are not allowed and don't have an association to go and fight for our benefits.

Thank God that the Association, unfortunately so many people don't know about this organization and I think the proof is in the pudding. Do you see many of the new veterans here or the people that are struggling right now? No. Because they don't even know about it. That is a sad statement right there. This place should be packed, and we should be in a place six times bigger than this. We're in base (place) and there are thousands of people I know, and I could list you 100 right now in two minutes. I know thousands who are struggling across Canada and nobody is helping them.

We're being fed this political nonsense all the time with news advertisement and I call them dog and pony shows they bring military and first responder behind them, the politicians. They make these beautiful announcements like they have done with the enhanced, it is always the devil is in the details. Once we get the details which are usually so many months later then nobody talks about it anymore, because things happen so fast now that by the time the details come out nobody really cares.

Only the people that have to go through the processes are left to try to fend for themselves to try to figure it out. How many years have you been dealing with this (previous speaker)? Years. It is frustrating, and it should cut your resolve. I can't even imagine.

I spent 20+ years in the military. I was well rounded a good soldier and did everything they asked me to do, went everywhere they want me to go. Why now do I have to fight my country and why do all my friends and coworkers have to do the same. It is ridiculous. We're being fed a whole bunch of bullshit all the time and it needs to stop. It is hard to get the people to get on board because the way that the government has been playing the veterans over the years is they have been playing us one group against the other instead of it is easier to divide and conquer than to try to fight a big group.

There is what 700,000 veterans I believe in Canada the last number I heard. Nobody really knows because nobody is accounting for us. Once they kick us out, nobody really knows in Canada how many veterans there is. Isn't that a sad statement? They should know where we are, what state we are in, who is not doing good, who is doing well. It's great to hear some people have great stories and they're doing good. That is good. Unfortunately, that is the only thing they don't latch on, these bloodsuckers I call them. Because they only look for good news because sunny ways. I'm not against the liberal. Don't think that I'm here to bash the liberals or the conservative. It has to do with the government of the day that we put there, needs to put their pants on and start looking after their troops. Period. Full stop.

1996 ■ I don't know what you're talking about! It didn't exist when I retired.

2012 ■ 30 days to clear out without any medical assessments.

1994 ■ At that time it was poor, the impression I received was that they were not interested in helping me.

2017 ■ It was good. Easy to follow.

2008 ■ Excellent, could not ask for more.

1995 ■ Very good and useful.

1993 ■ Scarce to nonexistent unless I asked.

1998 ■ Confusing.

2013 ■ Info I received was delivered early enough. There was just insufficient follow up with the CF pension office and no cooperation from VAC until I was no longer in the CF.

2009 ■ Have not received any info.

1982 ■ No problem.

In transition process ■ I was lucky. It's an overload of information way overload of information. You're getting packages from SISIP, from VAC from every which direction you need to fill out and have in on time lines especially if you're a 4C release you have your pension package that needs to go in. All of these packages need to get filled. What happens if you find out during your release medical you're going to go 3B so there's all kinds of issues that come up and then your pension package changes?

I'm lucky because I have an in with the IPSC so the services manager at Shilo took over my case and he helped me go over all the packages that my releasing base they helped me go through all of the packages because my wife is employed there. Not everybody has those options. Right. So that's one of the biggest problems and none of those groups communicate with everybody else. The other thing that you can do is you go through a SCAN seminar. If you're not looking at a 3B release at that time so for yourself you knew you were going to stay for the third day, I didn't get that option because I wasn't being 3B released at that time. So that's one of the issues is that you don't know what's going to happen or what's going to come up. You go to a SCAN seminar and you may not be releasing for six months so therefore all of this information gets dumped on you, so you don't know which way to go with it. So, all of those things kind of contribute to everything going on at the time. So, myself physical issue not too bad getting inundated with a whole pile of medical paperwork or different paperwork. Somebody with a mental health issue getting inundated with all of that paperwork where those groups don't communicate is going to have heavy workload and they're not going to know what to do with it to get it on time and meet the time lines required.

1996 ■ Rushed.

2014 ■ Too much boilerplate info and less detail.

2008 ■ For release process: Good.

2014 ■ I have no complaints regarding how I was processed for Release. The Release Section and everyone I dealt with at CFB Borden were conscientious and focused on making the transition as seamless as possible.

2000 ■ I was given plenty of notice for my release.

1979 ■ Late obsolete and useless.

2011 ■ Too much, too soon, no one to help navigate the system and documents.

2013 ■ What information? I have been provided none.

2015 ■ Overwhelming, and difficult to stay on top. A better more efficient process should be in place to assist injured vets and their families.

2003 ■ Never received any, it is only as of lately I am learning about a lot of stuff, I suffered PTSD for a long time and I became a forgotten soldier, I would be long dead if it wasn't for the strength of my wife.

2016 ■ I guess I should answer that again just because I'm probably the most recent. Again, it's just back to my last point, it's just too much. It's just too much information. They give you all the relevant information but the big thing with me specifically I got lucky because I had two-and-a-half-year T cap to transition that was up to the wing surgeon she gave me lots of time to know that I was transitions out of the military to come to terms with that.

There's a lot of people that don't, people I know personal friends that have been forced it's like a stopwatch starts on you basically you're going to be released from the military here is a flurry of information figure out what you're going to do with the rest of your life. So, there's a lot of stress added onto just not knowing when you're given all this information.

It gets back to my main point it needs to be better streamlined it needs to be explained better to the member what their options are. It's like keep seeing using analogy like we don't need to know how the sausage is made I don't really care, I'm in slot ABC medically released this is what your entitlements are here are your options. Like I say it's just too much and there's other people that are just mentally can't handle that much information knowing their career is coming to an end.

1980s ■ Transition out of the Canadian Forces starts in the Department of National Defence (DND) and so it is in that department that the process must be refined. I cannot attest to any knowledge of the current system since my transition occurred some thirty years ago. However, there seems to be a lack of some proper format for military personnel of about a week's length during which recipients receive the whole package. My wife was speaking after the town hall session with another female former public servant and they both agreed that their transition was a week's long "course" during which they received a thorough briefing on their future lives. DND does not appear to give the same information.

2014 ■ Lousy.

2017 ■ There was a great deal of information, and it was easy to access.

2014 ■ I had to hunt & fight for any information. I felt as though the bureaucrats thought if they didn't spend it on clients they could keep it.

1992 ■ Great.

1989 ■ Difficult, bureaucratic red tape and hoop after hoop to jump through. Took years not months.

RCMP ■ There are other issues like specifying a beneficiary for SDB so the benefit is tax free. Members need to know these things and the employing departments need to let them know.

1993 ■ Difficult and time consuming.

RETIRED ID CARD

Getting the CF75 Record of service card back for Veterans. I can tell you from travelling in the USA. The CF1 card is useless in the States. They want a card with a picture. The American Veterans have a card from their Veterans Affairs.

2006 ■ On that point I would like to raise the issue that, when I got out I got one of these lovely cards, record of service identification card with my name, my rank, my sin number, regular information on the back, everybody can see that. They don't do that anymore. I'm very proud to hold that. I hold that and hand it to places like, when you cross the border I use that, because I'm proud of it. The Americans, bless their hearts, say thank you for your service, well I've been out for twelve years and I'm proud of that. But they don't hand those cards out anymore, they hand out a stupid CF1 card which gets you a discount at Marks Workwear world. That's not good enough. That's a loss of dignity. To everybody in this room, in this room who has already spoken and hasn't yet spoken, you have had way more worse experiences than I have. I'm ashamed to say that I was lucky to my transition for civilian life. I'm ashamed because the people around me are so much worse off. I want to help them in some way. I can write a letter for the lady who has the baby back there and help her get through to the Ombudsman. It takes a lot of preparation to do these things, and I think the Canadian Forces owes it to provide a personal service, one-on-one, to each person getting out to ensure that the person who is helping, who is a former Canadian forces person/veteran, understands the gravity of transition, understands what the person is moving into, helps them get the courses, helps them understand their pension, helps them understand a spreadsheet that will deal with their daily expenses and budgets, helps them with their understanding of what it is like to run the family without the Canadian forces support. We Canadians are supposed to be dignified people, and we keep telling everybody else in the bloody world how they should run their country and provide human rights and we're not doing it ourselves. Thank you.

Really there should be at the end about military transition and CF not giving a military retired ID card or final acknowledgment of 30 plus years of service.

2016 ■ I don't have the same experience. When I was about to be released, I was released in 2016 and I did get an ID card when I retired. I was told they were going to be no longer done as of (date). I also have a CF 1 card.

2006 ■ The other thing that really got my goat was those in (city) that stayed in got a service record, record of service card wallet size. If you somehow didn't know how to get that you didn't get it. It's a nice thing to show up at a base or wherever especially if you're in the states and you drop by a base or something you can get room or accommodation and you just show your record of service card.

The other is this identification as the veteran, and because of being a veteran's association as we have here. We've tried to develop a national card of course it hasn't worked (?). Those with a CF card, which is applied for specifically you will have Veterans Affairs too. Because those things give you some identification as to the fact that you retired. I also have a card, otherwise I got through Veterans Affairs that shows I'm retired, so there are some inconsistencies on the situations that might add both military

and certainly us in the RCMP. I will make this short and quick example; those that have been to the War Museum in Ottawa, when you go there as a veteran, you get free entrance and lunch. The irony is I'm not a veteran for that.

1986 ■ I've been out of the service for 20 years, since 1986 and it was a good question; how do you know you're a veteran? I've been asked many times to show proof that I'm a veteran, but I haven't got a card or anything to show. Is there any document anywhere, I've got the retirement certificate to hang on the wall, but to carry to show that you are a veteran?

I can answer that question. When I first retired there was an ID card called an ND 175. That was your retirement card that showed you were a retired service person, supposedly a veteran. They stopped issuing that card maybe ten years ago. Now what you have now, what I have now is I have a CF 1 card that shows that I'm a veteran. It's accepted in a lot of places for providing discounts to the ex-servicemen and still current serving people. And it's issued to (?) instead of serving military. If you want to see the card, I'll take it out and show it to you. So, there is no more military ID card to show we were a veteran of the military. Canadian Forces did away with-it years ago.

OTHER

I served in the CF during wartime and the RCMP Police for 20 years. I retired as a (rank) and always thought of myself as a civilian and part of the community in which I live and worked. I see a transition for the military not the Police. Maybe that is one of the problems the Forces faces.

1996 ■ I retired in 1996 – never heard another thing from the military. An evaluation of the exit process six months or a year after retirement would be useful. Seems to be no quality control.

2004 ■ Stay in uniform and work at your unit, if possible or place the Veteran in meaningful work! Even people with PTSD can function, if, the proper guidelines are put in place. They at least would feel less stress, less hospital visits, etc, if properly taken care of. Called a purpose. The military, VAC and Veterans would all benefit if we work together. Telling your boss in 2017 that you think you have problems, is still not accepted!!! I know what General Vance said, but I can tell you, he is wrong, and members are hiding their injuries as they can't get out due to their health/family or financial situation.

Improved training needed for civilian HR in public service, so they know how policies apply to veterans coming into the public service.

One of the issues I would like to talk about and I think it is a big issue it is SISIP Manulife. It is the insurance plans that were mandatory since 1978 I think. Everybody is forced, money is taken off your pay while you served in the military the whole time and basically at the end, if something happens to you you're supposed to be covered with a long-term disability insurance scheme. Call it a scheme because it is a scheme. They're making it very, very difficult for people to be able to get the benefit up until the age 65. Even if people are totally disabled or unable to work and considered gainfully employed, they make the process very difficult. First of all, they ask the member to go get checked as somebody mentioned at 12 months and 18 months they will ask you to see a doctor and get the document filled out for their own need. There is no need for that because you're still injured.

If you're injured the day you were released from the forces because of your service, and it is deemed to be unrepairable, well, you're still going to have it three years, four years, whatever the case may be and most likely get worse. Not going to get better most likely.

Unfortunately, SISIP has a different way of looking at things. They have rosy glass on. They force you to go to a doctor, which first of all you cannot get because most people don't have a doctor once they go out of the military. When SISIP tell you that you have to go get that form filled out, you don't have a doctor. I said to them (SISIP) what are my options? Like do you have a doctor I can go see like used to have doctors at Veteran's Affairs to help out with people that don't have a family doctor once they're released?

To give you an example I was due to find out from SISIP if my 18-month medical document that had been sent to them was successful for my claim to be extended to age 65. Well, I was due to find out on the 12 of October and on the Friday before the long weekend, I got a phone call in the afternoon that says Wood Health. My heart stopped. It is either Veteran's Affairs that calls or some other entity that works for them most of the time when it says that. Sure, enough it was SISIP, it was my case manager. She announced to me, two days before the weekend and a few days before my two-year mark date that I was not being renewed. That meant a whole big

chunk of money that I had been getting to be able to pay my bills is gone – just like that. I paid into this program for no reason because everything I provided them, everybody was completely baffled why I didn't get supported for long term disability and it just goes to show you apparently it is happening a lot. A lot of people are being rejected even though they're not able to work. What are we supposed to do? Now we have long term disability plans that we pay into that we're being denied access to.

Just a little note on SISIP. They denied me, and I appealed to them, I fought with them, I brought the doctors reports they fought against and said that it's not good enough. The long and the short of it was, they initially did recognize that I was disabled. I had gone to Canada pension trying to get recognized and they said no. Once SISIP got on it, what anybody paid back then SISIP reduced, I presume it is still the same thing. They got on to Canada pension and Canada pension started paying me. So that might be a route for some people to go if they're having problems. Trying to get Canada pension. I'm not sure.

2017 ■ Just one question. I retired military and waiting to get a pension, and I understand when I hit 65, if I get the CPP, my military pension is going to go down. Right? So why are we doing that? To people that, Veterans that worked their ass off, served their country and when they get 65 your pension goes down? Doesn't make sense to me. That's my biggest beef. And I know the government people don't get that, but military people do. I can help answer that, a day or two older than you. When it happened, okay, and the gentleman my age of 73 or thereabouts, when we were forced and that's what it was, every Federal Civil Servant from the rank of Lieutenant Colonel equivalent down had to pay into Canada pension.

On the military side, they didn't talk to us in our language. Which is how much beer are we going to lose? Somebody in treasury board decided that we would pay one half of our premiums from the time we started to the age till we got out. I contributed 30+ years so the Canada Pension Plan. When I paid one half of my full premium. When I turned 65, I started paying the second half of my CPP premium. That's how that worked. And it took the pocket. Yes, it went down, but now we're starting to pay. I was retired, you know, after 65 you start paying.

The probability of me paying 30+ more years' contribution to my CPP is a lot slimmer than it was on the left hand side. If they would have talked to us in our language and said, listen, to get full premiums at your full CPP at the age 65, it's going to cost you two beer a month for the time you're contributing. And we wouldn't have had this problem. They got to come back out and explain that to people as to why suddenly you lose \$45.62. And they think they're taking they're robbing us of our money when in fact, we're only paying the second half of what we should have paid the first right off the bat.

I have one last point, but I don't know if I'm in the right forum for this. We're talking about transition, military, RCMP, all that. In the end, it's post-traumatic whatever. There is a delay (* inaudible) at a given moment, the guys are solid, on their feet, succeeding in finding a job. I'm fortunate enough to be with the (agency). Then the problem is that the 20+ years I spent in the army, they were never recognized. Now you get there, the newbie, no problem. There, three or four years ago, they recognized the time of the military or the RCMP. We're dropping to six weeks' vacation, hurray! That feels good. But why doesn't the pension follow? I don't have to go to 60 years old without a penalty.

In my opinion, I may be wrong, the pension should follow, but it depends on whether you transferred immediately or whether there was a delay between leaving the armed forces and then being hired by the (Agency), in which case it would be a new hire. I know there was a bill. . No, there is not a bill, there was an amendment to the

Pension Act a couple of years ago, in 2013, which ensures that members who transfer to the public service do not fall into new groups that have to continue working until age 60 before they retire, or RCMP vice versa, I do not remember. We are encouraging people who want to change that to treat RCMP members and members of the armed forces equally. But that is the context in which someone leaves the RCMP and the Forces today and starts working in the public service tomorrow. This is not in the case where someone takes a period of time.

My point is that the problem is, most of them are coming out of the RCMP or the army, no matter what, if they go out for medical reasons, they're probably not fit to work immediately. So, they have no choice but to withdraw from their pensions or veterans' allowances, but after that, when they go back to work at the federal level, when they are able to find a job that is not only 90 days, when they are appointed permanent, they can't buy back their pensions, it's impossible, they are penalized. So, if I wasn't made for the military, I'm not made to stay in the (agency) until I'm 65.

I would just like to give advice to those who are really interested, to those who go to federal court. I subscribe to the broadcast of federal courts of appeal and federal courts. Every day I get everything, everything, everything that is happening in Canada, the RCMP, the people that went all the way to federal court. I'll tell you one thing, we're learning a lot here. There is another service called CanLII, which brings together all the decisions of all the courts in Canada.

What I would like you to propose to the Minister of National Defence, to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, in accordance with the Department of Revenue –and here, pay close attention, gentlemen, to the retired members of the military –those who have left for medical reasons like me, that our tax rate on our medical pension be frozen, and that if we get a job and go back to work, then we will be taxed on the new income and not combine the two and that is the reason why many veterans do not go back to work, because they add the new income with the pension.

1997 ■ Now when we did our move, there's supposed to be checks and balances on one end and on this end and there's supposed to be somebody from the service that contacts you and at the time. And help with the movers and check out that you're happy with the move. When all was said and done, and after you finally completed your move, and the big boxes are in the house and bedroom set up and you're good to go for the evening and then you spend a couple of weeks going through whatever. Until you find you get unpacked you have no idea what the damage is or what's missing or what isn't missing. When all is said and done, and we're going to make other claim, there was really nobody in the service or outside the service to go to. You were on your own, you had to deal with the moving company who doesn't want to pay you any money by the way, they took their money, got you where you were supposed to be and that's it. They're end game was this is just our way of saying thank you very much and the cap on your move for damages is say \$500. Well \$500 doesn't go far when certain things are damaged. They accept no responsibility for it and my understanding now is that you, you alone are responsible for seeing the move. I don't know if that's changed but at the time it wasn't a happy scene I'll just leave it go with that. There were words spoken but the guy on the other end of the phone didn't care and it was not a happy thing. And I hope they've changed that. They were the service person or the person getting moved. It's no good being out there on your own fighting with a moving company in (city) who could really care less.

RCMP voluntary ■ I thought I was going to be here all alone, of course, and I apologize for the fact that there's (?). I don't think, very much RCMP members here until I heard of this gentleman. I'm also RCMP, and just talking about transition, there's no doubting that I changed professions and whatnot, so my transition was a non-issue.

However, I see today that both, say, the forces and the RCMP are in the same boat, and that is that we're being treated damn poorly by the government.

I look at all these questions and transition actions that you speak of, and they're all government related. Now, I don't know how you would ever rectify that. But it used to be a member in uniform walking down the street was something that people would stop and be proud of. That's not the case anymore. And the present government, of course, is cutting into that more and more and more, being supported by social media for their own voting exercises, usually, that the next vote that comes along, the more people from the social media that start thinking their way and drawing, draw in the other groups in our society that are coming to Canada, and it's a sad situation.

I see that Canada and the support that they give to their Force, and any RCMP is just a damn shame, and I'm tell you that the present government is just going to destroy it even more the longer they stay there. I'm sorry if I stand on the toes of too many Liberals, but it the true. It's very, very true. And here in our province now at least we're hopefully going to get out of some of it because I'd say the social, let's say the NDP, then, are doing the same thing following in the footsteps of the Prime Minister, and there's other provinces that are dealing with this same situation, and I don't know where or how it will ever be stopped.

It's good to hear a few of you get up and express how you feel about the transition. One of the things that all us white-haired people need is I attended a session by the lawyers here in (province) during the week. I don't know how many of you heard about Will Week. Anyway, I believe that one of the things that your association could do to help us Veterans is to help us make sure that our wills are and refer to legal people that don't have a deep pocket. It's amazing how much the difference is between what lawyers ask for just to fill out a will, a living will, what how well off are you that you can get married? What type of marriage are you going to have?

There are four types of marriage. I didn't know until I attended. If you want to know more, go and see your lawyer. Spell them out. The four? Oh. It's a little confusing. First of all, there's the regular marriage. Then you go to some religious organization, and they say, yes, you're now married. The next one is same sex marriage. How about you see it today on the news, a triangle of three people that were married? The next one is even more complicated, where the spouse has a child that has an (?). Are they going to lose it? Keep it? How can they do that? That's the fourth kind of marriage. You got it?

And it's really complicated, so that those if you're looking for something that you can do is help us with our wills. If I look back, my will is 15 years old. My wife and I, they're 15 years old. And it's the language has changed; the vocabulary is not the same as it used to be, you've got to get on stream with that. It's something that you could help us with, I believe, because we have similar requirements. We're Veterans, we've done, and we've served our country and all of us for an extended period of time. Help us out with that, if you would. Because we're all going to pass away, you know. And we need help with that.

I talked to a lot of my own family, its a large family and a lot of acquaintances and they have some weird ideas about what we do in the military, and how much you really are paid for the pension. The other thing is, people say "you have 25, 35 years, oh, it is a great pension." But it is only good for a certain amount. If that is all you have to live on and you want to go to a financial institution, don't matter which one, you want a house. They got a lot of great big ideas, oh we're going to do this, we're going to do that, the pension will cover it. The bank manager looks at it and says, what do you got? What are you bringing in? What is your bills? Then they show you the door and you never hear from them again. That is how it is. A lot of these people here in the base, they got weird ideas.

Once you go out that gate and you have got your 20, 30 years in, they don't want to see you again. The bank won't look at you. Your own acquaintances civilian type. It is a whole different ball game once you get out there. People that you talked to, "well, you're well off", and they have not got a doggone clue of what is going on inside that base. Just last week they had that (event). I don't know how many went out to it, it was on for four days. Teams using tanks out at firing point and the public could go. All you had to do is show up and get on the bus. Be out there all day and come back when you felt like it. But it was teams from six different countries all competing to be the best team. A lot of people here, you take all the school system around here, that base should be an open door for all the kids in the schools: but it's not. There isn't a child that goes out there. You know, they have firing point demonstrations once a year, firepower demos. There isn't a child from any school here that goes out there. They don't know what their father is doing at the base; they haven't got a doggone clue. It comes down to the School Boards here which should because we served in the military. People are still serving here, they're going to Afghanistan. (Unit) is going over to (place). The whole unit is going. The parents are going to be stuck here and they have got to look after the home ship. Any problems they got to serve, they got to take and fix them while the guys over there, that is just the way it is.

I just have one thing I would if you don't mind considering. When you get released from the military, medical, I got the (#), I tried to get EI. They put your release through and you can't do your job anymore, so you're forced out, so, I went and tried to claim E.I. because four months I'm waiting to get my security clearance, and after paying 25 plus years E.I., they tell me I can't get it. But because, I think it's from the release, the item they put on the ROE, but if you get a medical, you should be able to access EI

I spent 30+ years in the military, I paid for EI for 30+ years knowing very well I would never see a penny of it, so now that I retired, I get my CPP next year, why couldn't they take that money and give it back to me? It's not fair for me or anybody else to pay for something you know you'll never see.

I was Air Force. I had (#) near misses with crashes. One of them we had our chutes on. I spent some time at sea in a hurricane. It tore the ship apart on the decks and injured a lot of seamen. I have been shot at. You try to share those stories with civilians, and they have no comprehension what you went through. Trying to have civilian side understand how we live or how we lived, I just don't think it is going compute. I suppose we can try.

2006 ■ None of your questions really pertained to me. I think a good question if you had asked me what really made you mad or irked you when you got out. I got out in (city) and one of the things I got out voluntarily and I left (city) still several months because I had leave and whatnot accumulated so I came to (city). Friends in (city) who stayed in (city) got many things that I did not get. And it's trivial in a certain sense but I had over X years service and I never did get my CD2. People in (city) it just second to be as soon as they got out any medals or service accomplishments have been sent immediately. I've been out 11 years and have never got my CD2.

Part my fault I've never gone to Veterans Affairs and raised a fuss about it. But it's one of those things that made me a little bit mad and if that's what they think of my service, then, you know, that's what they think of my service. They aren't going to give me my medal.

I guess my bottom line here is that when a person gets out, they should recognize that person and give them everything that he has earned and deserved and what's good for all those city in (city) perhaps is good for all of those across the country.

Medals ■ Just to pick up where the gentlemen left off, I had a similar situation I guess. What I did was I went down to see my MP, who was down on 18th street at the time. And his assistant contacted (city), she did everything by e mail and phone. And explained the situations, as I explained it to her and everything was taken care of and within about two weeks I had everything. I didn't get anything from them, I didn't go to the service ward I went to my MP and she went to (city) with her contacts down there and everything was forwarded. There were no problems whatsoever. They were a great help. But that's the way I did it.

These politicians that we have in Ottawa when they go on a fact-finding trip to Afghanistan, they are protected like you wouldn't believe. They never, ever get out to your forward observation base or whatever. They're in a vehicle that has lots of protection armour and whatever and they're looked after very good. Anybody that is over in a place like that, the stories they tell when they get back they never make TV, never. You will never see it on there. Some of the stories are so graphic. I knew a friend here at (unit), he went down to (deployment). He was about seven or 8 feet away from this native and there were about nine guys around him using machetes on him and killed them right in front. My friend was not allowed to raise his rifle – nothing; yet the UN was over there supposedly protecting these people. That was when there was about, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 500,000 people killed. Me, I belonged to or can attend about seven or eight different military organizations in Canada. If I had the money, I'd go to a lot of them, but I just can't afford it. Just like that, and these guys are dying out now and they're all the (?). I think the youngest one ages somewhere around 65, 70. They're up in their 80s, we're going fast. Put it that way.

I don't think this is applicable to Veterans Affairs but after your release you go with the public service health care plan, take whatever level of health insurance you want and, in my day, you had the option to go for a dental plan. All administered by Sun Life. The other day I went to the optometrist and had the check. And they said you have insurance, I said yes. They said oh, you'll have to pay because they won't let us bill direct. Because you're a federal retiree. If you were any other Sun Life insurance holder, they can bill direct. I don't understand why that would, why we're singled out.

I think maybe you should talk to just where they're coming from. The reason I wouldn't go to Costco is because they won't direct bill but the people I do deal with will go direct bill. So, there might be a hang up on the person you're dealing with not so much with Sun Life. I found sun life pretty good to deal with actually. But just could be one of those things.

Sun life dental and the pension office, my name not spelled correctly. Two organizations playing ping pong with one another. Sun life would not pay because name spelled wrong and they said had to go back to pension office to correct. Pension office said they had sent it in correctly.

IPR, intended place of residence. That means that is the last move a soldier has once they're released. Back in the day when I joined, they told me you can only go back to where you joined. Back then I would have to go back to where I joined. They have changed that over the years. They made it so you could move to where you need to move once you're done whether your family priorities had changed or your size of your family had changed because sometimes you could be in a place for a long time and imagine somebody that is here in (place) for 25 years. He's raised his kids, he doesn't need this big giant house he might have had during the time he was there raising his family. Now he only lived at home with wife maybe. So, wouldn't that be alright that they allow him to go and move to a smaller house to down size. That is what the intent of that program was.

A few years ago, if you all remember when General Leslie tried to use it because he earned it. He was in the same boat. Yes, he's a (rank). Should he have used it knowing he was going into politics? That is another story. He blew it for all of us. After the conservatives turned around they basically slashed the whole program to pieces. Now we only have one year to use the program once we're released. Think about this. If you're healthy, not a big deal. You said a year to get your ducks in a row and sort things out. But we all know that moving is a very stressful thing for people. If you're injured you're dealing with a whole shack of issues you don't have a family doctor, the last thing on your mind is you want to put your family through the meat grinder and another move.

I don't know if I'm the only one that has seen this here. I don't think it is on. Unfortunately, they have played politics with that move and they never fixed it. So, you submit a request, you play their little game, you submit memos, it goes to CDS. I had great hopes because I served for the CDS, General (name). Guess what, he gave me one-year extension. That's it. Yet I can get five years now of priority hire for the public service of Canada. Isn't that something? So, they can give me five years of priority to get maybe a job potentially, but they can't give me more time to move my family after for the move that I have earned over my years in service. To me that is a break of contract. But because of the clause if you accept your pension, back apparently you cannot sue the government, unless you go in an action lawsuit with a big group. So, we're stuck between a rock and a hard place.

I think most of us have kicked out medically, I didn't get a pension, I still count myself lucky because I didn't have to spend the rest of the years with them. Because it was a lot of bigots there and a lot of people that are not very, not very constructive socially and also not uplifting to the way you can become better, better society. Or a better country. On the other side today, what I would like to figure out is that I think that we should have, from Veterans Affairs or someone in our society, a group of people to reach out too many people that have been released medically, with less than ten years, which makes them ineligible for any benefits or anything. They are living on the streets today in our country and I think that is disgraceful, myself nine years, got kicked out, didn't get anything, but you know what, I am much better off than they are. If something should be done, it should be done for people living on the streets, ex-veterans.

Don't make me get started about Phoenix because when he retired he was told he would get some money three weeks four weeks. Months later and then it was also a bill saying he now owed \$11,000 because he got paid and they're sorting out the paperwork. We've got that to worry about too.

RCMP ■ I am with the RCMP Veterans Association. I retired X years ago, and I think we all have had experience like on the military side. Long and short, upon retiring I think it still applies, more or less, you leave with the understanding of what (?) with respect beyond the service we served. Unfortunately, or fortunately, times change and the conditions under which you leave change. A couple of examples; the pension itself was a percentage of years of service, whatever time you get what you get, right. You're indexed upon retirement age and/or combination of age and service. The problem there, you have continuous problems today, of paying for example into CPP as everybody does a pension plan, except when you turn 60 you get the indexing. That's a few years ago for me, and so you might, and I did, get an increase considerably because of the index from what I did receive initially as a pension. When I turned 65 I became an old age security, I also got clawed back what I was getting any index for the five years that I had served under the Canada Pension Plan. So that has never been solved and is still an issue I think. The government to this day, I don't think has done much either to push that problem. And yet everybody now, I understand is paying similar amounts to tax increase (?). The other observation I made by sitting here is that we have some similarities in terms of problems along the path with Veterans Affairs.

VETERANS AFFAIRS CANADA

PROCESSES

Employers are willing to help you, but there is a lack of internal organization. There should be a caseworker on duty to receive and assess the client and follow up until there is a dedicated caseworker. My example is one... after my first visit to the front desk, I handed in my papers on my (medical) evaluation and that I already had my veteran's card for (injuries) in my military service. Every time I showed up, either to return my other papers, ask or ask questions, I never saw the same person at the counter, I had to explain my case every time... Enough of the humiliation thanks! It took a few weeks to finally have a designated agent. The answer I got was "too many requests... not enough agents." They should have a deadline, once each request has been submitted by the Head of Personnel, or they should follow up within a reasonable period of time. We must not forget that someone who presents himself normally is in distress. A day of waiting may seem like a week of waiting...

Pre-2012 ■ My next encounter, under the process here, with Veterans Affairs was, I have a disability, I have a K-card, I was interested in VIP back in 2012. I phone the 800 number and end up talking to somebody in Victoria.

At this point I'm 60+, and the person says we can service you because you are still active duty. And I, I said how long do you think people can serve in Canadian forces for starters, she had no clue. My first thought was okay how are we going to start this? I said I can give you my service number, my SIN number, can you not contact to show I have in fact been out for six years? Basically, said no, I had to go get my release papers and start all over again. Which, what I eventually did, I'm assuming I'm now released and if I need something from Veterans Affairs, hopefully something will happen. But I don't have great confidence.

I personally feel that the person answering the telephone at the 1-800 on your VIP card should not be making eligibility decisions. I think that they should be taking down your information & either sending you the applicable application/review forms OR referring you to a case manager who can take the time to review your file & then get back to you regarding your request.

In regard to the comments that have been made that Veterans Affairs Canada's process is lengthy, it is true, there are some people going into appeal. It takes more than three years before their case goes to trial, they win their case, and they would be entitled to retroactive amounts. They say, "We cannot give you a retroactive amount because the Veterans Affairs Act does not go back more than three years." At that point, you have to go back on the phone. This means that the person can be appealed three times, even if he or she has won his or her case, to get the benefits to which he or she is entitled. Thank you very much.

Pre-1989 ■ In my files, I have files, old files, I started in 1989 with Veterans Affairs Canada, my longest took 9 years to settle, but today, with the new system, it's not better, it's between two and three years to settle a file. It doesn't make sense either.

2000ish ■ A few years later I got out, probably two years later I kept wondering whether VAC had forgotten about me. I called downtown here, they gave me 1-800 number in Charlottetown, and surprise, surprise, "your case is coming up next week". This was two years after I originally put it in.

Husband has PTSD and he has a (body) injury, which we have been fighting with Veterans Affairs for so much stuff that we found out (later) that we have been entitled to, from other people that have got out. Some of the stuff that we had VIP we had while he was in the military and we had to fight, he got denied and we had to re-fight for it again. I mean, there is a lot of difference between when they are in to when they are out to what they are entitled to.

I went directly to the Veterans Affairs and I managed to talk with a first level lawyer. She showed me how to get around some of the system. There's always ways in grey areas, was the way it was put to me.

1980's ■ I have 10+ years military service my transition was very smooth that was in the mid 80s I also have X years with Veterans Affairs and when I hear some of the comments it upsets me because there were a lot of holes at Veterans Affairs part of it is linked to lack of funding but some of it they have no control over, they have a 1-800 number that people 90 odd years old are accessing. That's not serving veterans, they shouldn't have to be accessing they're too old for that. When you come getting out of the military and come the staff have no military background by and large. Consequently, they find it hard to link to your illness or your injury. If you've got the CF98 which is the accident report from the military, then it's a pretty smooth process. If you don't, it's a lot more work. All I'm saying is, they are there to look after you, they're not there to deny you anything. But sometimes process to get what you need is rooted in the lack of documentation coming from National Defense. Thanks.

Pre-1983 ■ I didn't have paperwork and that was a hindrance, for a two-year program. You know defense, they got lots of super people and I know I spent a long time in the military, years and years. It can cost an awful lot for physio for people with disabilities. I went to Veterans Affairs in 1983 and I didn't think I would get nothing. VA is very helpful and all she did was take my papers, I went to see her and follow-up on this. After six months I asked her, have you heard anything, no I haven't so anyway she says follow up on paperwork. I come to find out, everybody that is having problems. You just have to pursue it, pursue it, pursue it. So that's all I can say.

Receiving medical stuff that you require. It is fairly good, like there is a lot of, the compliments, it is a mystery. You go to your doctor, have a heart attack, doctor says well I think you should wear a heart rate monitor. Veterans Affairs says okay get yourself prescription from the doctor, send it in. At a certain point within Veterans Affairs you go to Blue Cross. You package it up, send it off and get back from Blue Cross saying yeah, we don't fund it, because it is not the type that we would expect you to get. Blue Cross and Veterans Affairs while that, I've gone to a doctor get a prescription. So the heart monitor, that's one thing. This happens with everything. Knee braces. Ankle braces, you name it, everything. Who has the magic book, the one you walk up and say okay, monitor for that or this type of service. Where you don't have to sit there and send me a letter to Blue Cross or Veterans Affairs or whatever and to five months waiting for a response to say, it is very serious, right. It is your heart. And this is where a lot of frustration, and why don't people just say, (?).

After listening to all this, it seems to me that the people that work at the Veterans Affairs, they are paid by the government, and they are also working for the government, but they're supposed to be working for us not for the government.

1997 ■ For myself, chronic, so diagnosed in '97 from tour in 90's. And my case manager they are in contact with me constantly. They send me questionnaires and um step back a little bit, asking for these services, I sometimes wonder if it is regional problems, because I go to Trenton, whenever I do receive paperwork and

some of these questionnaires, I go in and find out something, talking to somebody and they help me fill out the paperwork and any time I ever had an issue, with VIP, I would contact them, and they would provide me more services. So, the services have always been there. Like I said, they constantly have these questionnaires, do you need more (?) how can they help you? I have never had any complaint typically. It has been 20 years now.

In 2009, had to work through a Royal Canadian Legion services officer to get support. In 2017 much better, phoned the DVA 1-866 number to ask for a re-assessment of my knee and hearing. Letters came quickly. I am now on the VIP program for grounds maintenance and house cleaning. I'm told that my re-assessment is in progress.

I was just wondering, when I went to a doctor my last time to get a medical (?) For Veterans Affairs, my doctor's office asked me to pay for the paperwork to be done as Veterans Affairs is taking up to 3 months to paper doctor's notes to get done now.

I think the biggest thing I seem to find I served X years in the forces and I go to revenue Canada and I can't open the door. And this is the same thing that's happened with Veterans Affairs. Unless you're starting to realize what's going on, they're cutting away at the contact with their case workers. And anyone there to help us during the course of the day. And I mean majority of us when we have good days we have some clear thinking.

On bad days our thinking is just not there and what they need to do is implement either one or two people within the Veterans Affairs to be on call during the course of the day and especially come out with a smile. I mean one thing is giving us a service at least we should deserve at least a smile and not well you should have called. You know what sometimes when we're trying to deal with things that are paperwork and trying to figure out how exactly we're supposed to fill this out for them, who else can we go to? They're the professionals, they know exactly what they've just given us. They've given us paperwork that takes a University degree to fill out now. And not only the paperwork that's given to us, imagine what the doctors are getting now to explain a condition that they hardly know anything about themselves other than it has a name after a doctor.

Things have to start adding up. An injury is an injury. The pathology conditions that were occurs there has to be that help. And by forcing us to use a phone and getting frustrated and slamming our phone down on the ground because we're dealing with a 1-800 number and she can't give us an answer, or she can't speak English and dealing going to Veterans Affairs in the front-line workers can't even speak English to us. It's very frustrating. So, what I do find is that it's the same respect happening with revenue Canada, Veterans Affairs is doing the same thing. They allow us to enter and we can't get information and can't get a smile. That's all I've got to say.

Access to Service ■ Reasonably good.

Access to Service ■ Quite good.

Access to Service ■ Nil.

Access to Service ■ Wait times are ridiculous. My last case manager was useless, kept telling me to find the forms on my own or call the 1-800 number. My new one is way better. Currently wait times are the biggest issue for me. 20+ weeks now for my CIA application. That is insane. I am now about to start the 8-month wait for my

mental health claims. Not holding my breath on getting those services any time soon. The cannabis changes are BS also... I should not have to jump through these hoops just to have medicine that works and gives me a quality of life that pills rob me of. Also, we should not be taxed on ELB, CIA etc.

Access to Service ■ I have found that most services are. Kind of hit and miss.

Access to Service ■ Good.

Access to Service ■ Not good (two responses).

Access to Service ■ The application process is sometimes rather complex. The adjudication process takes a long time.

Access to Service ■ Extremely poor. For services that were not denied and were obtained through VAC they were slow cumbersome and inaccurate/inaccessible Communications are poor and the VAC employees try to sell programs/ benefits to you and make you feel like you are lucky you are getting what you have. I have been waiting over 18 months for a decision on an operation injury that had me under physician care in a hospital ward for a while.

Access to Service ■ Waits often as long as 18 months or even 2 years. Ridiculous. Delay, deny and die.

Access to Service ■ Approval does not equal access or reimbursement. Expect to have to appeal and expect it to take months.

Access to Service ■ I was lucky to have a spouse that assisted me in applying for disability award applications for my service injuries. It was difficult to await treatment for specific injuries while applications were processing, but once awards were granted treatment seemed to be quite easy to access.

Access to Service ■ Online. I did this all on my own. Case manager never really anything (?).

Access to Service ■ Sometimes difficult to navigate.

I think that if people attending here tonight know anyone who wants to apply during Veterans Affairs for a pension for help, they have to understand right from the beginning, that you have to be exceptionally bullheaded about it. They are automatically going to say no the first time. You have to get out your knife, your sword, whatever and just keep poking them for a long, long time. But there are benefits available for people who, which allows them to stay in their own home for much longer, housekeeping, as somebody said, socially, thank God we don't need that. But there are benefits available to keep you in your own home for yard work, for housekeeping, as I said you just have to be pissy about it and keep after them.

Just simple, we shouldn't have to be pissy about that, okay. Somebody mentioned, I got a culture there, okay. One of the things within Veterans Affairs appears that if the department understands the Deputy Minister, everybody else gets bonuses, it should be reversed if you spend all your bloody money you get a bonus, otherwise would be nickel and diming us, again I'm like everybody else here, I had to go through two appeals before I finally got my disability, why in God's name are they fighting us?

Access to Service ■ This one is easy – For the first year it was hopeless. I couldn't get a half-educated answer if my life depended on it – an apparently it did! Then I went into the office in Fredericton and met Andrea Sullivan. This lady changed my life in so many ways I cannot begin to thank her enough. So, in a nutshell – the toll-free line may very well be helpful for limited info, general Q&A but not good for those of us with a real issue. Once I gained access to a knowledgeable, well trained and caring person who actually knows what I am going through – results. Even when she can't get results quickly, she still keeps in touch with me to let me know I haven't been forgotten. Andrea Sullivan. Give her a medal please.

There's a gentlemen that talked about the help. I went through the same thing I wasn't always a (trade). I had another trade and Veterans Affairs weren't being helpful, but the Legion in Ottawa headquarters went to bat for me there was no argument although I understand they're supposed to start giving a bit more benefit out to the veterans and not so much out to Veterans Affairs. So, I'm pleased with what I've got and the service I've got they did phone up there was a follow up asking was there anything else I wanted.

Suddenly I was getting the key to the candy store on the phone. Veterans Affairs can be awkward because when I reopened my case the first time the girl said you've been denied and I said I just reopening it because the Legion is going to take it over for me. So, they weren't the most friendly people to talk to at that time on the phone. But thanks.

1982 ■ After I got out, I went for medical pension. Applied for it they give me a medical pension of 15%. But at the same time, they kicked it down to 3% and that's when I started to fight back said no I want my 15%. So no went through your medical records and it's a long story anyway I said no anyway they were wrong because they decided to change it again, so they checked me up to 9%. I said no, I'm still not satisfied I want my 15%. They said well you can't now because the guy there said look at it this way, you fought it the first time you've gone through the Supreme Court and you can't go any further. So that's it. I've been fighting them ever since. Going back many guys in (year), I was in (country) and got blown up in (country) got wounded. I was deaf, but Veterans Affairs not interested, nobody has asked me once since this happened how are you, nothing at all. So, I'm still antsy.

Once you're at Veterans Affairs you go, and you go there, I've been through the mail, personal things but all their lawyers work for Veterans Affairs. So, they are working for them not working for me. They are working for Veterans Affairs.

1990 ■ My issue is my (condition). And when I left the military I already had (condition) quite bad and when I, I would say about five years later I applied for help through Veterans Affairs and they looked at my files and they said well your everything was good when you left. And of course, all the doctors realized that you know the damage is done when you're young and you're exposed to (the environment). Anyway, I was disappointed that it took several times like I applied three times to try and get some help and I was turned down and then it was I guess a few years later that they lowered the standard or something and then I was able to start getting help and some benefits for my (condition). Anyway, I'm just saying the initial part was very disturbing but after now

that I have it, and I'm getting help I'm very pleased with that part, since I retired in 1990. So, I can't say anything negative about it right now because I've been treated very well at this point and I get a little bit because of my (condition) get a small pension. Thank you.

As a 20+ year veteran of the armed Forces, plus approximately # years with the Federal Public Service. I found the application process very bureaucratic, with a minimum of two rejections then, a Medical Review Board accompanied by a lawyer unfamiliar with military trades. In all, a two-and-a-half-year process before completion. Also, recently a reassessment has been rejected after seven months.

Excellent.

I did all my applications online, worked for me.

Locally very good (North Bay office).

Adversarial and prejudicial. I had to appeal for pension post medical release was awarded pension only to have to appeal the % and then had my pension cancelled for no reason against the departments on rules and protocols, forcing another appeal which took a total of 3 years while I was unable to work or provide an income. My MP at the time had to set in and fight with me so I could have my "Entitlement"

The entire process needs to be 100% transparent, no one should be having board meetings to decide a patient's care without the patient and or his or her representatives right there in the same room. More in person, more in my city, more like a government service and less like it's an insurance cartel that pulls the strings.

2016 ■ As far as Veteran's Affairs they have been very good to me. I can't complain. It does take time. If you're in a hurry don't be. It is going to take you a year or two years to see any action. Once it starts to come you're very good.

Applications take far too long and there's always the overwhelming belief that they will be denied the first time around. Par for the course. Re-applications for conditions already approved but that have worsened is quite ridiculous.

Coming back to the case managers, I had a lot of problems with them, because on the phone they say a thing and two, three weeks later you have to come back and say: "I never said that." So, I say: "we're gonna stop this, the phone, you send it to me in writing." And since then, I haven't had a manager. I only have one manager when I make a request for a re-evaluation or anything or information from Veterans Affairs, he sends it to me by email. Other than that, the case manager, I don't know who's who anymore. Those were my comments on case managers.

I can tell you when I was there, we were in the process of coming up with a system, I can only recall the acronym: the CSEN network, and it was a database where there had to be all the interactions with clients, whether it was for health or lawyers, everything should be indicated in there.

I applied to a case manager for a case and after 10 minutes she said, *"I apologize, but I'm not the one doing this, my supervisor is."* I said: "Get me your supervisor. "I spoke with the supervisor, she told me: *"Sir, I apologize, it's not me, and I'm going to have to talk to someone higher up."* Now I'm talking to someone higher up, they say to me after that: *"Well, you're going to have to send it to me in writing."* I send it in writing. After having sent it in writing, I receive a letter: *"Now you have to go to the legal side because it is not we who are going to settle this."* "Well, let's see!"

I realized that from the case manager and his or her supervisor (?). Do they have the knowledge and training on all the points of view that we want to discuss with them? Because sometimes we arrive in front of them: *"What are you talking about?"* She accused me of not knowing what I am talking about, and I say: *"Madam, it is in your regulations that you use these regulations to make this decision."* She reminded me: *"You were right, but now I would like it in writing."*

My VAC file, it's not easy. It's easier to go to the bank talking in Chinese than working with this machine. That makes no sense. I'll give you an example, I made a complaint, I actually made 20 of them –we're not limited, I'm post-traumatic and I have health problems, when I don't go, I stay at home, when things are going well, I work. I filled out 20 documents, sent them, they never arrived. Big waste of time. Because I'm not like the lady in front of me, I don't type as fast as that.

There, today, I did the exercise again, but by group of three claims only to make sure that it works. That means that this system, as the gentleman explained, if we don't have access to computers and then if we're not at the federal level, I could say, we have a hard time keeping up. There are days that I am not able, I read, and I don't understand. But I don't have any other services than that, I'm stuck on this one and it's extremely complex, as I said earlier, it should... I know its confidential information, but the process should be simpler than that. I complained about the fact that I made my 20 claims three and a half weeks ago, they said: *"We'll call you back tomorrow, sir."*

Now I'm on hold, three and a half weeks. So, it shows that the system at the front-line works, but when we go deeper and deeper and go farther, then the distance between the person and us is so great that we become a number, then the process doesn't work anymore.

When I applied 1996 re hearing loss benefit, nobody said that tinnitus was a separate application so after I had hearing loss approved, I was talking to audiologist who asked if I had applied to VAC to hearing loss on the tinnitus. VAC should be asking people applying for hearing loss about tinnitus as well. Also, when applied in 1996 the process was very adversarial *"no no no"* all the way down the line.

I am here because I have a son who is class A reservist. It is not so much the service side of it in terms of the transition. It is all about Veterans Affairs if you're dealing with a medical injury that's causing the release. I would say that Veterans Affairs is incapable of dealing a class A reservist. They don't know who they are. They don't know what they are. They keep saying, *"well go to DND and DND has all the answers"*. This is very problematic, particularly for my son to have access to rehab. Before he was on rehab he has questions to ask, so since July we have been asking to have him established with a case Manager. Every four weeks to six weeks I call into Veterans Affairs and they acknowledge my phone call and acknowledge that I have a legitimate concern here with someone who is considered to be in a high-risk situation, and yet they don't acknowledge that they got

my phone call they don't acknowledge the paperwork. They say something like they'll get back to you. We've been doing this since July for him. Obviously, he can't do this for himself, obviously they should be willing to talk. And yet despite all that, we're now at the beginning of November and we still have no one to talk to at Veterans Affairs. I have suggested one time that he wander into the Veterans Affairs office and see what they would say. This scenario doesn't work for anyone that is in a significant crisis. When you tell them that, when you acknowledge that is [off microphone] like he did on "my VAC account". His case Manager went on course and they sent him (?). So, this is pretty sad tale (?) just call Veterans Affairs. They're there for you. (?) it speaks to recent press conference really simple we're here for you. Not so much.

2001 ■ I'm a veteran. I was medically released in 2001. I have not worked since 2000. I wish to address the issue of the veterans Rehabilitation Services and vocational assistance program. That's the new one, the new name for it. In March 2016 the Canadian government announced enhancements to veteran's benefits in the federal budget. The effective date of the changes would be October 2016. The government enhanced benefits have and continue to wreak havoc on my wellbeing. The government developed a policy that is wrong. It was quickly written with tunnel vision. All veterans are lumped together as new applicants.

No thought was given to veterans already in the system. The policy didn't take into account what stage of rehabilitation a veteran may have been at. Nor did it consider the detrimental affects the policy would have on a veteran. The policy appears to have been written with the funny ways my friend, sunny ways, philosophy of our government. The policy requires the veteran to start the whole application process over for enhanced benefits. Previous documentation is irrelevant if over two years old. It is not current. The policy never considered the bureaucratic quagmire individuals would have to negotiate. The policy never contemplated the effects of the process on the veterans. Assessments, interviews, testing, even treatment modalities are being repeated to prove we qualify for enhanced benefits. If we don't participate, we are deemed non-compliant. Then the rehabilitation program is terminated with the subsequent loss of the enhanced benefits.

If we do qualify, benefits are only backdated to the receipt of the new application. Not to the announced affective date of changes for those who had been in the system prior to 2016. More important, the government did not do their homework. Not a single thought was given to how the convoluted administrative process of the policy would re injure vets with operational stress injuries. The policy has to be reviewed. It has to be fixed to prevent regression of a veteran's wellbeing such as I am personally experiencing. I assume I am not alone. That there are others going backwards because of the policy. Amend the policy before more damage can be done. In summary, for myself, the benefits aren't worth losing my sanity a second time. The program was a trigger. And now I start again. The hard road to recovery, and my husband trudges behind picking up the broken pieces.

Appeal process ■ Well, they understood my injury and made a fair decision in my case in the past. I have another case about my (other condition) which has been in treatment since spring 2017 and according to their letter of acknowledgement, the request should have taken 4 to 6 weeks to be treated, whereas it's been 7 months since I waited and still have no news. I don't know where my application is... even my case officer can't give me a concrete answer... I get the impression that she's holding the file.

The appeals process is long and tiresome.

2014 RCMP ■ The one thing and that was in 2014 so of course it's only three years ago, but I met a gentlemen from I believe the public service or from Veterans Affairs at the federal building in (city) for a, for an interview and he went over some of the benefits of what we could get or how we should go about things. And because of some other disabilities I had from injuries, I had a kind of a working knowledge of that. But if somebody had never been through it in the mounted police or in the armed services before, it might have been a bit of a daunting task to try and figure out how to go about it. And even now I have some other health issues on the go and there's no help now. I must figure it out for myself now of what's good, what's bad, and I'm out reaching to # division to (province) with the RCMP to another retiree who was in the division rep program with the RCMP. That's who I'm getting help from because when you go to the Veterans Affairs and ask them how should I do this? They can't really tell you what you need to include or what you don't need to include. So that's been a little bit frustrating. And anybody whose kind of went through the transition and with disabilities.

This is probably a good news story when it comes to Veterans Affairs. I was (?) after X years mostly all jet flying, and my hearing was deteriorating as I got to the end of my career. I was out of country and I was tested for hearing on an annual medical and it was noted that I had a considerable decrease in hearing ability. However, when I came time for release I got it at CFB (city) having been moved there for final location and I was not even tested for hearing which was strange because every year as a (trade) you had to have a hearing test.

17 years later I figure it was time I had hearing aids, so I went to Veterans Affairs in (city), told them what I thought I needed, they gave me the paperwork, but they also counselled me that if I had any other issues whatsoever and they went through a whole litany of things I could have which I don't, make sure I let them know right away because there's benefits that could be had. I went through the application process, filled in for both hearing and tinnitus and it took about eight months, however, it was approved first time around albeit slowly. And while I was away on an extended winter vacation check arrived in my mail for the tinnitus. So, I was some weeks before I actually received it and got back and was able to deposit it, but I also got a call from them to remind me that they had make a payment and why don't I cash it and get on with it. So, it was pretty much a good news story all the way.

I cannot go to your comments. 30+ years of flying jets and you do lose some hearing you do get tinnitus and my payment was almost as fast as your own. I can vouch for my father's experience though because his hearing loss was experienced in Korea and he got his check four months ago.

I have applied for reassessment on my medical condition and find the process very slow.

Appeals process – biased. Was told I would not win before I started the hearing. Lawyer was useless. They had information on my file that was incorrect. I did not have access of the information they used in the appeal.

Appeals process – Very difficult, I was not allowed to speak very often, the DVA lawyer took over at the appeal and I felt she did not have or use all the information that could have provided a more favourable result. It seemed to me there was a lack of communication as to what exactly needed to be provided to the appeal board.

It was pretty straight forward applying when I was still in the forces, I applied directly with VAC on CFB Shilo, post release however, it was a longer extended time, the wait times on claims have grown longer and longer, now I believe the minimum turnaround time is 16-20 weeks for anything

We get denied and suspended for absolutely no valid reason! My request for DA on stuff that hold absolute zero value in Award has been suspended due to lack of documentation, the same documentation that has been documented in my Med file since 2009!!! The same DA that would allow me the proper dental care after my release. It's frustrating that they only accept specific words, it's denied and hope you die sort of deal

I find many of the forms repetitive. It seems unreasonable to ask veterans to provide the same information over and over (i.e. the first few pages of a disability award application are personal information such as name, address, children's names and ages, spousal information). I'm sure that if there has been a change from the FIRST time a Veteran filled out this information, they would notify VAC immediately. There should simply be a bubble to put an X in to say all the information currently on file is correct instead of wasting time repeatedly writing in the same information.

The wait times for disability award applications is "supposed to be" 16 weeks but it actuality takes a year from the time a veteran submits the application, VAC receives all pertinent information and makes a decision on the file (i.e. application submitted fall 2016, award granted fall 2017- actual personal example). There are some processes that are recognized as time sensitive upon submission (i.e. home adaptation), however, due to the proposed/estimated cost of a renovation would exceed standard (easy) approvals, the application must go to an area director or higher which can lead to an excessive waiting period, prolonging difficulties for the veteran and their family.

I just want to make one point on total impairment allowance. I'm receiving the bottom. What they did was they changed it from total impairment. The only reason I know this is it happened to me. They changed it from total impairment, which was impossible to get – you could lose both legs and you're not totally impaired because you could still answer the phone. That is what it used to be like. What it is like now a 3-tier system. I'm only on the first tier at this moment. What it is now whatever is wrong with you, it puts you into the first tier because it is shown by your medical background that, yes you are injured. The next tier would be, we know he's not going to go back to work the next two years and they put him in the second tier. Once you're put in the, you're never going to work again category, that is when you reach the third tier. That is how it works now. An actual fact, the total impairment was impossible to get and the new, whatever terminology it is, it is a little easier to get.

As far as people getting the full 100% of the disability 360,000, I'm setting at #%. I have # claims in. They're all at stage 3 if people know what that is. There are four stages. The last stage is they pay you or they say no. They have been in there for some of them 5 months, some of them 4 months, at the stage 4 waiting. It takes forever. That is a real crime because, whether you get it or not it is a waiting game. It plays on your mind all the time.

The other thing a lot of people don't know, you can actually be 150% disabled. But you're only going to get \$360,000. The way Veteran's Affairs, I'm not being advocate for them, I'm just telling you the way it is, so you can do the best things for yourselves. My (injury) is worth \$, my other (injury) is worth \$. Each part of your body is worth so much money. Once you reach 100%, then what they do is they say okay, yes, the military made you 150% disabled. If you have any medical issues with that we'll cover it. It is very important that even if you reach the 100%, if there is anything else wrong with you, put it on paper by a doctor right away, because if twenty years from now (you see some young guys here), 20 years from now if that ailment flares up you're not going to get anything for it. Not money wise, but they're not going to give you the medical care that you need. If it is documented, you'll get the medical care. It takes time. I can't say enough, when you write up the paper that you

send, it has got to be written the way Veteran's Affairs want. It doesn't matter how you want it, if it doesn't meet their standard you get nothing. I said there is guys out there way worse than me that got turned down; that's the way it was written up. Just be careful.

I just wanted to speak more about me going up the chain from the review to the appeal to the court. And what had happened was there were legal issues when I went to the appeal I had to have a pension advocate representing me and what had happened was the decision was not in my favour and when I wanted to talk to them and go over the decision with them, they never returned my call until past the 30-day period where I can ask to go for reconsideration. So, then what happened was I passed this 30-day limit so I was forced to go to court. Now, I had to hire a private lawyer to do this to go to federal court. And anyways, in between all of this, I had talked, when I was talking to the bureau of pension advocates they told me they didn't want to represent me.

They told my lawyer they didn't want to represent me and that was a shocker for me because I always thought BPA would help the veterans if they wanted their help. But I had a straight flat out that no they were not willing to represent me so again I was forced to stay with a lawyer into federal court and by the way I won in the court by the way and it was sent about a being for reconsideration. So, there were already legal errors in my case. We're going through another round but there's some things that I learned when I went to federal court that people should be made aware of. And especially you when you're going to go back maybe to parliament or before the MP's that you should know, and I was going to save it for last I could tell you now.

Very disappointed in the service from the Bureau of Pensions Advocates.

I'm wondering if you can expound upon the, advocacy people, who will help you through your applications for PTSD or whatever you got. They are very helpful. I made my application, I had all my records, I applied for them before I retired, still have them because every once in a while, I get a question, I got to go and look in them. I would like to, but the day I throw them away I'll need it.

When I went directly to Veterans Affairs they just denied me and that was about it. So, then the Legion took it in hand in (city) I was recommended to contact Legion (city) directly and they were super and incidentally when they told me the caseload that the fellow was my case officer is handling is unbelievable and they still come through with good results as far as I was concerned in my case.

The other thing I wanted people to know and let your friends and family know or anybody in the military. I have got (medical condition) for an example. When I had the doctor write it up, I had him make it very clear that my condition was caused by the military by my job. The way he wrote it up, it was very clear. Veteran's Affairs had no problem, boom it was done. A friend of mine, he's got more time in the service, he's still in the service, and he needs operations. He's getting (treatment), it was turned down because of the way it was written up. The guys at Veteran's Affairs look at the report and if the words are not right you don't get it; it is as simple as that. They read and its right, you get it, if it is not you don't get it and vice versa. It is very important, when you answer that questionnaire, can you do... can you do... can you do, you have to ask yourself okay can I do it? If you say no, you have to say why. If you say sometimes, you don't have to say why. I'm not saying you have to lie on that form, but make sure that you fill it out correctly with someone that has done it that has been successful, because the way you write something down is whether you receive it or not. That's the bottom line, it has to be written up in their words or you don't get it. Audience Member: This is the point. We want them to know that

this is wrong. It is wrong. I'm just telling you my experience. I hear what you're saying. I can't comment on the medical marijuana because I don't take it. What I'm saying is when you fill out the paperwork, make sure that you do it with someone that has gotten through it and been successful because the way you word something, Veteran's Affairs doesn't care if you're deaf. It doesn't matter if you're deaf. You have to have a doctor say his hearing was No. 2 when he got in, now it is at No. 10 because of his job. They look at the numbers. Okay yes you get a pension. I'm deaf -I can't hear. The doctor didn't say it went worse, he just said yeah you can't hear, it has not changed, so you don't get it. It is very important on the wording is all I'm trying to get to. I'm not saying it is right or wrong. Just saying it is the wording.

The appeal process may be necessary more than one time; 2 or 3 appeals may be required. Don't trust the appointed Advocate to be fully aware of your problem. You must also do research such as your medical files to search for clues and data that has been missed or not presented. If you have been turned down for a specific reason, check your records that may have contradictory data.

Many years ago, I appealed a decision. I felt as though I was a criminal on trial (my wife did too). It was the worst experience we had ever had. The appeal was denied. I swore I would never appeal again and I haven't.

Reservists – VAC unequipped to assist them, they send them to DND and back/forth.

Good experience accessing services or information.

I am a pensioner of multiple pensions. When one requests a reassessment, VAC considers one case at a time, VAC does not add all pensions together, but if you're doing your grocery shopping, you buy several different items and when you arrive at the checkout, the cashier adds up everything. Why is VAC not adding? There is a form that exists in the name of (quality of life) in my case VAC used a form from 2006 and my application was made in 2017. In 11 years, my quality of life has changed. In conclusion, why does Revenue Canada recognize those who have more than one illness for a tax credit and why does VAC not recognize the request for a reassessment?

I call Veterans Affairs on a fairly regular basis. Usually before I call them, I go out on the Internet and go on their website and started to look around. So, when I call the 1-800, by the way I'm not case managed maybe I should be – I don't know. When I call the 1-800 number, I try to be as specific as possible in my question to try to get the information I need. I find a couple of things happen. Either they don't know, or they transfer me to somebody else who may or may not know, or they'll take my name and number and perhaps someone will call me back a week or so later. The frustration that I feel, is that when I call that 1-800 number, I'm not feeling that the person on the other end either understands (?) that answers my question or refer me or someone who does. Just give me help – they're not forthcoming.

Not good, every time I would call or even my veteran there were so many roadblocks and "I don't know". Having PTSD and unable to access a lot of the information is really hard even now trying to get information or even help is a nightmare.

What application process?

2006 ■ I got through Veterans Affairs when I had hearing issues, I got right away. Put it in – done. For neck issues or anything more substantial not.

2006 ■ It's challenging it really is. I find basically right now they say one thing and mean another and try to trick you for things and just the forms that seem very bland nonchalant and important are the most important. I've had a situation I've had to talk to two (?) in the last couple of months in the process ahead of me and tell me where the (VAC) land mines are to avoid them. I have to use my own (?) in the process so when I talk to the VAC people I know what to say and not to say. There's a lot of, it feels like there's a hidden agenda and basically you try to go in there and try to, without being aggressive and being in their face, try to create a relationship with Veterans Affairs so you can know how to support yourself. I find it is very, it's almost a secret.

Prior to personnel cutbacks, processes went smoothly. Since cutbacks and then re-hiring and training of new personnel everything has slowed to a glacial speed.

RCMP ■ Somewhat complicated with lots of details. I was injured in an accident; however, VAC gave me a pension for (a body area) area and would not cover the (other body) area. I was in hospital for a long time. I gave up appealing because of the red tape.

I'd like to carry on the first speaker because he and I are pretty well in the same boat and I can see his frustrations with the appeals board and here is the problem with the appeal board. This is in my opinion and I'm sure he'll agree with me, when you got to the appeal board there's two people one guy does all the talking and the other guys sit through like dummies and say nothing. 9 times out of 10 when you go to the appeal board the guy that does all the talking he has not a clue what you're talking about when it comes to military life. And my last appeal board that I was in, God forbid if it ever happens again, I had a guy that was an ex school principal and if you don't think you know everything you ask them, and they'll tell you they know everything. When we started asking questions and he started giving answers I was using military terminology and he didn't have an inkling about what it was about such as hoochies shanks mares, he had no idea what we're talking about. Absolutely stupid when it came to military life, and his fame to fortune he was a schoolteacher. He did not even have an idea of what Agent Orange did to the human body. When you get up against people like that, who are going to make a decision whether you get something or not, you got two strikes against you before you even walk into the room. It is absolutely mind boggling how they can go and hire illiterate people in that position to ask you questions about yourself and then they sit there and make a decision, and they don't even know what you're talking about. Now if you take all these complaints to the VA and you make inroads about it, these four people here are going to be better off, but I can guarantee you, you've got an uphill battle. Because with these appointments you will never ever reach the top, so thank you.

2010 ■ I'm one of the first one who did (VOC rehab) seven years ago, and the system was very new at the time and I found that they went into it without really doing their research. I ended up going to this too and out of the blue they're telling me "oh you qualify to be a pharmacist assistant". What? No, no, no, no, you can't do that to me. Then they tell me if the college is three hours away from me, and it was expected of me to drive back and forth three hours, so I said to the people, first of all, I can't do pharmacy because it has been at least ten years that I'm trying not to suicide. I have PTSD, sorry to tell you that, but it is not something that goes away. There is always a trigger; I could be watching a western and I will have gunpowder taste in my mouth and physically I'm facing it in my brain. Anyway, it is always, so I ended up saying, PTSD, suicide, I can't see myself driving three

hours every day (city), back home. And pharmacist, I might end up wanting to take whatever drugs come my way. This is ridiculous. They say to me, "well you could of told us that", no I couldn't. My psychologist, it took me three years before I could tell him what is going on and out of the blue you want me to say that? Well I walked home and never heard about anything else and everything got cut and so that's what I told them. Sometimes, they want to help but get into it without doing their research first.

I think something that hasn't really been mentioned up to now, it's the way the current, or the Veterans charter where it is recognized, assessed and the onetime payment. I have a hearing problem, deaf as a stone, it was my health specialist that told me to apply, that got it really bad, "have you applied for a pension". I said no, I'm still serving at the time. They said why the heck not and he recommended that I apply, so in I went, and I applied to Veterans Affairs, they said no, turned it down, couldn't prove it was service related, even though I had my health specialist saying it was service related. This was some time ago. I appealed, and I was assigned a pension advocate, if it wasn't for the fact he was working for Veterans Affairs, it was so stupid, so embarrassing, it was so embarrassing during the trial that you have when appealing a decision at Veterans Affairs that I actually stopped; I couldn't take it anymore – that was it. I released and joined reserves and I'm now trying to get hearing aids because I can't hear worth a darn. I was told to reapply because it is a lot better now than it was when I applied before; so, I reapply, and was turned down again. But what's interesting is because I had applied, I persevered, persevered, persevered, the only person that cares about your health is you, because I persevered, so when I applied the third time for this, all I want is hearing aids, I wasn't after a pension, I just wanted hearing aids and hearing aid batteries. I was successful. Interesting enough, they turn you down but when they accept you and say, "yes we are going to pay you a pension", they go pull out all the stops to make sure they contact you personally, because I guess they do so much rejection all the time. They actually want to get somebody who says, "oh thank you very much", so I was approved.

I found the appeal system was very slow (in my case 2013) and the VRAB took over a year and a half to come to a decision. I found the review (1st stage) process worked well with the advocate assigned very helpful in presenting my case. VAC still has issues with the volume of cases to be adjudicated and must address the system to open more VRAB offices, one for the WEST coast, CENTRAL Canada as well as PEI."

Just starting an appeal, so not sure.

Having a hard time finding Dr. willing to fill out paperwork can't get in to see specialist without long wait times. And have to pay out of pocket for forms to be filled up. They ask on quality of life same questions over in different ways. Still in process even though I asked for it a year ago didn't receive paperwork until 9 months later to give to doctor and to fill out.

In 2009, I had to access a Royal Canadian Legion services officer to get help claiming for (injury) problems due to injuries on service. I did get a lump sum payout and funding for (service) and (device). I also have some hearing loss. Within the last six months, I talked to two members of my Regiment who work for Veterans Affairs, saying I was having to pay to have my lawns cut and I was having trouble climbing ladders and doing house cleaning. They encourage me to call the 1-866 number for Veterans Affairs and ask for a re-assessment. I received some letters re my (injury) and my hearing. I've been to an audiologist and to my family doctor re my (injury). My hearing claim was turned down, but I have received a further lump sum payment re my (injury) plus on the VIP program for grounds maintenance and house cleaning.

I have had to appeal – no problems with the process apart from BPA staff appear to be overwhelmed with work.

Far far too long to appeal and such a run around I just gave up.

Quite difficult as the veteran has to write very explanatory letters to justify their claim due to Veteran Affairs very strict criteria. I am sure many Veterans eventually just give up on the system.

2006 ■ I'm having ongoing medical issues and because they're not in a program, I have to look outside the program and you're on your own dime your own wherewithal to try to figure it out. Myself I had to go to the doctor to get blood tests to figure out why I'm losing (inaudible). It turns out I'm exposed to chemicals and if you don't know that you won't know why you're impaired.

I want to appeal but figure they will deny.

The Veteran's advocacy (legal) staff were very helpful with providing information on how to proceed with an appeal and understanding the process.

Long. No acknowledgement of registering an appeal. 18 weeks after appealing received two calls from different case workers who gave diametrically opposed answers and were totally different in their telephone manner. They need to talk to each other and hopefully have the same person deal with each individual. At least then you know what to expect – good or bad.

I found that when I was trying to because of a medical release, I'd fill out the paperwork on my own send it in and, historically but I don't see any reason for it to change, when you put it in automatically the first question Veterans Affairs says it's no, you're not entitled. Then you go through an appeals process and that's what happened to me. In fact the judge advocate general called and I happened to be away and my wife took the phone call and she said well does your husband want to appeal and we had talked about the importance of this but certainly if they don't call me I'm going to go down there any ways and she said I've gone through the file and I notice you might as well put in for a hearing loss, and I hadn't put in for that. It took approximately another 3 to 5 months to go through the process giving the judge and the general a permission to look at my medical file. I had the discussions on the phone with the lawyer and I had to attend the appeal hearing. In the appeal hearing even though they had seen my documents before read them all before and said no, they still asked the same dumb questions: did you have this injury before you joined the forces? Well you have seen my entry documents, you saw my entry medical and it said nothing on there I can read, you can read. What do you attribute it to? Well I had to read back what I said before. It was very frustrating and eventually they came back and said "yes, you are entitled", and I got back pension for the period that I should have had it for.

I've belonged to the organization since 1986 and I thought for sure we had (?). I have been appointed as a service officer for my branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. I spent 20 years in the army and 27 years in DND afterwards, so I'm pretty well versed on how things work. I made a (VAC) claim for my ears through the Legion and they were free I got this all fixed up. My Legion service officer passed away and my president asked me to replace him and I said fine, but I told them fine, but I know nothing about it and I figure well I'm going to learn as I go.

I got a call from a widow of one of our members and she said she wanted assistance, she was looking for assistance with the VA. I said okay, so I made a phone call to my service officer in district zone (Legion) I asked him how do I deal with this, how do I talk to VA. He said they have an office in town. He said just walk in. Anyway, I just walked in. That was in February. She laid her case on the table, talked to one lady, the lady said no problem we'll be back in touch. In May I asked her widow, I said any news she said no. Well I said let's go back, so again we walked right in. We told her that she went through the whole smear again she had her file, she had my notes and everything, so she was well received again and very blunt and said okay this time you will hear from us. In July I said did you hear anything from the VA, she said no, not a word. Okay let's walk back in, so we walked back in and they said oh, do we have your file? So, she said everything again and we had our notes. So, they talked and chat a little bit and I was there taking notes and they said okay, you go home and if you don't hear from us tomorrow call us back. She went home and later calls me to say I got everything I asked for except for the labour on what she wanted done to the house. So, the system works. It takes time, I'm not sure why, but it did work for the widow at least in this case. I don't know what would have happened if she had been a male member or male survivor, but in my case, it worked well, and like I said just took time.

I sought one Departmental Review – I didn't find the process useful. Bureau of Pension Advocates is overburdened.

Difficult. It may not have been totally a fault of DVA but it seems no follow-up report requests were made at time doctors assessed injury (but their reports were inadequate).

Another long process. Although Mine was 4 years ago and the lawyer that assisted me from PEI was very good.

Terrified to talk to them. The last time I told them about needing more funds for housekeeping because our house move locally they cut my \$\$ by 50%! After getting it back to start point I gave up and pay out of pocket as the representative was impossible to speak to.

When I first got my pension, and I was turned down for my (injury), and I appealed, I went and saw (name), the pension advocate personally. We start ad conversation over a cell phone, and I said, I'm on pay as you go, what time can we have a cup of coffee together? And that worked very well. And I happened to know the appeals officer when he introduced me by his (rank). I said, no, he was (rank), went to the dark side. But that was the end of it. Don't follow up. (name), now you're a case worker in this part of (city), northeast (city). That's what I say, which don't know who we should be talking to. I was very fortunate here, the command service officer, (name), is right here in town and he has got as many people as much money as he could get them through Veterans Affairs. If it wasn't for (name) being a strong (rank), okay, with some stomach, for a better word, Second World War Veterans were missing thousands of dollars. And he's helping just about everybody that goes to him. Because he has access to your file. He can punch your name in, it comes right from (city). But Veterans Affairs is supposed to be doing this, not the Royal Canadian Legion, and we have another situation here in (city).

To a disability claim, you can't attach your supporting docs rec'd externally, there is no check in calls, like 'we have called to say we're still processing. Anything we can do?', and the process time is waaaayyyy to long. I have a disability claim on step 1 now 3 months. I won't see it decided until 2019!

2014 RCMP ■ Yes, for somebody not really very old I've had likely my dealings with the Veterans Affairs started in about 2008. And I transitioned out in 2014. I had disability pension with them starting back in 08 and that process because I was still in the mounted police at that time there was a lot of people to steer me in the right direction or to give me advice on how to go about the process. Some of the things Veterans Affairs didn't tell you that when they kind of tell you that oh, you should have another medical because maybe your condition has worsened and suddenly you go to their doctor and their doctor is very, very different than your family doctor. They are quite regimented in their, I think they have a purpose. And the purpose is to ensure either they keep you at the same thing or they downgrade your condition.

And I'm likely not telling you anything that you haven't heard. But that was my experience so right now I'm going through some more stuff with disabilities and it's a slow, slow process. And I realize that that unit or section had been cut back I think and now they're rebuilding Veterans Affairs because we didn't have Veterans Affairs office in (city) and now we've got one back. There's representatives in (city) that's only because we have a military base right there. It can be, the process is long for sure, longer likely than a lot of people would like it to be. It does take a long time.

Have had to appeal and have been denied even though they said yes you have these conditions yes, these conditions occurred in the military however you never filled out the proper forms during your service, so sorry you're not gonna get anything.

The process is very hard on the Vet the board made me feel like I was being interrogated. I joined at 17 and was released medically at 50 I have been diagnosed with PTSD but according to the board it's not due to the military It has made my PTSD worst just because I didn't deploy to Afghanistan.

I tried appealing a VAC decision on my back injury and received a call from BPA and the lady I talked to was extremely rude pretty much that the pain I feel 24/7 isn't real and that based on the evidence submitted that I was lucky to have gotten the level based on their biased junk rubric, that I had gotten, it was a huge slap to the face as my life is drastically impacted by this, and has restricted 99% of future employment choices, not to mention the injury being the cause of my release even though I had 5 years remaining on my contract. It felt as if they didn't care and that they had to rub it in my face that they thought I was not injured.

Process to submit a claim for a service related hearing problem was reasonable, but the 3-month wait for a response was not.

Process is extremely long and tedious. After accessing my medical files through access to information as directed by VAC, it was obvious that they already had access to them after the mandatory 16-week wait for any indication that they had received my request. As in the majority of cases the first answer was "NO". The Veterans Advocate Office was superb in that they were able to initiate a file review which resulted in a yes.

Very easy to fill out. Process was simple.

I said at the time the military I think the family and I retired and I say truly – and on the way, after a couple years I (?) said that we, the name, resulting in, I couldn't understand why. A friend of mine suggested I go and see a (specialist) and I saw them for seven years. The next time (?) never, as far as I'm concerned, the (specialist) frame

everybody, if all of a sudden, I started getting angry, somebody upset all the time and after all, after talking to (specialist), prescribed medications I'll be on for the rest of my life – like I said before, if I had, that was, so I don't know (?) one of the things, could have been prevented. If that had suggested to me, (?) I was one of the ones.

This has been, for certain annual (?) to a lawyer one more time was successful. It must be to the, the for prudence, more than half. And that's a shocking figure, again —.

I've gone through so many case managers from Veterans Affairs I don't have a clue who I have now because there hasn't been any contact. And this is where this whole issue if Veterans Affairs was so concerned about us, certainly the case managers can be concerned about us also. And I don't see that happening. Because without my own investigation of figuring out what I'm entitled to, they would have never come forward to me because there's a lot of things out there guys that you're entitled to and without being informed you're not, you have no awareness. I went from three pensions to five pensions only because I had to further my investigation as to knowing what I'm entitled to because the case managers weren't giving that information out.

I ended up having to go to federal court and what I found out when I was there was that Veterans Affairs sends their tribunal material from the appeal hearing directly to the federal court for review. I ended up going to federal court because of legal issue, legal fact. Errors in law. So, I went to the federal court and so the federal court ordered the tribunal material to be sent to them. Now here is the issue of privacy. The tribunal material had my social insurance number, my date of birth, all my personal information in there. And what had happened is I had to apply to court to get my personal information redacted from the record.

Which I had put in another, I had to go for court order to have my personal information redacted. Because every time you go to federal court it's anything that goes to federal court is public knowledge. And the privacy commission their commissioner has no authority over federal court for that redaction. So, you have to apply to the court and have a judge hear this. And this is a separate issue. And it costs extra money to give that redaction and you cannot, there's a cap in the federal court is what you can claim. If you're successful. And you can lose out of your own pocket for that. So, this is what veterans need to be aware of is that federal court anything that they get from the Veterans Affairs is not, the information in there any of your private information that may be on file is not redacted. That's one thing.

And the other thing is if it's internal in the tribunal is internal and you're within Veterans Affairs, the department is under the privacy commissioner has authority over the department to tell them that this information is to be kept private and you can put in a complaint to the privacy commission. So, the federal government privacy commissioner has authority over the department. So, he requested do you want your information private the department has to abide by it. But once you go to court it becomes public knowledge and you have to put in another, you have to apply to the court for permission to have that information redacted.

I would like to see the government deal with this issue so that veterans can have their private information protected from public knowledge, date of birth, social insurance numbers, we were using those as ID's before they changed over. I don't want the public to know all my personal information. And I shouldn't have to apply to court in a second case just to request that. When the Veterans Affairs sends the information over VRB sends the information over to the court the tribunal sends their information over to court that should be redacted before it gets to the court. That's what I'd like you to bring up.

Yes – I was able to almost 80, to mow his lawn and I thought, back through the office. I – he said you can call me and we will see what we can do. So, this, this and this and that said we were – so when we answer, says no mention here. And so, these exist. What we are supposed to use. The transition, the plan is to have issue, the ones that are, I don't like the numbers, they were 600, out of those 400 had medical component. Of those 400 less than half of that is close to – we had let's say 50% actually got the services, another 50% to, another 200 individuals. Because the services just aren't there. So, gives you the size of a thousand people, not going to handle – so somebody and it sounds like, so to change it. And anybody they call, don't have anybody with that so now I'm stuck – because right. No.

Applied for disability... bureaucracy all the way. Lawyer feedback paid for resulted in approved appeals.

I hated it, I felt the board members were totally disconnected to what I did in the service to the point they made me feel like I was not to be believed as they did not understand how the service life is so much different than their civilian life. We were taught to obey orders and ask questions later as well as the healthcare system in the military in the 1970's to 1990's is much different than it is today. It doesn't work not to have a peer in that appeal board who is an advisor to the board once you walk out that can clarify better what the member has gone through and why, not there to judge but to explain why we service members had to do things a certain way in order to be a cohesive unit. Also getting an opinion from my civilian doctor for me has caused more anxiety as he does not understand what I have went through in my career and has not helped me much.

Appeals process ■ What works is engaging your member of parliament. Although the front line workers are second to none, the organization itself should be closed down and a new organization run by veterans instead of bureaucrats with similar training would be a good start.

Found it difficult and thought it would have been helpful for someone at Veterans Affairs to be available to help fill out the paperwork. The Legion service officer was helpful, but seemed to be not up to date as to what should be included on the applications.

OK.

My initial application was processed in a reasonable to time. This was before the Harper government cutback on things.

It can be challenging on ones own. I had the help of a service officer at a Military base to help me.

The one HUGE issue I had here was the ELB versus LTD. I was handed the SISIP package and was told to fill out the front part, give the second part to my MO and send it all to SISIP. That's it. I did, then was qualified for my LTD – 75% of my retirement income. I was not told once that VOC Rehab with VAC qualified me for ELB – 90% of my retirement income. I never did receive that extra 15%.

The appeal for my back went well, I can't complain on this.

The appeal process is designed with every effort to discourage appealing. They deny and then make it hard to appeal. Take people who are already beaten down and then keep putting them through the grinder until they just give up, or die, whichever comes first.

I have appealed, I walk into the office – again takes a year or more to process. Even OVO three years to respond.

Going through it now. It is a truckload of lies and false expectations. You should be ashamed of failing at your basic mission. Who pays for the lawyer's salary? It is a huge unethical bias.

The appeal to award time is too long and very frustrating.

Stupid waste of time and effort. Then, if your very lucky, you get to sit in front of 3 wise men/women, with no military experience and explain to them, why you as a vet should be given a whopping small per cent, not that they give a shit anyway, its demeaning, at least have Vets on the damn Board, it's like a woman describing child birth, I as a male won't ever feel it, but can empathize with her.

Did you receive the services you needed through VAC? ■ Med released 3.5 months. Much feels still pending.

Did you receive the services you needed through VAC? ■ For those that were not denied they eventually were received.

Did you receive the services you needed through VAC? ■ Yes, but I had to apply to access the services I was awarded, and then had to submit approval for reimbursement, which also included an appeal to receive reimbursement.

I had to appeal a decision and was assigned an advocate through BPA. I spoke with her assistant repeatedly prior to my appeal date but didn't get to speak directly to my assigned advocate until the morning prior to the meeting. I had always felt the assistant was understanding my perspective, but I repeatedly had to correct my advocate when she was speaking on my behalf to the board members. It was distressing, and I was unsuccessful in my appeal. If there is a person assigned to speak on a veteran's behalf they should be able to speak TO the veteran repeatedly prior to the meeting to be sure they are fully understanding the reasons the Veteran is appealing the decision or action. I honestly would have been more comfortable if the assistant that I had spoken to at length about my reasons for the appeal had been speaking on my behalf instead of someone that seemed to be skimming over her notes and glancing over information that was of great importance.

It would also be nice if the appeal board made time to read through submitted documents prior to calling a meeting with the Veteran that can be challenging for the injured individual. Focus is difficult for many veterans. Allow the veteran to speak freely about their reasons for the appeal without getting cut off for what the board deems irrelevant. Veteran-centric should include hearing the veteran for what they feel is relevant, regardless of the board member's time constraints nearing lunch or the end of the day.

I have an injury, operational injury from the work and I don't ask for much but occasionally I need to get some physio, it is sort of life-long thing. You call in there, you got to have so much paperwork to get the approval. The approval lasts for a year and then you are dealing with VAC communicating with the physio people saying don't touch anything other than that injury. We all know if you have a bum knee, or hip can get dislocated, the back can get thrown out, a whole bunch of issues there that can crop up by limping around with a lower body injury.

I don't communicate very well with Veterans Affairs. They got to me one day, so I just backed up, made some signs, went to (city), protest from Veterans Affairs in BC, thank you, I got there about one minute to one and one minute after one I was upstairs, they said what can we do to help you? I said do this, this and this, they said yes sir. The good news is last Tuesday I got a check, monthly check and I got a previous check for (\$), where is the last 40 years.

Veterans Affairs treats me very differently now than what I started, because like they said I'm a trouble maker. Doesn't know, on Thursday and Friday, I'm going to (province) protesting down there again and the pension I got, you can't believe this, is a pension that I didn't apply for. I was an (trade) in the Air Force, a (trade) officer, how I became an officer I have no idea. That's just how haywire Veterans Affairs is, they don't have a clue what's going down there.

2009 (?) ■ Comments about VAC paperwork and insurance paperwork it left me very frustrated. I was told at the time, that Veterans Affairs would help fill out the paperwork for the veteran, and that has not happened. So, there is a lot of people out there with piles of paperwork and they are so frustrated that they just won't do it. Veterans Affairs (?) the worst day of my life. It's taken a few months now (?) still don't have a straight answer from Veterans Affairs.

2009 or earlier ■ Veterans Affairs is a pain in the behind. The application process is long, it's tiresome, and there's not a lot of help available. They say the application manager that can help you, my case manager quit on me about 8 years ago when I got transferred from the rehabilitation program to totally and permanently impaired. Even today I can't get access to a case manager. The fact your Veterans Affairs VAC account is there but the information that's on it is outdated. Right now, I've got four different applications for different services in with VAC. I put the last one in (month), I was told to take six weeks. It is now (month) and my VAC account still reads "we received your application on (date) and you should have a decision within six weeks". My colleagues in the system and the staff that answer the phone, can't give you an answer to a question.

It can't tell you why your file is taking so long to get processed, but they will tell you that what you read on your VAC account is incorrect. That you're behind maybe 16 to 18 months in services that they can give you in processing applications and that is way, way, way too long. I have total and permanent impairment, and I get 67% of what I used to make, and that makes it hard to live. To say that Veterans Affairs is there to help, somewhat, yes; a whole lot no. I don't know how to get around it. I talk with Veterans Affairs almost daily. I the answer is always the same, "sit on your ass and wait". Pardon my language but that's destroying everything I have and I'm dying every single day. So, my question comes back, I'll ask you a question, how do we change what happens when we contact Veterans Affairs, and how do we get processes for the applications that we submitted sped up, so it is quicker.

Like it's been four years and I've been fighting for my issue. And it would be nice that every time to know, you know, I'm not the medical person, so I don't know exactly enough about my condition because now I found with (condition) there's four, excuse me three levels, level 1, 2, 3. 1 for (injury) it is (injury) just an example I'm giving you and that means you can heal and you don't have (injury). Level 2 is a (condition) and it leads to (condition). Three

is a full (condition). So just as this one example if I had known exactly what level by seeing a proper occupational health doctor then I might not, might have changed my mind and not gone into the system. Because these come up at the hearings. Well what about this what about that what about the other thing. It puts the veterans through a lot of stress trying to go through the system from the view to the appeal to the court back down to the reconsideration. When if they had the resort if they knew where to go and who to see they might have been able to get all the information they needed to make the decisions to go ahead with it or not. Because if they don't ask us questions in the review or the appeal, you know, they don't bring up a lot of things. You sit there you talk you only have about an hour. These things come up after the fact and then you're stuck for years in the system trying to work out every little thing. Because it doesn't all come out when you're in the hearing. Well what about this level 1, 2, 3. Why didn't you tell me that when we were at reconsideration hearing.

1990ish ■ This is probably beating a dead horse. I have been out of the service for more than 25 years. I left as a medical release against my will. I fought for years every whipstitch along the way the various problems that arose from my injuries. I was stone walled over and over again. It got to the point where I won a few things, but I got denied a lot of things. I went to my MP "Sorry, can't help you". My situation going back that far, from my understanding today hasn't changed that much, maybe not even an iota. A friend of mine, a veteran from Afghanistan, problems, had to fight tooth and nail. He recognized that he had the problem, now I'm not talking about something like (injury) where it might be kind of hidden unless you're in the family and having to live with it; this guy is actually physically hurt. And to have to fight. This is one of the things that really upsets me with respect to Veteran's Affairs. You can have doctors that verify then they turn around and say we need another doctor or that doctor is not qualified to say that, you have to find one that is qualified to say that. On and on it goes. So, like I said I'm probably beating a dead horse. Maybe some of you or all of you have experienced similar things. I don't think as it stands now really, despite the so called new programs, I don't think it is ever really going to change until somebody can knock a few heads and make people understand.

Accessing service ■ Adequate for my situation.

Accessing service ■ They have been fairly quick in response to needs.

Accessing service ■ Satisfying. VAC has been very forthcoming on all services and programs available to me.

Accessing service ■ The programs are available & the information regarding them is readily available, however, accessing them is more difficult.

Accessing service ■ I had no problems.

Accessing service ■ Good.

2011 ■ It's one thing of proving your injury, but it's the next thing that your adjudicator says denied when the evidence is already based through your medical doctor and through the basic information that's led them to that because it takes sometimes takes a specialist to give a diagnosis and they're even questioning a specialist now for the diagnosis. It's becoming a very frustrating system to deal with and it's almost now it's almost like the liberal party has basically said now stop we're not going to be giving out these pensions as way we were for the last couple of years. We're forcing a real issue that's deny, deny, deny. Now, what happens with these doctors

that sign on with Veterans Affairs they have to sign an oath basically to them by saying deny, deny, deny. So, you've got to be very careful who you're going to see now when Veterans Affairs says we would like you to see this individual because they've signed a letter that they will protect Veterans Affairs and not the veteran.

Before, they went to the paper form they sent you had to fill out every year. You had to send it back. It goes from this area here it goes to (city) in (province). Then somebody on the phone will call and oh you have got a short questionnaire. So, this all happened, and the next thing I know, I got a letter from the pension board and my pension was cut 50%. I had to go to in camp here and talked to a lady in in there and found out and she got it all corrected. But it was somebody on the phone – no idea who they were, but they could have been just an ordinary clerk, but they're screwing around with your pension – it costs money. They're not a doctor and you do it over the phone, so it really makes you mad. A lot of these people that are there, they're making decisions that affect a lot of us, and they don't know what the heck they're talking about.

Accessing services – long and painful process.

I appealed a decision several years ago. I found it very easy. VAC actually provides step by step instructions on how to appeal and provides the lawyer. You call the number, do what they ask... doesn't get much easier than that, does it?

Appeals process ■ Horrible... system needs much improvement for services. Not user-friendly.

2017 ■ My spouse was extremely proactive in assisting me through my release, and in helping me to apply for Veterans benefits through VAC. Luckily, the majority of my service injuries were recognized and awarded through VAC prior to my release which is now very beneficial (i.e. medications). VAC has been great in helping make my home more accessible and accommodating to my medical needs and even though some disability award applications remain on hold, I am grateful for the services they have provided.

Appeals process ■ Slow no regular updates and a 20-week waiting process. Advocates are high quality and knowledgeable.

Appeals process ■ I found sitting in front of the review board was like being on trial for being injured. It was not a good experience.

2000ish ■ I spent 25 years in the Force and when I went out, I had a colleague from my area and then he was the boss at the (unit) and he said, "You should apply to Veterans Affairs Canada." It's been nothing but trouble since then. It's nothing but trouble.

I'm very open to everything. I'd like to go back to the "my VAC file" I've called there too, and I wrote this. They said: "Yes, Mr. (wrong name) – "my name's (correct name)", I told them. "Do you have (injury) pain?" they asked, "no, for me, it's (other injury and injury)." "Ah! Hold on." Now, it took a month before they came back to me. This is recent, this is recent. So, there are problems with (?) I hear. Thank you very much. Yes, sir.

I'll show you something here. These two books, I put them together myself to go to federal court, and I won my point because at the last minute there's a lady, Ms. Harris Guillemette – she's the head lawyer of the Veterans Ombudsman, she's in Ottawa – last minute, she calls me. I'm all done, waiting for them to tell me when I'm going to court. Is it normal for me to have to do this?

Pre-2006 ■ Your problem, what can you tell me, because I'm under the old regime? And now I'm having problems under the new regime, but my problems come from the old regime, what do we do? There, I passed in front of them, I asked for a reassessment, what did they say? *"Ah! We based our decisions on your quality of life from 2006"*, it is now 2017. There are changes. That's good that makes me feel better. But this whole thing is starting from afar.

I agree with you, but do you know how the Veterans Affairs' system works, it is a struggle, eh? For the first request, 98% of the cases are refused. Now, it's lawyers representing us... Look, now, is it normal for you to be paid by a veterans' department and I am going to sue Veterans Affairs Canada because you can't read between the lines that I'm sick, you understand that? This is not normal. That's why I'm asking you: do you know what you're getting yourself into? Because when you get to the third, fourth level, the third gang, we go up to the fourth, it's the same people who judge only on the third floor. That's the truth. If it's refused in the third, what do you think they're going to do in the fourth?

My friend, his hearing has gone, and he applied to Veterans Affairs for hearing aids and we got a response denying them. We went the other route to workers' comp, well everybody here in this room I'm sure knows how workers' comp works. Carrying on, one hearing aid broke and it was sent back to workers comp because the whole thing was to be replaced, well it was repaired and then go back and not working again.

In essence, we went to the Legion thinking maybe the Legion could help out. So, my friend got paperwork from the Legion and it turned out it was paperwork for his father who passed away in 1991. They got the names mixed up. It's got to the point where it's frustrating and you have to pay out of pocket just trying again with Workers compensation.

Appeals process ■ Not yet, but like most people I know I'm sure I will.

Did not appeal.

Appeals process ■ +COMPLICATED.

The appeal process – where a lawyer will tell you things that aren't actually true, and the process is variable, (as per the first lawyer comment). The process is random, non-repeatable, and only really works for BPA employees.

Appeals process ■ Haven't had to, so far.

Appeals process ■ It takes forever and sometimes it's because one piece of paper is missing. Why should I wait an extra 12 months because of one piece of paper?

Appeals process ■ They seem to be nice, but they stabbed me in the back.

Medication renewal; two months right now that I have been struggling to get my renewals for my medical marijuana. That is my medication. That is what has been helping me. All the pills that they have given me for years that did nothing to help me whatsoever. If you don't believe me ask all my family, my friends, ask my wife, all the people that know me. Day and night. Fortunately, they have decided to go after that group, about 4000 people that found that medical marijuana helps them a lot better than being a zombie on 40 different type of pills that do some crazy stuff to you. They're playing the game now – they deny – they delay. I don't know if people realize how complex it is to get that medication, but they have made it even more complex because of the way the paperwork they're asking.

Back in May, they decided for 4000 military personnel which are probably among some of the most injured, somebody could argue that are on that program, and they decided systematically they were just going to cut them off at three grams a day, which is like saying to somebody that is on any lifesaving medication, we're going to take you you have got 10 grams of something to help you for your ailments and we're going to drop you to three – just like that; not case by case, not recommended by your doctor – that was against the order of the doctor.

Veteran's Affairs now is playing God. They're playing that they can override doctors, they don't listen to doctor's orders. They systemically decided they were going to add another hurdle for these people to access these medications that they so much needed to keep their life in order. They have decided to just add this new rule that everybody was going to have to go to a specialist, a pain specialist, an oncologist if you have cancer or a psychiatrist. Third one, a psychiatrist, is a joke. First of all because psychiatrist you can talk to any psychiatrist, they will not support anything above three because they're going like this with the blinders on. All they do is issue pills, the psychiatrist; they're useless. You go to them, they see you for fifteen minutes. They just want to do something lynch to something that you said positive but have not listened to the other 14 and a half minutes that you spoke saying all the bad things that are happening to you. They're always looking for something positive and then they just keep giving you more pills. Now these people are in control over whether you're going to be getting lifesaving medication that you need, or they're going to give you pills.

They're in a conflict of interest really those people. Why are we forced to go see these people to renew our medication, which they don't agree with – they made it clear. Right? Health Canada is another person that needs to sort this out, because they're using the reason that health Canada has set a limit to 3 grams a day which is so archaic and uneducated decision. Arbitrary. Arbitrary and totally uneducated I will say. If anybody here wants to know about medical marijuana, I urge you go read it. I'm the damn living proof that it works, and it helps people.

If you would have seen me when I was on pills you would believe it. I hope they're going to listen to some of these things and they're going to do something about it. Two months I have been denied my medication. If I have to pay out of pocket and guess what, once they tell you after, if we find out that you should have been covered all along since May when they cut it down, then we might consider your receipts to see if we can cover you. That is not it, now they're playing another game; they're not paying all of the medication costs. What I mean by that is, we don't have the control over the industry – they grow the product. They are licensed producers licensed by Health Canada, about 50 of them now, going to be a lot more. But they grow the product, and even if we want to go somewhere else we can't buy it anywhere else. They set the price, but Veteran's Affairs, at the same time as they announced us back in April or May they were going to cut it to 3 grams, they decided also they were going to add another hurdle: they were going to reduce the amount of

they were paying per gram. Now they only pay \$8.50 per gram. Guess what, most places that will only buy you half a gram. Not all, some you could be even, but I would say most of the licensed producers if you need certain products that you need if it happens to be \$14 a gram for example, guess what, I have to pay the difference.

Can you imagine if you were on an oxygen tank or on insulin or any other lifesaving drugs and anti-anxiety pills, whatever you need to take care of your illness, right? Can you imagine if they told you that you can only get 3 10th of your bottle of oxygen or 3 10th of your little vial of insulin that you need to keep you alive and you have to pay the difference – would you accept that? Why are these groups being forced, which is probably, arguably say that it is some of the worst case that are in that group, they're being targeted by the Government? I want it to be quite clear that we know about it and we're not going to stand by it idly. We're going to fight tooth and nail. We're going to the hill in April to hog the hill in 2019. I hope all the veterans are going to join us and send a clear message to Prime Minister Trudeau that he better make good on his promise, because veterans are like elephants – they remember.

VAC is a %^#^ing joke. This process has been the most painful and difficult process. The VAC needs to understand that the very veterans they support are their reason for existence. I sent letters to the Minister of VAC only to get no response. I had to wait 18 months to access services and unfortunately many of my peers took their lives while waiting for support or attempting to access support from the VAC.

I don't want to give the impression that Veterans Affairs screwed me over, much but when I had an acute flareup and I required a walker for a few months, they were quick, they sent someone over and I got the walker and I mean if I ever need it again I would still have it. They paid for it and I got it. But the thing is it shouldn't have got to that point, where you have to go to the farthest point in your illness. Then, they're falling over themselves to help you. When I wasn't at that point, it was "go away, go away, you are going to upset our numbers". That's the attitude and it is like no, don't help me when I need the ambulance, help me before it gets to that point, then you are doing your job. I don't know, it's just, if it is an acute thing. A gentleman in (town) in a wheelchair inside the office for a couple of weeks and then they finally did something. It should have never got to that point. But you have to go to the farthest point and the lowest point, then they are willing to help. But until you get there, forget it. You are going to screw up their numbers on success. If you come in and they don't help you. So, get worse, they will be glad to help you.

3 levels of appeals and no change. The system has no accountability they just say no with no explanation just a letter saying no. Since the system is setup for the veteran to fail and be frustrated to go away. I am now contemplating going to the media to shame them into action or a lawsuit.

I had (condition) a year ago and I phoned my friend who talked here a while ago. I called the office, I called the number he gave me, and they sent somebody over to see me. He walked in and said, "how are you feeling". I said not bad. I said I've got (medical device, and another medical device, and another medical device) and what do you think? He sat there with me for three hours and questioned me. This went on for three hours. I must admit he served me perfect. They gave me everything I required, they kept in touch with me, and they still did come back and said, "If you have any needs, contact us again." So, I'm very happy with what I got.

I do carry a Blue Cross Card from Veterans Affairs but again the problem is that you go to a service provider, you give them the card, "here is what should look after my needs for my hearing aid" versus (?). You used to get a card and a card that indicated exactly what you needed on it. So those are changes that are ongoing and then to again inform others as to what that means to them as a service provider. That's what I've experienced and seen.

I want to comment on the Medicaid Blue Cross. On the Medicaid Blue Cross Program there's two different types, one is line A one is line B. Both have 15 programs and choice things. Line A is supposed to require preauthorization. Line B isn't. I want to know how Blue Cross works because, even with line B without having required preauthorization I can't get anything done medically without first getting approval from Blue Cross, plus there's also a maximum dollar amount or limit on certain medications that we have to have.

I had a call with Blue Cross to get permission to get something when I was out of country and I have got to say they were very good. Extremely good.

Adversarial at best.

Like myself, I don't even feel like a Veteran. I am a Veteran, but when I try to get something from the government, it feels like I'm trying to get something that I don't deserve kind of thing. They don't treat you right like that, and I think everybody's the same way. You feel like you don't want to do nothing because they don't treat you right. You feel like you're trying to get something that you don't deserve. That's why I don't feel like a Veteran.

Up until 2012 the only answers I would receive for veterans' program was that I was the wrong charter and they didn't apply to me. After 2012 they seemed somewhat willing to help but still castrated by red tape.

1975 ■ Been retired since 1975, spent X years in Air Force. In those X years got hurt really bad four times (in service). Veterans Affairs said it never happened and you have to work from that point of view. I'm going to work backwards here, on my release I complained, and I couldn't stay in the Air Force because of pain, when I got out I found out I had a broken (bones) in two places.

Went to Veterans Affairs they said do this and do that well I did it, I have a document here, cost me \$800, Veterans Affairs didn't like what is on there, so they redacted it. I don't think Veterans Affairs has a right to redact my documents. Then, good luck, when I got really hurt I got five pages redacted, four years of my life. That's it. The other day, I'm a bit of a disturber, I decided I'm going to see what is going on here, I wrote to public archives, they said no my records for 1958 when I really got hurt, someone had stripped them out. To me, I might be worked on this, but I think the public archives is a sacred trust and when Veterans Affairs or somebody goes into public archives and starts stripping stuff out there is something wrong with this country, there really is something wrong. Now going here, went back to Veterans Affairs, doctor says un-united fracture of the (body), they say so what, prove it. And yet my medical, when I joined up says A1 right across the board. They don't do anything there. There is another document around DVA, the pension advocate, the Legion, I wasn't supposed to get this, this was a document.

I can understand you not wanting to have anything to do with this releasing documents to this trouble maker, that's me, I'm the trouble maker. I have tried to soft, no that's not going to work. Nobody soft petals me. This was offered back, the doctor says has been in this area, yes there was, (bone) in my (body). Then just prior to getting out the doctor says no anomaly in (body), Veterans Affairs then turns around and those days they just said stand aside, we are in charge. Said no anomaly and then Veterans Affairs puts in developmental anomaly that means I was born with it. I don't have a hope in hell of ever winning this, but they will do this, but they are not interested in the fractures in my (body). The other day, disturb again, went to the public archives and I got all this. And this is being held back from me for 40 years.

Somebody in Veterans Affairs has to be held accountable for what is going on here. The other thing is, when you go to Veterans Affairs you are dealing with lawyers, it is laymen against lawyers, not a fair process.

The other thing that's, I'm going to say about that, the other thing is, Veterans Affairs and Prime Minister do not like to hear from serviceman wives, they are, these woman, they just don't like, they don't mind this because they are a bunch of, when the wives get the in the picture of things, it gets a little different. Other thing is for records, what I had to do was go to this chiropractor, going to get my records sent there, over the period of a year, I had about ten sets of records, released at me.

But if you go through them, you think you are dealing with ten different people because this is pulled out from this set and something is added here, it goes around and around like that. And I don't know what to do, I'm at wits end. The other thing is, I've never had a job, because every time I go to do a medical, bend down, I can't bend down I have a broken (bones) in two places, I have suffered, my wife has suffered, and children have suffered, Veterans Affairs don't give a good God Damn.

My experience in accessing services on VAC programs from the VAC has been very poor. My Case Manager is new and knows little about them. In fact, she should not have been permitted to interact with Vets until she was knowledgeable about VAC programs. All of the information I have obtained about VAC programs to date, has been via my own investigating or through conversations with other Vets.

I have a problem with Veterans Affairs. I'm sorry. I have a problem with Veterans Affairs. These guys are supposed to look after us to give us the most they can. Yet they're being paid by the federal government whose job it is to give us as little as possible. To me there is a conflict of interest right there, and during one of my SCAN seminar, one guy from Veterans Affairs said we're not there for you guys. Because their boss says, no, give them as low as you can. They won't say it in public, but behind closed doors this is what's happening, so I have no faith in Veterans Affairs.

Access to services and information ■ Very good.

Access to services and information ■ A living hell.

Access to services and information ■ bad hard aggravating.

3 years is not acceptable and with PTSD is was some of my most challenging and trying times.

I appealed through the Veterans Appellant process and again... why appeal something that has already been proven. Waste of time and taxpayer's money.

I didn't take the vocational retraining because all I needed was I went back to school. I got some funding for that. But I also wanted to, when I finally found a family doctor, I wanted to apply for the public service. I went to them and said all I need training for is because I was told that the public service had a special resume. When I went to the local employment services they had no idea what that meant. I was told through my contact person in (town) that, to apply for public service, you had to have a special type of resume. It took me many months to try and figure out what that meant how to write one. They did send one from Ottawa the person came, we

sat in a restaurant and it was very hard to work with the dishes and other things happening to try and get a resume done. I found that she was being paid to come but she was trying to deal with other things than the resume. Because I told them I said that's all I need I've got training in all these on or about sides, I know how to do a regular resume, I just need to add assistance to do one for public service. It ended up being a waste of time. When I contacted the office, they actually chewed me out, because they said they we sent someone up there to give you a hand. I said look I don't need all these other services I just need to know how to do a public service resume and this person you're sending me, we're sitting in a restaurant and it's very hard to work, we're not getting what I'm asking for thereby there's not much that you're helping me with. I had about this amount of money that showed up we just spoke about. I contacted Veterans Affairs and I found that way they were kind of rude because I said that I had heard that the government was providing these things. The person I spoke to kept saying go to our website. I said well, I have well why didn't you tell me about it, and they just didn't really want to speak about it and they said there's nothing going to happen until April and that was basically the conversation, so it wasn't very helpful to me.

Discriminatory. VAC told me not on your medical files and denied my claim I then produced my admin files and there was pages of documentation pertinent to my claim VRAB then denied it accepting my new information as fact and relevant. Yet claimed my condition couldn't be as I had run a successful business after leaving the service. Finally my case worker got my paperwork before someone who recognized the discrimination and the fact that I provided just what was asked of me in my initial claim.

I find the process angering and frustrating in that it seems that those who are responsible for making the decisions seem to deliberately NOT follow the VRAB act especially as is written out in sections 3 and 39. Going on my own experience plus talking to so many other disabled veterans it seems that too many cases that are nowhere near frivolous and not extremely obvious, IE: missing limbs or similar, the benefit of the doubt will not be given on first application and first appeal. The percentage of denials by VRAB is far too high and gives a strong impression that they must think that a large portion of disabled veterans applying for benefits must be lying about their issues and this could not be further from the truth. What will work is to force those on the VRAB board who are actually doing the denying to stop doing so without very good cause and start giving the disabled vet the benefit of the doubt where at all possible. Too many of them seem much more concerned with saving VA money to get their bonuses as opposed to giving out justifiable benefits. When the medical documentation of an actual physician proving a veterans, disability can be over ruled by a VRAB board member with no medical background, something that has happened far too often, then there is a huge glaring problem at VRAB.

Ridiculous. You call a 1-800 number and get a different office and person each time. Once you even get a case worker, you still have to go through a 1-800 number which eventually gets answered (be really patient) then someone in some city calls your local office for you where you get a voicemail to leave a message. At some point you may receive a call, if you miss it, you restart the whole process. It's a total joke! Why have local offices and caseworkers if we can't communicate directly with them!

I am now 95 years old and am still having difficulty in dealing with VA.

2009 ■ I would like to talk about the transition. I was in the military, retired in 2009, seriously injured in (city), I would like to talk about the transition about getting assistance when I was injured and at my worst, I had to prepare my documentation to substantiate my injury for Veterans Affairs Canada, I would say that was the most

horrific experience of my life, when you are at your worst is when you have to put everything together and do a justification for them. I did not get any help when I was in (city), to be honest the most support I had were from my co-workers. I was asking my case manager questions and asking her specifically um, Veterans Affairs gave you this form, like a thesis document and I needed, I would have appreciated to have questions, it was open-ended statements and I guess I said well what do I need to write on here, so I can narrow it down? And it could never get black and white points, like what are the questions I need to be answering? I answer to the best of my ability, it was two years of redoing. I had to, I submitted my claim, it was denied. And then I was in (city), rewrote it again, it was denied. Then, then I was told I didn't usually include this and this and all these points. Finally, I got more help and then I had to go to Court and then I had to fight for my case. After three years I was successful. But I think when you are medically injured if there are forms to be filled out you should be given clear information. Because if you are giving clear information I can put those answers, but we wasted three years of everyone's time. There has to be a better way, but Veterans Affairs Canada was not able to give me the answers I was asking the case manager what should be included. I felt it was, didn't want to tell me anything, but it is not for her to say, because once I put the facts, it would have been helpful.

It works well, but overburdened with paperwork in repetition, published timelines and service standards generally don't meet the mark – the net result is anger among some veterans.

2004 ■ A fight for everything, basically, even as I speak. After fighting VAC/SISIP/Medavie Bluecross for the past 16 years, I now pick my battles for myself, no one else. I was blackballed for speaking up on an issue that helped myself and other veterans, w.r.t Medical Marijuana. I no longer speak as an advocate for Veterans as my health is more important!

2015 ■ I had to be proactive and apply for everything that was available. There was no one to help direct which program should be applied for first or at all. Being a member of the Primary Reserve, you are left to look out for yourself because no one is looking out for you!

2008 ■ First of all when a member of the military leaves a military you're a veteran and I find it hard to believe you have to almost fight to get a veterans' card by having a disability. When you leave the military, especially if you're, depending on the area that you retire in, you also may have a problem having a family doctor and that can be a real big problem. One, if you're qualified on your medical disability you're allowed two years in which to have support through SISIP assistance and if you don't have a family doctor you can't claim a medical disability so you're out to lunch. If you end up applying for public service employment, you also need to have a family doctor. Having a family doctor is really important when you're applying to Veterans Affairs. What is also important when you're doing the documentation for Veterans Affairs is that they will send your paperwork to your doctor and your doctor has, I believe, up to three months to do it, and they're busy they just don't have the time. If you're not constantly reminding them about have you sent it in, I've a phone call from Veterans Affairs saying why hasn't your doctor sent in their paperwork, and I went really like I have nothing to do with it that's between you and the doctor. I was pressured to call my doctor and find out where is the paperwork. And so you're sending in this paperwork, or your doctor is sending in this paperwork, and your doctor has the training, the qualifications to say you have a disability, and Veterans Affairs I find it is presumptuous of them to say no to this doctor, and in one case that I submitted in which I had it was not a family history it was considered non-congenital and submitted the first time and Veterans Affairs said it's a family history thing. I went actually went through the Veterans Affairs lawyer and they established that no it was non-congenital.

2013 ■ VAC refused to talk to me about ongoing treatments until I was physically released from the CF, this caused many delays in carrying on with physio and other therapies.

I was just going to echo something that was said about the audiologist approaching Veterans Affairs on behalf of their client, of course they just want to sell hearing aids, but that's how I got mine. I had an audio test, Veterans Affairs said well yes you got a hearing loss, of course on my records, military records, flying airplanes and stuff, didn't quite cross the threshold to qualify for support. Then I think it was a couple years later, tell me to get another test, sure enough now it did cross the threshold, it was sent to Veterans Affairs, expected to hear from them and didn't, I got a call from audiologist, indeed I was entitled to hearing aids. They are just trying to scare off business of course, they took that for some reason, so what happened to that report, Veterans Affairs, no idea.

I definitely, I would have to say that our Canadians are really supportive of the military. I would have to say (city), or (city), because of the medical people up there, strong support for the military and when you are injured it was because them willing to take the time out of their busy schedules, as health care providers to contact Veterans Affairs Canada, I was told that was a lengthy process, sometimes would take like ten phone calls to get through, on their behalf they fought for me to get more treatments because they felt I was deserving, not paid more to do that, took their time to do that. I have to say if it wasn't for health care providers and Veterans Affairs Canada was not going to provide more than they had to.

RCMP ■ I have been, like I said I have been fighting with them for a few years now. Even though, in my medical files, it shows I injured my (body) on duty. They found something tied the horse to that, not even related to deny. I see a pattern and my wife spoke to it earlier, you apply, they deny. You appeal, they come back and say, okay we will give you 2/5ths and I think they are hoping now you will go away. Even though it is 100% related to your service. Then you appeal, and you got to go through either, well Minister, they will come back and might come up, or they deny you again, then the bureau gets in there again, then you are back at it again. Eventually, with (condition), for example, they deny all the way through. I find a gentleman, because we are in (city) and he wrote an opinion, research. Basically, what he said to Veterans Affairs the criteria you were using would deny anybody with (condition), but in particular those that have it the worst. They gave it to me. But everything else has to fight. I understand their frustration, I sent away, asked for my medical files, they were vetted. And I was through the RCMP, they only gave me certain amounts. But the lawyers and everybody else for Veterans Affairs can get copies of them. Made me get a Bureau pension advocates involved, they might be able to get your files for you.

One thing, frustrating. I really do, I think I sat back and watched things over the years and thinking to myself well thought things were going to change but it seems it is business as usual there. The only things that change, had two new Ministers, but what is anybody doing? I think that's a big thing, military guys, can speak to that, but say for me. It is just frustrating, I really do they just hope you either A, go away or drop dead. Yeah.

Well, you know, being a military brat, I look back now, and I look – I think they did it to World War II veterans, same thing. Bringing that up as a little thing, they sent me a form to get my doctor to fill out and it was an examination. My doctor actually had to look up one of the test, couldn't find it, spoke to a gentleman who was on the year or so from retiring, he said my God they haven't used that thing in over 25 years. And in one form I received, and we did laugh about this, was it says in there, if you chop wood. Somebody give me the relevance for that one, I'll never understand. I think a lot of this is outdated, I think a lot of people there, I think they are good people, I think there is something else like internally. It is the culture that is developed over the years and that is just to deny and hope you will go away and shouldn't be able to get away with it. So, let's hope there is another election.

2008 ■ The thing is, it was a long process. It's a minor thing compared to other injuries that you could have for Veterans Affairs and it becomes such a long process. I currently have a second one in, my paper was done a year and a half ago it got to Veterans Affairs last January, it got turned down, it then got resubmitted because I'm challenging it and it's still in the process. My family, I laugh because I said you'll be dead before any of your paperwork gets finished.

2008 ■ So through your whole military career when it comes time and Veterans Affairs when I first applied it was before they went to their new program and I sent in my paperwork and they said in fact didn't even send in the paperwork. The counsellor up at the base and they said, just go down to Veterans Affairs they will help you out. I went down and all they did was shove paper in my face. I went back up to the base they said we'll book you an appointment for help. I went to the appointment, they didn't even know who I was. I ended up going through the Royal Canadian Legion and that's how I've been dealing with them (VAC). But the paperwork it's such a long process and if you don't have, when I was in, asked by them to submit the paperwork, I did, and they said oh, but you also have to have all your accident reports. As it turned out because I was in a cell and not my original unit I was not permitted to access my accident reports that were on file. I contacted Veterans Affairs and told them this is a situation I'm really trying to get in by this deadline and so thereby I was declined, and I was told I have to reapply. Well as it turned out, I had applied before the process changed now it's under the new veterans' act and so I don't qualify for the old act because DND didn't allow me to access my documentation. So, it's a very complex. I have found since I left the military I've been more helpful in helping other people to release than the military has, or Veterans Affairs has. And it's been a long process and at times you just get tired of it. You want to be able to get on with your life because you're trying to transition, and it just seems like there's always barriers being put up and they're not being helpful and when you do call to ask, "how do I do this, go about it" there's no one to tell you. You've got to fumble through it, you've got to make the mistakes and it's like reinventing the wheel every time.

2009 ■ It was terrible. I was not given a Case Manager. I would call the 1-800 number and have to explain my sit over and over again. Each time I would call VAC number I would have to explain my case all over again. It wasn't until I finally went in to VAC with a breakdown that I finally got help. No notes on my file, very frustrating!!

When I first went after my pension, two, one of two different pensions, I went to (country) in (year), healthy. Three months after I was diagnosed with a serious illness and became very sick. So, they thought. Half of that was (condition) in this case. And I applied for my pension and got that right way. At the same time, I applied for a pension for my (injury) for (repetitive task), one-way paid ticket, \$30 a month, minus taxes, okay, and that was turned down. And I had to appeal it. I won the appeal. But why do we have to go out and prove somehow, well, you got to get a statement from well, the guy that saw it happen has been dead for ten years, so how do we verify it? It seems, and we'll come to Veterans afterwards that they doubt our word, and, unfortunately, it's somebody's wife who's 99% of the time doubting our word, and that's the biggest thing is when people do apply for a pension, is that they doubt our word. We served the country. For all those years. And now we got somebody who never wore the boots, okay, saying, oh, no, you're not entitled to it because it says in this sentence, you're not entitled to it.

Just to answer your question, when you call Veterans Affairs, you get a call centre in Kirkland, that's [audio cut out] they assign, to this Veterans Affairs office. Whether or not you, getting through to Veterans Affairs office. The other side of this is look at the rate of these that go to Veterans Affairs office. You can go in, get this

particular person and going on literally, you are explaining all over again what's going on. Other problems, how many times have I physically gone in and said reference this and say, we need Veterans Affairs, here is the letter, so now you are spending another five to six weeks trying to track down this to get, oh, yeah, yeah. Literally no continuity with who you talk to, going through a call centre, but this is what I'm talking about, you have to talk to a secretary, all these personal things, I talk to, whether or not I, the Veterans Affairs office. Discussing with people with mental illness.

You educate yourself about who you speak to and what not, but for those of you who are not familiar, also has (?) it only works externally. But it is an external resource you go to. I have only had to go once and use the ombudsman and they are basically these, so you extend it all the others, personally and speak to them. They contact and say this, the key to dealing with this is to make sure any conversation you have with any of the personnel you could say, when you are talking to someone on the phone, get their IP number. Make sure that you get a transcript, or you record conversation yourself. Record it and then when you speak to the Ombudsman, you send a transcript of everything that has happened. Unfortunately, its got to that point in certain situations, that takes it the next step. Once it gets in the Ombudsman hands, hand we should say, return very quickly, within a week, two weeks at the most. In my case, six working days and it came back with an answer. So, the Ombudsman is a good resource and only recently just, always been there, but the last couple of Ombudsman had become very, they are not anti-government, they are standing up for the members. They are very key resource when you have extended everything else.

Appeal process ■ Everything is on the veteran, to supply the evidence from files that they already have, and they already know, yet they play this game where they pretend it's all new info to them. Even the advocates seem powerless to break through the insurance corporation like act.

I have not had to appeal a decision as of yet.

The old joke, about apply for your denial as quick as you can, is true. It is not a joke. And every one of us here who has done that run-around can tell you, there is no one to do it. If you have coping psychological issues to go along with it, you can't sit down and do a 20-page questionnaire. Some of us, getting into the office was all we were able to do. And now you are saying, okay, here you go, fill this out, but before you fill it out you have to go to the website to print it off yourself to fill out then bring it back.

Appeals process ■ Not currently. This appeal is a joke because people that never see you and never completed an assessment of your doctor, whom did spend hours with you assessing you with their professional training that someone at an office that never even speak with you complete any assessment to a table that the members never see.

I have done 2 appeals on 2 different issues, the process was very slow and not in my favour, they did not brief me on anything prior to the hearing.

Told myself when I came here tonight I would be as positive as possible, as positive works better than negative, but there are issues and there are things that need to be corrected with Veterans Affairs. In my case again my hearing loss, it's, it keeps getting worse and I understand that I have to manage this to a certain extent of how much more it has gotten and the rest, I see an audiologist every six month. But then if you apply to Veterans Affairs for a review of file, the review date starts when you apply not, this tells you your hearing has gone wonky. They will use medical documents to deny or accept, but when you apply for a review of your benefits it is based on the date you apply, not on the date that you got your medical assessment, very frustrating.

I just wanted to say to everyone, I had Veterans Affairs a while back and they called me for an update, I can't remember. They checked my file and it had been eight years and she says, "Well, you're supposed to reassess at three years". I don't know at eight years ago. This does not go very well. She was a very patient, I spent two and a half hours with her and it was (?) so much time. She gave me a very, up until that time, gave me 3% of my hearing and funding for a hearing aid.

Like guys that got out 20 years ago, 21 years, 22 years, see this and say, "I got this you should go to Veterans" or get the run-around or keep my mouth shut?

Appeals process ■ I have had three DVA disability decisions. All were fair and acceptable to me.

Appeals process ■ Don't know, I have one application in "first stage" for over a year now.

I was very fortunate, put in for Veterans Affairs, I put in for (condition) and (condition), both 100% service related. But I put my claim in before I got out of the military and I was warned to do that, warned to put that in right away, while you are in the military, because all the documentation is there, and it is readily accessible. My claim was approved right off the bat. The issue, the other issue I have, I have (other) problems as well, that I put in a claim for not to be a claim but for future date and I have yet to have that reviewed so I don't know how that process is going to go. But I did, I did get, they were just small claims for the other two and I did, I did get approval right away for that one. But again, it was because I did it before I got out, not after, which I think was happening to a lot of people here.

I would just like to comment basically about benefits, I know you do a lot of advocating for pensioners. I just want to talk in terms of benefits we pay, the premiums are starting to change, the co-pay, it is so confusing, at the end of the day you have no idea about what out your of pocket or getting benefits for. Where I find there is a bit of disconnect in the appeal process. Just want to give you a small example, my father-in-law, retired veteran, did 35 years, he had cancer, he lost half his face, lost an eye, and he has this prosthetic thing about this big that goes up inside facial cavity, and he can't survive without it. They came back and said that is cosmetic and wouldn't pay for anything. I have gone through the process, lost the battle's, thank God for Veterans Affairs, because they came through for other things for him, but this whole thing in terms of medical and appeal process, maybe something your organization could look at. I don't understand why there aren't federal public servant veterans that are sitting on appeal mechanisms that understand some of this stuff, versus doctors and those who are out respectfully for interest of the plan and keeping the cost down and those things. So, I would like you to consider that. Thank you.

When you were talking about mental health, it just reminded me, veteran affairs Canada's approach is to direct veterans to the public service. So, things like USTAT (emergency services agency), which is supposed to be for emergencies, ends up inundated with things like, I needed testing to, (condition), or support. "Oh, you need to go through USTAT in order to obtain this" and I said, well I won't be going through USTAT to obtain it. She is giving me all these contacts, but it is not an emergency nature. Like when I think urgent, I think crisis. I don't really like testing (condition), but I can make my way through my test without it becoming a crisis fortunately enough. I flagged it with them, I followed it up, but I think it needs to come from a higher authority. Veterans Affairs Canada needs to stop farming military people out on to the public service. There is a lot of supports that they can access quickly, and even if it is not quickly, efficiently. So, somebody doesn't have to go from person A to person B to person C to get help at person D; it is stream-lined. If they are farmed out into the public service sector, it is no longer stream-lined. And they might not have the area of expertise in order to, yeah. USTAT, I just Googled it, urgent short-term assessment and treatment, run through VHA, now known as island Health Authority.

2006ish ■ I have been dealing with Veterans Affairs for eleven years, if they go away I will feel like one of my family members have left me. Anyhow, when we first started with Veterans Affairs, in our 20s when he got released medically, I asked for a package on his files, it said Veterans Affairs question mark, nobody knew what Veterans Affairs was and we finally found it out so I wrote the lawyer and I said, he has this, can he get medically released, and got medically released, is there something you can do, wrote back the ideology around the disease is unknown so they couldn't do anything, wouldn't be successful. Flash forward about 20 years I found out the US, the US Navy was coming up with the same disease because they were removing antiskid paint from the boats and they were breathing it. I thought okay we got a connection. Wrote them a letter back and got them the evidence, they said he had a mark on his (internal organ), which flash-forward when we get to that, another doctor said it was a mistake and they take that mistake.

Veterans Affairs use that mark on his (internal organ), as, you know, a thing on their side. Which when we found out it wasn't on a mark on the (internal organ), they didn't really want to look at it. So anyhow, we go forward again, and we see this doctor and Veterans Affairs started fighting with them. He wouldn't answer any of the questions, so then they ask can I get the answers to the questions and, he wouldn't answer my question, so

I went to the member of parliament and they said write them three letters and give them one every month and, you know, ask me if you answer the questions. I wrote him a letter, photocopied it and basically said I don't want to deal with Veterans Affairs, I know you don't want to deal with them, if you can help me I appreciate it. Of course, he didn't answer. I got another doctor, this woman was University educated, respiratory, they said the military was responsible 3/5ths for his condition. They started on her. She moved it down to 2/5th, Veterans Affairs came in at 1/5th. This is typical, you are going to fight with them, first time you go to them, unless you are dead or pretty well on your way to being dead, it is going to be a no. The second time, going to be, you know, they are going to make you move two or three times into it. As I said I'm in 11 years, warned them at the beginning we can do this easy way or hard way, not giving up until I'm dead. So that's, Veterans Affairs. By the way he just talked to Veterans Affairs yesterday. The lawyers in Charlottetown, they said that they have 75 successes, 25% failure and my husband pointed out, if he built a house in 25%, they will fall down, that wouldn't be considered successful.

When I said, I mention that they the lawyer had written way back when we were 20 years old that the pathology around this disease was unknown, so they wouldn't pay, for 20 some years, I went under freedom of information and found out 37, well we got 37 cases that (assistant) and I wrote a letter, it turned, in between writing that letter I get a phone call from the lawyer saying, I don't think we can use this information because we don't have the names. I said you are a Veterans Affairs, you have the decision numbers, if you can't trust your own work, who can you trust?

2000 RCMP ■ My husband was in the RCMP and he retired was diagnosed with PTSD and (injury) and (injury), so we go to Veterans Affairs, just like you said they deny first time, then you fight, deny that, then go to court, only going to give you 2/5th, if you don't think that is right you have to go to them again. It seems that everything we had to fight for, the exact same steps. It is like, this is what they do. It is proven you have this and they say it is work-related. It is like you have to go over and over and over again and when you have someone who is already suffering, you have to go over it hundred times and then I have to sit there and type it a hundred times you know. It is just a big circle. It's so frustrating. It is horrible. He retired in 2000 and we're still fighting with Veterans Affairs today.

I was in the process of making an appeal but could not go forward with it. I was overwhelmed with more paperwork. I don't understand why an appeal is required when you submit info taken directly from your medical file.

On the medication side, when I look at my (?). I just let it in, they know me now, and then even if I have a change of medication, I make a phone call, in 5 minutes it's settled. On this side, at least we're supported. On the post-traumatic side, but for the pills, we have to go to a doctor, and in my case, my doctor for my (other injury), I have to take (prescription), he said to me: "(name), you have to find one.", I'm going to have to go to the private sector, it's still a lot of expenses with each visit. It's a little thorn in the side.

Now I'm talking about the complaints, the ones that went to Court. It's hard to complain when you come to the Veterans Affairs Canada office to discuss your case, because you're talking to a 26-year-old girl who is fresh off the bar exam. So I come back one more time, it's disappointing

I have used the appeal process and it works well.

Appeal is pending. The Pension Advocate Officer assigned to my file has been excellent.

Appeals process ■ Aggravating to start it works OK after months of delay.

Slow arbitrary ridiculous. Any time I contact them my blood pressure goes through the roof. This is what happens when they delay deny and hope we die.

Am afraid to talk to them as they don't care and will use anything to claw back what little \$\$ we are entitled to.

1978 ■ Can you tell me who is a veteran? That is my biggest problem. I left the forces in 1978. I started in the early '50s. After I left, every few years I went to the office we used to have in town and filled out the forms for Veterans Affairs for assistance. The government would change, I would go back to the office again, and filled out more forms. Just recently, I filled them out again and sent them away since we got a new government in August I thought things just might change.

But I just got a letter again denying me assistance from the veterans' independent program. I'm now X years old, I have family to help me a little bit, I live in an apartment looking after myself and have daytime help. I thought with the Veterans Independence Program, I would get some assistance, but they tell me I don't qualify. I said to myself, am I a veteran? I'm not a veteran? What is a veteran? Nobody seems to be able to tell me. In this room right now, how many people are involved in the Veterans Independent Program? Can I see a show of hands? 1, 2, 3, 4. Did you have any trouble getting into the program? As I say every three years, I send this paper in and I get the same answer back, they deny me assistance. Thank you.

Veterans Independence Program, the gentleman is 85 years old. He should be on the Veterans Independence Program. If he needs the help he shouldn't be denied. It took me ten years to get recognized by Veterans Affairs, and that was ten years of living hell. It's gotten no better the last eight years.

I know that my father is in his hometown and he doesn't get any action on his hearing. He actually went to lawyers to talk to Veterans Affairs. I don't know if other people have to argue with them. It's not just my father there is a group of veterans and they now are going through lawyers or those particular professionals and using them as a method of receiving benefits from Veterans Affairs.

1979 ■ Hair pulling 5 years of denials nerve wracking.

In my experience there's a lot of gamesmanship and so I played the game. What I do is I show up to the office in my town and the afternoon I'll go to the office in the next town. I'll ask for a case manager and I'll ask them the same questions and I'll get back different answers because the policies are forever changing. What I'll do is I'll gather my notes and see the case manager and get back, "how do you know about this?" If you don't have the wherewithal, you don't have the ability or time effort or whatever to do so, you're just (?). Again, it's one of those things where you get a letter from VAC starting "thank you for your services". It's almost as if it is a bit of a punch, it is designed to be thankful but it's all guilt, and you're applying for more because supposedly 56% of all claims are denied out of hand. You have to do a level 1, 2, 3, 4 just to keep going.

Being the modern generation, when I did my first application it's done on line. Very much like instructions just put it through, find a job, and then the automatic response you get is it will take up to 16 weeks for a response. And then to be honest completely forgot it and 12 weeks later received a letter denying the claim. Everybody says you got to go through twice, I'll just let it go because apparently you can ask for them to reassess a million times but the second you ask for a hearing the one time you lose it you don't get to go back. Meanwhile a very close friend of mine was crushed in Afghanistan, (injuries listed) and VAC just offered him 15%, well below what his case manager who lost her temper. But it took him almost a year to get a proper case manager going through. Out of the blue, a year later, VA contacted me and asked me about my claim. I asked, are you guys going to do the paperwork or are you just going to deny

me again. They said, I think we got a better shot this time. So, where was the phone call last year when I was denied? Why didn't we get a better shot the first time? What did I do wrong? And there is no, I mean I understand the Legion does advocate, but unfortunately my generation of soldiers turn their back on the Legion. We don't have a Coles notes for applying for VA we don't have Cole's notes for applying for release, its all guys high-fiving and chat lines trying to figure it out.

2009 ■ With SISIP and Manulife everything was/is great. They have been very supportive and understanding of my conditions right from the start. VAC/VRAB have been a total nightmare for me since 2009.

1994 ■ I felt that the process had little transparency, like I was meant to just accept their decisions and move on. I was told that I had a lot of balls calling myself a veteran by their adjudicator at one of the many tribunals I attended.

Service has been prompt at the start however the process has now stalled and is taking a long time to process such things as reassessments or further medical help on what is available etc.

2008 ■ I worked for 10+ years and I was released back in 2008, just a start of VOC rehab and Veterans Affairs stepped in and they paid for me to go for two years for (training) they paid me while I was in school. They paid for my travel, they paid for my curriculum, every month for studies for supplies and anything like that. And that went very well. The start of it I had to research what I wanted to do, actually let me go back. I actually had to do a VOC rehab assessment. The assessment to see what I could do and what I couldn't. I did all the testing and then I came out the categories that I could do, civil engineering, nuclear engineer, all this other engineering stuff. So that's when I research myself what school I could go to, present to them, they approved it and off I went, and I was successful. On the Dean's list when I finished and worked for five years. Before I crashed again. But the program that we did, yes —.

HELP FOR DAILY LIVING

I have found them very helpful.

Good.

VAC says because I'm single, I can't get FCRB. My kids are grown in a different province. I need lots of help and rely on other family members to assist. No far, as I was 3B RELEASED. My case manager never suggested OT assessment. I'm in rehab program. I have done most on my own by hiring other people to assist me, so my daily situation is somewhat normal. After 3 years, 3B released, I am now VIP B... a big help... grateful. But there are still other services I need, and my case manager says nothing.

The long-term care needs to be there, and financially, but we're getting on, this is a big process.

Worker who attended my home last summer for an evaluation stated that I would be eligible for the home modification items & to contact them once I moved. After we moved & I called in to the number on my benefits card to have them come out for an evaluation, the person who answered the phone told me that I was not eligible for home modification benefits as it did not pertain to my pensionable benefit which is hearing loss.

Did you get the help you needed through VAC? ■ Some. Receive VIP for outside work but not for housework. Not sure what the difference is as my disability affects my arms and hands. Suspect because I am married the standard call is that my spouse can do the housework. Sorry but she is disabled so I pay.

Great so far. We have some home alterations requested that are still processing and going through the many levels of VAC to have them approved, and we are hopeful. Our Case Manager is wonderful and calls us regularly if she receives any updates or information on our file. I'd like to see some of the processes go a bit faster, but we understand there is often great complexity in reviewing information.

My husband is a retired veteran he has Veterans Independence Program and everything he could need relevant to his condition is there for him. My concern is as this population ages we are the front end of the Baby Boomers I don't know Veterans Affairs has anything in mind to assist other than programs to keep you in your own home. I don't know if they've even thought of that or where people go from there.

Poor disorganized and limiting by the rate of pay we can offer per hour to employ a PSW to come into our home.

They will not help me.

1988 voluntary ■ I have come down here, since I had a chronic illness. I have had good experiences with Veterans Affairs and other experiences that I'm not too happy about. Overall, they have called me and even asked me if I needed food delivered.

Slow – was advised by phone to re-apply for VIP, no response for 4 months.

Didn't get it.

They have supported our needs and helped a lot but if I need more, I don't feel I can ask DVA. I was told I have to have a request come from Interior Health.

My husband is a WW11 veteran. So, he is in declining health. Both DVA and Health Care have the "keep him at home" system, so it puts a lot of stress and wear on the care giver, as well as health concerns. Interior Health doesn't allow their respite people to do anything to help when they are here?????

Satisfactory.

Pending.

OK (3 respondents).

I was released in 1995, 23 years ago. Back then it was literally, there is a subject, there was all kinds of services. Well actually the first contract I had with Veterans Affairs was five years later when they contacted me. They were doing a study into the effects of (?) and since then they have taken really good care of me since then. With the VIP the point that send me back to school, get the studies there. And only got positive reviews, but this is done for me, since it would have been nice to have that contact when I first got in, but um I am happy with what you have done for us.

OK so far.

I have found support to be sufficient.

Good, on VIP program for house cleaning.

We had to fight for VIP. I changed from full-time to part time work to care for my spouse but have been denied care giver allowance. So not much support.

There is little support from DVA. They had a toilet changed, and that took years to arrange.

I wish the veterans affair had a pre-screened list of people that clients could call and hire for them to come in their home such as Housekeepers grounds keepers and personal care workers

So far, they have been very supportive and provided VIP funding.

Very good. I required assistance with access to our home and bathroom aids. The OT came, assessed my situation, and submitted her report after consultation with me. DVA was quick to make a decision and the required support was arranged and paid for in an impressively timely manner.

They are making us pull our own teeth to qualify for services they clearly have no intentions on providing. It's a real joke and its design to push injured and suffering vets to the point of suicide.

VIP is one of the things that works very well.

Good.

Home and living arrangements are very good.

The support through VIP is more just funding but you still have to do it yourself to have somebody do something. VIP is not covering as much need as there is. It covers the basic, but depending on the state of the individual, it would certainly not cover to have somebody come to three or four hours a day to help with bathing or dealing with, then we are not at that point. So, I don't know what it would be like in that point in time.

I received VIP after 3 applications and numerous specialist's letters. I am appealing denial of care giver allowance.

I've been having ongoing (type) therapy appointments through VAC for my (injury). When he wanted an extension, it takes a little while, not a whole lot of time but it takes a little while to get people for the next session. But they only give you I think it's 20 sessions in a year. Well there's 12 months in the year; 20 sessions it doesn't work. It really doesn't work. To start off with, when I have a flare up I am in the therapy three times a week to get any relief. It goes through very quickly. I don't know what matrix they're using to say this issue is worth 20, this issue is worth 5, this issue is worth 15. I have no idea what their matrix is. To me they need to go back to the drawing board do what they're doing now, talk to us and use a little common sense, say well this person is being disabled for this period of time they're still taking physio still getting treatment for the issue they were released for – still 20 sessions in a year doesn't cut it.

Not bad could be a lot better.

Veterans Affairs will help me to a certain degree, but I've also been denied a certain number of things that I need. I can't stand in a shower, and I can't climb over the side of a tub without help, and I got denied support and help for that. I have a wife that's more disabled than I am. So, she's no help in that area at all. But I've got nothing. I don't know how to go about correcting that or changing it.

Not denying that you aren't getting the support that you need and the help that you need. Bear in mind that you just retired not that long ago, and everybody in the room this, has been an ongoing problem for many, many years. My aunt in (province) X years old her husband was military full career, same problem this gentleman had, she could not have assistance for anything.

She ended up having to give up her home. Very self-sufficient lady but she still gave up her home this year now she's in a home. She would have been able to stay in her own home if she had been able to get the help she needs at this place. It's across Canada regardless, and you're fortunate in the sense that yes you have a new government and trying to rectify the problems of past governments and it's great that I can see some help coming your way, but the rest of them are still struggling, they're likely the same people that are seeing

that everybody same names in this room and they're not going to do anything, VAC, "there we go again he's applied again , he's already been turned down, no need to reopen the case". That could be a problem. I'm just saying those problems are still, and you know yourself, if something is stuck in your head that's where you are working from and try to come back and look at the situation again.

A survey once a year is kind of lame, and just another hoop to jump through.

Horrible... they will not help or respond to me.

2015 ■ To answer the questions, "where are the veterans", like most Quebecers, we are ready to whine, but when it is time to raise our voices, we stay at home. You should see Wednesdays, the veterans who are here are much better at whining...

I take a lot of notes because those who know me, I do a lot of radio, a lot of television and I am very involved with the veterans. We're talking about VAC and then access to My File and all that, the key, the key to success, is a case manager. If you have a good case manager, you're in business; if you don't have a good case manager, find one, the clock is ticking. I saw a file with a one-year delay because the case manager had been on maternity leave for a year and her files were left on her desk for a year. Some people have been wasting a little bit of time and that's too bad. This is the crux of the problem.

What I see as well, the newcomers who have been out for two years on the SISIP program (I've just finished the SISIP program myself), Veterans Affairs Canada and SISIP are not talking to each other. On one side, you have the doctors, who tell me: "You can't go to work", and on the other side SISIP is telling me: "You have to go back to work." Yes, I'm 50+ years old and I'm going back to work eventually, it's official. As Félix Leclerc said, "If you want to kill a man, let him stay at home paid to do nothing." It's time for SISIP and Veterans Affairs Canada talk to each other instead of waiting for 2 years before the file is sent to VAC.

About (local health clinic), I talked a lot with their director, are there people going to (the clinic) here? At (the clinic), they are psychiatrists and psychologists. And fortunately, I have a good one, I'm lucky because they prescribe the pills I need for my (condition and condition), otherwise they wouldn't have the right to prescribe these. And I've had a chat with the clinic director and the psychiatrists, and the ideal would be for veterans to take charge of the clinic, put general practitioners in there, that we can refer ourselves to the clinic, not only to meet our psychiatrists and psychologists, but also a general practitioner who would come to solve our family doctor problem, as we don't have a family doctor.

The Integrated University Health and Social Services Center] is a big machine, and they are being mixed up within (?). We see programs being abandoned. That's a suggestion you need to clarify.

Denied repeatedly for VIP and caregiver allowance even though I'm at 100% disability.

I was medically released from the military and require some support at home. VAC has an excellent program designed for exactly my needs, but 7 months after my application was submitted, my claim remains "in process", with little to no information on why it is taking so long.

On the clinic – I have just started the process, they give me a form on my state of health, and I would have liked to get the hell out of there, just fill in the form how you see how you go on paper. It hits you hard! Now the girl tells me: “You’re meeting a psychiatrist in six months.” That’s it.

2004 ■ In regard to the clinic, I left the army in 2004, I did 30+ years of service in the # regiment. I’m in the room and not in my living room whining. What’s difficult is to get into the process, once we’re in, it’s fine, we take care of our case and it’s fine. What is complicated for us, when we are psychologically ill, how do you want us to fill in the questions properly?

Mentally, we’re not there; We are stoned, we take too many drugs, we fill out the documents, and here, this document, once it is written remains written. That’s what they’re based on, you can’t come back and say: no, I was wrong, that’s not what I meant, I wasn’t running away, I meant something else. No, you wrote that in 2001, so now it’s over. It’s based on that. Right now, I have problems too, a bit like the gentleman, I asked for access to information, I received the documents, 1,559 pages, and there are pages that repeat themselves, there is no logical follow-up inside. I called, I said, “Listen, how can I organize myself to get into my file when everything is disorganized inside the document?” She says: “Sir, that’s how it works.”

I have two extensions, I am in January for the second level because I have difficulty to follow up inside the whole document, which looks a bit like Asterix’s 12 works [Note: this is referencing a popular scene from an old cartoon where the main characters are stuck in a bureaucratic nightmare]. Veterans Affairs, they are good, but the administration is heavy, extremely heavy, it makes no sense. But clinic, I was there for three years in the Post-traumatic unit and when the clinic took over, I felt a difference. It took a long time.

The clinic service works, if they can improve the service so much better. The problem with the waiting list is that there are too many clients on the floor, not enough resources ahead. I have a psychiatrist who is very good, I don’t have a word to say against him, he’s going to retire.

I take 20 pills a day, it doesn’t seem like it, but... When I start again with the newcomer, will he read the four volumes to understand the follow-up? He’s going to start from scratch, but I’m not at zero, I’m farther than that, and that worries me because today I’m having problems that are emerging, that we’re in the process of assessing, but my psychiatrist is semi-retired, he’s doing a day a week or two. Now, I’m on the verge of starting again, and I don’t want that at all, because when you start again, it’s painful, it brings back memories and it’s not easy for anyone. Thank you.

You didn’t mention the VIP program, the Veterans Independence Program. That’s the housekeeping, the lawn mowing, etc., etc. Currently it is managed by the Blue Cross. So, do not cross swords with the Blue Cross. I had some bad experiences with them, I had to write to the Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada, and since then I’ve been paid very late. I live here, but my pals live in (nearby) region, and they are paid on the 15th, but when the 15th is a Sunday, they’re paid on Friday, but for good ol’ me, they send it on the 2nd, Monday in other words, and I receive it 5 days later. Right! It’s just that now, what we’re doing.

I told myself: “I’ll call the veterans’ ombudsman”, four months later, they answer me: “Well, you’re still getting paid, so don’t bother us with stuff like that.” Before we were paid at the end of the month, and when the 30th was a Saturday or Sunday, it would automatically enter on Friday. That’s not the case with us anymore. My own case. I don’t know if there are others across Canada, I would guess yes, but there’s one question to ask: why are they doing this?

Up until now, I have only needed to use the VIP and occupational therapy support. Both are appreciated. If I could make one recommendation, it would be to make it easier to increase the annual level of VIP grant as costs and required services increase.

I personally do not receive those services, yet. But those family members and/or peers that do have no complaints.

Non-existent.

I just have something to say that once we did get my husband's, the independent program going, it happened because somebody phoned me from that office and said, I don't know why this just hit my desk now. You should have been approved right away. And she got it going, and it's been great since, the care, I mean, everything. That's that is a very positive point, but it took somebody who was able to decide. And I don't know why, but she, for some reason I got stalled because it was like I'm sending a hound dog on a scent when I want to go somewhere. It took her a long time to phone me, because I had given up and she had phoned me and said she just didn't understand why this wasn't on her desk sooner.

I'll say one thing: Veterans Independence Program has helped me. Like, I cannot do housework. If I do laundry my wife had a stroke, I mean, just but they've supported me all the way. Cut my lawn, shovelled my snow. I can't complain about that. It's just initial process is so difficult.

Just like the young fella said over here just a moment ago, reiterated, same dumb question, same form, talk about their own self-made bureaucracy, Veterans Affairs has it. I have been wearing a (aid) since I came home from (country) in (year), and every second year I get the same form, are you still wearing it? I got it for life. And I don't know why I got to the good thing about it, it's their nickel that's paying the stamp, not mine, and like it say, once you got it permanently, it isn't going away. We just don't re grow certain body parts. And it's stupidity. That's what it is. It's bureaucracy, stupidity.

VAC is useless for homecare. I applied twice for VIP, but because the majority of my illness is mental health no support was given.

Since release, my cm has never offered an OT assessment. I need lots of help-single-100%plus disabled. Why aren't I entitled to FCRB, because I'm single? Not fair, as my spouse was killed. I don't have that second spare of hands. I have to beg, pay for services around my home because I can't manage. Again, my cm is slack, no follow up because she doesn't care too. Honestly, word is on the street. Actions speak louder than words. No compassion, respect on her part. One would think, 60 clients in 365 days in the year, she could email, call, check in, visit once in a year!

Poor at times they expect for me to arrange services, perhaps they should have list of partners who provide services to Veterans that are available in each community or a link to a community partner who can provide that list of PSWs.

Inadequate, having a (body) injury and a brain injury and trying to continue with everyday life (cleaning, cooking, chores) is not a great accomplishment and also not been able to do so at the age of (young), is a huge trigger. So, after we applied for VIP and then being denied saying that because of his age he should be able to do it, is a real kick in the teeth and again a huge trigger.

Everything with VAC is a must "PROVE" basis, you have 100 barriers to overcome to get anything, many give up or perish trying to get help.

Non-supportive, she believes I as the spouse can do everything that is needed.

I received services after having to contact an outside agency.

Well, I'm a Veteran, but from a long time ago, and right now a personal situation for me is my wife is quite ill. She's not incapacitated, but she's quite ill, so for the last, let's say, half year, I've been the chief cook and bottle washer and I'm not used to that, and of course now the housekeeping services are suffering. And it's quite noticeable. I've got a huge yard to take care of it and so on, and I like to golf, and I like to do other things also. So, I enquired about the VIP program, and while I didn't speak with Veterans Affairs directly on that, I spoke with a representative from the Legion command who supports Veterans with respect to Veterans Affairs issues. And he told me, and this is very, very recent, he told me a VIP program is only for those who are injured or are have a disability of sorts. If you're healthy, you don't qualify. The fact that whether you're a retired Veteran or not, the issue of having a quality of life for you in your retirement years, other than being the chief cook and bottle washer for a long time, is not available.

And the VIP program, such as what (name) has suggested, is shovelling snow, washing windows or whatever, that should be available at least.

I have recently been approved for the VIP benefits (just grounds keeping) and the whole process took about 4 months. Not an overly long time, plus the benefit was retroactive to the day I applied, so in essence, it was pretty much immediate. Can't complain about that. I was also asked at length during an interview face to face with a case manager at VAC about the many things I could possibly need given my pensionable conditions. Have I mentioned yet how absolutely amazingly helpful it is to have a VAC case manager as well as a "live" person to talk to?

What support? My girlfriend paid for everything, medical care, transportation, training. a friend let me stay in his apartment until I got a job and could rent a place

Well I started in 2012 or actually before that because the change over that they expect 6 months before prior release to start rehab right. So, all those things that you just said did not happen back then. So, unless they're happening now, I'm kind of surprised because I haven't seen it, I am part of the vocational rehab but because of my medical conditions it doesn't allow me to go to work. So just being able to go to a therapist, a couple different therapists, dealing with my pain related issues, just going to the doctor and specialists and seeing therapists is all I can do in the sense of things.

The financial payments for the VIP program for looking after homes and lawns/ cleaning are not enough to get what they tell you should be receiving.

Now my wife is a retiree of X years just happened last year and we both are fully blown sick and what I have my daughter moved back into the house for us, and she takes care of some of the things that I may not be able to do in my day or things that my wife can't do. But my daughter moved back in two years ago to help us because the probability is that at some point I may have to move into a senior's complex but as far as I see it right now I would rather die in my own place. And that's what I would prefer.

So, by having these programs of Veterans Affairs is bringing out now it's allowing me to have some enjoyment with my place and knowing at some point my life has been shortened because of my conditions expectation of my life I don't see a long period I'm X years old now most of the guys that were in (other country) with me have now died and there's only a few of us left. So, the likelihood of seeing old age isn't going to happen. My wife it may be a little longer.

But there has been no offer from Veterans Affairs they know that my daughter is taking care of us, she's doing her own things also, but we've never been given a grant in the sense of things. They are supposedly talking about or giving to individuals. Because this is a whole different identity also. This program is a different adjudicator and they don't even have any idea how sick you are. They're just basing it on your day will do your activities and what you can do. And that's their judgment. And seems like my case manager has, doesn't even contact me.

We have been delayed for a required home adaptation. I was asked in Sept (2017) to provide 2 contractor quotes and a doctor's prescription which were provided within 2 weeks or the request. My Case Manager was made aware this was time sensitive (had to be approved before winter) and all policies were checked and considered for the approval process. It is now November and my injury is tremendously affected negatively by weather. I can only hope that the answer comes soon, or my condition may deteriorate beyond repair.

My veteran does require extensive and daily home care support I have had to hire outside resources to assist me. I do wish that there was a pre-screened pool of daily caregiver relief personnel housekeepers/cleaners as well as groundskeepers.

I can't be quite daunting having to scream prospective people who will be aiding with the care of disabled veterans who have mental health issues.

None for RCMP veterans.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ I am presently looking for some home modification benefits such as safety bars for the bathroom, bath seat, raised toilet seat, hand "grabber" to pick up things from the floor. I was refused & have contacted the RCL BC/Yukon Command Service Officer to act on my behalf.

2015 ■ My meds weren't covered until VAC approved my DA. It took 2 years after before they made me VIP – too long.

VETERANS AFFAIRS STAFFING

They should have more specialized people in VAC offices. For example, social workers or nurses or even someone on call like the police have in their intervention systems...

VAC has a big turnover of personnel which takes away from the quality of service.

The VAC needs to be operated and managed by Veterans for Veterans.

I find the website much easier to navigate than dealing with the phone system waiting to speak with someone. Once you do get someone they actually make you feel like they care which is a big switch since the first time I contacted VA.

Very long wait times. Massive staff turnover.

Case manager support has been excellent.

2015 ■ More training on the Veteran Affairs staff and processes is required, standard operating procedures on how vets receive message and are notified of denial or rejection letters. Educate your staff on PTSD, mental health, help them understand emotional, physical, mental pain soldiers endure and face during their transition, especially after they are medically released. These soldiers are in a fragile state, some have none or little support, and some that have the support isolate themselves to spare their love one's feelings. I don't know how your able to mail, email, these letters on a weekly / Monthly basis and still sleep at night knowing how much pain is inflicted on them. I find that the system is designed to push soldiers to suicide.

I feel the Government and Veterans Affairs need to step up and make some serious changes. The way the system is design at this point, is pushing the vets to turn to suicide, keep up the good work, its working, keep enriching your pockets, and empty the soldier's pockets who have worked there asses off to grant you freedom you have. How can you sleep at night knowing you're taking for granted the freedom and safety that you have while soldiers are suffering and are being treat like dirt? Soldiers deserve to be better treated. Less turn around, compassion, and proper training, have empathy for those deserving veterans whose love and passion to serve and protect you and your Country has been taken away from them because of injuries. As Canadians, we hold a Global reputation as kind, warm, welcoming, smiling humans, how can you turn around and treat vets with no compassion, no respect, no empathy, as if they were just another file # and still sleep at night is beyond me.

Accidents, and un-expected events happen within each of our lives, imagine yourselves in the vets life, ask yourself how would I want to be treated, forget those FFFF scripts, let your values kick in and serve vets with your heart and respect them as individuals and not like a File #. As a spouse, watching my spouse who I have grown to know as a strong, in control, supportive, passionate about life, go through this experience is pure cruelty to him and our entire family.

2008 ■ From my experience once again in starting in 2014 or 2008 those experiences have been via letter or in person. We're in the right vicinity you can do it either way. On the phone the Veterans Affairs people are always very pleasant and are very willing to listen to you describe what's wrong or what you need and so they're very professional.

I just don't think there's enough of them to try and service the amount of people that quite often you're on hold or not on hold. You phone in and you have a wait. Well, some people and if you are an older lady or gentlemen, either with hard, if you're hard of hearing or if you're not familiar with the phone system because there's that series of for this press 1, for this press number 3, and press 3 again if you want this. It could be a very, I think a daunting task for somebody either with a hearing disability or that is, who is just getting into that process maybe because they're 75 years old or 80 years old now and there's something happened in their service that they want to report. And/or for their spouse or somebody that's reporting for them. I think it would be a daunting task if they couldn't do it to a live person.

The mandate clearly states that veterans get the benefit of the doubt whereas in actual fact, it appears that staff tend to make decisions which delay payments citing the need for more specific information. There have also been decisions made recently where VAC have overruled Doctors with no justification. A prime example is the decision to cut back the amount of MMJ, even though the prescriptions are valid.

All. Outreach would be great if you really cared.

It's better than nothing.

How do you get a case manager? But I have had good results and don't have a case manager, never had.

Things with DVA, every time it is somebody different. I don't know what a case manager is, never heard of one.

I approached Veterans Affairs before I got out, and I was fortunate to find some support for a hearing loss, which was due to work. As I spent a lot of time around engines and things. I was fortunate, I got support with the hearing loss and my little pension and all the rest of it. But I never had a case manager, I was never told anything about a case manager. I think part of the success I had was because I never let go. I always keep asking, asking, asking questions until I win. That's how you have to deal with the government. Now I worked for 30 years in the CF, I went to civilian life for about four years, and I went to government for about four-and-a-half years. I had more experience with the government from that side. I found again even more so you had to work to find the answers to fight to get what you want, to ask questions, don't be satisfied with some fobbed off answer. You have to keep chasing it down and it takes a lot of work, a lot of homework, a lot of frustration, and the file gets thicker and thicker and thicker until you end up with some kind of answer you are looking for. Veterans Affairs is good, if you get a good case manager. I didn't have a case manager, I had different individuals like gentlemen said, a different person every time you pick up the telephone. If you get to know them a little bit, they actually are human. They help you out, but you have to know what you want. You have to do a lot of reading to find out what you do want to know. You just can't pick up the phone, say "hey my name is Joe Bloggins and I want to do this". You have to understand more about the service that they offer, so you can ask the right questions. And then keep on asking questions until you get the right support. Thank you.

What is unfortunate, I know there was a wave of hiring at the case manager level, and I wanted to send my resume, and then the case manager said to me: "(name), if you don't have a bachelor's degree, send nothing." So, someone with a bachelor's degree in visual arts will try to figure out a guy who has 25 years of service. We have a prime minister who has a bachelor's degree in drama and that is okay.

1989 ■ I retired in 1989. I had many problems with the pension review board in Charlotte town. The first thing they want to do there is everybody on the pension review board should made a go in with a unit and go at least two weeks to four weeks in the field under all conditions. It would smarten a lot of them up. That should be a requirement period. The ones that got on there now, a lot of them, they're just in there for the money, it is at our expense. If you can mention that in Ottawa where it counts, you know, that would be fine and dandy.

As someone suggested, sometimes the only way you know about things is hearing if from others, and I heard from others about the how, you know, the loss of hearing, tinnitus and vertigo and so on, and I worked on submitting disability claims or applications, I should say, and they're in process now. The but I happened to go to Veterans Affairs here in (city) about a week and a half ago, and I met with a Veterans Affairs Officer, and we discussed I was with her for about an hour and I have to say one thing, she was very, very pleasant and very forth coming in a few things. First of all, she said, Oh, you should talk to a chap named (name). She didn't say it once. She told me three times. So clearly that was a message. You should get some further guidance. And which I did. I went to the command office, Legion command office where (name) is, and while I didn't speak with (name), I spoke with one of his colleagues, and we reviewed my application and so on, and provided me with some commentary. And told me what might happen for the future, should there be a denial, and what they could do and what they would do on my behalf. So that is there, so but meeting with Veterans Affairs officer, she couldn't give me the guidance. She didn't give me the guidance. She told me where I should get it. So maybe that's the right thing.

(name) is a good guy, because when I was going through the process, like, VAC had said the case manager, I'm totally off them, because I said, you need to understand the soldier if you want to help the soldier. And I think they're lacking the knowledge what we went through, like it's they're civilian. I'm civilian now, but they don't understand, so they are, yeah, I know, they have a mandate, and what do they do? Think in a little box, but we don't work that way. And I have friends that refuse to deal with VAC, I'm helping them out. That's how they find out the information, because you get blown up overseas, you don't want to read stuff on the computer if you don't want to fill out paperwork. So, you got to be a better process to help them. Like, I keep help them, and sitting them down, take a half day to go over that you are paperwork. One thing, why every year you must go prove yourself that you're disabled? Why? So, they get frustrated, and that's why VAC must do a better job.

We don't brag about stuff. We just do our job. We don't care if we work 18 hours a day. We do it, because that is our job and we do it. And we're not used to have to go to question our chain of command. We always trust our chain of command because you have to. When you get out of the military and find yourself dealing with veteran affairs and all the other companies that they deal with, it is not the same relationship whatsoever that you have your whole entire career. Now you're dealing with people you don't know – they don't have the same background. Some people made some comments, very good suggestion earlier that they (VAC) should have to go through the system so they understand what we go

through. You have to walk in my shoes to understand my concern. What I would like to say to some of the employees at Veterans Affairs because it is not their fault; the front-line workers. They're not trained properly. The turnaround is too fast because there is, so much pressure put on them because of their supervisors. Unfortunately, these issues never get resolved because of that fact.

Vocational Support ■ As previously stated, I believe the VAC has excellent programs to support Vets. VAC Staff (at least at the working level) lack experience, or lack training, or are unqualified to effectively or efficiently initiate those programs. My very first interaction with VAC staff (when I was still serving), left me with a sinking feeling when information I had provided in a face to face meeting was completely transcribed incorrectly on all of the forms I was subsequently provided. Further, my VAC Case Manager did not show for 2 of 3 scheduled appointments with me, and when we did meet, she was totally unprepared for our meeting (being totally unfamiliar with my file). Additionally, VAC staff will not provide email addresses to enable effective or efficient communication flow between case managers and Vets. Finally, the VAC staff I have interacted with via "my VAC" have provided little to no insight on the progress of claims.

I cannot say the Veterans Affairs are at fault but again I almost feel a little bit bad. I've always thought it perfect for me. I had a case manager who gave me her cell phone number. I can call her 24 hours a day, but I wanted it to just be recognized that maybe there are some things in Veterans Affairs that work. Maybe I complained properly, or I cried. I'm not sure what happened, but all I can say I won't give you her name or anything she moved to the (city) office, but I am able to contact her and if she doesn't answer her cell phone because she's busy with another client, I hear from her in no more than 24 hours.

There is a system there. It can work. I also know there's a lot of bad things that happen with Veterans Affairs because, as you work and interact with some of the veterans you certainly speak about your own experiences, and fortunately I seem to have a little bit of pedestal for some reason and hopefully that kind of treatment continues but I can honestly say it's been not perfect, but it's been at least rewarding for me and not being as frustrating as what I've heard from other people in this room.

Case management is a joke – they note calls, etc., but don't get back to people, so appointments don't get set up and they go months without needed resources.

The system and staff are unprofessional, dis-respectful are reading from scripts the same as if we were listening to an automated machine recording.

Like I said, the Band Aid fix that we're talking about tonight, this will not address the issue. We have got to talk about a systematic problem here, which is the fact that we have employees that are not trained in the area, most are not veterans. There are approximately 100 veterans employed at Veterans Affairs, one of the lowest rates in the public service and we have situation. 100 out of possibly 2400 who work at Veterans Affairs. So, we have a very low number there. A lot of those employees don't work on the front line. The question becomes also, do we really want someone who has just left the military to join Veterans Affairs that doesn't understand what it is like to struggle on the street. Maybe we need veterans that have actually struggled on the street to know what it is like and know how to help the veterans because they would not understand psychological change because they would not understand the extreme cultural change a lot of veterans they don't realize until 20 or 30 years.

I do have a case manager with VAC, and I think it was somebody walking by the door on Monday and was a case manager on Tuesday.

2010 ■ I was lucky, I had an incredible case manager, and someone at Veterans Affairs Canada, Ms. Diane Sparks, I don't know if any of them did business with her, but I had an impeccable record with that lady.

I understand that VA is or has established a "school" for its bureaucracy to learn how to deal with its clients. One would think after some 90 years they would know but I guess it's a case of "better late than never"! We have said for decades that more vets should be hired into VA positions, but the public service unions have fought against this practice successfully. VA have created a new "Vets in the Public Service Unit" which was launched in September 2017 during the Invictus Games in Toronto. It appears to be somewhere a vet can go to get assistance in securing employment in the public service not necessarily in VA.

Programs excellent once you find them. Staff (VAC?) didn't know a lot about the programs and are not helpful to veterans.

I was fortunate in a way, I wasn't able to access the website, so I called, I don't think that many people do that. That went really is smooth. Every time I called I got an answer. They knew exactly what was going on and now the pensions are combined and single department, it must be even better than that. As you said earlier the process is simpler so that part seems to be moving in the right direction.

So, in terms of how transition works, let's say I'm getting out and I'm healthy and I want to get some training and I'm going to go and try to get a case manager. As you heard that can take months to get that case manager. The interview with the case manager occurs and she or he writes the file about how you can best be served by your transition program. They compare that report and that can take further months. Then that pile is then forwarded over to a contracting agency that then has to do an evaluation of what is the best education for it; and that takes months. That transition agency is not held to the same degree of accountability as a public servant would be. You do not know that they measure outcomes, or they have a skill set to provide that service. So, by the time that veteran enters that rehabilitation program, we're talking about a dramatic decrease in the investment with them and a lot has been lost – self-confidence as well as skill set in terms of having that person transition.

Front Line staff have been excellent.

Only VSA, Sharon Grey was amazing. She deserves a medal for going above and beyond PEI.

2015 ■ My VAC case manager – junk. In three years, I worked across the hall from her, she never came to see me, never visited my home, and I was 3B released. Gave little info, wouldn't even action my VIP, the VSA VAC had to do that, and both are trained to action this.

I called Veterans Affairs and complained that my applications are not being worked on; why? "The Pheonix pay system don't pay me so why should I work on your folks?" If I hadn't been on the telephone, if I had been at the desk I probably would have choked the person. They get a paycheck. The Pheonix pay system, okay it's a new pay system it's not perfect it's not working right. Big deal. They don't get a paycheck on Friday, they go in to work on Monday and get funds transferred to them. They earned that money. But as veterans we also earned what we applied for.

2006 ■ I find that the majority of VAC staff are attentive, feel like they're very helpful but if I feel that their hands are tied with regards to applying for what you need for the full spectrum of benefits. On the upside, even though I got out 11 years ago I still got access to the veterans' rehab program. The reason I know about that is I had a relationship with Veterans Affairs staff that told me about it and they, in turn, helped me with the key words I needed to apply. It seems you need certain key catch words to be accepted into that program.

STANDARDS

VAC lacks on measurement re: outcomes – their client surveys are skewed; when results were not favourable they dropped the surveys; they didn't reach veterans who are marginalized or vulnerable to begin with.

I had complained about having an injection in the (joint), earlier, of cortisone. I make the request, and he gives it to me, my cortisone shot. A month later, it doesn't work, the doctor says: "We're going to have to take another medication." That drug is \$400 instead of \$40. It is turned down, then, Veterans Affairs Canada, which immediately says no, and I wrote to say: why did you accept it for the (joint) at \$40, and it doesn't have any effect, and now the Blue Cross said no, they don't want anything to do with \$400? I sent all the evidence from the pharmacy, what it was like, I never heard from them again, and since then I've always been paid 5 or 6 days later.

So, you have a special treatment? I don't call it special anymore. If everyone has travelled across Canada, does the Blue Cross, do those who are paid on the 30th of every month, put that in their bank account... Or if it's personal revenge? Thank you very much.

I apologize for the straight talk. There are irritants. The Blue Cross, if I understood the process correctly, was hired by Veterans Affairs Canada. Occasionally, the Blue Cross does check-ups of medications that we receive from the pharmacy and it's marked on the document "you were randomly chosen." I'm not lucky, I get ten a year. The problem they have is that they ask me, that's true, they ask me: "on this date, did I take this pill? I have a pill dispenser, with 20 pills, I don't know which one is which one in there, I take them as it is marked there, that's it, and the deadline is 6 weeks, they ask me if 6 weeks ago, have I taken this pill, yes or no? At first, I said yes, and I returned the form.

At one point, I said: wait a minute, it doesn't make sense. So, I was marking no on the form. At one point I said: I won't answer anymore. Currently I am accumulating forms. Think about it. Where's the follow-up? Veterans Affairs Canada pays the Blue Cross to do a service and the service is not being done properly, but Veterans Affairs Canada pays the same. The money is wasted there, they should put it somewhere else, on us. Because what's it like to ask, "did you take your pill", when it's been 20 years since you started taking pills, managed by the clinic it's useless to ask, because from memory I don't know. So, that's it, I don't lie, but it proves one thing, the system doesn't work because they don't follow up, but randomly, they pick 10 a year. I'm not lucky.

There are service standards for care/resources in for ex provincial health care but seemingly none for VAC.

We have a brand-new Veterans hospital, state of the art. Every Veteran going out of there goes out underneath a Canada flag when he passes on. Our problem is it's now run by Capital Health, (city) Capital Health, and they're allowing civilians I have nothing against civilians, but it's the fitness centre for Veterans. And I know what they did. Capital Health said, oh, yeah, all the Veterans are going to die. They're thinking World War II Veterans, they didn't remember we got a whole young herd of Afghan Veterans, and suddenly, they were popular for a few years, and now it's dwindling again. And I have I Veterans Affairs starting with the Minister, (province), must come in here and sort that out. Because we got a lot of Veterans who when the day comes need that facility. But the bed's not there for the Veteran. Right? Including the RCMP. They're eligible for that. So, I think that's something that the association should look at.

Then that pile is then forwarded over to a contracting agency that then has to do an evaluation of what is the best education for it; and that takes months. That transition agency is not held to the same degree of accountability as a public servant would be. You do not know that they measure outcomes, or they have a skill set to provide that service.

VAC lacks on measurement re: outcomes – their client surveys are skewed; when results were not favourable they dropped the surveys; they didn't reach veterans who are marginalized or vulnerable to begin with. VAC has no means to measure successful outcomes for veterans. This was dropped in the 2010 client satisfaction survey, so they stopped doing it for 7 years. They recreated the survey in 2017 but didn't publish their methodology, they didn't include anyone that was pissed off, it's not credible and has no outcomes. The Auditor General should look at it, Stats Can is really good at conducting proper surveys.

I'd like to talk about the Blue Cross again. Veterans Affairs Canada serves Canada as a whole. If you get your leave in Quebec, you've got Blue Cross; if you get your leave in Ontario, it's another system, and in Manitoba it's another system, it varies according to the province and the arrangement they have with the province's health care system. So, it's very hard for a veteran who talks to one of his friends in British Columbia and says, "I've had this experience with Veterans Affairs Canada." Then the other one says, "No no no." It's not the same everywhere, it's different in every province. It's unfortunate for people because people struggle, continue to fight to try to get things and they're not able to have them, and with the Blue Cross, from the moment you made your request, the doctor who prescribed you. I am one of the lucky ones, I have had a prescription at the doctor's office, since I went to the specialists as well, as soon as you have them, if you have the bad luck of having a change in the prescription, well, there are letters that never end with the Blue Cross to make us accept the new prescription, and when we receive it, already three or four months later, then they will tell you, "Send us a letter with the bills, we will repay you." None of this makes sense.

What I would suggest is that one day Veterans Affairs Canada be national, stop thinking about health care over there and then one here and then another, everybody is the same, we're all in the same group here, everywhere, everywhere.

After I retired the, in the bank and all that, but I never heard from [audio cut out] something significant. Year after, six months after, the evaluation of their – they would actually learn something, but it would, it could be used to, there is no Quality Assurance on the process perhaps the, you are able to start in the – the Veterans Affairs and or something like that. And the transition would then be, the thoughts of deciding here at least, and then Veterans Affairs, it is the region.

Third party contracts are in place for assessment/treatment services. Working with these third-party contractors is dehumanizing and demoralizing. It is a call center approach with scripted messages to contact veterans. Organizations are not in your own province. No face to face contact, long distance telephone tag with voice mails. Some contractors don't even have toll free numbers. No reply emails, containing computer generated appointment schedules without input from the veteran. Time-sensitive scheduling of appointments that require an immediate response. No regard for the individual, their schedule or requirements to attend an appointment. Travel arrangements are the sole responsibility of the veteran. No concise guidelines for expenses to be reimbursed. Veterans are not robots. We are living, breathing, Injured individuals. We deserve to be treated with dignity.

GETTING HELP

Gave up trying to get anything from VAC.

If you live in a city that has a VAC office, you can get support by jumping thru hoops. I live in Victoria; the support is here. My father lives in Comox and there is virtually NO SUPPORT there. He's too old to give a shit now and I believe that's what VAC wants. We have tried to get support for my father to no avail.

What support? I pay for my own homecare worker.

More of a comment I guess, if we are trying to, more working towards improving that, the service. I'm I have a pension with Veterans Affairs and have a long-term disability with Sun Life, I get a call from this case worker every six months. Veterans Affairs has never called. I think Veterans Affairs had a similar system, where a case worker would have, I don't know, 20 veterans on this list and they would call every so often, that contact, I actually almost have a friendship with this long-term disability case worker, it is just a very casual, how are you doing, is everything okay, anything change, and it is, it is really cool. I think Veterans Affairs should really look into that.

Never received any home care, I had a case worker from 2012 until about 2014 sometime but she had a staggering number of veterans to visit on Vancouver Island, as much as she tried I would fall through the crack.

One would say that Veterans Affairs are responsible for causing great harm to veterans because there is a great promise out there, there is an expectation that there is help. So, when a veteran, when the family goes to seek help and it is not there, if any of you know about shame, especially if you're suffering from a psychological injury, then if the authority figure I was willing to sacrifice for is not providing the services and the authority cannot be wrong, then it must be me. And that shame turns inward, so it's no surprises suicides increase across the board in Canada. So, when they have people beating themselves up when it is not their fault, then we have a serious situation that goes beyond minor tweaks and minor changes. We have a fundamental perception problem about how veterans should be assisted in the transition. Veterans should not be treated to a lifelong [off mic] support and dependency. Let's call them dependency, right? You see a lot in the military. Encouraged dependency while we're serving in the military, yet there is not the assistance for even the healthiest ones to get the assistance that they need when they have difficulty.

Difficult. Have a work-related injury that was made worse through a personal accident and was flatly refused assistance.

Unless on a disability pension or settlement, there were no VAC services available. This ruling applies to the current day.

I don't know, I've been through it as well. I'm sure lots of my friends from the military, Veterans Affairs is a joke, deny, deny, deny. That's what I went through. I had to prove everything. Oh, we know you went for medical treatment. Nothing said you're on duty. Did you check my files? Oh, supposedly checked my files. No, they didn't. It's clearly documented where I was injured, how it happened and witnessed by. This is frustrating, and I every guy I talk to is going through the same thing. It shouldn't happen like that, and I agree with the lady. There's no way a widow should be treated like that, not one bit.

When a friend of mine is struggling with lighting in an expensive class that he is attending, and he has issues with fluorescent lighting. He connects with his case manager and he wants to know if he can get special glasses to shade-out the fluorescent lighting that he can make it work. Her response to him is that she will send him a list and she will get back to him. He is probably like two months into this course now. He doesn't have the glasses that he needs. I'm just doing a simple upgrading course right now and the support that I need is directed from a (specialist) for (equipment). They say, "oh you can't have those ones, you can only have these cheap ones" that do less. I'm saying, do you really think that's what I require to work? It doesn't make sense to me. Then I look at him, with his glasses and I'm thinking, there shouldn't be such a difference in obtaining access to supports that you need. I'm in touch with veterans in other areas of Canada. One gets told that "oh no, you know, he is struggling with (condition), he can't get access to a (specialist)".

I have another friend who ended up serving jail time over struggling and he went and asked for supports and then he did the same thing that I see a lot of veterans doing, self-medicating, with alcohol. There is so many things that we can put in place so that this doesn't have to happen to anybody. A big one is if Veterans Affairs Canada is contracting out to outside entities, then they have a really big responsibility. They shouldn't be just saying, oh, we pay a different rate for mileage. It is their responsibility to ensure that the agency is doing their due diligence and understands who the authority is in order to process claims, and they don't seem to.

I guess most definitely the armed services and the RCMP when they go over fighting right now and come being back injured or otherwise, they're not being cared for, because of the government.

I did not receive disability benefits for 26 years after my retirement. I finally was approved by VAC for a hearing disability.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ Only to personal doctors utilizing the health plan obtained at the time.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ I have received some services but not enough, I was very disheartened my last dealing with them and have basically given up on VA.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ No had to apply through provincial health care.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ I did all the leg work myself, Very little help from Vet Affairs really.

Talking about Worker's Compensation, I had Veterans Affairs to tell me to tell my husband to go to workers compensation, they say yes, we know the military does that, no you go back to the military, Veterans Affairs. And anyhow, I had made a phone call because the disease he has is something that people workers compensation, I wanted to see in line how they were, and I mentioned this to a young gentleman, he goes oh I don't think that's right. I said oh yeah it is, he said hold on a second, went to talk to somebody, I wouldn't have believed it but that's right. It wasn't just the one man telling me, gentlemen heard from someone else. Don't let Veterans Affairs send you to workers compensation, they won't like that.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ Needed VAC and outside agency: Took VAC 3 years to engage my services after a 3B release. No follow up on their part, always me asking re VIP services, OT assessment, questions about rehab program. I asked my case manager about orthotics, as I have been approved DA for them. She said, *“Go to Walmart, buy yourself memory foam sandals.”* Not the answer I wanted. I want to see a specialist. Some days the pain in my feet prevents me from walking – ughhhhh. All external agencies I have worked with in PEI have gone above. But I had to ask for them, that info was never given. I’m over 100% disabled and 30 years of service.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ NO... VA would not help me. They denied all medical services and equipment that I needed and claimed it was not service related.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ I did but 4 years after release.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ Some not all.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ I receive nothing, told to talk to the Legion.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ NOT.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ Very little from DVA. Very little from external agencies. Apparently, you need to be very close to an office to obtain services.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ No, I deal externally out of my own pocket.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ Veterans Affairs after a friend told me where to apply.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ VAC failed. Still showed I was active duty at age 64.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ No, I did not. I was not made aware of any services that were available to me. I found out thru word of mouth three years after being med released. When services change or there is a new program I could qualify for, I am not being advised. Different Case Managers tell different stories. I don’t understand why the info is not straight forward.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ I received most of what I needed through Veterans Affairs. As a volunteer, I have found that there are a large number of non-profit organizations that also provide specific support. The number of organizations can be confusing for the veteran and is a case for conflicting/ambiguous information in some cases.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ Pending. Not even sure what benefits are available beyond the VIP program.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ After 30+ years of fighting yes.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ Number of web respondents who indicated yes: 12.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ Number of web respondents who indicated they needed an external agency and VAC: 4

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ■ I injured my (body part) during service. I now have severe osteoarthritis in that part. I am now on the VIP program for grounds maintenance and house cleaning. So, I'm pleased.

I applied for services I needed through Veterans Affairs a month before I retired, and 6 months later I am still waiting for those services. I find the Programs that the VAC sponsors are excellent, but the processes and bureaucracy to get them approved are ridiculously slow. To date, I have paid out of pocket to civilian organizations to obtain services that the VAC should be supporting.

2007 ■ When I released in 2007 prior to release I requested to be re educated go to community college and all of that, but I never heard back from the Veterans Affairs or anybody from the military ever again, so I just carried on with my own life. Never thought too much about it. My wife was more concerned nowadays than I am.

I am still waiting on services, I cannot afford them unless VAC helps.

DVA actually offering services would be much different than just saying the services are available. Being available also means unachievable for veterans.

1997ish ■ I want to speak as a family member, although I am retired from the Federal Government. My ex, and he is still walking today, he retired from the military. He was injured a couple of times. One of the injuries involved a (injury) and his (injury). After he got released he asked for his medical records, so he could do the ongoing thing. I'm looking at this from a family member's point of view, because I was supposed to be his support system as you are for your husband and he is for you. He waited and waited and waited for military records to come, meanwhile he was going to see a doctor. We managed to find one. And they said his (injury) was going to slowly disintegrate if he didn't get the proper medical care that he needed. Well, that was I'll say 20 years ago. Today his injury has become severe and he can barely move, they refused him disability. Thank God, I was working but it forced him to go and get part time work where he had to sit, which only made things worse. To hear these veterans' stories makes me want to cry and I am so F-ing angry that this should be the way it is because you people have given so much to us, to this country and for the military and our government to look at you as if you're just a paper cut is bull.

I really think the general public, I mean, I tried explaining our situation to friends and they're going, well, he's retired military so he's going to get a pension and you guys will live good and veterans this and veterans that – like what are you whining about. But they didn't have to live with the depression, the suicidal thoughts, the anger, the commitment of myself and my family members to support him as best we could to keep him alive and moving and I think God he is still moving today but he's on a scooter or a wheelchair. He sits in a chair that rolls because he has to still work, he's not quite 65 yet. He has fought continually, it has been to no avail.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ▪ I received no support for 10 to 12 years. if it wasn't for a good Samaritan, a Colonel who found out about what had happened I would have had no support. Even then they would not pay for pass costs or lapses in pensions or for training or education.

Asked my case manager about my post traumatic issues of my accident. "You don't have PTSD is what I was told. Knowing something is wrong, not having the resources to rectify the problem.

1994 or older ▪ It took me somewhere in the neighbourhood of 20+ years to receive the services I needed, I fought them myself, seeing as my duty to assert my position with them. During that time, I attended several tribunal meetings in which men who own two or more luxury cars basically denigrated and poked fun at my situation, one of them remarking that I had a lot of nerve calling myself a veteran. I never had a case manager until 2012, my original application was in 1997. I had to call and tell the operator that I was going to kill myself in order to be taken seriously and even after that I had to make more appeals, in order to make it right.

Did you get the services you need through VAC? ▪ I initially queried a Canadian Legion representative to determine the most effective way to make application for hearing loss. It was beneficial.

Vocational Support ▪ Bad.

Vocational Support ▪ Zero.

Vocational Support ▪ NOT.

Vocational Support ▪ Non-existent.

Vocational Support ▪ I am going through this now. The process is straight forward, however the wait times make success in transition very difficult.

Vocational Support ▪ Vocational support is amazing. And I have an amazing team behind me. I lucked out with my case manager.

Vocational Support ▪ Absolutely inadequate, this result in being not prepared and therefore makes person depended on the system and handouts.

Vocational Support ▪ I was never found stable enough during my rehab period to attend any vocational training.

Vocational Support ▪ Satisfactory (2 responses).

Vocational Support ▪ OK.

Vocational Support ▪ OK once in.

Vocational Support ■ What vocational support? This is only for very, very rare cases. I am aware of several of my peers attempting to access this and to my knowledge no one has received this benefit towards rehabilitation. Often injury prevent individuals from doing what they were trained in and they require training in a new field.

This is all fluff on paper which is unobtainable to the vast majority of VAC members. 3 years to access service to which I was entitled is ridiculous. They need to streamline their intake and review process once a Doctor has provided them with their assessment. I am also not able to access services to obtain medication for my treatment. VAC will not accept Skype Dr. appointments and the Dr. I was dealing with is in another province. I have to pay for any trips to this Dr. myself if I wish to receive a prescription and VAC doesn't cover this trip. The VAC only reviews the Dr.'s assessment but never actually meets with the client. They need to reinstate the lifelong pension for injury resulting from service and stop trying to not support the VAC clients or stop installing barriers to services. All services available should be listed on the VAC site and the criteria required to access them.

Vocational Support ■ Now fair. but debt load high because I was unable to have good paying jobs with benefits and a pension because of my life-threatening illness

Vocational Support ■ More than I expected after hearing public media reports of what I consider abysmal treatment of severely injured veterans of service in Afghanistan.

Vocational Support ■ My overall experience over the years has been that there is no consistency in the answers that you receive from Veterans Affairs. It's totally dependent on who you get to talk to and their slant on your request.

Vocational Support ■ Vocational support is confusing. Specifically, I'm in VOC Rehab. I'll be forced to use the Career Transition and Education Program delivered through a third-party service provider. I'm told because I'm on ELB (earnings loss benefit) that I can't use the recently announced Education Benefit that was announced this year (up to 80k in benefits)

Vocational Support ■ Good.

We have a situation here; first of all, it is when the New Veterans Charter was created that they had something called area counsellors. The area counsellors were immediately renamed as case Managers and given two levels of PM higher, went from PM 4 to PM 6. There was no requirement for competent education to go along with that promotion. So, you had people called case Managers that do not know how to case manage. This is what we heard about trying to get ratios down in terms of case management. From 35. 1 to 30 to 25 to one. How are they doing that? They are doing that through sheer incompetence. You have a situation where you have disabled veterans that are being denied case managers. Why? Because uncle Walt Natynczk talks about his battle buddies and his effort and resources are all being dedicated to the newly releasing transitioning veterans. They all will get a case manager for vocational or medical rehabilitation. That means for those that have been out longer, such as the most incapacitated veterans, they don't require case management. The question goes here as we see mostly healthy veterans that can advocate for themselves is that it is very clear that they can advocate for themselves but even they're frustrated. They're given case managers. Those that cannot advocate for themselves, cannot take care of themselves are not given a case manager. We have a serious problem.

Hearing loss and CF service dealing with different loud machinery and equipment. Retired in 1996 and am fighting for coverage for over ten years. They keep telling me that my hearing loss isn't bad enough yet. All the service time kept fit and exercised, was (activity) for fitness and injured neck. Fighting for coverage but was told that (activity) was not a sanctioned sport. It was sanctioned while on exercise with CF oversees. This needs to be looked at in a different light.

Vocational Support ▪ I find that many disabled veterans that I have run into quite frankly have been too disabled for their brains and bodies to handle the process successfully.

Vocational Support ▪ I received none and was unaware of such a thing.

Vocational Support ▪ Poor (2 responses).

Vocational Support ▪ What support? I dropped off their radar 10 years ago after appealing reimbursement of payment and no one has ever reached out. I had to engage again recently, and it is the only reason I have had any contact with VAC.

Vocational Support ▪ It all takes time. Many items were available quickly through an OT assessment of my home, but bigger items seem to require the approval of too many levels. It's distressing to know that I am required to provide medical prescriptions and any document VAC requests "quickly", but I do not always receive the same respect. If VAC gives a one-month deadline for a veteran to provide specific information to them, why are they allowed to delay approvals by months?

Vocational Support ▪ Some good some poor, too long to get treatments in place and difficult to continue certain aspects of programming such as OT PT and Speech therapy.

Vocational Support ▪ Very good. I have been referred to a few places and have made the best of it all.

Vocational Support ▪ It's OK, could be a lot better, but at least they are trying.

Vocational Support ▪ No Help!

Vocational Support ▪ Good. The system works but is very slow. ELB was very difficult and complicated.

2015 voluntary ▪ I'm saying VAC, that's another I don't talk to them unless I'm going to do my two years reassessment. I have lots of friends that I still talk to that come to me to sort out their paperwork. I'm not getting paid for this, because they refuse to talk to SISIP, they refuse to talk to VAC.

INFORMATION (TIMING, VOLUME, CLARITY)

I talked to a lot of young people had payouts for their VAC payment and the talk about a monthly payment for the VAC pension. They seem to think they are going to get that on top of their lump sum. That needs to be cleared up but nobody in the government is going to say, "you got paid, you are not getting a monthly". I can take you to the base and show you 30 young guys who already got a payment who are just waiting for that monthly payment.

VAC case manager passes on nothing in PEI. In 5 years the VAC case manager has yet to come to my house.

1992 RCMP ■ I don't know what they do now. But one thing that I was really quite impressed with, and I was at a Veterans meeting one time, and the young lady from the Veterans Affairs was there and talked about what we were entitled to. Sure, don't find out from RCMP veterans association, I get more information out of NAFR. I get far more information from them than I ever get out of the RCMP, that's – I think kind of like, all they can do is try but not very successful. So that's my recommendation.

2011 ■ Since I've been retired for about six years I go back and forth to the east coast from spring to fall and I'm actually just down the road from (city) and, so I sit with a bunch of fellows (condition) groups three times of the month between (city) and (city) and that's a mixture of RCMP and Canadian forces retirees and soon to be.

A lot of the problems that are coming about with what I hear it's very frustrating, my transition through Veterans Affairs and that seem to be a little easier because I was in (another country) and some of the things that I went through during that tour seem to make things a little simpler for the adjudicator making decisions. But these groups that I sit with the (condition) organization I see a variety of issues that are occurring from ages that are 70, 80 years old, gentlemen the few that are left from the second World War and us guys the Korean and us guys that served with all the other tours that we've done over the course of time.

So, seeing these problems that exist, I don't see a very good communication between the veteran and Veterans Affairs. There's a very disconnect that I've been noticing for the last couple of years and seems to be getting worse.

Very hard to understand. It is a political game no one I have talked too understands what their entitled to.

I had to learn what was available and how to apply from other Veterans.

2016 ■ Very disappointing, feels like I have been going in circles, and just when I thought I understood the terminology it all changed. For instance, Permanent Impairment Allowances turns into Diminished Earning Capacity...

No problems so far.

Hard to find, difficult to read, and no answers available.

Long and complicated. It shouldn't be this difficult to apply for something or just to find the information needed to apply.

Slow at best.

2006 ■ Actually I'm in that VOC rehab now, I applied for it and I got out eleven years ago. I applied for it in January of this year and was accepted in March. I was told I was on the (?) list last October and I still don't know what that means. I've got a case manager and she's slowly feeding me information as we go. Rather than trying to press the issue, they're very reluctant in terms to let the cat out of the bag, about the program in April or how you have to qualify. I don't know the hoops you've got to jump through again trying to figure out the details and all the other concepts. My experience they seem to be under a speech restriction.

Pre-1997 ■ I found I didn't get enough information about what was available for me to you an example I got a disability pension in 1997 and I didn't find about the VIP services available until 13 years later. And it was through a friend who told me that VIP was available. So that's my transition. There has to be more information that's readily available. Nobody from Veterans Affairs or Canadian forces came up to anybody who is retired at that time and said this is a new program that is in place, you are eligible or appears to be eligible. So, it's a bit of a surprise to find out. Through Veteran's Affairs and I was approved for VIP services. But I'm lucky now. I don't know what's happening now. Hopefully it's much, much better now because some of the people retiring are far, far more injured than ever I was. I've been retired 22 years and there's a program coming up that's applicable to me that I may have a pension for I shouldn't have to go looking for that. We shouldn't have to go out and look for it. They have my file, there's an office here in (town) they should be contacting us.

2006 ■ Same for me. I'm going through the process now. There is a smörgåsbord of benefits but they're not forthcoming. You have to physically go there and know the system, ask for services and then people there say what can we help you with, what do you want and if you don't know what the programs.

Kind of makes me chuckle to listen to you, and I heard lots tonight. One thing about this Veterans hospital. Didn't know a thing about it. It just kind of throws me. I have been retired for 40 years. No kidding. I have never, ever, received a letter, a telephone call, or anything, nothing, from Veterans Affairs. That is wrong. My dad served, my granddad served, my mother served. First licensed mechanic in (province), my mother. No kidding. You guys, you know, 40 years and not a sound. Haven't you heard, it doesn't cut it! Balls!

Veterans Affairs, we're in the process of contacting them, and the information we have is probably different than what others mentioned back here. They told us they are currently about four months behind. The thing that I would like to see with the Veterans Affairs is the VAC account is a very useful tool for me. I can't speak for anybody else. I can speak for my wife. We have on that site; however, when they do say and change we are at step 2 or 3, that's all the information you get. It's just your personal information and I don't see any reason why it can't be something there where you get more information than its just step two or step three, or it is not complete. That's the only thing we've found when we've had that happen was the last couple of days. That it would be more helpful to have more information than just step.

2013 ■ I just realized that I have a Veterans Affairs card and all the services I'm eligible for, I didn't even know about, this gentleman here just told me about it, I have been out of the military for four years, carrying this card around and didn't even know what it was for. Those are the types of things that have to get out for people to know. That's what has to be, I thought I was well-versed, shows you how stupid I really am.

As a veteran, I can say accessing information that I need from Veterans Affairs Canada is not good. You need to know the question, they will not come forth. You have to know what you are asking, so in a way you got to be a lawyer, you got to do research, you have to, when there is nothing on the website to help you. After receiving treatments for three years I found out from someone else that I can claim for transportation to go for my health care. Like it is little things like that, why don't they just have a checklist out there, and it will be easy, it will not be hard to create a list of services that you could be entitled to. A cheat sheet, then at least it would trigger you to ask the questions. I'm sure there is a lot of people here that could be entitled to a lot of care and money and none of us really know.

Just to reiterate her point there, my daughter recently suffered an accident, industrial accident, so I've been dealing with, on her behalf with WCB. And one of the things I really like about WCB, all the forms, what they are for is on the website. The travel claims to go to medical appointments, she has to report once a year about what her condition is, has monthly reports, anyway it is a bureaucracy nightmare, it is very clear and very easily accessed and all done online, and I know exactly what it is that I have to go through. I have not been on the Veterans Affairs Web cited. My problem is I don't even know what is available to me, but like I said I'm healthy, so I'm not really looking. So that would probably be a really good way of doing things, if everything is clear-cut you go on WCB, you go to forms, go to the forms and everything is there, and it tells you what to claim and that's, that probably is a solution that they could have.

Just to go back to what this gentleman said, again going back to my daughter, she has a WCB case manager, she calls her every six months to see how she is going. Now, you know, I know it's WCB is Provincially run, so the numbers aren't as high. But we have Provincial, even area representation of Veterans Affairs all across this country and I honestly don't see why they can't give us a phone call and just say, how are you doing, do you realize that we have these new things available to you or how, what is your prognosis, stuff like that. It makes someone's day so much easier, especially if they are ill or incapacitated.

2014 ■ I benefited from very good case managers who helped me find out the necessary information. Trying to research info on-line by myself was at times frustrating/futile. Way too much paperwork to be filled out. Often the same forms or info are needed multiple times. I have helped individuals with this when they found it stressful – which many do.

Through talking to other members only.

2014 ■ The Veterans Affairs forms and process were confusing. It also didn't help that the 1-800 number was always busy, so I never got much in the way of a personal response.

Horrible. I have to call and wait an unacceptable amount of time on hold or being transferred from department to department.

1968 ■ I'm not a very talented speaker. And when I started not hearing very well I decided that I had to go get an ear test. I went and found out yes, I wasn't hearing very well. They give me a test and I waited for a while. I thought maybe my medical plan paid for my hearing aid, forget it, it didn't. But when I got out of that, somebody said well, you were in the service, I said yeah, I was in the service. What did they do? Well, I was in a tank regiment firing a big gun without protection. I have to say that the young man I went to Veterans Affairs

was an ex-soldier, so we got along very well. I didn't go up there thinking I was going to get anything on this. I mean, let's face it, a little Jr. rank) who served for 10+ years, I'm now 84 years old, what are they going to give me? So he started asking questions and I was honest about it, I said yes. After I left the service I worked in the bush with a power saw, which didn't help my ears without protection. Well he said took all that down, and he said I think we can help. He says that Veterans Affairs have lots of money he said. He said it may take six months before you hear from them. Well it wasn't five weeks yet Veterans Affairs, I open it up and there was a check in there. I said they paid for my hearing aid, but I was wrong. It was a settlement so that the DND didn't have anything more to owe me. Well that was okay, it was enough to pay for the hearing aid. Like maybe a couple weeks later I got another package. It was Veterans Affairs and Blue Cross. Yep and he said Veterans Affairs', but I never had Blue Cross, so I said, what's this? I took it back Veterans Affairs and the package included a card with my name on it. He said when you go for your hearing aid, use the card. Sure enough, so I had an appointment two days ago, so I said has anything changed? No everything is paid. So sure, enough now I'm wearing new hearing aids about \$6,000, which I could have hardly been able to afford, and I hear. The thing is, the question arose in here about how do we know about these things? And it's true, that I did not know even that we had an office in our town for Veterans Affairs. It had to come through another person. But I'm not saying it to be critical of the system, because as far as I'm concerned, they've treated me well, you know. What do they owe me? I've been out of the service since 1968. So, this is I have to say I'm quite quite satisfied the way that the veterans affair bureau treated me.

Poor, slow, and incomplete.

2007 ■ Just standing up from my personal experience you have to self-educate yourself the only advice I can give anybody when dealing with Veterans Affairs. All their publications everything is available on line specifically what you're entitled to what form needs to be filled out, language they're looking for everything is on line. I know there's difference of age with people in this room obviously but that's the only way I was able to navigate the system was by doing the research myself basically and I go back to Veterans Affairs and say no what about this or what about this entitlement but if I can pass on any advice to anybody it's to self-educate as much as possible.

Poor (2 responses).

2014 ■ Benefits from Veterans Affairs and the actual entitlements under different programs is hard to find out even when you have access to the different government portals.

2012 ■ If you have a good CM you are lucky, as they will help you get info required. If you don't know what to ask and are on your own good luck.

2012 ■ My experience was great because I have a good CM.

RCMP ■ No information received.

My file disappeared. Apparently. Timing is slow as decomp radiation.

Volume... ever go through the amount of possible forms from VAC? Vague.

Not very good.

No info for my father. He doesn't own a computer, so he was SOL again.

The web portal is poorly designed and hard to navigate when searching specific information.

2010 ■ But, you know, a few years ago the government cut access points at Veterans Affairs Canada and transferred them to Service Canada. We're lucky in (city), we still have it, but there are people everywhere in Canada who don't have that any more, offices you can talk to someone, they have to go through Service Canada, and then they're public servants too, but they're not as good as when you go straight to Veterans Affairs Canada.

They (Service Canada) are more versatile and therefore less specialized. Exactly, to save costs. We should be happy to be here tonight because we can make our voices heard and it is time to say what we have to say. It takes more skilled release staff, in the clinics, in the... Excuse me, the transition to release, we were talking about...

Without the Legion, I wouldn't know about any services. Still uninformed about many services and programs.

I speak with Veterans Affairs on an almost on a daily basis. The answers that I get come from the customer service agent. It is very, very difficult to get to speak with anyone beyond that person that answers the 1-866 number that we are given to dial. I don't get answers that I need. If I got the answers I need, I wouldn't be calling every day or other day. So that system needs to be corrected. There needs to be access to the different program directors, program people that work specific programs instead of just calling in on general.

It's still a fight with Veterans Affairs and as for I go back to the electronic versus snail mail; in your VAC account they give you a choice, you can select whether you get your notifications electronically or if you want to receive them by mail. I wasn't aware you could do both, so I just learned something. I don't know is the VAC perfect, no? But again, I'm going to ask the question, how as veterans do we make changes and how do we get changes out there? And you've already answered one way I'd like to hear a different answer this time.

When asked if anyone else had heard about the VOC-rehab program that has been in place a number of years, only the one person had heard about it.

I do have a positive, any time I have called, I found the people in the call Centre, very helpful. But they are limited. So that's the positive side of it is that yeah, but as far as anything else, why so far much from them, tells me here is this, here is an update on where things are, nothing like that. It is just, dead silence, so but like I say the individuals I have spoken with have been helpful.

The benefits available need to be published and distributed so that all veterans have equal access to this information.

The Log in for Vet Affairs is stupid as hell, I still cannot access my personal information, every time I get on there, its telling me my Password is incorrect, sort it out for god sake, waste of time, and very frustrating.

Horrible... poor system... no help... left to fend and navigate for yourself.

Backwards. If it wasn't for a random case manager calling, I would have never known about them (programs) do to the incompetents of VAC on my release.

Got info from other veterans, VAC was not forthcoming or helpful.

2015 ■ One thing I would like for the people to understand out there is that they need to stop playing games with words. What they're doing, is when they announce these fancy scheme, when they do their press conference, the details come out later. But they change some of the wording like the pension for example. When we were promised in (base), remember the Prime Minister and crew were on the stage in (city).

He said that we were going to go to full return to the medical pension for injured personal due to service related injuries. The last two years, they have started dragging their feet on that promise and they started to insert the word option. Have you noticed? Now they're talking about an option to a medical pension; meaning the amount of money you would have gotten by disability award, now you are going to be given an opportunity to split it over a long period of time. If they give you 100 grand for ruining your life, and it is your "chump sum" I call it; go away, we don't want to hear from you. Now they're just going to split it over what ever amount of years somebody deemed that you probably have left. They're going to have a fancy chart somewhere that somebody concocted, and they're pretty crafty with these charts.

One interesting one they have come up with the last little while, if anybody remembers, they promised to increase some of the benefits, I'm trying to remember the actual name of the increase. Everybody was supposed to be topped up to \$360,000 being the platform for the lump sum. What a bunch of hogwash. Nobody I can challenge anybody here to find somebody to do what has gotten the amount. Nobody has gotten even close to that amount. I know some people that are extremely injured and again nobody talks with this stuff because, you know, we're used to that sort of mentality in the military.

The reason I'm saying that is because some of that recent changes to some of the wording that they used is very worrisome. Some that comes to mind right now is the TPI term, which was totally and terminally impaired. They somehow had the bright idea to rename name it. I have a very fuzzy feeling my spidey sense is telling me there is more to hear on this story down the road. We still don't know what the effects of this change of word is, but I guarantee you, mark my word, told you so, that we're going to pay for this. I know we will. And I know because they removed this totally permanently impaired word and they replaced it with DEC, which I can't remember with the damn acronym change. They keep changing them all the time. I think it is another disingenuous way to confuse people even further.

These programs are so complicated, and they keep changing the titles and thresholds and you have to look at depending on what year you got out, you get different sheets. You look at yours and compare with it mine, it is probably different. Why is it that way? It is easier to conquer if you divide the groups into smaller groups and put them one against the other, because you know they're not all going to march on the hill next spring to topple the government to remind them again. I hope they're going to review all the changes and what are the effects of the changes?

The other one is CIA. Does anybody here know what the CIA is? Its called Career Impact Allowance. Some clown somewhere has up with some unbelievable criteria, it is an insult. Me, I took it personally and it insulted me and if some of you don't know about it, I'm sorry if I'm the one that is telling you about it. If you have done over 20 years of service, okay, and you have joined say at 18 that leaves you at what age 38. In their eyes, there is no impact on your career whatsoever if you got injured while you were in service. Because, the way they're calculating it you have to have if you're over 20 you don't qualify for their criteria to be considered affected by that. To me that is an insult. I don't know if other people feel that way, but to me that is how I took it. I think it is very disingenuous way to attack our benefit once again – death by a thousand paper cuts. Whether they're gouging us more in the pocket by increasing our rates for our dental or medical because when I released, that was just two years ago, I was paying \$150 to my dental and my medical coverage. By 2018, probably a lot of people know, as the same person its going to cost me 350 bucks, but I'm making a lot less. I can't work, and they keep cutting all the little benefits. They're undermining everything that we have. We don't know one day if you're going to get it or not. None of these benefits they give you, they give to you at their whim. If they decide to yank it, if it send you a letter in the mail and you don't jump through the hoops they're telling you to jump, they pull the plug and that is it – you lose that benefit. I think a lot of people live under this constant worry about not being able to provide for your family.

There are announcements, flash announcements. When you apply for them you don't qualify. They deny people. They push your request, "oh we lost the paperwork".

I don't want to make it a habit. My only contact with Veterans Affairs was not happy. It was in (city). They were at the federal building at the time and then they shut that down of course and I'm not too sure what the status is right now. But at the time I wanted to know about certain benefits that were there in case I went before my wife. The lady, I don't know the lady's name, but her response was well perhaps you could check with the Legion and they could maybe help you out with that. And I thought well, you're the Veterans Affairs this is why I'm here. It's got to be a circus. The only dealings with the Veterans Affairs was they directed me to the Legion.

Accessing information is relatively easy. Services on the other hand...

NOT.

Second question, you said that the, DVA came out with a policy in 2006. Why don't they send it to all the veterans?

My last question is, if DVA would get together with the public health and get an office here in (town), wouldn't that be a lot easier for everybody? Audience Member: I believe Veterans Affairs Canada has an office here in Victoria. Audience Member: You mean public service health care plan? Audience Member: It is always quiet. Unless there is, on DND property. Audience Member: I'm not aware. It is on (street), there we go. You got the (street) main office and they also will work out integrated personnel support (other street).

It's in legalese, and unless I ask about something the information which I should know is not offered.

I don't get a lot of information, and I really don't know where to look.

Most of its found out through a friend. Did you know (something)? Know what? And they tell you. Oh. I think I'm eligible for it. That's basically the way most of us are finding out information is somebody has heard it from somebody, who tells somebody else. Somebody says, and I got it. Then we'll all push a little harder. Yeah, information coming out of what people are entitled to and any updates, okay, is very poor. Thanks to the royal Canadian Legion magazine, the first issue in January, February, normally has the update of what the pension rates are. Okay? And that's the copy I'll leave for my wife because she knows how much pension I get, because out of that lump sum it also says X number of dollars belongs to her. But most of our information is gleaned from somebody read something, saw something, tried it, and then passed it by word of mouth, not from Veterans Affairs in the mail, and the mail out or anything like that.

Again, I pretty much had to find my own way. Like I said, my tax person was very familiar with stuff, and just through people just like tonight, I found out about that one card that you can get your baggage on luggage. I had no idea it was possible to apply for one. I had never heard of it until tonight.

Poor, excessive, and useless. Imagine a department that prints and returns documents that have been submitted to them electronically. A gigantic waste of time and resources that lead to the email sender now having to recycle their classified electronic submissions.

Sufficient.

Ridiculous. I end up getting everything from my case manager weeks before I see anything through myVAC or in the mail.

No matter which way we turn. If we try to get together with our fellow veterans nobody can agree because we all have different issues and that is the thing. They're trying to make the one size fits all and it doesn't work. Veterans from Korea, veterans from the Second World War, veterans from UN missions in the 90s, veterans that spend their time in Rwanda or Haiti or Afghanistan, because they have different issues. Not that one had it tougher than the other, we're all in this together but there is a lot of that the government is sort of own on this and tried to splinter the groups against each other.

You hear sometimes they say they try to pit the groups that were prior to the 2006 when they changed the new veteran charter. They seem to have tried to put that group against the new veterans. That is why it is hard for the new veterans to get their voice out there because, the majority of time anybody here seen that survey that was on my VAC account Veterans Affairs a survey they did online, they sent that to some select people. I couldn't believe to see the results of that survey. It pisses me off because I did the survey and I filled it out honestly with all my issues. But I guess I'm the only one that is having issues in Canada as a veteran. Yet there are thousands that are struggling, so what is wrong with this message? They pick and choose what they want to share with Canadian and it is deception, it is propaganda. Unfortunately, none of the bad stuff comes out. When you're approached the people that hold the power, I went to my Member of Parliament I talked to them. They gave me the standard excuse well I'm a bencher, I'm this, I'm that. That was working well but I'm going to have a new appointment with my MP again because guess what, she got promoted, now she's the (department) minister. She's going to have my visit again and I'm going to make sure that she can't use that one this time because she's the minister. She's in the cabinet. She could have done something before but said she couldn't do anything, now we'll see if she'll actually do something.

Dismal. Only organization that seems willing to HELP is service Officer at the Legion. VAC officials of no help... in fact seem eager to hinder and provide little or no advice... although they are suppose to be providing services to Vets... signed disabled vet.

I had to research it myself or find it through other vets, I was never made aware of any programs.

Garbage. Pure garbage.

Not very well received.

Information is confusing as are the policy's timing is dismal they can't meet their own mandate of 16 weeks to process claims. When you do get a decision it's very complicated and hard to understand.

2010 RCMP ■ I found the process difficult in 2010 because the RCMP was not very forthcoming in obtaining information about VAC. I became aware of their services through military contacts I had at the time. I now have a good knowledge of the services available and how to apply for same. However, in the early days I found it difficult to navigate the system and without help from other veterans I would have been lost in the fine print.

Today, I've found it is more user friendly and the improvements are very much welcomed.

Med released, I've been fed more information as to what I should ask/apply for from other med released members. I want to complain about how much attention from VAC! Any form is fine.

One thing I have found now on the negative side. But if you don't ask, they will not tell you what you are entitled to. Even though you are getting something for your back or whatever it is, they won't tell you, yeah by the way, you can have this, you can have that. I found out from an audiologist that I was entitled to hearing aids for my tinnitus and other things. Wasn't Veterans Affairs, made an appointment and they asked me, are you a veteran, I said yeah. They called Veterans Affairs and they told them yeah, nobody told me. I had been there, you know. It is just, that's frustrating, give everything you are entitled to. I mean most people here I think, you know, they are just not, use it, don't abuse it. And that's all they want. They want what they are entitled to, nothing more and they certainly should not be getting any less than that. So that's one of the short-falls there in dealing with this and the forms, like a lot of people are saying. There are some on the website for travel claim, it says according to a court of law and to another website to find out what section of the veterans, the act it falls under and that's all garble gook, make it user friendly, and put it in laymen terms. So that would be my suggestion.

Just wanted to support some of these folks talking about not knowing what is available, because I didn't, I haven't gone to this website because my condition is not necessary for me to do that. However, I do know a couple in Ottawa that were both service couple, and the lady retired medically, the gentlemen is still working in the forces. And they can claim, through Veterans Affairs, to have their driveway shovelled, their yard work done, that was a surprise to me. I had no idea Veterans Affairs could support you that way. Yeah there is stuff out there that most of us don't know about.

I found accessing VA was rather easy, but I had to do it on my own, literally no information was given to me upon release.

Unlike many, I have a great case manager who keeps me well informed but prior to this I was not able to get very much information. It took a lot of trial and error mostly due to the fact the people I was dealing with were either not very knowledgeable, over worked or didn't care. Again, I truly believe that having a knowledgeable person with training concerning disabled vets at a Service Canada office no more than 30 or 40 minutes away from disabled veterans would go a long way to curing that. The closest one to me would be at the VA office in Halifax an hour and a half away not my local Service Canada office. I know of disabled vets who are 5 and 6 hours away from even a Service Canada office. For more isolated areas video conferencing might be an option as long as the person on the other end is knowledgeable and the veteran has assistance with the conferencing if needed.

As you may know VA was created in 1928 as the Department of Pensions following World War 1. That organization and title was changed in 1944 to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and from its beginning, has historically operated under the proviso that if you, a service person or vet, seek VA assistance for medical attention or a benefit you have to prove to their satisfaction your entitlement. Whereas this not wrong, it places the applicant at a disadvantage. We see this disadvantage daily in retirees or those in transition who for whatever reason are unable to obtain the necessary information to complete their application/appeal or support it or to understand what is required of them when they have the information. In their defense, VA will say that they have staff members on site who can explain the forms and the information required. While true, it is not always workable for someone at a distance from the VA office, who is required to deal with the VA office. We heard repeatedly at the Townhall the problem of applicants/clients of their inability to understand what information VA was seeking. In my view, there is a fundamental need for someone to sit down and read each VA form to ensure that it conveys its message clearly, free of bureaucrateese. Whoever does such a review should be a vet of the former rank of sergeant, or lower, not an officer and not a public servant.

VA does not promote itself well! Historically, government departments have shied away from transparency in an apparent attempt to protect the Head (their expression) of each department (DM). Whereas government trumpets transparency, it does not often practice what it preaches. We have all been informed of the abuses to the Access to Information Act and the shielding of information, including innocuous information, in deference to the Privacy Act and not just in VA but through-out the government. A personal example is my request to VA for a copy of each and every piece of paper on my VA Hearing Loss file to support an appeal of a rejection of a request for reconsideration. I was sent a CD with photocopies of the pages, some 550 pages. I reviewed each page and discovered pages missing. I advised VA and they then sent me a second CD containing the missing pages. Was this intentional or ineptitude?

On receiving information ■ Are you kidding me?

And which leads me back again to the VIP, if it wasn't for somebody else who told me about it, I wouldn't be here today without the VIP services. And I would hope that I'm not an example of everybody that the information is far more forthcoming than it was.

Satisfactory.

Generally, very good.

Slow. By letter after many months.

Get information through NAFR

Adequate.

The information is good for volume and clarity. The continuing problem is with timing and VAC has to hire and train their staff to keep up with the volume of inquiries, claims, and other assistance to veterans.

For the most part – very good. Sometimes the timing/waiting periods are a bit long.

I don't always understand the wording and then get frustrated. And then ask pretty much same thing in different ways.

Sometimes good.

Extremely Slow.

Quite good now.

Once I got in Veterans Affairs system it was great.

Legalese nogo. I want the straight poop.

First response to a claim for hearing loss took much too long and the information received was confusing and self-contradictory.

Depending on the agent you speak to it can be an overload of info and then followed by the next agent who basically says, "we can't do anything for you!"

The information getting back to member is too slow and even though it states it will take 10 business days, it takes a lot longer than that and no one calls with a follow up.

Timing was very long. Even recently I phoned to make a reassessment appointment and did not hear back for almost 2 months. They made the appointment within a week but way too long to acknowledge the appointment.

Timing is ridiculous, yearly quizzes are not necessary. Our conditions don't change for the better. Mine haven't changed for the better. Any positive results will be met with CLAW BACK regardless of the issue.

VA disseminates information about its activities, vet policy, legislation, etc. by postings on the web or submitting it to the veteran's community, i.e. RCL, and others. If you are not an active member of the vet community or a member of a vet association or not a user of a computer, then your access to information is indeed limited. We have in SAGE the Veterans' Corner. It could and should contain more factual information on VA happenings and not just be a recipient of VA press releases. VA needs to do a better job in getting its news

out to its clients/the public who are not members of the veteran's community or NAFR and that is a continuing complaint. As an example, a speaker at the townhall advised of receiving a "veteran's medical examination". I have never heard of such an exclusive medical exam and so must now chase VA to determine its reality.

One of the concerns of former members is that if they receive a benefit from VA and they make too much noise about that benefit or others, they will lose some or all of that benefit. That myth must be dispelled.

Lack of info or even acknowledgement of VAC receiving a request or any forms.

Timing, sucks.

Volume. A lot to take in.

Clarity, I needed help with some of it.

I find it overwhelming all of the paperwork all the repetitive forms of the continuous information if a member has been released and is totally in permanently disabled and he's never getting back then why do you require so many forms filled out by a civilian Doctor Who is already overburdened

Good (2 responses).

Unacceptable, the timings are beyond ridiculous, the clarity and how they assess an injury based on their "Rubric" of injury makes you realize that VAC is more of an insurance company instead of actual veteran support, lump sum payouts help briefly but as fast as you get it, it gets spent paying of the debt created waiting for that lump sum, (sacrificing payment on some bills for others).

Not bad but can be difficult to understand.

In the (?) I'm not aware of any of these programs (VOC Rehab), I don't know if any exist for —.

It is not getting out to individuals, if you don't have a computer, how are you going to find out about it (VOC Rehab)?

Asked for a show of hands for people that didn't know about VOC rehab – five hands raised. Later in conversation, two spouses found out that they could have done training when their disabled husbands could not.

Seeing how VAC has denied all of my claims and the BPA has been no help I don't really get much information at all.

Opaque and misleading.

Abysmal. This is the most isolated / insulated bureaucratic organization ever created.

Absolute horse shit, I was stuck at step one for nearly a year only to be told it was suspended due to lack of documentation... mind you it's the same Documentation that has been documented for nearly a decade!

Timing is ridiculous, far too long for anything. Clarity is also a joke.

So far, there was some information I required additional clarity, but the majority of information I receive is quite adequate. My assigned case manager is very proficient in returning phone calls, and if I have a question that she cannot immediately answer she offers me a timeline in which it may take for her to have an answer (which she follows up on quite efficiently).

The one area that seems unclear is what treatment benefits are included with specific awarded disabilities. I have called the 1-866# in the past to inquire about whether I am covered by VAC for specific treatments, and after a short time, the person on the phone is able to pull up a list of some sort noting treatments that are covered for my claimed injury. I would love if this list could be sent to me for each of my awarded disabilities as it would make it easier for me to know if something might be covered. For example, it would be obvious to most people to assume physiotherapy would be covered for a back or knee condition. Its uncommon for a veteran to know that oxygen therapy is included in many mental health condition treatment options (such as PTSD). Having a list that the workers have at their disposal would be greatly advantageous to the Veteran.

Timing, everything, every application has taken over a year to get processed and approved mind you, but a year waiting... ughhh. Volume... OK. Clarity... some letters vague.

It is insufficient in quantity and quality.

Poor and not plain English.

There is a veil of secrecy hiding initial information. If you don't know what to ask for or about, it can be very well hidden. Peer support has been my main way to get around that, and now that I have a case manager who cares, I am learning about more than I could find by myself.

Get a lot of Paper which don't mean shit to the average Vet, rambling on about stuff we don't care about mostly. Waste of good man/woman hours. Point form, is better and so easy to understand.

I can't access my VAC account and haven't had access for over a year. Every time I get the password squared away, I have about a week's access until suddenly I can't get through the password anymore until I call the office again. I really don't want to call the office every week, I have PTSD.

The information I have received regarding VAC programs has been due to my own digging and through discussions with other Vets. VAC staff and my Case manager have provided no value to any process I have entered. My case manager (who is new), should never have been put on the street to interact with Vets until she was knowledgeable enough to respond to questions. She is only interested in following the process of a program and is of no help to a Vet who is looking for information/advice in order to make informed decisions.

I have found that the answers I get from VA employees to be inconsistent. In fact, I have had completely wrong answers given to me that set me back a few months on my release process because I had to make appointments with other people to verify the information I received from the VA office on base was incorrect. Also had to consider changing my plans for the future as a result of the false info. I would recommend better training for the VA staff or instruct your employees that it is OK to say you don't know and find the right answer later.

I have praise for Veterans Affairs staff and processes. They are "user friendly" and care about their clients. One anecdote: I recently received notification in hard copy form of a disability award for a long-term Service-related injury. Options were given for how to receive that award. The options form was interactive-based, and I was able to submit my choice through the DVA web site. I expected to have to wait two to three months for confirmation of my choice and instructions on how to access the award. Three days later, the money had been deposited in my bank account. Now that's service!

What information? I get nothing unless I ask.

I don't get any info about programs. If a benefit has changed and I am entitled to the new benefit the Case Manager should be informing us of changes. They change program names and don't tell anyone about it.

All I can say that the e mail that we got the other day stated you would get something in the mail; they didn't tell you when, but that's fine. When we filled out the "on your account", we stated that we preferred to have it electronically and by mail so what we're getting is a little bit electronically telling us to wait for it. That is just a little bit frustrating.

Timing – slow.

When I finally got to VA and got starting to reconnect, every time you go to VA, you go to this website, there is all the paperwork you need. If I could do that I would have to pay you 60 thousand dollars a year to sit behind a glass that's bullet proof wall, because if you did your job you wouldn't have to be behind bullet proof glass, you know. There is a thing that people don't realize, you know, if you are behind bullet proof glass that means you are pissing people off. It is not only those of us who have psychological issues with our time in the military and our coping skills have been shot, it is people that wonder "why do I come here, why are you being paid"? You know, right now I'm going through an appeal and I go to VA and they ask, "do you have your Veterans website pass", yeah I do, "well go look it up. Why are you here"? You didn't help me fill out any paperwork. You tell me, I mean, this gentlemen has to go to the Legion, a volunteer organization, when the people who are being paid to do it ignored it. That is the crux of the problem right now. If the people who are paid to do the job did the job, a lot of our problems would be solved. They can bring up new programs, they can revert back the old programs, if they don't do the job, how are we supposed to do ours. Exactly. How are we supposed to transition if, if we're told go to the website? It will tell you everything you know. I've been to the website and every time I do I want to throw my computer out the window or take it and beat you with it because you've told me to go to it. There needs to be a personal touch to it and someone that you can ask what's happening with my program, what's happening with my appeal, what's happening with my, my first application? They answer, "Oh well it has gone to the great beyond and it is in processing". Okay I'll just go bash my head on the wall because that's what you have told me. It is in processing, doesn't give me any

information. It doesn't tell me anything. You might as well just leave, just as I walk out say I don't know anything, go away. Because that's all the good you are doing if that's what your job title is. We have to change it. I spoke to VA and I told them, not in quite so common terms, the same thing and that was, well anyone here that was in (town) that was what six months, eight months ago. And I wasn't as calm then as I am now. I mean it is, if you are not going to do anything then don't say you are there to help. I've been suggested to go to the Legion, what? Go to the Legion, you are the people that have the direct access, you know, as the VA.

Volume – fine (bit too much boilerplate and surprisingly some people find this a CYA/trust issue).

Poor. After 14 months, I enquired about my application through the Legion only to find out it has been suspended six months earlier.

Late low volume and clear as mud.

Timing – WAY TOO LONG. Volume – NONE. Clarity – What clarity? Nothing is clear, everything is masked and hidden, and they make it this way purposely.

Very slow.

COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

Service in person would be my personnel preference some mail correspondence is required to record what is happening and how my file is progressing.

Paper it is the only evidence.

Prefer in person but have had some helpful advice by phone.

Assign a caseworker and provide his/ her phone number would be a good start.

Email.

It works, just a lot of forms which would be easier to via electronic submission or via emails.

RCMP ■ Process, help was in person. Prefer help in person.

All I have is on-line. The nearest office is Vitoria I think, I'm not sure they have a phone.

There was is frustration with the website, because it is sometimes where people don't work well with computer, where people that get a lot of new ways, hearing problem, et cetera, watching a computer and watching paperwork; the concentration level is not there. We need to, we go to again very, very, very fortunate. I go to the VA office, I sit down with somebody and ask to see someone and say this is what I'm going through, and this is what I need. How do we move forward? There is a letter, there is the website now I kind of know how it works. There is that one-on-one that, mental disorder we need to have and do have it. I now been working on trying to have it, because love being able to, this is the big, big diagnosis a lot of Veterans have, actually with, other places. That lack of mental capacity, something on the screen or something on the paper, if I make an appointment, I then know, what am I supposed to do again? If I didn't take all the notes properly I will forget and have a major panic attack. Having the one-on-one person needs to happen. We have to have people again very, because it helps a lot and can write notes to do the right actions. But for everybody I think, something is that the one-on-one with somebody that knows how to work it out and can work it out with, and not send you anywhere.

Let's get into the positive too. First of all, it's very interesting, thank you for coming out like this, it's a shame that interest is not shared with everyone, but as you said, it's better to have quality than quantity, and it's a very good comment. I, on my side, think I found a good case manager, which prevents me from going through the web. I personally write to him personally, I just mark him: call me.

Veterans Affairs and everything's online. Unfortunately, there's still two decades of us that are not computer literate. Talk to me. Every one of us that's drawing a pension right now, of whatever level, has a social work has a case load worker downtown Canada Place. I don't even know what she looks like, let alone her name, and she has my name, and we never hear from them. Unless you go stir the pot, you never hear from them. And they should be brought they should be made to come out and meet you at home, at the Legion, at A & W,

somewhere, and with your file, and say, Oh, you didn't apply for this, and you're entitled to that. Not us do all the research. Because the young clerks that have just retired are very computer savvy. This old thumper head, (rank), (rank), it's Greek. I could tell you a burn underneath your kitchen sink, burn your house down, or how to make explosives, but I don't know how to go on the computer and get all this. And while I'm standing, hopefully the last time, Veterans Independent Program. We need the association to really push for it. Right now, I apply for it, and it's in the mill, and I haven't got it, the wife doesn't get anything. There should be no doubt in any Veterans Affairs Minister's mind that if a veteran, okay, passes on, I do the shovelling snow, because that's my form of exercise in the wintertime, and I break out a little sweat, I go have a cup of tea, but that's exercise. But one day I could drop dead doing my exercise. And she doesn't have any entitlement to Veterans Independent Program. All it is to come wash the windows and shovel the snow. That's got to be updated so that it's automatic. If you're drawing a pension, you get it. Or the widow gets it. The whatever size of the pension. (That's one of the difference, by the way, with RCMP. They don't have access to VIP at all.) They should.

Since the issue for me is hearing, talking on the telephone is really hard. And so, for me I was fortunate we have one not too far an office where I can go to and talk in person and actually read their lips if I can and I find often people they speak just too fast on the telephone and unless you have a hearing problem severe hearing profound hearing loss like mind you have no idea what it's like when people don't enunciate well. So that's difficult for me. Write it down or I'll talk to you in person.

I live some distance from the VAC office. On-line communications with it would be enhanced as well as a local telephone number.

I find the current system works well with electronic (secure messaging) and case manager support when requested. The Case managers are a MUST because in more complex files they can help you navigate the policy and guidelines for claims.

The service purpose I'm referring to are for disability claims. Making the annual reports from VAC are also helpful as they give the client information on the system is being improved.

For an Evaluation – should be in person.

The agencies, like to use their Web page. Those of us who weren't, didn't have computers when we were kids, because they didn't exist, have a lot of trouble with that, even if we are technically competent. I have a lot of trouble, I have a degree in engineering, I have lots of trouble. They need to learn something, actually in common to, need to have the ability to go back one page when you screw up and they don't do that.

I just answered the phone call two days ago, originally, we were sent a questionnaire to evaluate the veterans independent program specifically can talk about that. That was while we used to have to fill out a form every year. Now I received a call, they said they are now calling because the veterans have asked specifically they would prefer a call. Some veterans are now much older and cannot physically travel to the mailbox and fill out the forms, the phone seems to be a better way, I have to agree that would be better, a phone call took me exactly three minutes to answer, when they send you the questionnaire for whatever reason there was a lot more questions on there than the actual phone call. I thought that was better by phone.

Annual review – electronic, telephone or by mail.

I would prefer more electronic information – especially as it relates to Disability Application process. I waited 52 weeks for a consequential decision rendered in October of this year. No Service Medical Docs were required and yet it still took 52 weeks. Website continues to state 16 weeks. This is totally misleading.

Any elderly person would prefer more personal contact, vice being bounced from one call center to another. Then waiting months for a decision/answer

I feel support info would be fine.

I have a concern to your question is how you get the information right. I do phone calls for this organization, and I phone I don't know, maybe 30 people. There will be at least 7 or 8 that don't have a computer. So, my concern is that information will have to be two ways. It can't just be one. For those people that can't get out, can't drive, all those things. That's my concern.

The electronic information – website is good for general information. But for personal problems it's better to talk to a real person.

Should be in person to avoid people taking advantage.

Electronic information works for basic interactions (e.g. submitting forms) but personal interaction with a KNOWLEDGEABLE person (even on the phone) is much more effective for anything that is a bit more complex.

Electronic information is fine. Any response to requests should be acknowledged on receipt with the understanding that it will still take 16 weeks to say no and initiate the appeals process.

I would like to be served by phone and not electronically when dealing with finding out exactly where in the process my application is. It is too confusing when looking at application and seeing it says being processed but not saying exactly where in the process the file is.

In person/electronic.

What we have seen tonight is there seems to be over-reliance on websites. On websites of people that don't want to counsel, check on a website. They actually don't know how live counsel or there is not enough of them and obviously, there's a pretty big demand if you see (?).

I want to talk to you about the electronic versus the stand by the system on the Internet. I look around the room and I'm fairly young compared to a lot of other people I see here. I have access to a computer and I'm pretty I'd say pretty average at working the computer and I know how to work my e mail and I'm not sure that everybody here does. Not just because we're not (?) or millennials. We're all a lot of other things,

Baby Boomers if not earlier. Computers weren't there for a lot of time of our lives. The VAC account; it does work good, if you can get into it. But like I said the information that shows up steps 1, step 2, step 3, its lovely if you get to step 4 because you may see some money.

I have a couple of applications in that are supposed to be showing in my VAC account and the only answer I can get from the assistance line that we get access to is, that yes we have them, yes you're with the department but they haven't been entered in the system yet. Five months, six months, what are these people being paid to do? Who are they looking after? Because, obviously from some of the comments that have been said here earlier, it's not veterans that are being looked after.

Electronic is fine for most inquiries and forms.

To make some progress on what the gentleman just said, I'm a young veteran, as you can see, and then, well that's it, it was very, very simple for me, there, on the computer side, so it was easier for me to have my file on line with My VAC file, I made two travel requests for medical expenses, reimbursements, and then they wanted a voucher, all of that, and so on. We are offered a service that is good, that can meet the needs of those who want it, online. People of another age prefer the post office, on the other hand, it's a shame that there is no follow-up in this choice, you know, we do it online and then it doesn't seem to work, so it's finally better to do it by mail. I keep the original receipts, for example for shipping, etc. And then, well, that's it, finally it's easier to do the old method. It's a little complicated, we get lost with the different departments.

To clarify the point. If veterans put forward an electronic system, it should be fully functional. Now, if I hear the gentleman, the old method is better. We talk about the environmental footprint everywhere. If we do, let us do it properly.

We're back to the days when you can take a picture of a cheque and the bank will deposit it. What are we waiting for to make the same deal? Send your form, take the picture, put it online, he sends it. If the banks accept a cheque by photo, Lord knows! What are we gonna do about it?

Electronic is useful, peer support is better but mostly in person is how this should be handled due to the level of complexity VAC uses to complicate the process.

Follow up report forms by DVA on all injuries or illness issues.

I prefer to see my case manager in person, but she is always close to her phone. This works, having to go through the 1-800 number is BS.

Electronic information however nothing beats I want on one phone conversation with a very good caring efficient Veterans Affairs caseworker somebody who is proactive knows what you should have before the paperwork is finalized from Ottawa making sure that you have a form ready to sign

In person.

I prefer the uploading electronic method, for when I'm playing mail tag it takes ridiculously long, turn around being measured in weeks, not to mention the cost of having things express-posted to them, online I can upload and have it reviewed in real time however if I have any questions, it takes 5 days to 2 weeks

I prefer electronic and via telephone.

In a timely fashion.

I prefer to have no contact with VAC but have no choice to deal with them. I now have a case worker who I will meet in another week. I have had no contact with VAC for 10 years until a month ago. I also now use the VAC Account online.

I would like to see more information readily available on the veteran's MyVAC account. If something is being worked on by a specific person, I'm not suggesting that person's name and contact information should be made available, but their title and what they are working on specifically would be helpful to know. It seems illogical for me to have to call the 1-866 number for certain information. If the random person answering the phone can see certain information about my file, why is it that I cannot? Make all information about me accessible to me so I don't waste someone's time (and my own) by sitting on the phone asking questions.

Start with a veteran's photo id card.

Electronic.

Case managers don't give out their office Phone numbers even though mandated. They refuse... so I have to go through 1-866 number. I also know some case managers have said, *"I don't want to meet that vet"*, as they were too busy selling Avon out of the cubie in PEI – fact!

Peer support is the only thing keeping me going. OSISS. They work harder than VAC case managers; why, because peer support understand more about vet, vice a cr04 mailroom guy who is now a VSA. Never answers your messages, or leaves you message. And when you drive an hour to VAC office, they pass the buck to someone else. Email, voice mail, text, hard copy mail. Remember, I'm busy running around doing all these medical appointments, the phone ringing can be a trigger. And VAC does leave messages I've been told. They call three times – no message, no answer, they move on.

Person to person and electronic filings.

You need a phone call, you need a human. All the letters emails that's great but it's just really easy to say no to somebody. You need to talk to somebody. You're talking about somebody's future, you're talking about somebody's finances, you're talking about their life, and having it done as coldly by e mail or unfortunately "thank you for your services" as I previously mentioned is unacceptable. They have case workers for a reason.

Veterans Affairs will not e-mail you. Veterans Affairs they will call you, they will send letters in the mail, but they won't e mail you. I don't know why but I know from an ex-DND point of view that an e mail usually is passworded so therefor it is legal. And you can sometimes use emails against them so therefore they do not use them. So, it's again one of the things where basically there's a lot of time delay, in my experience there's a lot of getting an envelope out of nowhere, by the way here it is. Try to figure what it is they'll give you 30 to 45 days to figure it out and go through it.

In person, peer support, and more openness from VAC.

If I could access my Account I would do Electronic, since you guys have made it so damn stupid to set up and account, person to person is the only alternative.

I was dealing with VAC through the toll-free number, speaking to the call center. Every call was agonizing, painful and difficult. I learned about the new VAC center in Fredericton, so I went in. The difference for me is night and day. I much prefer to talk with a person face to face. And I have been able to accomplish so much with VAC since I have been going to them versus calling. The "My VAC Account" is quite helpful and electronic communication is also more preferable, and quicker in most cases.

In person and electronically.

I would like the ability to have access to all depending on my schedule and available time. Somethings are better done in person.

I'm at the point that I don't want any contact with VAC, so more electronic I guess.

Person with non-bullshit answers.

Electronic information.

In person (3 responses).

In person doesn't exist for those that don't live near an office. Proximity to Ottawa, or a DVA office, should not be an indicator of whether a veteran has to struggle for support.

I would advocate on the electronic service as my preferred way to deal with VAC. To date, my experience has been very satisfactory. I realize older veterans prefer "face-to-face", and at times/circumstances believe it is required as well.

I like the electronic myVAC account.

For electronic at least I have a record of what took place.

In person. It is too easy for them to hide and not be accountable for their actions.

I would rather to be just told the "truth". No lies, no misinformation, no filling paperwork out in triplicate for a condition that's already pre-existing.

I'm one who likes having someone face to face but I also require seeing things on paper or in writing.

I like My VAC account, it needs some tuning in regard to claims processing and the wait times with claims or reassessments is drawn out and ridiculous. It seems to get worse sometimes they don't seem to be communicating between offices. In my case and its documented, I was sent to an orthopedic doctor for a reassessment on a mental health issue. He was confused as was I the problem was rectified eventually but created much stress.

I think some person or persons with intimate knowledge of Veterans Affairs and at least a basic knowledge of disabled veteran's issues should be made available within a half hour's drive of any disabled veteran. As it stands now there are very few if any qualified people employed at any of the so-called Service Canada offices the Conservatives constantly touted before and during the election.

Meeting in person should always come first in order to put a face to a name and provide some context to a Vets case. Electronic communication can then follow (however, VAC staff do not give out their email addresses?), as it is an effective and efficient means of follow-up from face to face meetings. Additionally, Case Managers should be Vets if at all possible, because they have an understanding of the demands of military life.

I prefer internet-based communication for routine information, interactive web forms for submission of forms and documents, and in-person exchanges for problem resolution and personal information.

In person or by phone works best for me.

In person. And I expect them to write notes on my file, so I don't have to repeat myself over and over again.

For benefits I prefer to be able to get full details and options on-line and to apply on-line. However, as I use an iMac I find the Government portals do not always provide full functionality. I have followed-up on this and I have been told that it is a known problem in some cases.

I like the periodic phone follow-ups I get from my case manager.

In person or by phone/skype. Email can be misinterpreted and confusing.

All methods should be available as needed. Each client's needs are different and they require more hands on.

In person, electronic works also if its faster.

RECOGNITION/RESPECT

I want the silliness to stop, I want the BS to stop and I want them to work to HELP me and not DENY me!

We have done our job and we have done it well to serve our country. It is time for the government to start recognizing what we have done.

I served in the RAF for 10+ years during and after WWII and for 10+ years in the RCAF from 1956 to 1968. VA has never considered me a Veteran in the full meaning of the word.

It is time for the government to listen and step up. We want to help make a difference in the lives of our Veterans.

Ex wife of military member who died, quite abruptly dealt with speaking to me, they expected me to know everything.

Every single vet should receive with a package with all benefits available to them without a fight, it is complete bullshit that injured vets who have never seen a civilian doctor, who don't have a health card and once release no longer have access to the military doctors. They are asked to fork out proof of all kind of injury that date back 20 + years of proven military injury have to go through testing, after testing and have some stranger come to their private homes to evaluate. What a way to make them feel little as a vet, invasion of privacy. When they don't feel like even having their own families over they have to agree to have someone stranger who doesn't give a fuck about them come into their house. It's almost like what we do to our 10-year-old, check their bedrooms when they want something to make sure they deserve it. Well reminder. Vets have paid it forward by serving for our Country, they shouldn't have to prove themselves to deserve benefits or services offered by Veterans Affairs Canada or anyone else for that matter. The system that Veterans Affairs has in place is not design for the vet's best interest, it is designed to ensure that Veterans Affairs have little to no benefits to pay and design to push vets to quit trying or push them to suicide. Prisoners and Immigrants are better treated than our vets. What a way to honour our vets. Way to go Vet. Affairs and our Government who just choose to ignore and do nothing other than try and put every veterans group against each other.

2001 ■ Third party contracts are in place for assessment treatment services. Working with these third-party contractors, these is dehumanizing and demoralizing. It is a call center approach with scripted messages to contact veterans. Organizations are not even in your own province. No face to face contact. Long distance telephone tag with voice mails. Some contractors don't even have toll free numbers. No reply e mails containing computer generated appointment schedules without input from the veteran. Time sensitive scheduling of appointments that means you have so many hours to say you'll be at the appointment. That requires an immediate response. No regard for the individual, their schedule, or requirements to attend an appointment. Travel arrangements are the sole responsibility of the veteran. No concise guidelines for expenses that will be reimbursed. Veterans are not robots. We're living we are living, breathing, injured individuals. We deserve to be treated with dignity. Third party is not doing this.

And they have created this insurance industry mentality now with the third-party approach. Veterans Affairs Canada is responsible for our wellbeing. It is their damn job their sole existence. They're called Veterans Affairs Canada for a reason. They're not called Industry Canada or tourism (province). They're called Veterans Affairs Canada, so if they cannot look after their clients, what the hell are they doing? That's my question. Is our money well spent? Obviously not because nothing is happening to help the people. Not in the right place. I'm just venting my frustration with the system in general and I don't know if it is a good venue to start diving into each little thing because there is so many things I could talk about.

Why are we beggars for something approved to and entitled to this, yet the process works if you are a thief looking to steel something, as opposed to someone who learned an entitlement they should receive. I don't know where this consultation goes but it seems to be that, we're not getting recognition to be dealt with respect in the process.

NEW VETERANS CHARTER

Initially, pensions were issued by VA under the Pension Act of 1928. That act allowed monthly payments of pension benefits which ensured that recipients did not receive a bulk payment to fritter away. That authority was changed by the passage of the Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act of 2005. The latter act employs what is known as the “insurance principle” proposed by a former DM, David Nicholson, a former insurance executive seconded to the government on an executive exchange program. The insurance principle is considered highly undesirable because it employs a single payment for a disability and then dismissal, i.e. here’s your payment; goodbye and forget you. A soldier losing his life, or a limb receives a single payment of \$ 360,000 and then is ‘told’ to “get lost” or that is the feeling they have. Young soldiers or their widows often have no experience in dealing with such a large sum of money and it can be frittered away on automobiles, vacations, etc. The insurance principle is a major bone of contention within the veteran’s community.

Sorry to interrupt, you are crawling into a hole and they are handing you a shovel, that’s what this lump sum payment is. This is wrong, absolutely wrong.

The other side of this is you are dealing with, nine times out of ten, there is all this addiction: drinking, drugs, gambling, sex, all this stuff, so here you are, going to, PTSD. So here always something. The financial counsellor, for a person who can’t stand, the skin he is in. He has addiction problems. Does he want to talk to a counsellor? Well (?) they walk, drink it away. Sniff it up their nose.

I was given, the choice of hearing aid, either a lump sum or that lump sum spread over a certain number of years and I, 84 years old. take the lump sum. A veteran is coming back, serious injuries, getting a lump sum is outrages, it is a disgrace.

I was under the old system with my pension, and I didn’t get a lump sum, and I’m happy I didn’t. I think I have done pretty good.

VAC needs to reinstate the life long pensions for disabilities incurred during service.

A return to lifetime pensions and not the “option” which the liberals have masqueraded as the promised lifetime pensions... it’s not like they don’t know how to award them, they need to look only back to before the modern veteran’s charter (prior to 2006), it feels that they have lost touch with how to help veterans and instead have become as large of a fight for veterans as what we have experienced in front of the enemy overseas.

In March 2016 the Canadian government announced enhancements to Veteran’s Benefits in the federal budget. The effective date of the changes would be October 2016. The government’s “enhanced benefits” have, and continue, to wrack havoc on my well-being. The government developed a Policy that is wrong. It was quickly written with tunnel vision. All veterans are lumped together, as new applicants. No thought was given to veterans already in the system. The policy never took into account what stage of rehabilitation a veteran may have been at. Nor did it consider the detrimental effects the policy could have on a veteran. The policy appears to have been written with the “Sunny ways my friends, sunny ways” philosophy of our government.

The policy requires the veteran to start the whole application process over for enhanced benefits. Previous documentation is irrelevant if over two years old. It is not current. The policy never considered the bureaucratic quagmire Individuals would have to negotiate. The policy never contemplated the effects of the process on the veteran. Assessments, interviews, testing, even treatment modalities are being repeated to prove we qualify for these benefits. If we don't participate, we are deemed "non-compliant". Then the rehabilitation program is terminated with the subsequent loss of the enhanced benefits. If we do qualify, benefits are only backdated to date of receipt of application, not to the announced effective date of changes for those who had been in the system prior to that date. More Important, the government did not do their homework. Not a single thought was given to how the convoluted administrative process of the policy would re-Injure vets with operational stress injuries.

The policy has to be reviewed. It has to be fixed to prevent regression of a veteran's well-being, such as I am personally experiencing. I assume I am not alone, that there are others going backwards because of the policy. Amend the policy before any more damage can be done. For me, the benefits aren't worth losing my sanity a second time. The program was a trigger. And now, I start again, the hard road to recovery. My husband trudges behind, picking up the broken pieces.

Interesting, because I was grandfathered, I have a lifetime pension; it is tax free, it is not big, but it is there. What bothers me a little bit, actually a lot, as I see benefits, more recent conflicts that are certainly worse than anything, they are getting payments, life spans. I would have got more over my life for my hearing aid than somebody who is recently injured, pretty major, I think that is. I'm grandfathered, so we're doing this and I'm getting all this money. Well they wanted to take, my understanding, the one lump sum because they, okay well there are problems, other than the physical. The system, from my understanding, is going to take one lump sum and break it down into monthly payments until that one lump sum was paid off. That's just not right. It should come out in the report that the veterans charter is not working, veteran's affairs must be more proactive.

OTHER

One final word. Looking at all these different points that people have brought up, all extremely valid. I can see how the politicians are going to see this. Oh well, we will just throw some money at it, just call it such and such program and veterans will shut up, that's not the answer, it has never been the answer. Someone really needs to take charge and ownership of this, as a champion, a politician champion, that's who it is going to be, who is going to say, *"I am going to fix this."* We are going to allow some dignity to the veterans. They have served and provided security for this country for X number of years, everybody has a different number, and the country is responsible, not only for making sure we transition into the civilian world, so we can carry on living a life, a dignified life." They need to make sure we do it properly, not just throw money at it and call it a so and so program and make it good for the visibility of the Globe and Mail test. That's not good enough. We want to see real action, real solutions, and real advocacy for each person who needs this absolute individual help. Thank you.

The bottom line seems to be the need for education – both within the departments of government involved and the transitioned. Such education should help to resolve the many issues presented during the townhall, and I'm sure other townhalls.

Theme clear among most who speak: total disconnect with VAC, mistrust of them, cynicism, including among family members.

I think the biggest mistake made by our government in the last ten years are when they close down the local Veterans' Offices that we had, and they tried to work all their knowledge and input whatever they had to service Canada. Service Canada don't have a clue when it comes to helping veterans with what they need and what they require. One of the things I would like to see going forward, and I know it's been happening across the country throughout this current government's mandate, is they are trying to reopen Veterans Affairs offices. Is there any way we can advocate that more offices than just one or two in a general area? I'm saying that right now because there are some people here that said they have transportation issues, and the closest Veterans Affairs office in our area is (city) and (city).

In my opinion, VAC should be merged with National Defence. Having the Minister of VAC also serve as Associate MND is of no significant value to veterans as the bureaucracy in locations outside Ottawa in most cases has little or no military experience.

Let me tell you another program exists called SISIP. I'm talking about firsthand experience. SISIP has vocation rehab, they have an approach case worker that shows up within three days. Sometimes the next day. You have your interview right there and discussion for rehabilitation and education occurs that day. There is a massive push for VAC to swallow SISIP, it would be a great mistake. SISIP should be put in charge of VAC!

I would like many others would like to see the VIP program extended to RCMP vets who served and protected their country only to get injured and now have a hard time living in their own home due to lawn care and snow shovelling. A private members bill was introduced by Mr. Peter Stoffer when he was MP but died on someone's desk.

Just a quick comment and it may be best routed through office of Ombudsman, since Mr. Parent can get in to see a lot of people at eye level. One of the biggest shots in the arm for Veterans in Canada, would be someone who is appointed by the governor general, who walks out of Rideau hall and says, "I work for Veterans not the Treasury board". It has never happened yet. I don't have a requirement for Veterans programs myself, I'm fortunate, but I would sure love to see the Treasury board get the hell out of Veterans Affairs Canada.

I don't understand how SISIP and Veterans Affairs Canada can operate so differently. (local agency), which is contracted out by CCVRS is of the belief that authority for any Veterans requesting a claim, is the National Joint Treasury Board. Not the Act, not, not the Law, but National Joint treasury board.

I'm just going to say for the mic, recording for trying to capture this, So the Ombudsman has been working okay for you. I had difficulties when I moved here, because when I was in Nova Scotia, Veterans Affairs was fantastic. I moved here, and it is like a total smörgåsbord. I was given one case manager, then took me off a certain program, then I phoned to talk to her about a situation and was told I had no more case manager. So, I'm left out in the open. Now I got somebody else, thank God. But what she is saying, what that gentlemen just said, yes. We phoned the Ombudsman, met some young lady named Jennifer Leslie I think it was. Within a week it was all done, certified, everything was done. The paperwork was in and whatever was owed they gave me, whatever was left they kept. Which was bloody quick and really, really well done.

I had an experience with the Ombudsman, I was able to help my father-in-law who was long retired from the Air Force and was struggling because of a hearing problem he had from training as a pilot in the Harvard trainers. I sat down after a lot of frustration from him, with a big fat file about two inches thick and wrote a big long letter, put a lot of attachments on it, sent it into the Ombudsman with his signature and he got a huge amount of pension, hearing aids and a lot of home help. There is a lot of sympathy, it was immediate, and we were both satisfied.

I contacted the Ombudsman's office and two months later I'm still waiting to find out if they have received the request I put in.

I congratulate you and hopefully I hope that we will stop whistling in the wind and preaching in the desert. I finished a closing address in court against VAC, saying that the Ministry of Defence is very different from the others. Other ministries, you are sitting on a chair with wheels and looking at landscapes and mountains. Veterans, we're always in a mountain and what we hope is that we don't end our career in a chair with wheels.

Audience response ■ I can tell you, we work in the Correctional Service, there are officials who work in the Correctional Service who are not sitting on chairs.

I wasn't talking about you guys.

No, but the Armed forces, the RCMP, Correctional Services, the Coast Guard, there are departments that are different from the others, but it's true, a lot of public servants work in offices.

They're all incompetent. Some of them are hard to understand.

Back to what I said earlier about contacting Veterans Affairs. The Ombudsman wrote Veterans Affairs with their letterhead and there was no response to that letter; so, nothing. When I mentioned the Legion earlier I should have said wasn't the local Legion who messed up the paperwork and sent my friend's father's paperwork who had been in the military in the Second World War. It was the representative from the head Legion office in (city), so that was the person. The local Legion in our area is great.

My advice to anybody here, go through the Legion. When you try to do it on your own, it seems to be lots of stumbling blocks. Thank you.

I used the Legion as well, but I've also had to go beyond our local Legion. I had to go to the Ontario Dominion command. The service officer at the local Legion did not know, wasn't aware, or didn't know how to find the information for me to submit my applications. So yes, the Legion is a great place if you can't find out through the service officer of the branch please do go ahead and get a hold of Dominion Command, they are in Aurora, they are amazing.

When you want to go home, it's more complicated, and for veterans, working full time, if you already have a pension of \$30, \$40, \$50,000, you're going to work and you're doing another \$30, \$40, \$50,000, it hurts taxes. If you want to try, as here in the (city) area, it's full employment, there should be a program that speaks to employers. Of course, these are not key jobs, but jobs that could say: "We would be interested in having people who want to work", we do a week or two. One week he works two days, the other. You know, I don't know if it's something that would be done, but maybe it's an idea. Of course, I know, I worked full time, and it's costly in higher taxes.

Does everybody know about military Ombudsman or Veterans Affairs Ombudsman, yes, no, maybe so – show of hands. Do you know that? I found particularly the Veterans Affairs, Ombudsman particularly helpful. Essentially in these cases, you approach those offices if you got a situation such like this, which is horrendous, and they have staff who can, it is like a team that can come in, jump on the situation and generally solve it quite quickly. If, literally nothing is working for you in the regular system, the Ombudsman, either your DND or Veterans Affairs can really be helpful. Just Google them, they are available, 1-800 number is easy to contact, they'll get back to you right quick on whatever your issue is. They will help, okay. Particularly this lady here (family crisis), okay.

I really appreciate you shared this story with everybody because a lot of bad things are happening to veterans these days and they're not being shared with the public. Most people don't know what is happening, and I share with your pain because I know so many of my friends are going through this and I have gone through it and it's a pain to see that it is still happening because it's not being fixed it has been going on for years.

I don't want to sound like a broken record but when you get your pension money, I tried years back to get a break down of dollar value for my (injury 1) and my (injury 2) and my (injury 3) and everything. They won't give it to you. All you'll get is just the amount you're getting. I do a lot of channel surfing. Last night I got into something that through CTV (city) and there is a group of veterans in (city) that is getting together for a class action lawsuit against the Federal Government. I don't know where that is going to go. It was just on last night.

How to do the pension work and stuff like that. One suggestion that I have personal experience is, I don't understand how the government is doing the benefits now. I don't know how they're figuring out the tax part that they're doing on us. I don't understand why they're taking the bare minimum, for I don't know the amount that they're giving you I guess. I don't understand why they're not using the same type of system like for the seniors with old age, OAS or CPP. The one where they figure out guaranteed income supplement. My Mom was getting that. But with that one, my Mom didn't have to do anything and any tax or any benefit was based on what her income from her income the year before, her income tax. That is how they decided to take the tax off you for the next year, or if you would get a benefit, in this case if you get income supplement. I would like to see them do something like that. Take a veterans last year's tax form, and if you made 40,000. We're going to tax you at a \$40,000 tax rate instead of we're giving you \$50 a month, we're going to take \$5 out of it and at the end of the year you have got to pay the money. It would help us that way. Take some of that equation away. Give us some financial boost ahead of time.

I just want to make a general comment because to me there's always going to be issues that slip through the cracks and special cases that need special attention. But let's go back to what happens when you're in the military. The entire system envelopes you with support. They're your paycheck. They are your housing needs if you need to be, they are your medical needs. They are your training, educational and intellectual support they are your value set, self-esteem they are entirely your world it's your life it's not just a job.

Veterans Affairs has an impossible task in providing all of that support when somebody gets out. Because they're structured like a workers' compensation board. They're surrounding your support needs or they're providing your support needs with respect to some financial and medical based on truly approved issues for military service.

All the rest of that is left behind and so I think that either we tell veterans and military staff when they're getting out don't expect that from Veterans Affairs, here is where you can go for it, or we provide that to Veterans Affairs to say here are the actual needs of these members. It may not be the medical, it may not be a financial they may be suffering from just plain kicked out syndrome. And that is the issue that we need to support veterans with. Because they may not have something apparent, they may have having very apparent.

But Veterans Affairs right now has an impossible task and I think they need a top down what do we define as success type of planning session because right now I don't think Veterans Affairs can achieve success. Notwithstanding hugely diligent efforts of very dedicated staff that have to be each and every one of them on the point of burnout because no one comes there when they're happy.

Would not hurt me at all see Veterans come under Defense with one minister. That way vet affairs would not argue whether or not was a medical release.

This kind of relates. If CRA and have the government go back ten years to change laws so that they can get people to pay taxes on things that they thought was legal, there is no reason that things can't go back to change so we don't lose half of our pension, like our CPP and our pension when we're 65. There's no reason that those can't go back. They say they can't if it doesn't save the money. But I know for a fact just recently it happened to me. CRA went back ten years to change some laws so that things could happen.

Well, there's no confusion there. CRA takes money in and DVA puts money out. The government doesn't make money by spending it on us.

One of the things I found in my experience is that standard of care is so limited in scope. As the gentlemen mentioned, if you go to physio 20 times a year you're treating symptoms not the problem. In my experience, what has to happen is that you need to treat what is wrong with the person. If you can keep pushing pharmaceuticals, physio, chiropractors without dealing with what is wrong with the person they're not going to get any better. After doing physio for four years and the physio said they're better and they're not, how does that make the veteran feel? Now you're crazy. Living back in a small town away from the world but she has, in fact, been detrimentally damaged, now she has no access to the services she needs, she's going to spiral and circle the drain getting worse and worse.

Functional medicine you do blood tests and other identifying things activities, identify what's really going on. That's the kind of stuff that I found in my experience. How to use sleep clinics and doctors and a lot of my own money and identified if I'd had exposure or experienced chromosomal changes, changes in my body, due to exposure to Agent Orange or depleted uranium. Functional medicine aspect will be helpful for veterans because we are in unique situations and we're exposed to things that the average Canadian is not exposed to.

1999 ■ For me, listening to what the government is going to do for new veterans, getting out of the armed forces, that's all fine and well. The number is shrinking as they put it off, and put it off, and put it off. We, as veterans, look at the system; we know that federal government is closing hospitals for veterans, yet they are opening them in Afghanistan for Afghani veterans. They are giving 10 million dollars to a convicted terrorist and that's a slap in the face in every veteran in and around Canada and anywhere. Support, giving this (Afghani) person this money that he can put back into the war machine that keeps the war going, you know, what about the people that are living under the bridge, living in their cars? That's who we should be addressing. They are the guys and woman, that are "in the trees" as they say; they are off the map. It is a dangerous thing because, we talk about the movies Rambo, that's what it is, you know. He was a veteran hiding out. That's what we have in Canada, hiding out. One day they are going to pop and everybody is going to go "oh that's terrible". But, the money that was wasted on Bombardier, on this terrorist, on this hospital in Afghanistan; when I hear promises from the government I think it is all crap.

I think government has to stop lying and deal with the issues that are at hand. The veterans living under the bridge, the wives living in fear in their own PMQ and/or house because, spouse can't get help. These poor people are suffering vicarious PTSD as a result of living with a veteran with an OSI. There should be help for them. The best organization I've, I have been involved with since I retired is OSIS, occupational stress injury social support. That's a big help for my wife and it is a great help for me, because I can meet with fellow veterans that have OSI's. I get a great feeling of comradery in that group because we all know what it is like to have these demons we have. I think it is all political rhetoric that.

Let me give you a picture how it could work. Post-World War II. We had just won the war. Within three years we're talking about he had already set up a general advisory committee that consisted of no fewer than six ministers of cabinets and their departments that had reporting to them had 13 subcommittee to deal with issues everything such as transitioning those disabled to the blind. And they set up those 13 subcommittees and prepared programs for every single veteran transitioning out of the military and then nationwide. Then they commenced, not just veteran-wide, but a nationwide education network to ensure that all family members and all veterans understood what it was like to serve in the military and what benefits were being provided. Everyone was educated, everyone understood what that transition process was like, and everyone was there

to support them. So, giving piecemeal, hot potato veterans off to different agencies without offering to help them, is not acceptable. Let's not forget the so-called case managers, these are hands on people. They went to the houses, they talked to veterans and showed them how to build the house. They went to the family members and taught them what it was like to have a disabled veteran and how to care for them. They went to the teaching workshops on building houses how to get loans and start the business, how to become an apprentice in business, and they were a continuum that coached these veterans from the day they left the military right until they had a successful life. Some of those relationships and case managers continued on for 20 years. They still have people that were on the house ago assistance and as well as other World War II programs into the 1990s. Some of those programs didn't end until then. We had a situation whether it was no one that was going to be left behind. I shouldn't glorify too much (?) the point is the system that we have today, and (?)

Anything else is going to cost too much. World War II, they said you know what if we had the money to send them to war we have the money to fight [off microphone] and that is the situation that is missing right now. In terms of that, it all filters down from that. Nothing was too great or too expensive to spend on that transition and all of a sudden, we made an investment. We just have not tried to Band Aid approach their life. Try to reduce bureaucratic ratios without spending (?). We were the most successful economy in the 1950s, more than any other nation in the world. In large part because of this huge investment in every veteran, not just the most disabled, but every veteran received a substantial benefit in order to make that transition work, because they understood that when you joined the military, you had fundamental mindset to change. What they're missing today, is they think it is just another public service job because you have public servants administering these programs.

In World War II what they did, is they took them back and they became the senior managers of Veterans Affairs. They organized the departments. They were prepared to transition out – they were not career soldiers. They knew that they had to understand this (?) a transition. We have none of that understanding now. We have a bureaucracy that serves Treasurer first, serves their own managers, their own divisions, second, third and somewhere maybe that is why so many veterans fall in the cracks. That's why they can't even get their basic needs met.

I just wanted to put something in perspective. You talked about World War II. We had 13 subcommittee and six ministers of Parliament. With the New Veterans Charter, remember, the original World War II program is called the Veterans Charter. It was a very noble sounding name, which was all encompassing. They set up a modernization task force, which was given [off microphone], so I just want to give that in perspective as to why things are fundamentally messed up. We don't have complete government buy in on this. We don't have the Canadian population buying into transition, because they don't understand what it means to serve in the military, what is the dramatic and profound cultural shift that has to occur and if they're disabled, that shift is exponentially different.

The now homeless members (again 40%???) with no fixed address? What is the VAC doing for these members? Does VAC even know how many members have attempted to access service which died within the first year (suicide) or ended up homeless while waiting for the services to kick in?

We're going to solve some problems in this room this evening, or so it is my impression. We are fortunate that (location) base did not come here in its entirety because we would have heard about all sorts of problems. There have been 158 deaths in Afghanistan since 2001 and 178 suicides since 2001.

Now, what really peeves me even as much, is I got to know this fellow. This fellow I knew just in passing, friends, coffee buddy. Lazy lazier than a 3-cent coin. But managed, because he served I think it was two years in the military and I don't put any disregard on that. Decide because it (military) wasn't for him – left. Because he knew a major, he helped him fill out medical papers for his service 20 years ago and he got a check, I saw it, for \$111,000 in back pay and he's going to get a pension every month. From what? Because he had a small heart attack; no heart attack is small, but he had a heart attack and somehow this major filled out the forms enough that the heart attack was blamed on the military service. Now whose ass is kissing whose? And I really truly think that the public, I know among you veterans that you try to talk and try to share, but I really think the general public has to have a better understanding of what it means to be a veteran, to fight the fight you're fighting. It is bad enough that you're over doing service for you come home and have to fight again and again and again and get nowhere?

I'm sorry, as a civilian I think it is a load of crap and I think for up and coming veterans that are serving now, the younger men, if you have families that are in there now, warn them that another war is going to be on their shoulders and let them start the fight now. Have public meetings even if you have to go to the Legion or somebody's rec center and say public information session. Find something that catches the public eye and bring veterans in and say look, we're one of you but we're in a battle that you don't understand is happening. Because I think there would be a lot more support and a lot more respect. I know when I retired from public service, I was given the cold shoulder by so many people. The only way that I got any respect I used to be a manager at one of the fast food joints, and I got very, very sick and I had to retire. "Oh, you poor sweetheart." Those who knew me who knew I retired from federal said "oh you're set for life". Well, I had to fight for my benefits for disability. I fight to keep them going because yes I need them.

And I really like to try the medical marijuana, because I hate the pills. I really think there has to be more public involvement in your, pardon the expression, private fight. Because you're a special group of people. You do a special job that nobody else here has done.

As a wife, as a daughter, my father was military Korea. I saw what he went through to get his pension. I helped him as much as I could, being in administration – that was before public but service. I just helped him, and I asked the right questions. I found the right set of ears. And my Dad was looked after. Unfortunately, he just passed, but he was a proud veteran and I know you're all proud veterans or soon to be proud veterans or the families of proud veterans, but God damn it we have to get more people understanding this fight because the government will say oh, there is a group of people. They don't tell anybody anything. If the public starts knowing, that's two groups of people. Because there might be 700,000 veterans in this country, but there is millions of people. We got to become a group.

As far as the mental health aspect of it goes, I hope each and every one of you has support you need. I taught mental health seminars and loved it. I saved lives; I know I did, I saved my own life. We need more of that. We need to talk to people who understand what it is you're fighting inside. I hope something like that is either on the table, is already out there or will be out there. If there is, I'll get involved. As a public person, a family person, I wish each and every one of you all the best. Don't give up on yourself. Tell the government to go screw themselves, but don't stop fighting. Because you're all worth it. Thank you.

For the record, I hope I'm not going to make anybody mad here because it is not aimed at the service that you're providing to some of your organizations. There is a lot of stakeholder's organization right now that are covering one group or another of that branch for one reason or another – they're all different. What I hate is that they're playing politics with these groups, as probably some of you have seen, whether it is the Legion, the NATO UN organizations, they're a dime a dozen. Vets Canada, Patriot Love, there is all kinds of organizations. Some are doing great job. The issue I have is we don't have an association where we vote members, as we would do in the military with our messes and so on. These organizations are all over the place and they all have their own agendas. Some are getting, what I would say, fed by the government – money; therefore, they're biased.

I have an issue with the fact that these people are the people that represent us the veterans at the table with the minister – this is a big problem. I believe this is, probably out of everything that I have said tonight, this is the thing that needs to be looked. They need to scrap that committee that the Veterans Affairs Minister has with the stakeholders as commonly referred online with a lot of the advocacy group. They're called stake eaters, because they go to these things, they're being flown to Ottawa wherever they're doing these meetings, they rollout the red carpet, they're paid their meals and paid everything. They go there, and they tow the party line. Why? Because they don't get the fat check at the end of the month if they don't tow the party line the minister wants them to tow.

That is why the survey that VAC did just recently shows everything is great, everything is pinky, hunky dory, which we all know it is a bunch of crock. Everybody after 2006 New Veterans Charter, let's make it clear people, everybody before 2006 if they're happy with their pension great, super, everybody deserved it, they deserve it. I wish they would give you more. That doesn't take way from everybody after 2006 affected by the new changes. A nickel and dime that is just cut, slashed, and denied or told BS stories.

To me that is where the big tragedy lies, that is why so many people are frustrated, so many people are walking away from an organization that traditionally were looking after veterans. The Legion, as an organization, not as each little place, I know a lot of people that are my friends they work in the Legion and they do great work. Unfortunately, the organization as a whole has lost their way. The organization is no longer a military organization looking after veterans. It is now a civilian organization, let's say it because that is what it is now. It is a civilian organization run by civilians and they have lost their way.

As the gentleman said earlier, they don't know what the military is and they don't understand it. It is not because they hang out with people that have stories about the military they understand what the military is; they have not lived it, not walked the walk, so they cannot talk the talk – they cannot speak to these things. I hope some of the things we've said tonight is going to make some changes. I'm not disillusioned the fact that I know that they're going to try to pick the things that are convenient to them as they like to do. If we keep challenging them and we keep putting them on the spot and keep picking at them eventually hopefully we'll crack their armour and they'll start doing their job. That is what they're paid for. Let's make them accountable. I hope everybody is going to do the same spread it around and tell everybody you know.

What I'm trying to say is I know with the union we have occupational health doctors that workers can go and see at the federation labour house. What the veterans need just so they can clarify their conditions so that they can have a better idea what's going on with them is they need a sort of a reference, a pool, a resource. We need to know who we can see for a resource list.

Where to go, what doctors can be seen, what doctors are available for the veterans to go and see on the outside of the Veterans Affairs, on the outside of DND. Some sort of place to go so that they can and occupational list of occupational health doctors that could be made available on a website or something here. Here is do you have questions about this condition or that condition, here is a list of doctors that are willing to see you and talk to you about your condition. So that you don't get that run around becomes a little bit more clear.

Like in my case with micron in this case (condition) I would like to go and see an occupational health doctor who might be able to explain more about my condition. And then that would help to make a decision whether a person should go through years of fighting Veterans Affairs or not if they had a little guidance, you know, because a lot of times a lot of stress and takes years to go through the whole system.

I do a lot of work on social media sometimes and help other people, because they want to have service. When you get into retirement and retiring from the military, will people go to the courts, other people go to change in location, they don't always get around, the little bubble we are talking about – the base, the pharmacy, we can walk, we have all the little system really, when you realize what you need. You were committed but that's not the way, approval for this, they could reimburse, my copies and people will, into moving, it just goes, and even then, sometimes you have to pay because you travel a lot. You have to pay on the services, so even in the military, to make it nicer, but when you live on your own and don't have anybody to take care of your closest family, there is lot of unexpected bills to have, when you get this et cetera, et cetera. People end up at the end of this, and comes up with .0. Having counselling, finding counselling and having a lifetime pension.

I (?) you want I'm still here – and I don't think we went for, and I had a problem; I had a serious problem, because I used to drink a lot, I don't drink much anymore. But there is – they are not just Veterans Affairs and they said, this will, to talk about. Two and a half hours, that was incredible; a good, a good job. It is the best that we have ever had. I couldn't, these things, what is this all about? What has done, I was in, and maybe (?) around. Doing well and my dad, all those before me, serve in the Korean forces. They just, you know, I think of that (?) in Ottawa and this, Second World War veteran dead now and there were (?) piece of trash. (?) From all of these other countries. Really well treated and the Veterans, this is, (?) thank you very much.

Just once again I hate to keep feeding back to government, but now, as you heard, the public service medical plan is being cut back. Now, that's the government. And all of us are again in same situation. You know, I'm thank to God that the Legion exist and not every one of them, the Legion members, by the way, are active Veterans. But the Legion stands up and supports all the Veterans all the RCMP and what have you. The here we are meeting in a Legion facility. I had to drive about 20 miles to get here, and with my own situation, RCMP, we don't even have access to meet in our own building that we worked in for 30 years. You know? The government is just cutting the legs right out from under us in every way, shape, and form.

FAMILY SUPPORT

TRANSITION

Having a young family – not enough to support; financial aid, no admin assistance.

Lack of support at the time of my veteran's transition cost him, family members and extreme debt. We are still only just re-entering the system and aren't able to evaluate this as of yet.

Need a one stop shop service... MFRC, JPSU, OSISS, VAC.

Need checks and balances. Follow up with released vets... email... mail etc... instead out of mind... out of sight situation.

OSISS family peer supports coord... miracle workers!

We had one little pension, I couldn't find a job in my small little town and couldn't afford that and to look after my husband. I think we should be part of the transition process that should not just be for the military member to have the most information, especially if there is any type of injury involved. My husband's heart attack was caused by the military. They documented his, but never medicated him because he was a specialist in his field and they wanted to see him working. We had to fight to get released from the military.

RCMP ■ The second thing when talking about family, went through, I was in security service and they changed over to CSIS, so within we talk back and forth, and I decided to stay with RCMP. Don't take into consideration about your family or your spouse who had a career, she was a teacher. We made the decision I would go up and rent a place and stay, I knew I had about a year and a half left before I was going to retire, she had a career she was passionate about, didn't want to move our children around that time, getting into junior high, and says well you are going to (province), didn't matter what you suggested or put in, you got a negative reply. No one wanted to listen. There are things out there that we went through, private sectors, very fortunate we had people that were in the retirement, they gave us a lot of good advice. Universities were close by, we had the advice, we made our own solutions for it. But it was just, they had nothing set down, out there, and even today you look out on big corporations and small corporations, there is really nothing well on organized, well-detailed that can really help people who are retiring from private sector or military or RCMP. In RCMP, the wives were second class citizens.

I am a widow of a Veteran, and he passed away as a Veteran, but what I found was difficult was finding, as the executor of his will, and I would love to have had one place where I could go and say, this is what he has, where do I go, what do I need do, so I didn't need to pay back a whole bunch of stuff I got an extra month or two after he had died. That's just what I would really have appreciated.

I had a very excellent tax person who was familiar with this, so she came and stayed with me for two days and did a lot, but I would have been up, quite frankly, "shit creek", if it wouldn't have been for her. I would love to have one place when your Veteran spouse dies where you can go and say, okay, he died, what do I do now? (You and Your Survivor's booklet was mentioned) I had some of those with that little booklet at one point, and

we did have everything. I knew where stuff was, but it was phoning these numbers and then waiting for days for a phone call back, and by that time and then I get home and I've missed the call, and so it was really it just took such a long time because everything seems to be so backlogged. And I'm not saying they're not doing their job. What I'm saying if things are backlogged there needs to be something done to simplify the whole system. I've heard Veterans here speak about that all night, about simplify the system.

Once again, the young people with the transitioning out, they have a lot more to them now than some of us did. When they deploy, they have a lot more family support than we did. When I went to (country) in (year), my wife, me being the oldest guy in the unit, my wife was the mother hen for the young guys. We were very lucky; my battle group didn't lose anybody. Our neighbour battle group had. But they have a lot more support than we ever did, and it was the Sergeant Major's wife, because the CO's wife still had toddlers, and it was the CO and the Sergeant Majors that their wives were the support group at home. Nowadays the young fellas have it far too easy. And I think that's part of their problem, too. They got too much support at times instead of being made to stand up on their own two feet and grow up.

2016-2017? ■ So, some of the things I know that are in place, is taking your spouse to SCAN seminars the spouse usually accompanies so they can actually learn what sorts of things are available to them during the SCAN seminar, so it's not question when the military releases and walks away. The other thing that happens if somebody is being medically released the family are integrated into the JPSU or briefings or brought in to fill out the paperwork, learn what things are available to them and find out what's going on with the member that sort of thing. There are avenues out there for the family. They are invited into the process as much as possible. And then it's availability to kind of educate them on things that are going on with the member.

This now, take into account the family side. Because, what the release process. No one will actually physically contact whether it is a family resource centre or any other departments. They don't reach out to the spouses, to the children, because if you are operating on the way to another location, military move like now you are currently retiring. What does that do to the family? What does that do to the spouse, the jobs, education? If you are in the area, okay, fine, but still someone should take into account how it affects the family, because now the consultants, six months from now what happens because used to see you move from place to place every so many years, now all of a sudden, you know, they are not used to that now they're not in the uniform, what is this? You actually know how to dress yourself. It is the little things that helps them make transition like you can bring in some of your family members, but you are not educated. They don't know the system, don't know how this works, even if you have a little bit of understanding. They need to take the next step and counsel, bring them up to speed, if you need help you can go here, you can access this.

2006 ■ I have PTSD & could not handle the search for understand most info I have access to. I just get overwhelmed. My wife was too overwhelmed taking care of me to handle researching programs, filling out multiple forms etc.

Still serving ■ I'm actually still serving and my family is rather addicted services that we have through the MFRC and PSP. I'm looking to transition out in the near future. So my wife has already told me, what are we going to do without the MFRC and PSP? So when it comes to education with work, moving stuff like that, these are things that people ask. So as far as I know, I find I've started researching into my retirement and what's funding knowing that I'm pretty much done.

We didn't get any information re the transition out of service.

There is a two-tiered system when it comes to spouses as well. If you're a service couple you're in from day one, you know the system and if one spouse leaves before the other you have the concept. We have personal friends who when spouse is being medically released and the other is planning to pull the plug go out to BC and retire. He already knows the system because his wife has already been through the release system and has had the nightmare of finding out what she was entitled to. We have a two-tiered system in the CF because one for service spouses, whereas non-service couples like my wife, who is a civilian we don't receive the same funding as service couples do, we don't receive the amount of support the service couples do in moves, releases, deployments, we don't receive the same funding that are offered during deployments. So, there legitimately is a two tiered system within the CF for service couples versus non service couples.

RCMP ■ What's also difficult is the family, since you're not part of the same group, family help, because, of course, I'm assuming that for the military, is the same thing, there are people who inform families of the situations. In case of civil disorder, which lasts 2, 3 weeks, one month, okay, the police officer is in such a place, they connect with the family.

When you're at another level, head of the civilian police, it's up to you during crisis to try to find the time, because, of course, in a crisis situation you're in charge, you don't have time to do that, to reassure the family, it's very difficult for the family, what they see on TV is that part of it, often it's less worse in reality, there is always an impact.

I know that today (?) I just want to present to you the similarities and cases that exist during the daily life of our police officers, it is not only the RCMP who go on mission, there are police officers from all levels, municipal or provincial. At first it was only the RCMP, but over the years it has expanded.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

I was extremely proactive in assisting my husband to apply for disability awards to have his service injuries recognized prior to his release. It was a great fear for the expense of numerous medications he relied on daily to not be financially covered upon his release. VAC was great in having the most prominent disability awards processed quickly prior to his release to lessen this fear.

Extremely frustrating to deal with VAC.

Horrible.

My mother she had a stroke and Veterans Affairs was looking at (?) And she, I had no difficulty getting the walker or any of her, anything that she needed for her after her stroke. The only thing was that I had to get a family doctor for her to get a prescription so that I could get her that walker. So, there was a period in between where I had to go to the Legion and ask them for some help so they loaned me some of their equipment until I was able to work it out with Veterans Affairs to get the things that she required. By the way, after she passed away, I had to return the walker to Veterans Affairs. So, in certain things they wanted back after she passed away.

Hi I'm a civilian. I want to say that I work with a non-profit, that everybody in our group has PTSD. What you are talking about is great, the Veterans, the ones that are really forgotten are the wives and the children. A lot of people transitioning out right now are from Afghanistan. They have young children; in our program we have children ranging from four to 14, all these kids are being scared and there is no help for them out there in any way, or form. There's nothing for them. Your taking another generation of kids that is going to have a really hard time. So that needs to be included, it is not the veteran definitely needs to be included, but the veterans' spouse and the family need help and they very, very seldom get it from Veterans Affairs. They usually get it from a not-for-profit.

Just emotional right now because I am a wife and my husband is not allowed to be diagnosed with a stress injury. He is denied everything right now and, as the wife, I am going through being tortured. The military family resource centre can't help me. The base counsellor can't help me, and there is no support for us. My kids are seven months, two years, three and twelve, and they are all suffering. I can't even have my husband at home with the kids by himself, and no one will help us. We need a voice, we need someone to help us. He can't even come here because this will trigger him. And we're not from here, so I have no family and no support here. And I have no military family here, and I have no way to get home. So, I am basically an orphan, trying to do the best for my family, and I am suffering as a human and we can't even get out yet.

I can make a comment on it because my mother is getting benefits from my father's service. At her age she's running into the assistance with this and assistance with that over the last 15 years. But her record started so far back that it's not necessarily relevant today the way things run.

Meetings are needed for family support.

2016 ■ Because of my last injury that ended my career, what happened was they put me on the Veterans Independence Program and all the money for services I get to have my home cleaned, to have my grass cut, and to have my snow shovelled. One of the questions that I asked them, I don't know why I asked them, I asked them what happens when I pass will my wife get the same services. She gets the services that I would get because she is recognized she herself as a veteran she was not given the VIP program. But because I am, I was told that my services would pass to my wife as well. That was one experience.

It never hit me until about a couple months ago, a gentleman that lives in our neighbourhood who comes in and helps with this. His father was in military during the war, you know, they had a lot of kids in the family and they, you know, he wasn't well, he had said to me, nobody ever thought about it, you know, the kids really suffer. The kids don't understand it, I guess the father could probably had post-traumatic stress, he was a merchant marine, never got any money until after he died. But the kids, they had to pick potatoes, they had a really tough life and they didn't understand, you know, until they got older, that the war had caused this hardship in their life. When you mention that, it is true that they got to start looking at the kids, because I mean I really didn't connect that either, that, you know, the kids suffered after the Second World War because the parents weren't, the father wasn't well, and the mothers had to deal with everything. The husband is coming back with post-traumatic stress.

I must apologize first if I start crying, it's hard. We have had no help, myself, for my three children. Sorry. My kids are teen and two children. My one child has just been diagnosed with post-secondary PTSD due to the father. My teen has nightmares because of what goes on with dad with the PTSD. The teen also has high anxiety. I have looked through the military through the MFRC, and there is nothing, there is nothing for my kids. Myself, I have PTSD also and I have to pick up the tab of everybody, for everybody. I have a husband with PTSD, two kids with PTSD and a young child coming up. We get nothing, I get ten counselling sessions a year, that's what I get from Veterans Affairs. We have asked for help for even like PTSD, parenting plus, to help parents deal with kids and PTSD and there is nothing out there that has been offered.

Almost impossible.

It is important to know that family members are treated even more derogatorily than DND ever treated vets. Family members do not exist for veteran's affairs. If family member needs assistance they must go through the veteran's client number. When you're dealing with a situation, my wife is with me a lot on bad days and she is not allowed in any capacity whatsoever to ask for services. So, when I am incapacitated, my wife cannot go and get help for me. This raises a question like this young lady raised, so how does that veteran get help. This has been a situation, and I remember 20 years ago when I began advocating (name), we raised the issue – give my family an ID card. Allow them to access my benefits, allow them to act on my behalf. 20 years later still can't get an (?). If they can't get basic things like applying for public service health care plan and can't get pension, and I talked with the bureaucracy in general, if they cannot get those very basic elements right, there is no – it's no surprise that the most disabled veterans are not getting any (?) they require.

How are we going to help the most disabled, and that is really what is happening in the case of families. You have a situation here where the family (?) veterans in the families and this is not truth. If you look (?) Veterans Affairs, it's mandate is to assist veterans and their families. It doesn't say assist veterans, and once in a while, families. They're put on equal par, yet there are no policies or legislation to follow along with the mandate to fulfill that promise.

Very bad. The local DVA office have new a list of potential service providers, but the list was made up of deceased and retired providers.

2006 ■ Yeah, we'll come back to that, on the family conversation. We have a hard time getting support for ourselves, imagine the families! They don't even have a file, nothing at VAC; it's a mess for the rest of us, but family is their last concern. They're not able to take care of the rest of us properly. I was released in 2006. I had a follow-up for 3 years. He said that I was fine, last year I had a relapse. I'm not ready to go back to work yet. I had my first appointment with my family doctor. As another speaker said earlier, its fine, but we always start the process over again, and we're still at the beginning of the wheel. The wheel turns, it turns, but nothing follows.

It's all well and good to be paid, the money doesn't give you good health, but give us a service that is reliable and fast, that doesn't take years, maybe the family will already benefit a little bit. Thank you.

1968 ■ I have a few things written down here because which trust my memory. I'm involved in a medical claim on behalf of my husband who joined the Air Force in (year), and was released in 1968. Due to medical situation he was sent out to (city) for medical care and then back to highway source. As the base was closing we were transferred to (city) 1965 when he reported in he was handed his pink slip thanks for he didn't want any names.

Reason geographical restrictions. He stayed in until 1968 and said sayonara. We stayed in (city) and he had various jobs over the years. (Date) he saw a lung specialist, because of health concerns in breathing, walking and he ended up leaving his place of work because of his health in 1994. Diagnosed with (condition) which can lay dormant for 20 to 40 years and it really hit the mark on that. He was on oxygen 24 hours a day, the last two and a half years of his life. Dr. (name) started the claim for some financial help (date). But 16 years later I'm still waiting. My husband passed away (date). There have been some appeals but they were all turned down as DND said there was no asbestos in the buildings up north.

Well they figured they were dealing with a woman so we could buffalo her. And he had been in for over shore for 14 months before I knew him. I came across a NAV Canada newspaper showing men in white garb removing asbestos in buildings in (location). I sent a copy to Mr. (person) assigned to me. (Date) the advocate states his request to the appeal board to rule the awarding by proportional entitlement and retroactive any settlement effective three years. There's been at least four advocates involved in this case and whenever I call the office I never know who I'll speak to as I understand they're all retired lawyers and only work one to two days a month. I know it's a freebie, but I need the advice too.

Down to me, due to my own health concerns the stress leaves me exhausted at times. It seems when I'm not in touch with them, they close the file but don't notify me. I'm also told they are waiting for me to give up. Well, I have no intentions of doing that. My husband gave almost 17 years of his life to our beloved country and look where it got him.

Widow ■ No allowance for family to continue receiving support, very convoluted system... too convoluted, too difficult.

Our friend in Canadian forces, spent a year and a half in the hospital of dying. His wife, what the Veterans Affairs doesn't understand, what she is going through personally, never ask, also has (illness), may not be here in the next year and a half. But they never ask, so her support group is her friends, family, and community. Knows nothing about what she is going through, that is hard. Not only hard on her, it is also hard on her friends.

It is long, overwhelming, confusing, frustrating, not user friendly considering that many of us have full time jobs, businesses, kids to care for and injured vets, and that dealing with Veterans Canada is almost a full-time job on its own. Let along the damage control we as spouse are left to do every bloody time they are denied a service which they shouldn't have to fight for in the first place.

Not good.

I'm back again but he is talking about the members now and in my case, I was not in the military my mother was a World War veteran II vet so it's a little bit of a different situation where there's both two different situations.

Never received any.

2001 ■ Good evening, concerning the family, I also have points to mention. Every veteran, when we leave, we have a case manager and you live with them. It's not like a wedding, but it's just like, you have him or her and then it's over, you can't choose. I think they should get involved at the family level.

An example. I'm a very severe post-traumatic, I'm controlled today, but in 2001, I was spinning around like a weather vane in the wind, everywhere. I fell into major depression, my wife too, she ended up in private, she lost her job, not because of her, because of me, that she was putting up with me. There's no one who did anything about it.

If we want to help families, it has to start with the case manager, get involved, mark "family of Mr. ABC", and not "file 9528". Because I have a number, but I have a name too, and I have a family that goes with it. If the case manager had tools and then a new approach to understanding the entire family on file, because it is, you can't just isolate the veteran as such, because he or she has a social life, a family life, responsibilities, and at that point the responsibilities often fall on the woman. I'm lucky, still with my wife. Many of them are divorced, and divorce is caused by the psychological problem the person has and it becomes extremely difficult for the woman to endure the man or vice versa. Basically, the case manager should stop thinking about the veteran, think about the whole family and then get the family on the wheel as well. I think that's what the approach should be.

If family needs help, they cannot access as themselves, only as part of the VAC/veterans case number.

Spouse cannot access help on behalf of the veteran either.

2005 ■ He mentioned a lot of things that I could have said too, but as such is the Canadian Forces, I have retired since 2005, 41 years of service, as such, the Canadian Forces forgot about family, always thought of the military first, as such, for the veterans it is the same. I had to ask about the family and it always came down to saying, "The veteran is you, you're the one who asks, and then if it's accepted." "It's not me who has the

problem, it's the family that has the problem, and we completely forget it. How can we come back to say. "We should say: if the veteran has a problem, we solve it with him, if the family has a problem, the family should have its own file, not just the veteran, and it always comes back to the same thing.

The (vocational) program, I didn't have to pay that. So the going to be protocol.

Now the Veterans Affairs has a program where you can be paid as a caregiver for up to a thousand dollars a month.

But you, if you have been taking care of a spouse, and not being able to work?

One of the pensions my husband gets from Veterans Affairs, supposedly a part of it is for me. I have no idea what that is for, to do with his PTSD, he gets a certain amount that is to help me. I don't know what help I can get. Because I do have to be the one that's always positive, when you deal with someone suffering, it is really hard. It is hard to be that person all of the time and so what am I entitled to? I have no idea. All I know is that on that pension that he gets monthly some of that financial bit is for, because of me, other than that I have no clue.

I got a call from a very close friend in (city), her husband was in the Canadian Armed Forces, and he has now passed away at 50+ years of age. She is going through a very terrible time, traumatic, experience been no support only from friends, her co-workers, places she works in. And their two children, we know their two children very well and they are having difficult time losing their dad. Her comment was there is no transparency within Veterans Affairs, unless you have a legal mind you can understand some of the forms and documentation, just back and forth and no one really to sit down with her and say this is what it means, and this is what we can do for your husband. Instead of saying what we can do to help you, it is what we can do not to help you, to find some reason, has a stat concept that doesn't help her. The reason he didn't attend, I got the phone call tonight before I came up to hear from her.

RCMP ■ I'm also an advocate for the RCMP Veterans association here in Victoria, had I've good experience with Veterans Affairs, speaking to them on behalf of members and also directing them to Veterans Affairs Canada. One of the reasons I came tonight was to speak for a spouse of a diseased veteran. Over the years, everybody is familiar with public service health care plan, and they were on the family plan, when he passed away, just over a year ago she was denied any coverage under public service health care plan. The reason they gave, the public service health care plan people, was she was no longer in receipt of a pension cheque, which is correct, he was under an old part of the RCMP Act. But, she was in receipt of disability pension, her husband's, and still is, we appealed to public service health care plan people as part of the process, still denied, because it is a benefit not a pension. She is a member of FSNA and she and her husband have been for a number of years and we have tried every angle, obviously going through the appeal process is something that's required, now we're left to other options.

RCMP ■ Can I just ask one simple question, but there may not be a simple answer? Is a disability pension a pension or a benefit? Is it a definition? Because that's what they refused me eligibility on. It is under Veterans Affairs, this is the thing. Although it was awarded under the RCMP pension continuing act, it is administered through Veterans Affairs. So, the pension comes under the Act, under the health care plan, but not recognizing it as ongoing pension, recognized as an ongoing pension. To me, a benefit is something you get when you need it. A pension is something you get every month and that unfortunately I am unable to get this, so it strikes me this is a very legal question. I'm caught between two groups of bureaucracies.

The main reason I came this evening. We're getting to that stage in our lives where the gentlemen said 75 age group, and my only concern is things change over time that cause departments to change, companies to change, health benefits another insurance company or dental group, all that stuff. What I would like to see is Veterans Affairs or some other come out with a brochure of phone numbers, current numbers and points of contact that say my wife could call figure before her or something like that where she can understand what he is going to happen with the pension what it's going to be what type of health benefits she's going to retain, her dental benefits and other things that are available to her. Like SDB she has no idea if they're still there what they're about or who to call.

My daughter is a lawyer so she can help her in most cases, but I find now like the gentlemen said when you call the 800 number it's hit 1 hit 3 back to 2 go to 5 and it goes on and on and meanwhile you're put on hold and listen to elevator for 10, 15 minutes until a voice comes on the other end and that voice usually tells you to go to another department and then you start over again. Trust me, it's the way it works. If they could come up with a common point of contact for various departments that a spouse is going to need for pension, health benefits, and other things, with one phone call and one person to talk to guide her through the system, I think that would be most beneficial and most veterans would go feeling their wife or spouse is in good hands. That's not asking for too much. I think it should be updated every two or three years because departments like I say change, people change, and if they kept it current then it would be a great help.

I've always dealt with Veterans Affairs and they have always served me well and served the wife well when I've been away or something, needed something. I find that Veterans Affairs here quick phone call and might have to go on hold and all the rest of it, but we do get through and we are serviced quite well by Veterans Affairs. In my personal opinion.

I think more access to mental health is required for all family members especially my husband who is the veteran. He has very high anxiety issues related to his service and this has affected every member of our family. At times we have reached many crisis situations.

Just to get back to your question. Yes, my wife applied for it for the family, and it wasn't like me. I made the request, they asked me to meet with them, and it was just to elaborate more on the subject. But they wanted to come to see her at home, they came to see her at home, they talked with her, they went back, to receive a letter later and we're told: not accepted. Why all this work, when you could have had the same deal just in writing or on the phone and then get scorned, especially having someone from Veterans Affairs Canada come to see you at home? Hey! It's okay. No. It's no more than that.

Since then, the family wants nothing to do with Veterans Affairs Canada. She no longer wants anything to do with Veterans Affairs Canada, because it is as scared as we are to be turned down. (?) The family is not interested.

It would be helpful for any veteran spouse and all children to have immediate access to mental health services regardless of the veteran's injury. Being a caregiver to or child of an injured veteran, (whether their injury is mental, physical, or both), can cause tremendous stress within the household and families may require guidance to stay together. I'm not saying each person requires specialized care (although some may), but rather to have a social worker that they can vent to about any difficulties they face. Sometimes we just need to have a go-to person that is impartial who will listen to us vent and understand

if we simply need to cry for an hour. It can be difficult to feel like you can't talk to your friends or family for fear they might judge you or your partner. When physical pain is constant in a veteran, it is natural for this pain to affect their personality and mood. Spouses and children need to have someone to talk to about how they feel without being told to give up/leave or dismissed for their feelings of inadequacy. We require information on pain management, mental health assistance, and coping skill training.

Availability to more services for the children of veteran's. No matter the age as teens they may not notice how PTSD affects them until they are adults and are parenting or coping with a stressor.

Help transitioning, and day to day care and better maintenance of the program.

More help.

My spouse cannot go back to work. Programs need to be available to the age 50+ veterans. Most are geared to younger Vets.

Yeah, my husband was in hospital when I called Veterans Affairs asking for some assistance, because I was told by some of his buddies that you should do this, and I had the experience where my father was a Veteran, and he got, because he had a (letter) number, he got just tremendous care from Veterans Affairs and was very well done. My experience was something different. Because my husband couldn't talk to them himself, and he was in hospital, I was questioned, I was told it can't happen, he's not home, I mean, every excuse under the sun. It was given all the rules why not. Nothing to help me with how do I access what we needed. This was just two years and three months ago. And I would prefer to talk to a person.

Family members need to be recognized by Veterans Affairs. For myself and my wife and my kids, the only person with the Veterans Affairs recognizes is myself.

I just wanted to mention I was also in the military and experience with my Mom and Dad, they didn't qualify for the independent living, but my Dad passed away and my Mom was not entitled to any benefits. I think that's the thing for Veterans Affairs to recognize the spouses at some point in time that they be entitled to independent living, as they've also suffered through military lives (?).

Family's get injured as well when a member is injured. More services should be made available for the spouses and children. Financial support is key in easing the burden of a career ending injury and systems in place to get the whole family unit assistance in Transition.

For those veteran with PTSD and have a spouse and children or even grandchildren (that live with or spend a lot of time with) I feel that there should be some help and support, especially for kids. They don't know or understand what is going on and some kids blame themselves for what has happened to the parent and for triggering moments, that in turn is damaging to the child and not at all how a child should live there life.

There is nothing out there for the spouse or KIDS, my children are young teen, two children, they are suffering as much as there father not knowing what is happening or how to deal with what is happening with there father's PTSD.

I do not find any help or support for widows as to programs to use, a lot of us are in late seventies and eights, and will no longer be able to drive, so any info would help as services required.

RCMP ■ Just as an example, my mother would be X years old October. She was a Silver Cross mother and she was treated through her entire life by Veterans Affairs. But whereby (?) We have come a long way, we still got a long way to go. One of the problems is doing it together. Our forces (RCMP) needs major transition and (?) Change is inevitable. And we need a standardized card that indicates Veterans service.

Everything required to ensure that the members can access services required (mental/physical) and ensure any financial obligations to the members are addressed and provided at the time of release.

I have had no problem accessing services with Veterans Affairs considering I have full POA. I have though try to get some of the benefits available to the spouses and have been denied even though friends that I have spoken to have received said benefits it really is a hit and miss system. I am anxiously awaiting the new benefits in April, specifically the caregiver recognition benefit. I firmly believe that that is a benefit that should be given to every single spouse of any disabled veteran who is more than 60% disabled!!

I got my beautiful wife here with me tonight. She's come I can't believe how much there is no support for them. She's my rock. She's helped me through this. She's put up with all my hard times and my struggles and without her I would have never gone through this, but there is no support to help them.

Just a small comment that when I was a peacekeeping in (country), we were provided, I was provided with a separation expense. The abbreviation was S.E.X.

RCMP ■ Like me, I arrived from abroad, before taking my pension, I hadn't been at home for years, so there is always a transition that has to be made personally and with the family, there is no support in there, it's similar, the family is left to itself, it's up to us to fix the problems in our own house. That's similar.

INFORMATION

Transition

1993 ■ Poor at the time.

Considering that's all we have we can't find it we take what we get when we do the best we can with it knowing that this is just brutal honesty and one must deal with it.

Dull and confusing.

2011 ■ I retired from the six years ago and there is nothing that I'm aware of for the family, you know, to help them with what to expect, you know, it's not working.

The audience was asked if families could speak about the information they received when their service person transitioned out. There were three spouses that identified themselves and all three said they received no information.

Yeah that's it, so working hard to try to make it happen. So, we can call the members, because we have tons of services, tons of services paid for that there is not enough kids for that, because nobody knows that this, that left hand, right hand, together.

When you go to SCAN we have thousands of (unclear), all the services around so we don't, overwhelming. Try to make it part of this process, so you go here, go to there, resources and then so on.

1994 ■ My wife and I were well prepared after receiving the provided information.

I just think that the questions a bit strange because given the age spectrum the use of electronics for younger members probably phone calls or walk up for older ones. There's going to have to be a menu. We can all as individuals select where we fit into that spectrum and choose what's best for us, but I think you still have to have it all available because of the age spectrum of veterans.

Terrible, our health and dental insurance was screwed up and I almost lost all of it due to bad information given to me by the release centre.

Only through peer support. OSISS.

I asked a lot of questions when my husband was releasing. I attended a SCAN seminar in the final months and found it geared toward retraining as well as employment after service, which didn't apply in my husband's situation. I'm sure I bothered a lot of people in the final months by making a lot of phone calls and writing a lot of emails. I was over-run with documents with no direction on which applied to us, in what order to fill them out, who I submit them to, or what certain terms meant. It was overwhelming and distressing.

Did not get any for my wife.

I received zero information from anyone. I had to research it on line.

Unavailable.

2007 voluntary ■ I got out in 2007 I'm pretty sure my wife or myself never heard from the base personnel or military or Veterans Affairs at all in the ten years I've been out. My wife is a base employee, so I get a lot of my information through her now but when I first retired there was nothing. There was no my previous unit never contacted me it was just good bye, thanks for coming out and have a nice life. But I had a job all lined up, so it was, I never really thought of it too much. But it was like the day I left was the last time I've ever heard from the military.

Need information and updates on changes. More ease in the contacting services.

Family support should be there for the children, it would be nice if there was a summer camp for the children of veterans to go to so that they know they're not alone living with a disabled veteran as a parent. As for the partners I firmly believe that if your partner has had quit their job or is unable to go to work due to their partner being more than 60% disabled that they should be getting a monthly check.

I also think that there should be a retreat for the spouses so as to recharge their drained body mind and spirit. So many spouses and children walk away from severely disabled veterans really do everything you can to keep the family intact!

The information is too generalized, and doesn't cater to the individual's needs, vets are not just a #, they are forced to leave their jobs, they are the ones who make it possible for us to live free of cruelty, safe. I don't understand whose come up with the transition system the vets undergo when they are kick out, released. I can tell you from a spouse perspective, I don't feel that much consideration on the impact that the transitions have on the injured vets and their families. On a good day someone who is healthy, not living with mental health would find this transition extremely difficult but add the health, finances, dis-ownership, feeling of identity lost when they only thing they know is being soldiers. Only to find out that the fight for their Country is the easy part of being a soldier, finding for your rights as a veteran is the difficult part of being a soldier. As a Country who is known to be generous and welcoming, we sure don't honour this image which is perceived when it comes to how we treat our vets.

Overwhelming and scary, they didn't really help prepare us as a family unit or the veteran for anything out in the world.

My husband retired after 30+ years service and all went smoothly.

Again, what information? You have to dig, beg and hunt for any information and only seem to be other veterans that guide or mentor their peers.

Never received any.

Veterans Affairs

There was no access.

I took a VOC rehab. I didn't know that there was one until my husband was contacted and because spouse can't work well at the time. I did the rehab program, I was a (?) and moving to a small town I can't be driving back and forth to this because I need to be close to look after my husband, so it would have been better for myself if I was able to get that degree or that, so that I can get a high paying job (?) but instead of working I am looking after my husband.

20 years ago, they told any members what programs to go for. If you don't hear it, as far as I'm concerned is we hear from somebody else. If veterans take control of all these different programs, the spouses. The spouses don't hear about the programs.

FaceBook.

Not everybody is FaceBook.

Should be, Veterans. They don't want to promote it because they – so they don't promote it because from, it is like "what are you doing here?" because you're left out in the pasture. It makes it a pretty sour taste in your mouth when you don't know who to turn to or apply to. Now problems with it, who do I go to? Have to belong to Veterans Affairs, or do you like have to be Vocational rehab.

I just want to touch on family supports. There is a lot of areas that families aren't aware exist. They can access counselling. If somebody is placed on a category and maybe they are thinking that there might be an operational stress injury or something going on, they usually attach them to a unit, the joint personnel selection unit. If that has happened to any person that is attached to that, can request to be posted to a unit that is close to their family support. There is no reason for a family to, be here detached, isolated from support. Somewhere, somehow, there needs to be an advocate for veterans, for their families, that just fights for them. Not the one that's holding the, the purse-Strings, but the one that is actually fighting for what's right. Thank you.

The other piece, with regards to families, is that a lot of the information that they should have obtained before a crisis occurs doesn't seem to be shared. Where I'm going with that is that when it comes to, to putting out a claim, say a Veterans Affairs Canada, if it they are struggling with whatever, depression, whatever. So many veterans and so many actively serving members are of the perception that they have to wait until they are a veteran before they can slip in a claim to Veterans Affairs Canada. Possibly a back door for families that aren't getting their voice just isn't being heard through the DND system, through MFRC, and things like that. Maybe another approach is to be approaching Veterans Affairs Canada, to be submitting a claim for whatever. I remember when my daughters and I were going through a time and one of the things that one of the counsellors said is important is the more eyes on you, your children, then the better it is. Even if you are going, you know, for children who witness violence or whatever your personal thing is, it is a support, you know. Oh, I got that support five years ago. Does that support still work? Did you really put the supports in place that

you needed? There has to be some kind of logic and some kind of common sense and it is not about how many dollars, it is about the actual support, because everybody does well when they have the support that they need. It doesn't mean that they need that support for 15, 20 years, they might only need it for a few months, they might need it for five years. The sooner they get that support in place, the easier they are to live. Thank you.

I took care of my mother. I looked after my mother who was a World War Air Force veteran and she stayed with me until she passed away. So, the, the issue was work but thank God, I was with the federal government, federal employee so I was able to get time off from work whenever she, when I needed to take her to doctor appointments and things like that. And by the way they didn't tell me I was entitled to reimbursement for parking or anything else, you know, like gas or whatever unfortunately and I didn't know like these people I don't know what questions to ask Veterans Affairs because I never had to deal with them. And most of the time I found after the fact here is what I'm entitled to and that's after the fact after she passes away, and I talked to some more people. Mostly I'm information gathering from around me instead of from the department itself like Veterans Affairs. It would be nice to be clear on as a family member what they're allowed to have. So, if there's taking their family member to appointments and things like that and maybe a little support from the community like the soldiers trying to get support from the community so that their employer won't put them in a position where they can lose their job because they've been away to so many appointments because of their sick family member.

People start this, on Facebook there are groups, this group, that group, the spousal group but nothing what we want to have. So that's what I have seen. They actually help with, the means, so that's activities, result for things like that. It is very beginning stages of it. I'm glad that you understand that the system and all the acronyms that come with it. Because this is probably, I'm assuming spouses when you, the this and that and all that comes with it. What the heck is that and all of those forms is probably, you need to be, saying well Veterans Affairs, that's it. People will take care of it. All of the other non-profits or entities. They might not have that possibility to help.

No, I know this is, the stage, be done who takes care of it. And it is the transition program and come for two years, but this is where you have to go. Compared to other systems, how do you get, how do you retain those members? Because those files are private. The names are not given to RCMP. They have to advertise to try to get the people to, the programs, because it is not an automatic, no connection, from actions to words and doing some CAFes and Veterans transition and hoping that the veterans are coming and extending to use transfer to a larger broader —.

Miscellaneous (Family)

Family Court rulings need to be changed so that Veterans Affairs disability income is absolutely, in no way included, much less grossed up as "earned income" to provide support to an ex spouse. That the Family Courts allows the discrimination against the disabled Veteran, so that an ex-spouse can monetarily capitalize on a Veteran's injuries is absurd, unfair, and shameful. And yet it happens EVERY DAY in Family Courts across the Nation.

I'm just beginning to get some information on this. The remarriage after age 60. It sounds like there's some corral we're supposed to be in, and once you're over 60 you're not supposed to be looking over the fence. I don't know what the actuarial problems are, and I was widowed after ten years I got married. I'm just going to find out. I got the call in today. They're going to tell me what my 30, 40, or 50% provisions are going to cost me. But somehow it sounds like someone didn't like the idea, someone thought I was going to marry someone 20 years old who was going to be on pension 60 years after I died.

Talking of family support, in 1969, I was taking a Special Forces course America was heavily involved in a big war, and what I observed was the widows of the many who may have been living in the area were provided with transport in a form of a staff car to pick them up and bring them into the PEX where they could shop, do their other things that they needed to do at the base, take care of them for the day and take them home. I've never seen anything like that or near that in Canada. We got CANEX which was supposed to provide services on base and they couldn't give prices of benefit of the servicemen because they had undercut local merchants. Somehow, we were trapped into something that was convenient, but no way of benefit. I don't know what they're doing now on the base. I don't think it's changed very much, but decisions on how to take care of people are important to the people who are signing the blank cheque, and there's so many things that could be done that are "too expensive", and that means that we're not worth it.

Maybe I'm drifting off here, but there is a disability tax credit out there, CRA, T2202, when I started I could go on the Internet and get it. Shortly thereafter it says it is not available, got to go to PDF, PDF you pull it up, now it cost me \$50 to get a computer whiz guy to pull that form off the computer. Right when he says hasn't counselled it, but for the average senior you can't get to it. If anybody wants the forms I have them. It is a revenue form, your doctor has to fill out.

APPENDIX

LIBÉRATION

Caractère adéquat de l'information (délais, volume et clarté)

L'information en ligne, ça vaut ce que ça vaut, monsieur. Les informations en ligne, ça vaut ce que ça vaut. Ça vaut ce que ça vaut, on regarde en ligne puis dans le temps de le dire, on se perd. Et puis quand on parle ou on écrit à une machine, il devrait y avoir plus de personnes, des fois on appelle, et c'est long, c'est long avant d'avoir la ligne.

Pour l'information en ligne, quand on fait affaire avec un ancien combattant qui a 92 ans, lui n'a pas d'informatique, il n'a pas d'ordinateur, donc s'il n'y a personne de sa famille qui fait les choses pour lui, il est complètement coupé du système.

1996 ■ Je ne sais pas de quoi vous parlez!

2009 ■ Aucune.

2014 ■ L'information donner était énorme, pour les dates j'ai pas eu de problèmes mais vue le nombre d'information donner la clarté était pas trop pire.

2017 ■ Bien.

2011 ■ Avant de prendre ma libération des Forces, j'ai assisté plusieurs fois au colloque de préparation à la retraite. Bien que l'information reçue était claire, le volume d'information était énorme et difficile à tout digérer.

1996 ■ Je ne comprends pas la question?

1993 ■ Rien.

Aucune information.

Accès à l'information, aux services et/ou aux programmes

Oui, depuis tantôt vous parlez des gestionnaires de cas, oubliez pas vous avez un agent de pension aussi qui s'occupe de vous. Qu'est-ce que la gestionnaire de cas ne connaît pas sur les droits de pension, l'agent de pension devrait le connaître.

Moi, je suis sorti en 2012, dans ce temps-là, je ne sais pas si c'est encore de même, mais il y avait beaucoup de misère avec la pension. Moi, j'ai été chanceux, je suis sorti en janvier, j'ai eu mon chèque de pension au mois de mars. Ça a pris du temps. Ceux qui sortent, je sais... ça, c'était la pension des Forces armées canadiennes, ce n'est pas une pension d'Anciens Combattants.

Au niveau du service téléphonique, au niveau fédéral, je trouve que c'est excellent parce que tout est centralisé, les personnes qui sont là sont extrêmement polies, elles ont de l'écoute et je pense que c'est extrêmement important, ils essaient de nous diriger le mieux possible, mais le problème c'est après. Un coup qu'on est dirigé du mieux possible par ces personnes-là, eux nous switch à l'autre personne, là les problèmes commencent. Il manque un document, ça prend ci, ça prend ça. Je vais vous donner un exemple, j'ai appliqué pour mon dossier avec le programme qu'on a, là, je ne me souviens pas du nom.

Ça prend des ressources humaines qui vont aider les militaires, leur donner de l'information et ça prendrait une trousse aux familles avec les numéros de téléphone à appeler, puis tout ça. Voilà. Ça, c'est mes suggestions. Je vais laisser la parole à d'autres personnes.

Le SISIP c'est une grosse machine, et ils sont en train d'être mêlés à eux-mêmes*. On voit des programmes laissés à l'abandon. C'est une suggestion qu'il faut que vous mettiez le point là-dessus.

1996 ■ Ça n'existait à ma retraite

2009 ■ Mauvaise, j'ai vécu ce deuil seul avec ma conjointe.

2014 ■ Malgré toute l'information qui avait été donner j'ai quand même eu à faire beaucoup de recherche.

2017 ■ Bien.

2011 ■ J'ai eu une bonne expérience en ce qui a trait aux services et à l'information concernant ma retraite.

1996 ■ Aucune information ma été transmis!

1993 ■ Peu de services.

Cela a été long et pénible.

Soins médicaux (transition au civil, qualité, Croix Bleue)

2012 ■ J'ai fait plus de 30 ans dans les forces et un processus de libération, ce qui est arrivé, c'est que ça fait cinq ans que je suis libéré présentement, je n'ai pas encore de médecin de famille, et puis vous savez comment c'est dans les Forces, on n'a pas besoin de notre carte d'assurance maladie et tout ça, et à la libération je pourrais dire que c'est bordélique d'avoir un médecin de famille.

1996 ■ Dans le civil plus efficace et plus à l'écoute.

2009 ■ Il a fallu que je voie un docteur et reçu un traitement de choc post traumatique.

2014 ■ Très difficile et beaucoup de recherche.

2017 ■ Très bien. J'ai obtenu un médecin de famille avant ma retraite avec le programme des forces canadiennes et obtenu mon premier RV avec le médecin civil dans les 15 jours suivant ma retraite.

2011 ■ Très difficile! Quand on a connu l'accessibilité aux soins de santé militaires, la transition au système civil est atroce et ce, surtout lorsqu'on est libéré pour des raisons médicales. Le fait de ne pas avoir déménagé après ma libération a facilité mon accès à un médecin de famille car celle-ci avait déjà les enfants dans sa clientèle alors elle a accepté de me prendre. Il n'empêche que le suivi multidisciplinaire dont je requiers a été pesant et surtout long à mettre en place car mon médecin civil ne comprend pas en détails les nombreux questionnaires requis par Anciens Combattants. De plus, plusieurs de ces derniers me sont facturés car le bureau du médecin n'accepte pas les paiements différés.

1996 ■ Je ne sais pas!

1993 ■ Ok.

Au sujet des cliniques de santé médicale. J'ai parlé beaucoup avec le directeur de la clinique de santé médicale, est-ce qu'il y a des gens qui vont à cette clinique ici? À cette clinique, ce sont des psychiatres et des psychologues. Malheureusement... Moi, j'en ai un bon, je suis chanceux parce qu'il me prescrit les pilules que j'ai besoin pour (mon affection) et (mon affection), sinon il n'aurait pas le droit de le faire. Et j'ai jaser avec le directeur et les psychiatres et l'idéal serait que les Anciens Combattants reprennent la clinique à charge, mettent des médecins généralistes là-dedans, qu'on pourrait se diriger nous autres à la clinique, pas seulement pour rencontrer nos psychiatres et psychologues, mais aussi un médecin généraliste qui viendrait régler notre problème de médecin de famille, que là on n'a pas.

Pour ouvrir une parenthèse sur la clinique, justement. Je viens de commencer le processus, on me donne un formulaire sur mon état de santé, j'aurais voulu sacrer mon camp, juste à remplir le formulaire, comment tu vois comment tu files sur papier. Ça frappe en tabarnac! Là, la fille me dit : « Tu vas rencontrer une psychiatre dans six mois. » C'est ça.

2004 ■ En fait, pour parler de la clinique, je suis sorti de l'armée en 2004, j'ai fait plus de 30 ans de service dans le (#) régiment. Je suis dans la salle et pas dans mon salon en train de chialer. Ce qui est difficile, c'est de rentrer dans le processus, un coup qu'on est dedans, ça va bien, on prend en charge notre dossier et ça va bien. Qu'est-ce qui est compliqué pour nous autres, quand on est psychologiquement malade, comment voulez-vous qu'on remplisse adéquatement les questions?

Mentalement, on n'est pas là; on est gelés, on prend trop de médicaments, on remplit les documents, et là, ce document-là, un coup qu'il est écrit reste écrit. Là, ils se basent sur ça, tu ne peux pas revenir pour dire : non, je me suis trompé, ce n'est pas ça que je voulais dire, je filais pas, je voulais dire autre chose. Non, tu as écrit ça

en 2001, donc c'est fini, on se base sur ça. Présentement j'ai des problèmes aussi, un peu comme le monsieur, j'ai demandé accès à l'information, j'ai reçu les documents, 1 559 pages, et il y a des pages qui se répètent, il n'y a pas de suivi logique à l'intérieur. J'ai appelé, j'ai dit : « Écoutez comment je peux faire pour m'organiser pour aller dans mon dossier alors que tout est disparate à l'intérieur du document? » Elle dit : « Monsieur, c'est de même que ça marche. »

J'ai deux extensions, je suis rendu en janvier pour le deuxième niveau parce que j'ai de la difficulté à faire le suivi à l'intérieur de l'ensemble du document, qui ressemble un peu aux 12 travaux d'Astérix. Anciens Combattants ils sont bons, mais l'administration est lourde, extrêmement lourde, ça n'a pas de bon sens. Mais la clinique, j'ai été trois ans que le contrôle du post-traumatique et quand la clinique a pris en main, j'ai senti une différence. Ça a pris du temps.

Le service de la clinique fonctionne, s'ils peuvent améliorer le service tant mieux. Le problème avec la liste d'attente, c'est que là il y a trop de clients sur le plancher, pas assez de ressources en avant. Moi, j'ai un psychiatre qui est très bon, je n'ai pas un mot à dire contre lui, il va prendre sa retraite.

Je prends [#] pilules par jour, ça ne paraît pas, mais... Quand je recommence avec le nouveau, il va-tu lire les quatre volumes pour comprendre le suivi? Il va partir à zéro, mais moi je ne suis pas à zéro, je suis plus loin que ça, et ça, ça m'inquiète parce qu'aujourd'hui j'ai des problèmes qui ressort, qu'on est en train d'expertiser, mais par contre mon psychiatre est en semi-retraite, il fait une journée par semaine ou deux. Là, je suis sur le bord de recommencer, et ça me tente pas pantoute, parce que quand on recommence, c'est douloureux, ça ramène des souvenirs et ce n'est pas évident pour personne. Merci.

Moi, j'ai une réponse à ça. J'avais fait une plainte pour avoir une piqûre dans le joint, avant, de la cortisone. Je fais la demande, il me la donne, ma shot de cortisone. Un mois plus tard, ça marche pas le docteur : « On va être obligé de prendre un autre médicament. » Lui, ce médicament-là, 400 \$ au lieu de 40. Il le refuse, c'est Anciens Combattants qui le refuse tout de suite, et moi, j'ai écrit pour dire : pourquoi vous me l'avez accepté pour le genou à 40 \$, et que ça fait pas d'effet, et là, la Croix Bleue a dit non, elle veut rien savoir à 400 \$? J'ai tout envoyé les preuves de pharmacie, qu'est-ce que c'était, et je n'ai jamais réentendu parler d'eux autres, et depuis ce temps-là, je suis payé toujours 5, 6 jours plus tard.

Donc, vous avez un traitement spécial? J'appelle plus ça spécial. Si tout le monde on fait le tour du Canada, est-ce que la Croix Bleue, est-ce que ceux qui sont payés le 30 de chaque mois, ils mettent ça dans leur compte de banque... Ou si c'est une vengeance personnelle? Merci.

Je m'excuse, la parole facile. Il y a des irritants. La Croix Bleue. La Croix Bleue, si j'ai bien compris le processus, a été engagée par Anciens Combattants pour effectuer des tâches. À l'occasion, la Croix Bleue fait des vérifications de contrôle de médicaments qu'on reçoit par la pharmacie puis c'est marqué sur le document « de façon aléatoire, vous avez été choisi. » Moi je ne suis pas chanceux, j'en reçois dix par année. Le problème qu'ils ont, c'est qu'ils me demandent, ça, c'est vrai, ils me demandent : à telle date, est-ce que j'ai eu telle pilule? Moi, j'ai un dispensaire, avec [#] pilules, je ne sais pas laquelle qui est laquelle là-dedans, je les prends comme c'est marqué là, point final, et le délai c'est de 6 semaines, ils me demandent si de 6 semaines as-tu pris telle pilule, oui ou non? Au début je répondais oui, je retournais ça.

Là, à un moment donné, j'ai dit : attends un petit peu, ça n'a pas de sens. Je marquais non. À un moment donné, j'ai dit : je ne réponds plus. Présentement j'accumule les feuilles. Imaginez. Il est où le suivi? Anciens Combattants paye la Croix Bleue pour faire un service et le service n'est pas fait adéquatement, mais

Anciens Combattants paye. L'argent se gaspille là, ils devraient la mettre ailleurs, sur nous autres. Parce que ça donne quoi de demander « As-tu pris ta pilule », quand ça fait 20 ans tu prends des pilules, géré par la clinique? C'est inutile de demander, parce que de mémoire je ne sais pas. Donc, c'est ça, je conte pas de menterie, mais ça prouve une chose, le système fonctionne pas parce qu'ils font pas de suivi, mais par contre aléatoirement, ils en choisissent 10 par année. Je ne suis pas chanceux.

Du côté de la médication, quand je regarde mon... (*inaudible). Je fais juste arriver, ils me connaissent maintenant, et puis même si j'ai un changement de médication, j'ai fait un téléphone, en 5 minutes c'est réglé. Sur ce côté-là, au moins, on est appuyés. Du côté du post-traumatique, mais pour les pilules, il faut qu'on aille rencontrer un médecin, et moi mon médecin pour ma (blessure) je dois prendre une (prescription), il m'a dit : « (nom), tu dois t'en trouver un. » Je vais devoir aller au privé, c'est encore beaucoup de frais à chaque visite. C'est une petite épine dans le pied.

J'aimerais revenir au niveau de la Croix Bleue. Anciens Combattants dessert le Canada au complet. Si tu sors au Québec, tu as la Croix Bleue, si tu sors en Ontario c'est un autre système, au Manitoba c'est un autre, ça va selon la province et selon l'arrangement qu'ils ont avec le système de santé de la province. Alors, il est très dur pour un ancien combattant qui parle avec un de ses copains en Colombie-Britannique qui lui dit : « J'ai eu telle affaire à Anciens Combattants. » Puis l'autre dit : « Non non non. » Ce n'est pas pareil partout, c'est différent dans chaque province. C'est malheureux pour les gens parce que les gens se battent, continuent à se battre pour essayer d'avoir des choses et ils ne sont pas capables de les avoir, et avec la Croix Bleue, à partir du moment où est-ce que tu as fait ta demande, le médecin qui t'a prescrit... Moi, je suis un des chanceux, j'ai eu une prescription chez le médecin, depuis que je suis sorti avec les spécialistes aussi, aussitôt que vous les avez, s'il y a un malheur d'avoir un changement dans la prescription, bien là c'est des lettres, des lettres qui n'en finissent plus avec la Croix Bleue pour faire accepter la nouvelle prescription, et quand on le reçoit, il y a déjà trois, quatre mois de passés, là ils vont vous dire : « Envoie une lettre avec des bills, on va te le repayer. » Ça n'a pas de bon sens.

Moi, ce que je suggérerais, qu'un jour Anciens Combattants soit national, arrêtez de penser à un soin de santé là-bas puis un ici puis un à l'autre, tout le monde pareil, on est tous dans le même groupe, là. Partout partout.

Retour au travail dans la société civile

Au sujet de l'intégration et du retour au travail, plusieurs de nous durant leur carrière ont fait comme nous probablement, sont allés chercher les cours à l'université pour améliorer leur sort un coup qu'on va prendre notre retraite ou, spéculatif, gagner des rangs, monter dans la hiérarchie. Mais quand on sort de l'armée, j'essaie d'appliquer dans plusieurs travaux, à 52 ans ou 53 ans, aller travailler à 13 piastres de l'heure, 14 piastres de l'heure, pour finalement que je vais gagner une piastre, il va en sortir 42 cennes en impôt.

Ce que j'aimerais que vous proposiez au ministre de la Défense nationale, au ministre des Anciens Combattants, en accordance avec le ministère du Revenu — et là, portez bien attention messieurs les retraités de l'armée — ceux qui sont sortis médical comme moi, que notre taux d'intérêt de taxation sur notre pension médicale soit gelé, et que si on se retrouve un travail et qu'on retourne travailler, à ce moment-là on sera taxé sur notre nouveau revenu et non combiner les deux, et c'est la raison pourquoi beaucoup de vétérans ne retournent pas au travail, parce qu'ils additionnent notre nouveau revenu avec notre pension.

Donc ma suggestion, et je pense que tout le monde serait bien d'accord avec ça, c'est que si on sort médical, que

notre pension soit gelée au taux de taxation de 28 ou 30 % complètement indépendant du nouveau salaire qu'on va faire. Ça aurait-tu du sens, ça?

Voyons, en tout cas la transition, les services de transition, tout ça, que, après notre deux ans avec le RRM, le SISIP, j'ai retourné aux études et tout ça, de s'assurer que, tu sais, il y a un suivi et que si finalement je ne suis pas apte à l'emploi... Tu sais, c'est parce que moi, je me suis renseigné sur Internet, dans le volet adaptation, il y a un volet psychosocial, professionnel, j'ai pu continuer mes études, ça a été payé par CANVET*, si j'étais pas intelligent comme ça, que j'étais pas allé sur Internet, je n'aurais pas eu accès à ces ressources-là.

2017 ■ Je voudrais parler des bons coups, tout à l'heure. Il y en a des bons coups. Quand on sort, y'a les scans des séminaires et tout ça... (*inaudible). Mais ils sont là pour répondre puis... mais tu ne sais pas qu'est-ce qui t'attend en avant, ça fait que les questions que tu aurais pu poser là, tu les as pas en tête. Il y en a plusieurs de nous autres qui sortent amochés. Moi, j'ai plus de 40 ans de service, je suis sorti cette année, on en a enduré, on en a caché des bobos... parce que si on en avait des bobos, dans le temps, soit on était mis dehors, on était marqué, on voulait juste faire le job, un point c'est tout. Avec le nouveau système, avec toutes les niaiseries qu'ils nous font faire, 13 kilomètres avec des poids sur les épaules, le gars est rendu à 55 ans, il est encore bon, il travaille bien, on va le scraper, qu'il fasse comme les jeunes, ça fait qu'on mange une mosus de volée les 5 - 10 dernières années, le corps en mange une bonne.

Un coup qu'on est sorti, c'est là que ça se gâche un petit peu. Le Canada a investi une fortune, ils nous ont entraîné, éduqués c'est incroyable les qualités de travail qu'on a, et la majorité de nous autres, on a bien de la misère à se replacer, parce que c'est compliqué, tu es rendu trop vieux, il n'y a pas de système pour dire « Hey! Les business, on a investi des millions dans ces gens-là ». Crime on est encore capable d'utiliser, on ne dit pas qu'on veut avoir des salaires comme tout le monde, etc., aidez-nous à avoir de quoi.

Moi, je travaillais, j'ai été plus de 10 ans dans les opérations, 100 milles à l'heure. On n'a pas beaucoup de support de ce côté-là, nous préparer à sortir, ils font ce qu'ils peuvent, mais... Il se perd de l'argent, des connaissances, des capacités dans le monde du travail au Canada, les militaires on est entraînés, on sait où on s'en va, mais on dirait qu'un coup qu'on est sortis, c'est fini.

Ce que je m'aperçois aussi, les nouveaux qui sont sortis, qui ont été deux ans sur le programme SISIP (parce que je viens de finir le programme SISIP), Anciens Combattants et SISIP ne se parlent pas. D'un côté, on a nos médecins qui disent : « Tu ne peux pas aller travailler », et l'autre côté SISIP me disent : « Il faut que tu retournes travailler. » Oui, j'ai [#] ans et je vais retourner travailler éventuellement, c'est officiel. Comme Félix Leclerc disait : si tu veux tuer un homme, laisse-le chez lui payé à rien faire. Il serait temps que SISIP et Anciens Combattants se parlent et pas attendre pendant 2 ans qu'ils passent le dossier à Anciens Combattants.

Quand tu veux rentrer quelque part, c'est plus compliqué, et pour des anciens combattants, travailler à temps plein, si tu as déjà une pension de 30, 40, 50 000, tu vas travailler et tu fais un autre 30, 40, 50 000, ça fait mal à l'impôt. Si tu veux essayer, comme ici dans la région de (ville), c'est le plein emploi, il devrait y avoir un programme qui parle aux employeurs. C'est sûr que ce n'est pas des jobs clés, mais des jobs qui pourraient dire : « Nous autres on serait intéressés à avoir des gens qui veulent travailler », on fait une semaine à deux. Une semaine il travaille deux jours, l'autre... T'sais, je ne sais pas si c'est quelque chose qui se ferait, mais c'est peut-être une idée. C'est sûr qu'à temps plein, je sais, j'ai travaillé à temps plein et ça coûte cher d'impôt.

Je vous félicite puis j'espère, j'espère qu'on va arrêter de donner des coups d'épée dans l'eau et de prêcher dans le désert. J'ai fermé une fermeture en cour contre les Anciens Combattants, disant que le ministère de la Défense est très différent des autres. Les autres ministères, vous êtes assis sur une chaise avec des roues et vous regardez des paysages et des montagnes. Les vétérans, on est toujours dans une montagne et ce qu'on espère c'est de ne pas finir notre carrière sur une chaise avec des roues. Je peux vous dire, on travaille au Service correctionnel, il y a des fonctionnaires qui travaillent au Service correctionnel, qui ne sont pas assis sur des chaises avec des roues.

Je ne parlais pas pour vous autres.

À mon avis, ça se peut que je me trompe, la pension devrait suivre, mais ça dépend si vous avez fait le transfert immédiatement ou s'il y avait un laps de temps entre le départ des Forces armées et puis d'être engagé par (une agence), dans ce cas-là, ce serait une nouvelle embauche. Je sais qu'il y a un projet... Non, il n'y a pas un projet de loi, il y a eu une modification à la Loi sur les pensions il y a une couple d'années... en 2013, qui fait en sorte que les militaires qui transfèrent à la fonction publique ne tombent pas dans de nouveaux groupes qui doivent continuer à travailler jusqu'à 60 ans avant de prendre la pension, ou GRC vice versa, je ne me rappelle pas. Nous, on est en train d'encourager les personnes qui veulent changer ça pour traiter les membres de la GRC et les membres des Forces de façon égale. Mais c'est le contexte où quelqu'un quitte la GRC et les Forces aujourd'hui et commence à travailler demain dans la fonction publique. Ce n'est pas dans le cas où quelqu'un prend une période de temps.

Mon point c'est que le problème est, la plupart qui sortent de la GRC ou de l'armée, peu importe, s'ils sortent médical, c'est probablement qu'ils sont pas faits pour aller travailler immédiatement. Donc, ils n'ont pas le choix de retirer leur pension ou leur allocation d'Anciens Combattants, mais après ça, quand ils retournent travailler au fédéral, quand ils réussissent à se trouver un emploi qui n'est pas 90 jours, qu'ils sont nommés permanents, c'est que là, ils peuvent pas racheter leur pension, c'est impossible, ils sont pénalisés. Donc, si je n'étais pas fait pour l'armée, je ne suis pas plus fait pour rester jusqu'à 65 ans à (l'agence).

Attentes sur les groupes de transition proposés

1996 ■ Bonne idée.

2009 ■ Que chaque retraité de la GRC soit rencontré pour avoir plus de suivis.

2014 ■ Je crois que, essayer et corriger ce qui ne fonctionne pas est appeler à mettre les choses au mieux.

2017 ■ Pas grand chose.

2011 ■ Un meilleur accès aux soins de santé civils SPECIFIQUEMENT dans le cas d'une libération pour des raisons de santé. Une assurance de ne pas être laissé pour compte pour une période indéterminée lors de notre sortie des Forces.

1996 ■ Sans aucun doute il devra y avoir du positif...

1993 ■ Ok.

Processus de libération

Moi, je suis de la GRC, je suis seul de mon groupe. Je vous remercie d'avoir invité la GRC. Il y a quand même plusieurs membres qui se joignent à vous lorsqu'on va en mission de paix et lorsqu'on va à l'étranger. Deux commentaires ou deux points concernant nous, à la GRC, lorsqu'on se retire en fin de mission — pas en fin de mission, mais en fin de service, c'est similaire à vous, donc aucun examen médical, et vous, similitude au niveau de la famille. Comme moi, je suis arrivé de l'étranger, avant de prendre ma pension, ça faisait des années que je n'avais pas été à la maison, donc il y a toujours une transition qui doit se faire personnellement et avec la famille, il n'y a pas de support là-dedans, c'est similaire, la famille est laissée à elle-même, c'est à nous à régler à l'intérieur de la maison les problèmes. Ça, c'est similaire.

GRC commentaire ■ Un deuxième point, lorsque tu reviens, chez nous en tout cas, militaire je ne sais pas, le travail n'est pas reconnu. L'aspect psychologique c'est difficile pour l'individu, tes collègues croient que tu es en vacances ou que tu es parti à l'étranger et que la vie a été belle pendant trois, quatre, six ans, etc., donc là, c'est ce qui est difficile aussi.

J'agis à (ville) en tant que pair aidant, et dans la plupart des cas, quand je rentre dans un cabanon pour aller désamorcer une situation qui est dangereuse, le gars dit tout le temps qu'il est tanné de se battre, qu'il s'est battu l'autre bord et qu'il se bat encore contre les Anciens Combattants pour avoir son dû, pour finalement avoir une pension qui est raisonnable, faire son deuil de sortir de l'armée. C'est un deuil de sortir de l'armée. Il y a deux grosses choses qui nous donnent un coup en sortant de l'armée — ceux qui viennent de sortir, vous me regarderez-vous hocherez la tête — quand on passe au QM, qu'on nous redonne notre stock, puis quand on nous remet notre carte d'identité. C'est ce que les gars trouvent le plus dur, plus le manque de camaraderie.

Degré de préparation à la transition du retour à la vie civile

Je suis sorti, moi, j'ai été chanceux, je suis sorti correct. Aussi, quand tu sors, moi, je suis rentré dans les forces à l'âge que j'avais moins de 20 ans, je suis sorti après quasiment 30 ans de service, c'est sûr que quand tu t'en retournes dans le civil, comme le gars disait, tu n'es rien. Tu as monté dans les Forces... Le seul fait que j'ai sorti, c'est parce que j'étais tanné au niveau mutation, je ne voulais plus être muté. Quand tu sors, tu vas dans le civil, il faut que tu refasses ton nom, que tu recommences à zéro, et essayer de te vendre, négocier un salaire, c'est toutes des choses que tu n'as pas apprises. Quand tu rentres dans l'armée, tu vas au centre de recrutement, tu ne négocies pas de salaire, tu ne fais rien de ça. Je sais que dans mon temps il y avait des cours comment faire un CV, des choses de même. C'est des choses qui pourraient être améliorées.

1996 ■ Aucunement.

2009 ■ Non, de la GRC.

2014 ■ Oui mais parce que j'étais (carrière) mais malgré tout je continue à dire que pour un autre métier il devrait y avoir des séances plus spécifiques pour vous aider à passer les étapes de transitions de façon plus facile car j'ai rencontré beaucoup de personnes qui auraient voulu avoir et recevoir de l'aide pour planifier plus tôt certaines étapes de leurs transitions.

2017 ■ Oui.

2011 ■ J'ai beaucoup apprécié pouvoir prendre part au programme de transition vers la libération pour les derniers 6 mois de mon service militaire. Cela m'a permis de travailler avec des collègues civils et ainsi que tranquillement vivre sans uniforme tout en contribuant à la société.

1996 ■ Non, c'est seulement 20 ans plus tard et ayant ma carte d'anciens combattants que je suis allé chercher de l'aide. Durant ses années j'ai vécu dans le désespoir et dépression après dépression et l'année qui a suivi ma libération j'ai connu un divorce, ma femme ne pouvait plus vivre avec moi dû à mon comportement et mes moments de frustrations. Aujourd'hui j'ai [#] ans je suis bien encadré par les anciens combattants par je vis un grand sentiment de honte et peu d'estime de moi-même. Tout cela pour conclure, j'aurai aimé mieux mourir en service que vivre ce que je vie. L'adaptation à la vie civile est toujours un défi pour moi, je m'isole de plus en plus... pas facile de changer de vie surtout a [#] ans. Très dure pour la santé mentale...la vie civile évolue trop vite. Il faudrait être psychologue pour survivre pis encore.

1993 ■ Non.

ANCIENS COMBATTANTS CANADA

Accès à l'information, aux services et/ou aux programmes

Mon dossier des ACC, ce n'est pas évident. C'est plus facile aller à la banque parler en chinois que de travailler avec cette machine-là. Ça n'a pas de bon sens. Je vais vous donner un exemple, j'ai fait une réclamation, en fait j'en ai fait 20 — on n'est pas limité, je suis post-traumatique et j'ai des problèmes de santé, quand je file pas, je reste chez nous, quand ça va bien je travaille. J'ai rempli 20 documents, j'ai envoyé ça, ça ne s'est jamais rendu. Grosse perte de temps. Parce que moi je ne suis pas comme la madame en avant, je tape pas aussi vite que ça.

Là, aujourd'hui, j'ai refait l'exercice, mais par groupe de trois réclamations seulement pour être sûr que ça fonctionne. Ça fait que ce système-là, comme monsieur a expliqué, si on a pas accès à l'informatique puis si on n'est pas au niveau mettons fédéral, je pourrais dire, on a de la misère à suivre. Il y a des journées que je ne suis pas capable, je lis puis je ne comprends pas. Mais je n'ai pas d'autres services que ça, je suis pogné sur ce service-là et c'est extrêmement complexe, comme je disais tantôt, ça devrait... Je sais que c'est de l'information confidentielle, mais le processus devrait être plus simple que ça. J'ai fait une plainte sur le fait que j'ai fait mes 20 réclamations v'là 3 semaines et demie, ils nous ont dit : « On vous rappelle demain, monsieur. » Là je suis en attente, 3 semaines et demie. Donc, ça démontre que le système à la première ligne ça fonctionne, mais quand on va plus creux et qu'on va plus creux et qu'on va loin, là la distance entre la personne et nous autres est tellement grande qu'on devient un numéro, puis là, le processus ne marche plus.

Pour faire du chemin sur ce que monsieur vient de dire, moi, je suis un jeune vétéran, comme vous pouvez voir, puis, bien c'est ça, moi ça a été très, très simple pour moi, là, côté informatique, donc c'était plus simple pour moi d'avoir mon dossier en ligne avec Mon dossier ACC, j'ai fait deux demandes de déplacement pour des frais médicaux, des remboursements, puis ils voulaient une pièce justificative, tout ça, puis c'était trop compliqué, donc j'ai refait une demande par la poste, comme j'avais toujours fait, puis dans un délai vraiment raisonnable, j'ai été remboursé puis j'ai eu un suivi par téléphone. On nous offre un service qui est bien, qui peut répondre aux besoins de ceux qui le désirent, en ligne. Les personnes d'un autre âge eux préfèrent la poste, par contre c'est dommage qu'il n'y ait pas le suivi dans ce choix-là, t'sais, on le fait en ligne puis ça semble pas fonctionner, ça fait que finalement c'est mieux de le faire par la poste. Je me garde des originaux des reçus, par exemple de transport, etc. Et puis, bien c'est ça, finalement c'est plus simple de faire l'ancienne méthode. C'est un petit peu compliqué, on se perd avec les différents services.

Rencherir sur un point. Si les Anciens Combattants mettent de l'avant un système électronique, il devrait être en tout point fonctionnel. Là, si j'entends le monsieur, c'est mieux l'ancienne méthode. On parle de l'empreinte environnementale partout. Si on le fait, qu'on le fasse adéquatement.

On est rendu de nos jours où est-ce qu'on peut prendre une photo d'un chèque et la banque va le déposer. Qu'est-ce qu'on attend pour faire la même affaire? Envoyez votre formulaire, prends la photo, tu le mets en ligne, il l'envoie. Si les banques acceptent un chèque par photo, batince! Qu'est-ce qu'on fait?

Bonsoir tout le monde. Je suis un gars de (ville), je suis membre de ANRF* depuis 15 à 20 ans à peu près, j'ai passé plus de 20 ans dans les Forces et quand j'ai sorti, j'avais un confrère de ma région puis c'est lui qui était le boss à (l'unité)... (inaudible)* et c'est lui qui m'a dit : « Tu devrais faire des demandes aux Anciens Combattants du Canada. » Ça fait que depuis ce temps-là, là, c'est rien que des problèmes. C'est rien que des problèmes.

Je suis d'accord avec vous, mais savez-vous comment ça marche, le système de vétérans, pour se battre, hein? La première demande qu'on fait, 98 % des cas, est refusée. Là, c'est des avocats qui nous représentent... Écoutez là, c'est-tu normal que vous êtes payé par un ministère des Anciens Combattants et moi je vous actionne les Anciens Combattants parce que vous ne savez pas lire entre les lignes que je suis malade, vous comprenez ça? Ce n'est pas normal. C'est pour ça que je vous demande : savez-vous dans quoi que vous embarquez comme il faut? Parce que quand vous êtes rendu au troisième, quatrième niveau, la troisième gang, on monte au quatrième, c'est les mêmes qui jugent qu'au troisième. C'est vrai. Si c'est refusé au troisième, qu'est-ce que vous pensez qu'ils vont faire au quatrième?

Je pourrais vous en parler longuement. En tant qu'avocat devant le tribunal des Anciens Combattants, sur ce point-là, mais peut-être on devrait continuer parce qu'on va avoir beaucoup d'informations. On sait dans quoi on embarque, oui, parce qu'on connaît le ministère, on connaît le système. Il y a eu des changements, le nouveau système est pour les personnes qui sont actuellement, il est différent de ce qu'il était auparavant et on va voir dans quelle mesure ça répond aux besoins, si ça corrige certaines erreurs du passé.

Votre problème, est-ce que vous pouvez me dire, parce que moi, je suis sous l'ancien régime? Et là, j'ai des bobos je repasse sous le nouveau régime, mais mes problèmes viennent de l'ancien, on fait quoi? Là, j'ai passé devant eux autres, j'ai demandé une réévaluation, qu'est-ce qu'ils m'ont dit? « Ah! On s'est fié sur votre qualité de vie de 2006 », on est en 2017. Il y a des changements. Hein c'est bon, ça me rassure, ça. Mais tout ça, ça part de loin.

Moi, je suis très ouvert à tout. Je voudrais revenir sur le programme (Mon dossier ACC*) (*inaudible)... Moi aussi j'ai appelé là et j'ai écrit ça. Ils ont dit : « Oui, monsieur (mauvais nom) » Je suis (bon nom), moi. « Vous avez mal aux (blessure)? » « Non, moi c'est (autre blessure et blessure) » « Ah! Attendez. » Là, ça a pris un mois avant qu'ils me reviennent. Ça c'est récent, là, c'est récent. Donc il y a des problèmes avec... J'entends. Merci. Oui, monsieur.

Je prends beaucoup de notes parce que ceux qui me connaissent, je fais beaucoup de radio, beaucoup de télévision et je suis bien impliqué avec les vétérans. On parle de ACC, puis de accès à Mon dossier et tout ça, la clé, la clé du succès, c'est un gestionnaire de cas. Si vous avez une bonne gestionnaire de cas, vous êtes en business; si vous n'en avez pas une bonne, trouvez-vous-en une, ça presse. J'ai vu un dossier avec un an de retard parce que la madame était partie en congé de maternité pendant un an et ses dossiers sont restés sur son bureau pendant un an. Il y a du monde qui ont un petit peu perdu du temps. Et c'est dommage. Ça, c'est la clé des problèmes.

Et dans mes dossiers, j'ai des dossiers, anciens dossiers, j'ai commencé en [année] avec Anciens Combattants, mon plus long, ça a pris 9 ans à régler, mais aujourd'hui, avec le nouveau système, ce n'est pas les meilleurs, c'est entre deux et trois ans pour régler un dossier. Ça n'a pas de sens non plus.

Pour revenir aux gestionnaires de cas, j'ai eu beaucoup de problèmes avec eux autres, à cause que au téléphone ils disent une affaire et deux, trois semaines plus tard il faut que tu reviennes sur le sujet : « Je n'ai jamais dit ça. » Je dis : « On va arrêter ça, le téléphone, vous m'envoyez ça par écrit. » Et depuis ce temps-là, je n'ai plus de gestionnaire. J'ai seulement un gestionnaire quand je fais une demande de réévaluation ou quoi que ce soit ou des informations

des vétérans, il me l'envoie par courriel. À part de ça, le gestionnaire de cas, je ne sais plus c'est qui. C'était mon commentaire sur les gestionnaires de cas.

Je peux vous dire quand j'étais là, on était en train de sortir un système, malheureusement je ne connais que l'acronyme anglais : le CSEN network, et c'était une base de données où il devait y avoir toutes les interactions avec les clients, que ce soit pour la santé ou les avocats, le tout devrait être indiqué là-dedans. Je comprends votre frustration, si ce n'est pas le cas... (son pas assez fort).

J'ai fait une demande à un gestionnaire de cas pour une cause et après 10 minutes, elle m'a dit : « Je m'excuse, mais ce n'est pas moi qui s'occupe de ça, c'est ma superviseure. » J'ai dit : « Passez-moi votre superviseure. » J'ai parlé avec la superviseure : « Monsieur, je m'excuse, ce n'est pas moi, il va falloir que je parle avec quelqu'un de plus haut. » Là, je parle à quelqu'un de plus haut, on me dit après ça : « Bien là, il va falloir que tu me l'envoies par écrit. » Je l'envoie par écrit. Après l'avoir envoyé par écrit, je reçois une lettre : « Maintenant il faut que tu ailles du côté juridique, parce que ce n'est pas nous autres qui va régler ça. » Bien, voyons donc!

Moi, ce que j'ai aimé de ma carrière dans les Forces, bien qu'elle ait été courte, c'était le côté social, t'sais, prendre une bière au mess, le côté humain j'ai aimé ça, et à la libération, ça a été dit par plusieurs : un numéro. C'est ça que je retiens : un numéro. Mais j'ai été chanceux, j'ai eu un gestionnaire de cas incroyable, et quelqu'un à Anciens Combattants, madame Diane Sparks, je ne sais pas s'il y en a qui ont fait affaire avec elle, mais j'ai eu un dossier impeccable avec cette dame.

2010 ■ Mais, comme ça a été dit, on a entendu plusieurs choses, l'accès à l'information c'est très difficile, et moi, je suis un jeune assez allumé, quand j'ai été libéré, en 2010 j'ai été libéré, ça a pris un an pour traiter mon dossier médical avant que je reçoive ma décision de : « Tu es libéré, médical. »

Avoir accès à l'information suite à ma libération, ça a été pénible, je me ramassais... Monsieur parlait de Astérix tout à l'heure, j'avais l'impression de me ramasser là-dedans, et heureusement que j'avais compris ma condition médicale, j'ai eu un bon suivi psychologique, des bons rendez-vous, et j'étais éveillé pour prendre en main mon dossier. J'étais capable d'aller sur l'internet, Mon dossier ACC, gérer les papiers, et mon épouse me soutenait là-dedans. Si j'étais une personne plus âgée, médicalement inapte, j'aurais jamais eu accès à ces dossiers-là. C'est en jasant avec un de mes amis, militaire avec moi : « Hey! (nom) tu peux faire une demande d'invalidité, d'indemnité tout ça. » Bien voyons!

Vous n'avez pas parlé du programme PAAC, Programme d'autonomie des anciens combattants. Ça, c'est le ménage à la maison puis le gazon puis bla-bla-bla. Présentement c'est géré par la Croix Bleue. Alors, il ne faut pas obstiner la Croix Bleue. J'ai eu de mauvaises expériences avec eux autres, j'ai été obligé d'écrire au ministre des Anciens Combattants, et depuis ce temps-là, je suis payé très tard. Je vis ici, mais mes collègues sont d'une région proche, et ils sont payés le 15 eux autres, mais là le 15 c'est un dimanche, ils sont payés vendredi, mais moi je suis payé... Ils l'envoient le 2, le lundi autrement dit, et je le reçois 5 jours plus tard. Hein! Ça fait que là, qu'est-ce qu'on fait.

Je me dis, je vais appeler l'ombudsman des vétérans; quatre mois plus tard, ils me répondent : « Bien là vous êtes payé quand même, achalez-nous pas avec ça. » Avant on était payé la fin du mois, et quand le 30 était un samedi ou un dimanche, ça rentrait automatiquement le vendredi. Là, ce n'est plus ça avec nous. Mon cas à moi. Je ne sais pas s'il y en a d'autres à travers le Canada, j'imagine que oui, mais il y a une question à se poser là-dessus : pourquoi ils font ça?

Les employeurs sont prêts à t'aider, mais il y a une d'organisation à l'interne. Il devrait un agent de cas en service pour recevoir le client et l'évaluer et garder un suivi jusqu'il aille un agent désigner a lui. Mon exemple en est une... Après ma 1iere visite à l'accueil j'ai remis mes papiers sur mon évaluation psychologie et que j'avais déjà ma carte d'Anciens Combattants pour blessure au dos dans mon service militaire. À toutes les fois je me présentais soit pour retourner mes autres papiers demander ou aller poser des questions, je ne voyais jamais la même personne au comptoir, il fallait que je réexplique mon cas mon à chaque fois... assez humiliant merci! ça pris quelques semaines pour enfin avoir un agent désigner. La réponse que j'ai eu "trop de demande... pas assez d'agents. Il devrait avoir une date d'échéance, une fois chaque demande déposer par le chef du personnel ou bien donner un suivi dans un délai raisonnable. Il ne faut pas oublier quelqu'un qui se présente normalement il est en détresse. Une journée d'attente peux lui sembler une semaine d'attente.

Membre de la GRC à la retraite en personne.

J'ai reçu des services après avoir dû m'adresser à un organisme externe.

Ils devraient avoir plus de personnes spécialiser dans les bureaux ACC. Par travailleurs social ou Infirmière ou même quelqu'un en service sur appel comme la police ont dans leurs système d'intervention...

En personne.

Aidants naturels ■ Aucune.

Aucune.

Suggestion d'aide pour la transition ■ Rencontre.

Aspects juridiques et appels

Moi, j'aimerais juste donner un conseil à ceux qui sont vraiment intéressés, à ceux qui vont en cour fédérale. Moi, je suis abonné à la diffusion des cours d'appel fédérales et des cours fédérales. À tous les jours, je reçois tout, tout, tout ce qui se passe au Canada, la GRC, le monde qui ont monté jusqu'en cour fédérale. Je vais vous dire une affaire, on apprend énormément là. Il y a un autre service qui s'appelle CanLII, ça regroupe toutes les décisions de toutes les cours au Canada.

Pour les commentaires qui ont été faits, que le processus des Anciens Combattants est long, c'est vrai, il y a certaines personnes qui vont en appel. Ça prend plus que trois ans avant que leur cause soit jugée, ils gagnent leur cause, et là, ils auraient le droit d'avoir des montants rétroactifs. Là, ils disent : « On ne peut pas vous donner de montant rétroactif parce que la Loi des anciens combattants ne retourne pas plus que trois ans en arrière. » À ce moment-là, il faut que tu retournes en appel. Ça fait que la personne peut se retrouver trois fois en appel, même si elle a gagné sa cause, pour avoir les bénéfices qu'elle a droit. Merci.

La loi a été changée par la suite, je sais, mais quand moi, j'étais là, dans un cas comme ça, si on gagne en appel, on paye depuis le jour initial. Je sais que la loi a été changée depuis que je suis parti.

Je vais vous montrer quelque chose, ici. Ça, ces deux livres-là, c'est moi qui les a montés moi-même pour aller en cour fédérale, et j'ai gagné mon point parce que à la dernière minute, il y a une madame, madame Harris Guillemette -- c'est l'avocate en chef de l'Ombudsman des Vétérans, elle est à Ottawa -- dernière minute, elle m'appelle. Moi, tout est fait, j'attends qu'ils me disent quand est-ce que je passe en cour. C'est-tu normal que moi, je suis obligé de faire ça?

Maintenant, je parle pour les plaintes, ceux qui sont allés en cour. C'est dur d'aller en plainte quand on se présente au Bureau des Anciens Combattants pour débattre notre cas, parce qu'on a une petite fille de 26 ans qui sort du Barreau... (plus de son). Donc je reviens encore une fois, c'est désolant...

Bien, ils ont compris ma blessure et ont rendu une décision équitable dans mon cas dans le passé. J'en ai un autre cas sur mon état psychologie qui est en traitement depuis mars et d'après leur lettre d'accuser réception la demande aurait dû prendre de 4 à 6 semaines à être traité, alors ça fait 7 mois j'attends et toujours sans nouvelles. Je ne sais pas où est-ce ma demande est rendue...même mon agent de cas ne peut me répondre concrètement... j'ai l'impression c'est elle qui retient le dossier.

C'est long et pénible.

Qualité du soutien

Commentaire GRC ■ En mission de paix, chez nous il y a deux niveaux de... Deux classes de personnes, une classe qui sont comme vous, lorsqu'ils quittent le pays ils vont en contingent, les missions de paix, de guerre.

Moi, je n'ai jamais quitté le Canada... J'ai quitté le Canada pendant de nombreuses années, mais jamais en tant que membre d'un groupe de contingence. J'ai quitté le Canada, à l'étranger en tant que chef de mission en mission de paix ou négociateur avant que l'armée arrive pour des traités de paix; avant que la guerre cesse, il y a des négociations qui se font.

Donc là, la difficulté qui existe... Je me compare un peu au général Dallaire parce que lui était chef du groupe militaire, moi j'étais chef du groupe de policiers en mission de paix, j'ai été représentant spécial aussi, mais principalement chef. Donc là, lorsqu'il arrive quelque chose au sein des troupes, le gouvernement canadien, la Croix Bleue, les Anciens Combattants s'occupent d'une certaine façon... c'est la même chose pour les policiers (*inaudible).

Chez nous c'est la même chose, chez nos policiers. Je suis d'accord avec vous, il y a beaucoup de gars de la GRC qui chialent, qui chialent, j'aurais beaucoup aimé qu'ils soient ici aussi pour témoigner et vous appuyer dans les choses et faire part dans leurs difficultés, ils ont sûrement des difficultés similaires.

S'il existe un problème au sein des troupes, ils ont l'appui de leur gouvernement contrairement à nous, lorsque nous sommes en charge d'une mission, nous nous rapportons aux Nations Unies, donc nous avons un drapeau canadien sur notre épaule, mais... Donc, lorsque le Canada arrive pour appuyer nos troupes, comme moi en (pays), j'ai perdu [#] de mes hommes (incident), le Canada a envoyé immédiatement des psychologues et tout pour le contingent canadien (un petit contingent de [#] policiers). Lorsque je me suis présenté pour m'asseoir et parler au psychologue et parler de mon aventure et qu'il m'écoutent, ils m'ont poliment dit qu'ils n'étaient pas là pour moi, que s'il y avait des problèmes, que j'avais les Nations Unies à New York et puis (?).

Tout ça pour dire qu'il y a quand même beaucoup de difficultés qui existent. Lorsqu'on sort d'expériences comme ça, lorsque mon (incident) et qu'on a perdu [#] de nos soldats, c'était une mission conjointe militaire-police, ça laisse toujours des marques. Lorsqu'il y a des désordres civils, mais il n'y a personne qui s'occupe de nous lorsqu'on revient au Canada.

C'est mieux que rien.

Je me suis aperçu qu'à partir du gestionnaire de cas et son superviseur, est-ce qu'ils ont les connaissances et les formations sur tout le, tout le, tous les points de vue qu'on veut discuter avec eux autres? Parce que des fois on arrive devant eux autres : « C'est quoi tu parles? » Elle m'a accusé, moi, que je ne sais pas de quoi je parle, et je dis : « Madame, c'est dans votre règlement, vous utilisez ce règlement pour prendre cette décision. » elle m'a rappelé : « Vous aviez raison, mais là j'aimerais l'avoir par écrit. »

Je me dis, moi, il manque de personnel à la libération, des gens compétents, comme ça a été dit par monsieur, pour avoir un accès, avoir l'heure juste de : qu'est-ce qui se passe quand je libère? Pas juste de nous refiler un dossier de 2 500 pages, mais nous l'expliquer et qu'il y ait quelqu'un qui assure un suivi et qui en parle aussi à nos familles, à nos épouses, parce que moi le jour où je n'irai pas bien médicalement, je ne serai plus apte à faire mes réclamations, appeler, traiter mon dossier : « Comment ça va ma pension, mon dossier d'invalidité, ça avance-tu? »

Mais, t'sais, le gouvernement il y a quelques années ils ont coupé des points d'accès à Anciens Combattants pour les transférer à Service Canada. On est chanceux à (ville), on l'a encore, mais il y en a partout au Canada ils n'ont plus ça, des bureaux que tu peux parler à quelqu'un, il faut qu'il passe par Service Canada, puis là c'est des fonctionnaires aussi, mais ils sont comme moins bons que quand tu vas direct à Anciens Combattants.

Ils (Service Canada) sont plus polyvalents et donc moins spécialistes. Exactement, pour sauver des coûts. Là, c'est écrit ce soir, on devrait se réjouir d'être là ce soir parce qu'on peut faire entendre nos voix et c'est le temps de dire ce qu'on a à dire. Ça prend plus de personnel compétent à la libération, dans les cliniques, dans les... Excusez-moi, la transition à la libération, on parlait de...

On va aller dans le positif aussi. Premièrement c'est très intéressant, je vous remercie de vous être déplacés comme ça, c'est dommage que l'intérêt n'est pas partagé envers tout le monde, mais comme vous avez dit, c'est mieux la qualité de la quantité, et c'est un très bon commentaire. Moi, de mon côté, je pense que j'ai tombé sur une bonne gestionnaire de cas, ce qui m'empêche de passer par le Web. Moi je lui écris personnellement, je fais juste lui marquer : appelle-moi.

Ce qui est plate, je sais qu'il y a eu une vague d'embauche au niveau des gestionnaires de cas, et moi-même je voulais envoyer mon CV, et puis la gestionnaire de cas m'a dit : « (nom) si tu n'as pas de bac, envoie rien. » Donc quelqu'un qui a un bac en arts plastiques va essayer de comprendre un gars qui a plus de 20 ans de service. On a un premier ministre qui a un bac en art dramatique et ce n'est pas grave. (*inaudible) (désolée le son coupe).

Non, mais les Forces, la GRC, services correctionnels, la Garde côtière, il y a des ministères qui sont différents des autres, mais c'est vrai, beaucoup des fonctionnaires travaillent dans des bureaux.

Elles sont toutes incompetentes. Il y en a qui sont dures à comprendre.

Soutien plus important pour le vétéran ■ Aucune.

FAMILLE

Qualité du soutien

2006 ■ Oui, on va revenir là-dessus, sur la discussion famille. On a de la misère à avoir du soutien pour nous autres, imaginez-vous les familles! Ils n'ont même pas de dossier, rien à ACC; c'est le bordel pour nous autres, mais la famille c'est leur dernier souci. Ils ne sont pas capables de s'occuper de nous autres comme il faut. Je suis sorti

en 2006... J'ai eu un suivi 3 ans. Il a dit que j'étais correct, l'année passée j'ai replongé... J'suis pas capable encore de retourner travailler. J'ai eu mon premier rendez-vous avec mon médecin de famille... Comme un autre intervenant a dit tantôt, c'est bien beau, mais on recommence toujours le processus, on est toujours au début de la roue. La roue elle tourne, elle tourne, mais il n'y a rien qui suit.

C'est bien beau être payé, l'argent, là, elle ne donne pas la santé, mais donnez-nous un service qui est fiable puis qui est rapide, qui prend pas des années, peut-être que déjà là la famille ça va s'en ressentir un petit peu. Merci.

2001 ■ Bonsoir, au niveau de la famille, moi aussi j'ai des points à mentionner. Chaque ancien combattant quand on part on a un gestionnaire de cas ou une gestionnaire de cas et tu vis avec. Ce n'est pas comme un mariage, mais c'est tout comme, tu l'as puis c'est fini, tu ne peux pas choisir. Je pense qu'eux devraient s'impliquer au niveau de la famille.

Un exemple. Moi, je suis post-traumatique très sévère, je suis contrôlé aujourd'hui, mais en 2001, je tournais comme une pirouette partout. J'ai tombé en dépression majeure, ma femme aussi, elle s'est retrouvée au privé, elle a perdu sa job, pas à cause de elle, à cause de moi, qu'elle m'endurait. Il n'y a personne qui a rien fait pour ça.

Si on veut aider les familles, il faut que ça commence par le gestionnaire de cas, qu'il s'implique, qu'il marque : « famille d'un tel », et non « dossier 1234 ». Parce que moi, j'ai un numéro, mais j'ai un nom aussi, et j'ai une famille qui va avec ça. Si le gestionnaire de cas avait des outils puis une nouvelle approche pour comprendre la famille au complet dans le dossier, parce que c'est le cas, on ne peut pas isoler juste l'ancien combattant comme tel, parce qu'il a une vie sociale, une vie familiale, des responsabilités, et à ce moment-là les responsabilités sont souvent virées vers la femme. Moi, je suis choyé, je suis encore avec ma femme. Il y a plusieurs qui sont divorcés, et le divorce est causé par le problème psychologique que la personne a et ça devient extrêmement lourd pour la femme d'endurer le monsieur ou l'inverse. Il faut à la base que le gestionnaire de cas arrête de penser à l'ancien combattant, pense à la famille au complet puis que la famille embarque dans la roue aussi. Moi, je pense que c'est ça qui devrait être l'approche.

2005 ■ Il a mentionné beaucoup de choses que j'aurais pu dire aussi, mais autant dans les Forces canadiennes, je suis retraité depuis 2005, plus de 40 ans de service, autant dans les Forces canadiennes qu'ils oubliaient la famille, pensaient toujours aux militaires en premier, autant dans les Anciens Combattants c'est la même chose. J'ai eu à demander pour la famille et ça revenait toujours à dire : « ancien combattant, c'est toi, c'est toi qui fais la demande, et après si c'est accepté... », c'est pas moi qui a le problème, c'est elle, c'est la famille qui a le problème, on l'oublie complètement, comment peut-on revenir à dire... On devrait dire : si l'ancien combattant a un problème, on le règle avec lui, si la famille a un problème, elle devrait avoir son propre dossier cette famille-là, pas juste l'ancien combattant, ça revient toujours à la même chose.

Juste pour revenir à votre question. Oui, mon épouse en a fait une demande pour la famille, et ça n'a pas été comme moi. Moi, j'ai fait la demande, on m'a demandé de me rencontrer, et c'était juste pour élaborer plus sur le sujet. Mais elle, on a voulu venir la voir chez elle, on est venu la voir chez elle, on a discuté avec elle, on est retourné, pour recevoir une lettre plus tard et se faire dire : non accepté. Mais pourquoi tout ce travail là, quand tu aurais pu avoir la même affaire juste à l'écrit, ou au téléphone, puis se faire bafouer, surtout avoir quelqu'un des Anciens Combattants qui vient te voir chez vous. Hey! Ça va... Non. Ce n'est pas plus.

Ça fait que depuis ce temps-là, la famille, elle veut plus rien savoir de Anciens Combattants. Elle veut plus rien savoir de Anciens Combattants, parce qu'elle a autant peur que nous autres on puisse... De se faire refuser. (*inaudible) Elle n'est pas intéressée.

Commentaire de GRC ■ Et ce qui est difficile aussi, c'est pour la famille, étant donné que tu ne fais pas partie du même groupe, l'aide familiale, parce que bien entendu je présume que chez vous les militaires c'est la même chose, il y a des personnes qui informent les familles des situations. Désordre civil, ça dure 2, 3 semaines, 1 mois, O.K. le policier est à telle place, ils font le lien avec la famille.

Lorsque tu es à un autre niveau, (échelon supérieur), c'est à toi durant les crises d'essayer de trouver le temps, parce que bien entendu en situation de crise tu es au poste de contrôle, tu n'as pas le temps de faire ça, rassurer la famille, c'est très difficile pour la famille, ce qu'ils voient à la télé, c'est qu'une partie, souvent c'est moins pire en réalité, il y a toujours des impacts.

Je sais qu'aujourd'hui (*inaudible) je veux juste vous présenter quand même les similitudes et les cas qui existent durant la vie quotidienne de nos policiers, il n'y a pas seulement la GRC qui vont en mission, il y a des policiers de tous les horizons, municipal ou provincial. Au début c'était seulement la GRC, mais avec les années, ça s'est élargi.

Accès à l'information, aux services et/ou aux programmes

Aucune.

Divers

Moi j'aurais un dernier point, mais je ne sais pas si je suis au bon forum ou pas. On parle de transition, militaire, GRC, tout ça. Au final, c'est post-traumatique, peu importe. Il y a un laps de temps (*inaudible) à un moment donné, les gars sont solides, sur pied, réussissent à se trouver une job. Comme moi je suis chanceux, je suis rendu à la Garde côtière. Puis le problème, c'est que les 21, 22 ans que j'ai faits dans l'armée, ils n'ont pas été reconnues jamais. Là, tu arrives là, un petit nouveau, pas de problème. Là, v'là trois, quatre ans, ils ont reconnu le temps des militaires ou de la GRC. On tombe à 6 semaines de vacances, youpi! Ça fait du bien. Mais pourquoi la pension suit pas? Je ne suis pas obligé de me rendre à 60 ans sans avoir de pénalité.

Actuellement, à moins que je me trompe, il y a beaucoup de frustrations au niveau des vétérans. Quand on regarde notre gouvernement qui donne 10 millions de \$ à un gars comme Omar Khadr et que nous autres on a de la misère à être payés pour les blessures de guerre qu'on a eues pour aller défendre les valeurs canadiennes

de l'autre côté, quand on a le maire de (ville) qui dit que chaque et chacun de nous... On n'est pas ici pour parler politique... non non, loin de là, mais quand on a le maire de (ville) qui dit que tous les réfugiés syriens auront un médecin de famille dès qu'ils seront ici, c'est ça la frustration des vétérans.

Pour répondre aux questions, « où sont les vétérans », comme la plupart des Québécois, on est prêts à chialer, mais quand c'est le temps de parler, on reste chez nous. Vous devriez voir le mercredi, les vétérans qui sont là sont pas mal mieux pour chialer... (*inaudible).

On va régler des problèmes dans la chambre ce soir, j'ai l'impression. On est chanceux que la base de (endroit) soit pas venue ici au complet parce qu'on en aurait eu de toutes les sortes. On a eu 158 décès en Afghanistan depuis 2001 et 178 suicides depuis 2001.



National Association
of Federal Retirees

Association nationale
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