



## **ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE VETERANS' ASSOCIATION**

### **Board of Directors - News and Views**

#### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER:**

During the latter part of October I visited New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia and met with the Executive and members of all three Divisions. I was well accepted, there was a good turnout and good discussions at all meetings.

The current popular subjects of the Veterans Affairs Canada, Veterans' Independence Program, the Superannuation Pension adjustment at age 65, the matter of a pension for widows of members who marry after age 60 and widow's life insurance after age 70 were discussed and members were made privy to any information that I had on the subjects.

During these meeting I again stressed that during the next two years I hope to concentrate on increasing membership and improving members' benefits. I tried to stress that there is strength in numbers and each of us should try to recruit one new member during the Association year 2008/09.

Our 3rd. Board of Directors Video Conference was held on November 25 with all Board Members, our Executive Director and our National Advocate attending. It was another good meeting with some twenty two subjects on the Agenda including a presentation from Assistant Commissioner Keith Clark on the Change Management Team. Clark outlined the objectives of the Team and how the Association and its members can assist in changing the Force.

We also had a presentation from Mr. Pat Stogran, Veterans Ombudsman, who spoke to us and answered questions on Ombudsman's mandate. In view of the reports of Mr. Stogran not mentioning RCMP personnel or Veterans during some of his Town Hall meetings, I put the question of whether we have any priority on his agenda to him directly. His response was that he was new to the job and after a career in the military he was inclined to refer to the military most often. He also advised that he is just getting to know the workings of the Force and our Association and has a great deal of respect for both. He assured us that we have the same priority with him as military veterans. He stated that he offered an apology for not mentioning Force members or us at some of his meetings. I am inclined to take Mr. Stogran at his word until or unless his future actions indicate otherwise.

Mr. Stogran was also asked if he could help us further our efforts to become part of the VI Program. He advised that setting up policy between the Force and Veterans Affairs was not in his mandate but was rather a matter for the Force to work out with Government.

As I told you in a previous newsletter I wrote Minister of Public Safety Day with copies to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, Greg Thompson and Commissioner Elliott. I have not had a reply from Mr. Day so I have written his successor Mr. Peter Van Loan asking for his support. I have received a reply from Minister Thompson advising that "the RCMP has authority over, and sets direction for, the programs and services available to its current and former members. The matters you raise would therefore best be addressed by the RCMP".

On November 26 a luncheon/meeting was held by members of the Board with Commissioner Elliott and members of Senior Force Management. I was unable to attend due to a medical problem but I asked our National Secretary Bill Maxwell to offer my regrets and to ask Commissioner Elliott where the VI Program stands. My understanding is that Commissioner Elliott still supports the program and is to meet with Minister Van Loan in the near future to further discuss it.

Our Board members and members of the National Council were recently advised that Senior Deputy Sweeney has corresponded with Minister Van Loan and he will let us know when anything new is learned on VIP.

As you can see the matter of the Veterans Independence Program is being kept front and center and hopefully will have positive results in the relatively near future.

As this will be the final newsletter before the New Year I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Pat and myself.

Larry

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## **RCMP VETERANS ADVOCATE PROGRAM**

At the AGM in Winnipeg, President Larry Power asked me to commence an RCMP Veterans Advocate Program for the Association. I agreed to undertake this project on a voluntary basis for one year.

Since then, I have identified the first step is to establish a volunteer Advocate in each Division/Province. Currently three (3) Divisions have identified individuals and I hope to have a full slate early in 2009. An Advocate should have the desire to assist other veterans and their families by seeking benefits for them as veterans of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). An Advocate should also be seeking enhanced benefits for these individuals and have knowledge of current benefits available to our veterans.

If you are interested in becoming an Advocate for your Division, please e-mail me at [dalelively@gmail.com](mailto:dalelively@gmail.com) or telephone 506-529-3849.

There are four (4) items that I consider as being most important to our Veterans at this time:

- Veterans Independence Program (VIP);
- 2) Marriage after 60;
- 3) Reduction in RCMP pension at age 65 when Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits kick in; and
- 4) An increase in Great West Life (GWL) Insurance benefits at age 70 which at this point provides coverage of ten thousand dollars with a \$12.00 monthly premium.

This is our program to help our fellow members in need! Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) serves in excess of 4,600 RCMP veterans out of a population of 20,000 retired and former members. Are you having difficulty obtaining Services/Answers from the RCMP, CPP, VAC or Great West Life or are there other needs in your area? Certainly there are other issues we need to be pursuing. Do you know of an important benefit I have missed? Your input would be greatly appreciated.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish one and all a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year and I look forward to working with you in 2009.

**Dale Lively, Advocate**

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On November 26<sup>th</sup> the following list of people attended a luncheon with the Commissioner that was hosted by RCMP Veterans' Association:

Commissioner William ELLIOTT	
Peter MARTIN	D/Commr. Chief Human Resources Officer
Louise LAVOIE	Director – Honours & Recognition
Dan DUBEAU	O.I.C. – Employee Relations
John RELIGA	National Treasurer – Board of Directors
Cal SMALL	Chairperson – RCMP Quarterly and BOD Director
Rick MORRIS	Immediate Past President – RCMP Veterans Association
Greg PETERS	Media Relations
Adrienne MONCRIEF	Director General– Occupational Health & Safety
Paul BATEMAN	Commissioner's Office.
Ray BERNOTIES	Commissioner's Executive Officer
Bill MAXWELL	National Secretary – Board of Directors
Joe OLIVER	Change Management Team
Bill GIDLEY	Executive Director, RCMP Veterans' Association
Dale LIVELY	Veterans Advocate & Governor
Bernie CORRIGAN	CO Headquarters
Ian COOPER	Administrative Officer – RCMP Veterans' Association
Sandy RAMOS	Force Historian
Tanya BAGLOLE	Editor – The Quarterly Magazine
Chantal RENAUD	Circulation Manager – The Quarterly Magazine
Geoff GARCEAU	National Office – Vets

During the luncheon topics such as Veterans Independence Program (VIP) and benefits for survivors of members married after 60 years of age were discussed. It was obvious that we have the support

of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Peter Martin in pursuit of the Veterans Independence Program. They continue to speak with the Minister of Public Safety and are developing a suite of benefits to work toward. The next Board of Directors Meeting will be held on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009 and Deputy Commissioner Martin has been invited to this meeting to discuss these issues and provide us with an update as possible.

At the November Board of Directors' Meeting Pat Stogran, the Veterans Ombudsman spoke in regards to his position and duties and his words follow. A translated version is also available on our website.

*On 25 November 2008, I had the good fortune to meet with President Larry Power and the Board of Directors for the RCMP Veterans' Association. I would like to thank Bill Maxwell and the Board for the invitation, it was long overdue. There are important aspects of the Veterans Ombudsman mandate vis-a-vis the Force that I had to clarify with my colleagues and I had some personal baggage I had to get off my chest.*

*It is very important that our colleagues in the RCMP take note that by the letter of the law—the law being the Order in Council that constitutes my marching orders as Ombudsman—I am not a “Veterans' Ombudsman” in the truest sense of the word, I am the Ombudsman for clients of Veterans Affairs Canada. The way that this impacts on my relationship with RCMP Veterans is that I am mandated to act on their behalf only for those services that Veterans Affairs Canada is contracted to provide them. Everybody should know by now that I infer the lack of specific direction to be a freedom rather than a limitation, and I have encouraged my staff not to back away from issues that may not fall within the jurisdiction or powers that are specified in my mandate. My vision for this Office is that it be the rallying point for all of our stakeholders for issues that impact on the Veteran Community. However, as willing as I am to exercise whatever moral suasion this Office might have in any way I can on behalf of our stakeholders, I am not willing to disobey a lawful command. The reason why I say that is that the Order in Council specifically prohibits the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman from becoming involved in matters that are the exclusive jurisdiction of the RCMP, apart from those that have been expressly assigned to be administered by the Department.*

*So what, right? Since I have been in Office, I have been bombarded by complaints from well meaning but misinformed colleagues from the RCMP who wish to be entitled to the Veterans Independence Program. Sorry, that is a Force headquarters issue to take up with Government. If the RCMP does not feel it is important enough for them to lobby Government on your behalf, then that is an internal problem. Rest assured, however, that if I am presented with an issue where it appears that the RCMP has not been treated fairly by Government, I will go to the wall on your behalf. The other complaint I often hear is that an RCMP presence is not manifest in the wall hangings and communications of Veteran Affairs Canada and the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman. If that is the most pressing need for our RCMP brethren from the Department and my Office, then significant inroads to satisfying it have been made. There are pictures and posters hanging in the Veterans Ombudsman's offices in Ottawa and Charlottetown, I often wear my RCMP cuff links that Lorne Hall and Bill Gidley so graciously provided me, and Veterans Affairs Canada has an RCMP flag in the Atrium in their head office in Charlottetown. Yes, folks, we could do better but – come on – I think we all can.*

*For the benefit of our RCMP Veterans, I cannot overstress how important your Veterans Association is. Get involved! It is important that your Association keep abreast of your needs and those of your families and campaign on your behalf with the Force for whatever benefits or services you feel you deserve! When I met with the Association's Board of Directors, I pledged the support of our good offices to get a grip on the issues affecting our RCMP stakeholders and to rally support for the RCMP amongst their constituency any way I can. I hasten to add, though, we at the Office receive very little feedback from our RCMP brethren. So I encourage you all, if you are a Veteran of RCMP service, a family member or someone who is aware of a problem confronting one of our stakeholders and you don't know if it is a Veterans Affairs Canada issue or how to get in touch with the RCMP Veterans' Association, call us toll-free at 1-877-330-4343 or send an email to [info@ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca](mailto:info@ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca). It may not be within our ability to do anything about it, but rest assured we will direct you or your issue to the appropriate authority.*

*Pat Stogran  
Veterans Ombudsman*

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