

NATIONAL ADVOCATE UPDATE –BOD MEETING 23 APR 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.

Claw Backs, Reductions and Overpayments

There have been a number of requests for information regarding the reduction of the Long Term Disability (LTD) payments. Most of the reductions are the result of payments from Pension Act Disability Pensions. Hopefully the recent settlement between the Federal Government and the Class Action Suit will soon rectify this situation. The Federal Court is expected to confirm the settlement on June 20, 2014.

However, some members are discovering a reduction when they start receiving CPP or CPP Disability Pensions under age 65, as well. Great West Life (GWL) administers the LTD on behalf of the RCMP and they are demanding members who have received LTD to apply for a CPP Disability Pension. This will actually reduce LTD payments and preserves the Insurance fund's reserve. This has been built into the LTD Plan.

There have been a number of members requesting clarification from Morneau Shepell (MS) regarding Pension Overpayments which have been discovered years after their retirement. The mistakes were originally made by the RCMP Pension Administration Unit prior to the outsourcing of these services to MS. Repayment is being demanded, however the explanations surrounding how the mistakes were made has not been communicated well by MS. In fact, MS has refused to calculate these arrears due to an omission in the original contract with the RCMP that did not include fees for this work. It was not until 2011 that a contract amendment was signed. I tried in vain to develop a management contact within MS to garner explanations for the affected veterans. MS kept referring me back to the RCMP. Finally I was able to make contact with the Director of RCMP Pension Services who has been very supportive and is now my point of contact for pension issues. It was learned that most of these mistakes are discovered during two mandatory life event reviews. One review is done at age 60 (indexation)

and the second one at age 65 (claw back of RCMP Pension due to CPP). By then the payback amounts can be very large. I have requested a relief provision under Section 23(2.1) Financial Administration Act. The RCMP has request a legal opinion.

VRAB Hearings

During the fall of 2013 the head of the VRAB made an offer to the RCMP Advocates to attend a VRAB Hearing at a location convenient to each Advocate and in their language of choice. I made the offer to our Advocates last October and the response was very small. I am hoping the onset of winter and the pending migration to a warmer climate may have been the main reason. I am in the process of calling each Advocate to make the offer again.

RCMP Veterans Women's Council

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 was 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 was held on Parliament Hill on 27 JAN 2014. I forwarded a report to the BOD requesting the matter be placed on the agenda for the meeting on 23 APR 2014.

Ron Lewis

National Advocate

17 APR 2014