



NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER
JUNE 2006

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Veterans' Association Mission Statement

“The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Veterans’ Association, proud of our traditions, commits to promote the physical, social and economic welfare of former members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and their immediate families and to be of service to our communities and Canada when required or requested through rendering assistance to the Police, especially the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in matters of common concern.”

FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Rick MORRIS

It is with great pleasure that I write to you today to thank you for your confidence in me at the Annual General Meeting in Halifax. My intentions are to work very hard on behalf of the Association and represent you to the best of my abilities. At the AGM you voted in a strong National Executive team. I would like to congratulate: Larry Power, Senior Vice President, Alex Geddes, Assistant Secretary, Ron Pond, Director (Chairman of the Modernization Committee), Nick Shaigec, Director (Constitution and By-laws) and Tim Hoban, Director (BTF, Benefit Trust Fund). At the AGM Bill Patton finished his two years as Chairperson of the Board of Governors and now moves to his position of Governor. The National Executive Committee would like to thank you Bill for your excellent service. Past President Dale Lively takes over as Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

As of this month NEC will send you out a Newsletter from the pen of the National President to keep you in the flow of information from your National Executive Committee. It should be arriving around the first of the month and it will inform you of the last month’s events. We can not send out minutes of our meetings until they have been accepted but we will try to keep you in the loop as much as we can.

Since the AGM I have been invited to meet the members of the Mounted Police Foundation. They are looking for ways to have greater visibility across the country and it appeared they were looking for a way to reacquaint themselves with the Vets Association. As you may remember Al Burchill was one of the Board of Directors for a number of years but Al has now stepped down from that position. We are waiting for the outcome of this meeting.

Bellow is a photo taken at the AGM showing the new President's Medallion. These were the first three to be presented.



(L to R, National President Rick Morris, Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli, Past President Dale Lively and now Chairperson of the Board of Governors) Photo by Bill Helland

Tim HOBAN, Director BTF



Attended Eel Ground Pow Wow on Eel Ground Reserve, NB.
Picture shows (L/R) # 13346, Harold MOODY - Native Dancer - # 22102 Tim HOBAN

Tim has been working on changes to the application form for BTF with John Religa and will be submitting them to the Force.

Tim is processing three applications at this time for BTF considerations.

John RELIGA, Treasurer

(1) The RCMP Benefit Trust Fund (BTF) Committee has considered the Association's request to increase the donations to a charity on the death of a former member of the Force, not just of the Association, to \$100 from \$50. However, the Fund is not growing as it did when interest rates were higher, therefore this request was not approved. A request by one of the divisions at the AGM to add an additional \$50 from the Association's Benefit Trust Fund to top up the \$50 from the RCMP BTF is under consideration. One problem with this option is that two cheques would have to be sent to the Charity - one from the RCMP BTF and one from the Association's BTF and two receipts would be required.

(2) Some of the receipts that the Treasurer receives from divisions for floral tributes and donations to charities on the death of a former member have not included the person's regimental number. This resulted in a delay in the repaying the division the money that they put out.

Alex GEDDES, Assistant Secretary

Alex has been tasked to gather all of the AGM reports of minutes and AGM information so that our National Office will have a solid historical database. He has only just begun his research into AGM reports, Admin. Manual (Red Book), names and dates of all of the past Vets National Presidents. Alex has been dealing with Vets HQ Office personnel just to find out what is on file. Some correspondence may take place with divisions who have done AGMS.

Dale LIVELY, Chairperson of Board of Governors

Bravo. I'm glad you are doing this Rick and I commend you before the first edition appears as it is needed (efforts to have it done in the past fell by the wayside - depending on someone else to do it) Anyhow I attended a Modernization committee meeting on Wednesday 20th from my new digs - the DFO Video Conference room - right here in St. Andrews.

Ron Pond, Bill Maxwell, Mel Cheavins and I discussed the strategy leading to September NEC Meeting. Sub-Committees were formed and I trust Ron Pond will give you the structure of how things are set up to proceed as we work through the summer. Guy Baril was unable to attend but will be filled in on the procedures. Ron Pond remains Co-Chair with Mel Cheavins - I'm chair of Governance Sub-Committee - Bill Maxwell is chair of communications sub-committee and Ron takes on Marketing & Promotions Sub-committee. We expect there will be one more sub-committee required.

I have fielded a few calls concerning disabilities from members and have done my best to steer them in the right direction. A letter, with the research, was sent directly to the Minister of Veterans Affairs on behalf of a Member that was refused compensation in Alberta that all those Military Personnel working around him received. We hope the efforts will receive favourable consideration from the Minister for our member. Guy Baril, Dal Langenberger and I have discussed the possibility of producing a miniature "Presidents Medallion" lapel pin and hopefully more will come of that by NEC time. I've encouraged Dal to contact the company we've used for the engraving. More to follow.

Bill GIDLEY, Executive Director

The Senior Executive Committee meeting I was invited to attend as an observer turned out to be more than. I was invited personally to sit at the table by Commissioner Zaccardelli for the video conference and the topic was the Veterans' Affairs Canada/RCMP direction to be taken and SEC makes these important decisions for the Force and former members. Deputies from different regions and top RCMP brass from Ottawa attended. Several of the Deputy Commissioners mentioned how pleased they

were to see a "veteran" at this meeting. This is a first for a former member to attend a SEC meeting and good for our association for sure....

(Bill was asked to speak to the modernization initiatives and spoke on our behalf and supporting the package that was being voted on that day. On July 20 I received a letter from A/Comm Kevin Mole with very positive words about the Veterans' Association in the production of the report and giving commendations to Bill Gidley and his staff for their work. The presentation passed that day and is moving further on in the approval process. Rick)

In June I attended a PAC video conference meeting on 23 June 06. The minutes are not available until adopted at the next PAC video conference the 29 September 06. The last PAC meeting prior to the a/n meeting was the 17 Feb 06. Those minutes are OK to go on our website, once we have it running. Gerry has been working on this and we are close to getting it done....as far as the PAC minutes go....I have requested Gerry to have the RCMP NCPC team put the PAC minutes from the 17 FEB 06 on our vets website and I anticipate this will be done by the end of July.

There have been no other meetings in June/July for me to attend. It is slow at this time of year, as far as meetings go that is. I will be attending a Quarterly magazine meeting tomorrow 25 July 06 and there are several items on the agenda...but basically the Quarterly is operating quite well and in the black...but we could improve readership...we do send out 30 free copies to Veteran Affairs Canada regional offices to make them more familiar with the Mounties.

The "Future of Disability Programs and Services for RCMP members and their Families: Needs Assessment" has been sent to all vets divisions via e-mail ...and this is indeed an excellent report that will look after the needs of members and their families....which is a quantum leap to the current VAC program. I believe the PAC and VAC meetings I refer to has real "accomplishments" but are a work in progress and it takes time to bring matters to a beneficial conclusion for our vets....the minutes and reports contain the accomplishments and pitfalls all together for the reader...

Basically the running of the National office and responding to people's needs/questions keeps me quite busy...

Nick Shahec, Director, Constitution and By-laws

On Sunday July 23rd I attended a memorial service at Mission Creek Alliance Church at Kelowna, on behalf of NEC, honouring the service and sacrifice made by Constables Cameron and Bourdage at Spirtwood, Saskatchewan in the line of duty on July 7th.

The Service was organized by OIC Kelowna Detachment, Supt. Bill McKinnon, attended by local citizens, regular members of the Force and Veterans of our Division. The service was attended by Her Worship Mayor Sheppard, Kelowna, and the local Member of Parliament. Mayor Sheppard brought greetings and condolences from the people of the city, and expressed her admiration of the work the Force is doing in very difficult times.

The Veterans were thanked for the past contribution and their presence at the celebration honouring the lives of Cameron & Bourdage.

The Service was conducted by the Force Chaplin, and assisted by Auxiliary Constable, who is a Pastor of a local Church in the community. The service lasted for one hour.

Cal SMALL, Insurance and Chair of the Editorial Board of the Quarterly

Yesterday we had our monthly Board of Trustees meeting and our Editorial Management Committee meeting. (Both related to the Quarterly Magazine) As President, please note that Al Haggerty resigned from the Board of Trustees and the Editorial Management Committee, effective June 13. Al has served the Quarterly since January 2004 and his wise counsel will be missed. You will remember that Al served as President of Ottawa Division for four years. Sig Sigurdson was elected to replace Al. I have personally known Sig for many years and also, he is known by the other committee members. I'm confident he will serve the magazine well. Other than our continued efforts to develop advertising policy, the other issues discussed at our meetings were of a routine nature. Also, please note that I well, has required by the Quarterly Business Trust, advise Bill McCheyne, the original Settlor of the Trust, about the above mentioned changes to the composition of the Trust.

With regard to the Insurance Committee, the next meeting will be held on Sept. 14 so there is nothing to report at this time. Take care.

This report that is being made available to you was forwarded to us by A/Comm Kevin Mole. This is the executive summary of the report submitted to SEC and was passed in July. There are some very amazing things that could be happening soon to support our people who are getting pensions from Veterans Affairs Canada.



The Future of Disability Programs and Services for RCMP Members & Their Families: Needs Assessment

Executive Summary

Submitted by:

Chief Superintendent C. R. (Cal) Corley
Project Director
Occupational Health and Safety Branch
Headquarters, Ottawa

June 1, 2006

Executive Summary

The number of serving and former RCMP members living with disabilities is growing. Many suffer from multiple and serious disabling conditions affecting not only their physical and emotional well-being, but also their successful re-integration into the RCMP workplace or transition to civilian life and post-RCMP employment. This study has concluded that, despite its best efforts, the present system is failing those individuals and their families in greatest need.

Project Summary

This study was undertaken to provide a comprehensive assessment of serving and former members' needs for modernized disability-related programs and services. Furthermore, it provides a comparative analysis of current programs against those which recently came into effect for Canadian Forces (CF) personnel, veterans and their families. The intent is to provide the basis for senior RCMP decision-makers to make well-informed decisions concerning the modernization of disability programs and services for affected serving and former RCMP members, their families and survivors. Recommendations for improvement are offered.

The RCMP has over 23,000 employees, comprising a mix of regular members (70%), civilian members (12%) and public service employees (18%). This study focuses on the serving and former regular (RM) and civilian (CM) members - the two groups to which the *Pension Act* can apply. In addition to the 19,200 serving RMs and CMs, there are approximately 14,000 former members that must be considered in the current context.

Background

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) administers disability pensions and related benefits to serving and former members of the CF and RCMP, their families and survivors.

Currently, VAC delivers benefits and services to more than 6,000 RCMP clients.

Following a decade of study and research conducted both jointly and separately by the CF, VAC and the Senate, it became clear that the existing approach was no longer meeting the needs of CF personnel and veterans, and was incongruent with modern principles of disability management. For example, existing program authorities did not respond well to family issues and needs; individuals were maneuvering through a complex and highly bureaucratic program service delivery model when they were most vulnerable, and; program costs were escalating sharply, but not yielding the desired health and wellness results CF veterans and families expected.

In 2002, the CF and VAC initiated a move toward a modernized approach. The RCMP chose not to participate, opting to conduct its own needs assessment as the basis for determining its future approach.

On April 1, 2006, *The New Veterans Charter (NVC)* came into effect, providing a comprehensive range of modernized programs and services for CF members, veterans, their families and survivors. Existing CF disability pensioners were "grand-fathered", and thus will continue to receive existing benefits provided under the *Pension Act*.¹

Under the *Pension Act*, disability pensioners receive a monthly disability pension. Under the *NVC* for the CF, this feature has been replaced by a package that includes a lump-sum disability award, supplemented on a needs-basis by other economic and non-economic financial supports. The Charter's comprehensive suite of programs also includes:

- Case management

¹ The *Pension Act*, which dates to 1919, was one of the initial pieces of legislation to provide for disability pensions, care and support of disabled returning soldiers from World War I. Today, disabled serving and former RCMP members access similar *Pension Act* benefits through Part II of the *RCMP Superannuation Act*.

- Rehabilitation services and vocational assistance
- Job placement assistance
- Health benefits
- Disability, death and detention benefits
- Financial benefits, including (a) earnings loss (b) supplementary retirement (c) income support, and (d) permanent impairment allowance.

VAC's comprehensive client-centered service is designed to encourage early intervention, wellness and re-establishment in the workplace and community. The modernized approach is holistic, involves the spouse in case planning and focuses on maximizing independence.

The Charter also enables those with non-service related disabilities or needs to access certain programs and services that were previously inaccessible to those groups.

Process and Methodology

The research portion of this study involved a Needs Assessment survey in which over 1,500 RCMP disability pensioners participated, providing rich quantitative and qualitative data. This was augmented by an interview program with VAC, RCMP and CF staff with key program, policy or service delivery responsibilities. A literature review provided additional benchmarks. The study also considered earlier needs assessment-related work conducted in 2003-04 by VAC and RCMP Occupational Health & Safety and Compensation Branches.

A set of guiding principles was developed to act as the canvas against which RCMP member needs and the corresponding program analysis was conducted. These principles also establish common criteria to facilitate decision-making considering the interests of the RCMP, its members and the Government of Canada.

Findings and Conclusions

By its very nature, the current approach encourages unwellness, inhibits early intervention and is not conducive to the successful transition to civilian life or re-integration of members back into the workplace. Most affected are members transitioning out of the RCMP and former members. The issues emerging from this study fall under several themes, key among them:

Psychiatric Injuries: approximately 30% of all newly approved disability pension applications in the past year were for psychiatric conditions – chiefly PTSD and Anxiety. The care, treatment and support of affected members and their families tend to be among the most complex and costly. These members also tend to experience more difficulties with rehabilitation and re-integrating into the workplace or community.

Transitioning to Civilian Life and Post-RCMP Employment: Many members cited the need for greater support. While the majority indicates that their transition to civilian life was successful, only half said they were adequately prepared. The

same held true with respect to those seeking other employment, with many believing that their condition has had an adverse affect on their careers and post-RCMP employment.

Re-integrating into the RCMP Workplace is more difficult for the more severely disabled and those with psychological conditions. Those cohorts also reported higher incidences of non-supportive behaviours on the part of supervisors. This is clearly an area that requires attention.

Independent Living: Many RCMP veterans cited the need for greater support (e.g., snow clearing, yard and general household work) in remaining independent in their own homes and communities as long as possible. At this time, the Force is actively working towards accessing Veterans Independence Program (VIP) and Chronic Care benefits that have long been available to eligible CF disability pensioners.

Summary of Key Findings

1. **The current approach fails those in greatest need:** The more severely disabled – particularly former members and those transitioning to civilian life (and their families) would benefit the most from integrated rehabilitation programs, improved and integrated case management and enhanced transition support. There are presently 155 serving and 520 former members who are considered more severely disabled.
2. **The current approach casts too narrow a net:** Modernization would open up rehabilitation programs (including vocational rehabilitation and economic loss programs) to RCMP members who are medically released for non-service related reasons or to those who demonstrate a service related need, post-retirement. In the case of those whose conditions prevent them from benefiting from vocational programs, such benefits can be transferred to spouses. In addition, all RCMP members would have access to the Job Placement program to assist them re-enter the civilian workforce. Under the present scheme, RCMP members do not have any form of post-release support. In fact, the present scheme is largely limited to the pension payments and health benefits.
3. **Exponential growth in disabled population and associated costs:** The RCMP disability pensioner population has grown steadily over the past five years. There are now over 6,000 disability pensioners, a number projected to grow to over 10,000 within five years. Today, 1 in 8 serving RMs is a disability pensioner, compared to almost 30% among former members.

Pension and treatment costs have also risen dramatically in the past five years, with pension costs alone having risen over 201% since 2000/01. The number of serious conditions – particularly in the psychiatric area – is also growing. This has significant cost implications, since these tend to be more complex and costly in terms of care and treatment. Finally, the pension cost liability to the Government of Canada is over \$1 billion and growing.

4. **Psychological injuries have broad implications for the organization.** As previously mentioned, 30% of all new favourable RCMP pension assessments over the past year were for psychological injuries. While many disability claims for psychological injury are often the result of a traumatic event, others are compounded by cumulative and prolonged stress in the work environment. The evidence, supported by the literature, suggests that cultural factors, such as low supervisor and co-worker support, are key inhibitors to successful recovery. Consequential organizational costs include increased treatment/pharmaceutical costs, absenteeism, turnover, workplace conflict and low productivity.

Conclusion

The current approach to disability management focuses interventions at the level of the injury/condition. This approach is rooted in the belief that only once the underlying health condition is treated could the various consequences of that condition be resolved. Extensive research and experience has shown that this is not often the case. By contrast, modern disability management recognizes that fragmented approaches are ineffective. It involves a comprehensive and holistic approach that addresses the multi-dimensional short and longer-term needs of the individual and family. Case management underpins this, supporting the individual in making informed and constructive choices.

Most members do not envisage ever becoming disabled. And if they do, they expect that theirs will be a low-end condition requiring little by way of case management and rehabilitation. It is therefore reasonable for many to conclude that the current *Pension Act* arrangement is much more generous than a lump-sum disability award. So it is understandable that many members are reluctant to give up the prospect of a monthly disability payment for life in exchange for significant program improvements aimed at those with greatest needs. That is the trade-off.

The reality is that many RCMP disability pensioners suffer multiple problems affecting not only their physical and mental health, but also their successful re-integration into the RCMP workplace or transition to civilian life and post-RCMP employment. The current approach falls significantly short of responding to their needs and those of their families. Over the longer term, management strategies are also required to address cultural issues that inhibit the successful workplace re-integration of members living with disabilities. Looking to the future, the RCMP should ensure that its members and their families are comforted knowing that should they ever become disabled, they will receive the full

spectrum of required care and support necessary in order to regain their health and maximize their independence and re-integration into the workplace and community.

Assessing the Options

Three distinct options have been developed for consideration:

Option 1 – Status Quo

This option retains existing VAC programs and services (including entitlement to a monthly pension under the *Pension Act*).

While some members have indicated they would be pleased with the stability afforded by the *status quo*, overall, stakeholders tend to agree that this option does not address the unmet needs of the more seriously disabled. This Option is not recommended.

Option 2 - Remain under the *Pension Act* with Improved Programs and Services

This option retains the monthly pension scheme, while improving upon the existing programs and services available to affected RCMP members. Program enhancements, requiring new funding, might include:

- VAC transition interviews for discharging RCMP members
- Job placement assistance

From a general membership perspective, this is likely the most attractive of the three alternative approaches, since it retains the monthly pension scheme while making some improvements.

The CF and VAC undertook a program enhancement scheme prior to moving towards *The New Veterans Charter*. Their assessment is that notwithstanding these moderate improvements, the overall approach still fell short of meeting client needs.

Option 3 – Modernization [Recommended]

This option provides RCMP members and veterans access to a full suite of modernized programs and services similar to those now provided to the CF under *The New Veterans Charter*. It aligns to the overall Government vision and is consistent with modern disability management concepts and standards. This alternative requires enabling amendments to the *RCMP Superannuation Act*.

Under this option, future successful RCMP disability pension applicants would receive a lump sum disability award rather than the monthly pension payment. Existing disability pensioners would be “grand-fathered” under the current *Pension Act* arrangement for existing conditions.

In summary, this alternative would provide modern standards of care and support to future affected members and their families, while expanding its target population

base in some key program areas to include non-service related medically discharging members, as well as others leaving the RCMP with transitional or service-related needs.

It is also the most cost effective, yielding significant savings to the Government of Canada over time. This may allow the RCMP to reinvest some savings into the improvement of program and service delivery for serving and retired members, e.g. job placement assistance, as well as improving upon aspects of the organizational culture that are impediments to affected members' full recovery and re-integration into the workplace.

Overview of Options, Advantages and Disadvantages		
<i>Option</i>	<i>Pros</i>	<i>Cons</i>
1. Status Quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly pension for life perceived as an advantage by many ▪ Does not introduce any new risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Escalating costs are unsustainable from a GoC financial perspective ▪ Does not respond to the unmet needs facing many RCMP disabled members.
2. Remain under Pension Act with Improved Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responds to some of the pressures identified in the Needs Assessment ▪ Creates opportunity for incremental improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires new and increased funding investment ▪ “Pension for life” not consistent with modern disability management concepts and industry standards ▪ Pension remains gateway to access existing programs & services ▪ Perception of wanting to “have our cake and eat it too.”
3. Adopt Modernized Approach adapted to RCMP Needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost-neutral ▪ Savings can be re-invested in program and improvements to organizational culture ▪ Aligns with GoC Disability Agenda and modern principles ▪ Expanded RCMP population will benefit from various programs and services (e.g., vocational rehab) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Move to lump-sum award will be seen as a loss to many members (although existing disability pensioners will be grand-fathered under the <i>Pension Act</i>) ▪ Option least appealing to the general membership

Recommendations

Three key recommendations emerge from this study. Other tactical recommendations have been made under separate cover to the Director General Occupational Health and Safety and are being actioned. The key recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation #1

That the RCMP move forward in partnership with Veterans Affairs Canada to design a suite of modernized programs and services that meet the needs of RCMP members, veterans and their families (Option #3).

Implementation Issues: The design phase will include establishing how a modernized approach can complement existing Great West Life Disability Insurance benefits, as well as the Survivor Income Plan, both of which are key issues to members.

Recommendation #2

That the Director General Occupational Health and Safety review the potential and benefits of entering into a tri-partite partnership with VAC and the CF to improve mental health of RCMP members through appropriate means, including the peer support network under their Operational Stress Injury Social Support initiative.

Recommendation #3

- (a) That the DG Occupational Health and Safety develop a broad-based plan to address organizational culture factors that inhibit the successful re-integration into the RCMP workplace by members living with disabilities.**
- (b) That the DG Occupational Health and Safety undertake to identify and assess the actual and potential risks, together with costs resulting from stress in the workplace and develop management strategies to control or eliminate these risks and losses.**

Impact of Recommendations

These recommendations address the most significant issues surfaced through this study. Their implementation can yield a significant return on effort. For example,

- First and foremost, members of the RCMP and their families will be reassured knowing that, in the unfortunate event of a serious service-related injury or illness, they will receive the highest standard of care and support.
- The perception of the RCMP as an employer of choice may be substantially enhanced.

The workplace culture will consistently be better informed and consequently more supportive of those suffering the types of injuries described in this report, resulting in lower absenteeism (ODS), reduced health care costs, and improved productivity.