

NATIONAL ADVOCATE UPDATE –BOD MEETING 15 JAN 2014

Since our last BOD meeting I have been assisting veterans and their families on a variety of issues. The common issue is guidance for disability claims and other forms of assistance for members in need of home care and home maintenance.

There have been some calls from member's spouses and families requesting guidance after the death of a member regarding pension, benefits, tax issues, other government pensions and head stones.

A Benefit Trust Funds application has been initiated for a veteran who is in need of some very expensive equipment to enhance his basic daily living requirements. The purchase of this equipment is not available from any other sources or programs.

One interesting situation arose concerning RCMP headstones and grave markers which was resolved by veteran Dave Morrison of Ontario. Some cemeteries will not accept grave markers less than 4 inches in thickness. The manufacturer of RCMP grave markers produces them with a thickness of three inches. Dave Morrison made inquiries with the RCMP Division administration contact and the manufacturer. When necessary a thicker grave marker will be produced upon request.

The issue of marriage after 60 years of age in relation to pension survivor benefits is an ongoing concern and I handle these requests for clarification on a regular basis. Many times the survivor just needs to understand the rationale. Other times there are solutions especially common law marriages prior to age sixty or a reduced pension option. As a result of some successful resolutions and the need to clarify the issue, I am preparing an article for the next edition of the Right Marker.

I have been working with the Royal Canadian Legion for an article in the RCMP Quarterly to promote the valuable services available from the RCL.

Veterans Affairs Canada in conjunction with the RCMP will be making an announcement of the implementation of a Canada wide program of Transition Interviews (T.I.) for all retiring members. These interviews, which have been part of a pilot project in some Divisions, will inform members what benefits and services are available from VAC and how they can be accessed. There is a strong possibility the T.I. will be extended to veterans who have retired during the last two years.

As a member of the RCMP Veterans Women's Council, I have been actively involved with the Council in preparing a research paper dealing with harassment which has been a major concern within the RCMP, the government and has been a high profile item in the media for several years. The Council has been extended an invitation by members of a joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons to present our research paper and participate as panel members in a National Summit of Experts. This event will be held on Parliament Hill on 27 JAN 2014. The research paper was forwarded this week to the BOD with a funding request for travel.

Ron Lewis

National Advocate

9 JAN 2014