

# VETERANS AFFAIRS

## 2003-04 PERFORMANCE REPORT

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**The Honourable Albina Guarnieri, P.C., M.P.**  
**Minister of Veterans Affairs**

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**MESSAGES AND MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION STATEMENT:**

**MINISTER'S MESSAGE**



During my first few months as Minister of Veterans Affairs, I have had the privilege to participate in various Remembrance activities and meet with war veterans and Canadian Forces servicemen and servicewomen. I have been inspired by the sense of pride they have in their service for Canada. I have also been able to better understand the sacrifices, in human terms, made in the defence of freedom.

Canada owes a debt of gratitude to these courageous men and women who have served in times of war, military conflict, and peace operations throughout the world. Veterans Affairs exists to repay this debt and ensure that their sacrifices and accomplishments will be remembered forever. The dedication and commitment of the staff of Veterans Affairs to our clients and their families is a reflection of our profound respect and admiration. As Minister of Veterans Affairs, I am honoured to serve those who have served us so well.

In the year covered by this report, the primary focus of Veterans Affairs has been to develop and deliver effective and innovative programs and services that meet the needs of our aging war veterans and the emerging needs of our younger Canadian Forces veterans and RCMP clients.

In 1944, when the Department was given its mandate to provide for *the care, treatment or re-establishment in civil life of any person who served in the Canadian Forces ... and their dependants or survivors ...*, our programs and services dealt primarily with re-establishment and rehabilitation of returning soldiers. As our wartime veterans aged over the following decades, the services had to evolve to meet their changing needs. Today, with the recent increase in our Canadian Forces and RCMP clients and the changing nature of their operations, our programs and services again must be updated to meet the requirements of both younger and older veterans. To begin addressing this challenge, we have launched a Service and Program Modernization Task Force. Over the next two to three years, this Task Force will research, develop and implement improvements to the current structure and content of the programs and services for Canada's armed service personnel. At the same time, the Department will maintain its high level of service provided to our aging war veterans.

## MESSAGES AND MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION STATEMENT

The year covered by this report was marked with many noteworthy accomplishments and milestones. For example, we, along with veterans and all Canadians, commemorated significant events of our military past, including: the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, the opening of the Juno Beach Centre in France and the unveiling of the Monument to Canadian Fallen in Ottawa. We continued our implementation of our Integrated Service Delivery Framework, which has improved the level of service to our clients, and we extended the Veterans Independence Program.

I am proud of all that my Portfolio has accomplished for our veterans and other clients. We will continue in our commitment to effective and efficient management of our resources through rigorous assessment of our expenditures to ensure accountability and value-for-money for taxpayers while, at the same time, delivering modernized programs and services. Those who served Canada deserve nothing less.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Albina Guarnieri". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Albina" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Guarnieri".

The Honourable Albina Guarnieri, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Veterans Affairs

**MESSAGES AND MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION STATEMENT:**

**CHAIR'S MESSAGE**



During the 2003-04 fiscal year, I was very pleased to be appointed Chair of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board and to have Elizabeth McNally appointed as Deputy Chair. Both Mrs. McNally and I have extensive experience with the Board and we are very committed to ensuring each client is well served through the review and appeal process.

As in the previous fiscal year, the demographics of the Board's clients continued to change. Former/current members of the Canadian Forces and the RCMP comprised 72.6% of our clients. For this particular group, this represents an increase of approximately 20% over the last four years (and a 5% increase over the previous year). The Board is adapting to the different needs of Canadian Forces and RCMP clientele, while at the same time, continuing to meet the needs of an ever aging war service veteran population.

Increasingly complex medical and legal issues to adjudicate have strengthened the Board's commitment to ensure Board Members have ongoing professional development to keep abreast of evolving medical conditions and administrative law.

To address present and emerging issues, and focus our efforts and resources on the highest priorities, the Board has developed a three-year strategic plan which provides long-term direction, improves risk management, and provides sustenance and improvement in the review and appeal process. This Strategic Plan focusses on improvements in four key areas: communication, service delivery, management structure, and transition management.

This year, the Board was honoured to have one of its employees publicly recognized for her outstanding contribution to public service. Dale Sharkey, Executive Director of the Board, was awarded the Head of the Public Service Award in the category of "Valuing and Supporting People." Ms. Sharkey is indicative of all the people who work at the Board and their commitment to excellence.

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**MESSAGES AND MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION STATEMENT**

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In continuing to improve upon the Board's structure and functions, we remain committed to providing a fair, impartial, and transparent disability pension redress process that ensures our clients receive the benefits to which they are entitled under the law.



Victor Marchand  
Chair  
Veterans Review and Appeal Board

**MESSAGES AND MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION STATEMENT**

**MESSAGES AND MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION STATEMENT:**

**MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION STATEMENT**

We submit, for tabling in Parliament, our *2003-04 Performance Report* for Veterans Affairs.

This report has been prepared based on the reporting principles and other requirements in the *2003-04 Departmental Performance Reports Preparation Guide* and represents, to the best of our knowledge, a comprehensive, balanced, and transparent picture of our organization's performance for fiscal year 2003-04.

Jack Stagg  
Deputy Minister  
Veterans Affairs Canada  
September 24, 2004

Victor Marchand  
Chair  
Veterans Review and  
Appeal Board  
September 27, 2004

**ABOUT VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

**WHO WE ARE**

Veterans Affairs is a Portfolio comprising one Department – **Veterans Affairs Canada** and one Board (which operates at arm’s length from the Department) – **Veterans Review and Appeal Board**.

Veterans Affairs serves Canadians in three main areas: pensions, health care, and Remembrance. Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) provides pensions for disability or death. It also provides economic support and health care benefits and services. For those who wish a further review of their disability claims, our Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) and Bureau of Pensions Advocates ensure that clients are treated fairly and professionally. Finally, because our brave men and women have given so much, we recognize and honour their sacrifices through our Remembrance programming.

The missions of the Department and the Board are as follows:

**Veterans Affairs Canada**

To provide exemplary, client-centred services and benefits that respond to the needs of veterans, our other clients and their families, in recognition of their services to Canada; and to keep the memory of their achievements and sacrifices alive for all Canadians.

**Veterans Review and Appeal Board**

To ensure fairness in Canada's programs for disability pensions and war veterans allowances by providing research and advisory support and fair and expeditious appeal adjudications.

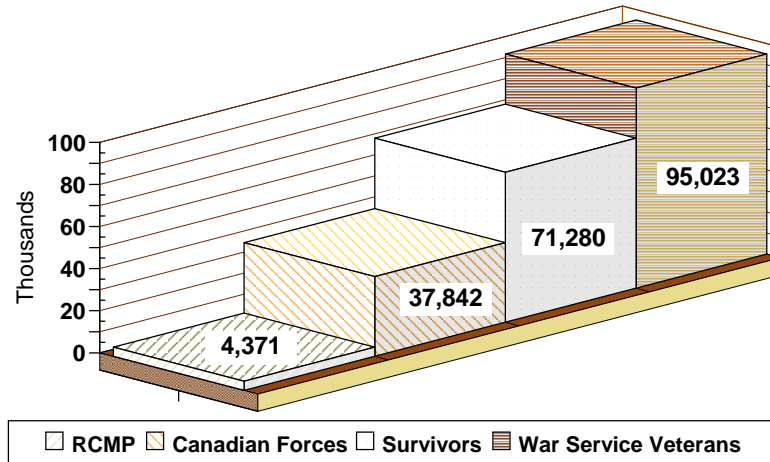
Veterans Affairs Canada and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board are headquartered in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island and serve Canadians from 40 offices or service centres across the country. In Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec, VAC operates Ste. Anne’s Hospital which has more than 490 residents. With respect to staffing, VAC has approximately 3,400 employees, while Ste. Anne’s Hospital has approximately 900 positions filled by about 1,300 part-time and full-time staff. VRAB has 29 Governor-in-Council appointed Members and approximately 80 staff.



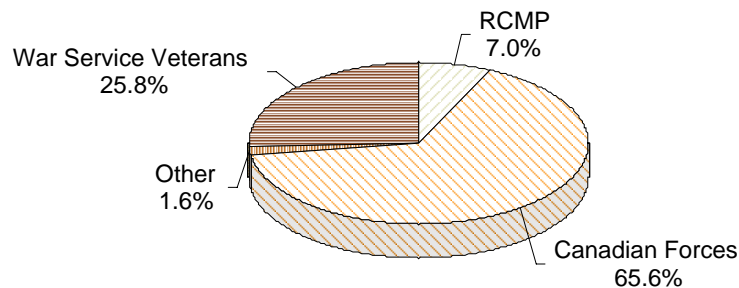
**ABOUT VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

**WHO WE SERVE**

As of March 31, 2004, Veterans Affairs Canada served approximately 209,000 clients. Our family of clients includes veterans, Canadian Forces still-serving members, past and present members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and their families and survivors. The following is an approximate breakdown of the people served by VAC:



The Veterans Review and Appeal Board served the same groups of clients as VAC, specifically those who have been denied pension entitlement for a claimed disability or who are dissatisfied with their assessment for a pensioned condition. The following is an approximate breakdown of the people served by VRAB:

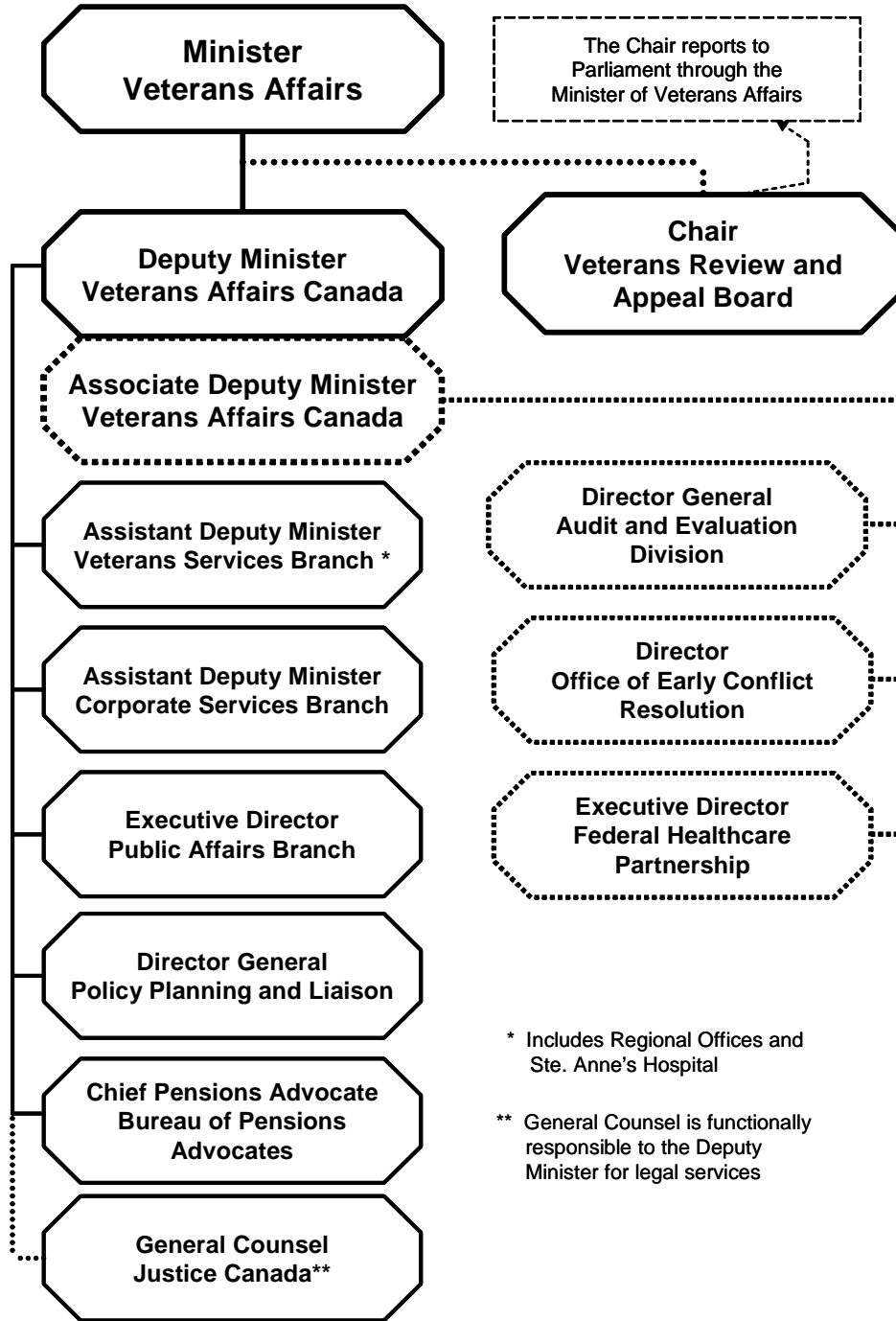


The above percentages are based on 6,770 review and appeal decisions finalized as of March 31, 2004.

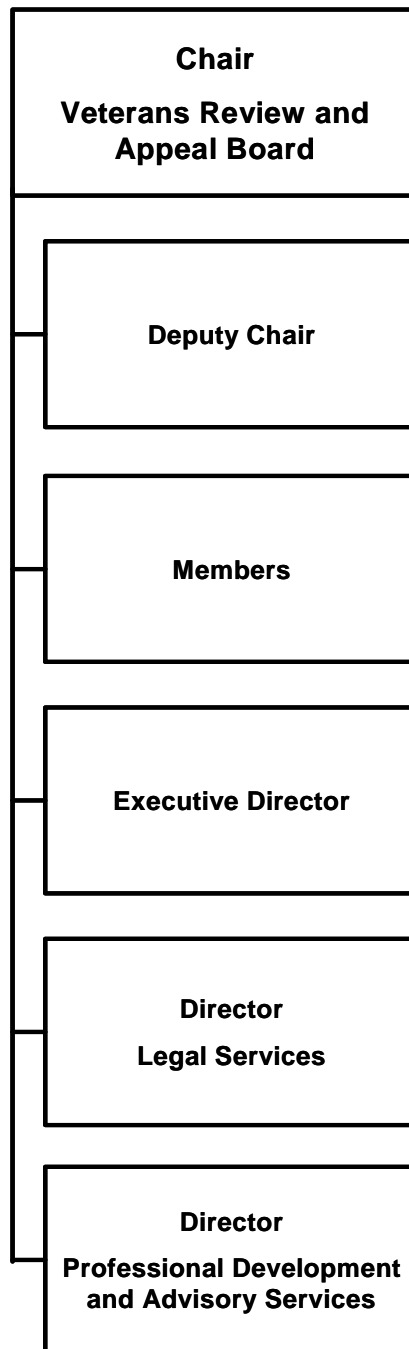
ABOUT VETERANS AFFAIRS:

HOW WE ARE STRUCTURED

*Veterans Affairs Canada Organization*



*Veterans Review and Appeal Board Organization*





## Web Site Access

### The Portfolio (Organization):

- Bureau of Pensions Advocates
- Corporate Services Branch
- Policy Planning and Liaison
- Public Affairs Branch
- Ste. Anne's Hospital
- Veterans Review and Appeal Board
- Veterans Services Branch

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/organization>

### The Department:

- Departmental Reports
- Disclosure of Travel and Hospitality Expenses
- Legislation Administered by Veterans Affairs
- Mandate, Mission, Vision, Values and Ethics
- People in Charge

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department>

### The Board:

- About VRAB
- Contact Us
- Documents (including 2003-2006 Strategic Plan)
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Service Commitment
- What's New

[http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca/VRAB-TACRA\\_contents.htm](http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca/VRAB-TACRA_contents.htm)

**The Year in Review:**

This year has again been one of continuing change and adaptation for Veterans Affairs. Most notably, the number of our Canadian Forces (CF) clients continues to increase (13% of our clients in March 2000 to 18% in March 2004). This growth has translated into a need for specific programs and services geared toward a much younger client who has life circumstances and complex medical conditions much different from their older veteran peers. Meanwhile, our aging war service veterans have now reached an average age of 82 years. These elderly Canadians may require more support to maintain their independence in their homes and communities. They may have urgent needs in relation to poor or failing health. They may require long-term residential care. As well, the number of our RCMP clients is also on the rise and they, too, have different needs than that of our veterans. Thus, Veterans Affairs Canada must continually review its programs and services to meet the emerging needs of its diverse family of clients and their families.

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board has also faced a similar shift in the demographics of its clients. As of March 2004, former/current members of the Canadian Forces and the RCMP comprised 72.6% of their clients, representing an approximate 20% increase over the last four years. Not only is the Board dealing with an increase of clients from this particular group, but its Members are adjudicating claims presenting increasingly more complex medical conditions.

To improve the delivery of service to our veterans and other clients, Veterans Affairs Canada focusses on eight priorities and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board focusses on four priorities. These are aligned under the following strategic outcomes (long-term and enduring benefits to Canadians):

Strategic Outcome Description	Priorities Aligned with Strategic Outcome
<b>Benefits and Services Programs Strategic Outcome</b>	
The delivery of benefits and services that contribute to the independence, quality of life and standard of living of Canada's war veterans, eligible Canadian Forces veterans and still-serving members, RCMP clients, qualified civilians and their families in recognition of their sacrifice to the nation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Improving and expanding services for Canadian Forces veterans</li> <li>▶ Partnering to serve the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and eligible civilians</li> <li>▶ Transforming service delivery and promoting innovation in policies and practices</li> <li>▶ Evaluating the effectiveness of the disability pension process and its flexibility to adapt to the emerging and changing needs of our veterans and other clients</li> </ul>

**THE YEAR IN REVIEW**

<b>Strategic Outcome Description</b>	<b>Priorities Aligned with Strategic Outcome</b>
<b>Pensions Advocacy Program Strategic Outcome</b>	
The rights of Veterans Affairs Canada clients protected through professional, legal representation in appealing decisions related to disability pensions and allowances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Improving and expanding services for Canadian Forces veterans</li> <li>▶ Partnering to serve the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and eligible civilians</li> <li>▶ Evaluating the effectiveness of the disability pension process and its flexibility to adapt to the emerging and changing needs of our veterans and other clients</li> </ul>
<b>Canada Remembers Program Strategic Outcome</b>	
A knowledgeable Canadian public that recognizes the achievements and sacrifices of Canada's citizens in the defence of freedom and appreciates the historical significance of these accomplishments in the development of Canada as a nation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Providing strong leadership in the delivery of Remembrance programming through effective partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Administration</b>	
Activities focus on service improvement and organizational effectiveness through the strategic management of our staff, improved communications, expanded use of technologies and a greater contribution to national policy development in areas that are directly related to the well-being and recognition of our veterans and other clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Enhancing our policy capacity to ensure more effective use of information and analysis in support of evidence-based decision-making and better public accountability</li> <li>▶ Aligning our strategic human resources plan to support the goals of the organization and the aspirations of our people</li> <li>▶ Advancing the development of our information technology capacity in support of service improvement, organizational effectiveness and Government On-Line</li> </ul>
<b>Veterans Review and Appeal Board Strategic Outcome</b>	
Fairness in the Disability Pension and War Veterans Allowance Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Improved communication with appellants, staff and stakeholders</li> <li>▶ Improved service delivery</li> <li>▶ Improved management accountability framework</li> <li>▶ Smooth transition</li> </ul>

Veterans Affairs has a number of planned results or targets that are also aligned under the above-mentioned strategic outcomes. In late 2003-04, we began the process of developing a Program Activity Architecture (PAA) which will identify performance indicators to effectively measure progress towards our planned results. This government-wide initiative will cultivate a more accountable and transparent management structure of public resources. The PAA consists of a list of program activities on which our organization will report to both Treasury Board and Parliament. It will reflect how our organization is structured, but, more importantly, how

accountabilities are managed and how program activities contribute to our strategic outcomes. Performance measures will be put in place for each level of the Portfolio's architecture. This PAA is the key instrument that will provide a foundation for performance measurement. Beginning with the *2005-06 Report on Plans and Priorities*, which will be tabled in the spring of 2005, we will be well-positioned for enhanced and more meaningful reporting for Parliamentarians and all Canadians.

For the fiscal year covered by this report, we made commitments to:

- improve our service delivery across the country
- continue our planned modernization at Ste. Anne's Hospital
- engage Canadians in Remembrance activities
- promote Remembrance learning initiatives to our youth
- continue our memorial restoration work abroad
- ensure appellants are treated fairly in the review and appeal process
- increase awareness of our pensions advocacy role in the review and appeal process
- effectively and efficiently manage our corporate resources
- demonstrate our commitment to government-wide initiatives
- update our legislation to allow changes in our programs and services

Varying degrees of progress have been made on all of these commitments and these are summarized in the Performance Accomplishments section of this report. We have made great strides in some areas, including implementation of the Integrated Service Delivery Framework, to ensure that we are able to provide consistent service across the country. A component of this framework involved the establishment of a National Client Contact Centre network which amalgamated more than 100 toll-free numbers into one English and one French national toll-free client service number. As with any major system implementation, our amalgamation of telephone numbers posed challenges for staff and clients. However, response times and stability of the new system and client service have markedly improved. As well, our workload continues to present challenges.

In our 2001 and 2003 National Client Satisfaction Surveys we asked our clients about the quality and effectiveness of the benefits and services we provide. The overall 87% satisfaction rating from our clients in our 2003 survey (an increase of 2% over the results of our 2001 survey) validates that we are continuing to make progress in addressing the unique needs of our clients.

For readers wanting additional information, most sections of this Performance Report conclude with a list of relevant Web Sites to what was covered in that particular section. For those interested in parliamentary committee activity related to Veterans Affairs, a summary of activity that took place this fiscal year (and parliamentary Web Sites) can be found in the Annexes section of this report.

## PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME

### PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME:

#### BENEFITS AND SERVICES PROGRAMS

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#### STRATEGIC OUTCOME

THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND SERVICES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE INDEPENDENCE, QUALITY OF LIFE AND STANDARD OF LIVING OF CANADA'S WAR VETERANS, ELIGIBLE CANADIAN FORCES VETERANS AND STILL-SERVING MEMBERS, RCMP CLIENTS, QUALIFIED CIVILIANS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR SACRIFICE TO THE NATION.

#### PRIORITIES

- Improving and expanding services for Canadian Forces veterans
- Partnering to serve the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and eligible civilians
- Transforming service delivery and promoting innovation in policies and practices
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the disability pension process and its flexibility to adapt to the emerging and changing needs of our veterans and other clients

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Actual Spending for 2003-04: \$2,455.0 million

2,580 Full-Time Equivalents

#### • • • INTRODUCTION • • •

By promoting independence and an improved quality of life, Veterans Affairs Canada assists our veterans and other clients to continue to be valuable, contributing members of their communities and society. Over this fiscal year, there have been a number of accomplishments that have improved the delivery of our benefits and services. These range from the improvement of how the public reaches us to progress on modernization of our services for Canadian Forces clients.

Our Benefits and Services Programs Strategic Outcome is aligned with the Government of Canada Outcome – A Strong Health Care System – in the *Canada's Performance 2004 Report* (<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/est-pre/estime.asp#OSD>).

#### • • • PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS • • •

##### *Integrated Service Delivery Framework*

Veterans Affairs Canada has made significant progress with its implementation of the Integrated Service Delivery Framework which has three objectives: consistent exemplary client service delivery across the country; financial resources and people assigned to where they are most needed; and clear service expectations for clients and staff. This integration of service delivery involves the establishment of Client Service Teams, supported by Centres of Expertise and Management Centres. This three-year



project will be fully implemented by March 2005. During this fiscal year, there were a number of achievements.

#### Centres of Expertise

Centralization of calls into a National Contact Centre Network has resulted in the re-distribution of work from the District Office, providing those staff with the time required to meet our clients' unique needs. A plan is in place to achieve stability of the network and meet the response time service standard.

Our veterans and other clients who have not had contact with the Department in a twelve-month period are now contacted through our Pro-active Screening Centre of Expertise. Screening Analysts contact these clients, in their language of choice, to identify potential unmet needs and provide information, targeted assistance, and referral services. In addition to this screening, as workloads permit, these Screening Analysts also assist District Office staff in the completion of their Veterans Independence Program Annual Reviews to determine if clients have any unmet needs. VAC staff, including Proactive Screening Analysts, conducted an outreach to clients potentially at risk during the forest fires in British Columbia in the summer of 2003, the Ontario power outage in August 2003, and the snow storm in Atlantic Canada in February 2004, as clients were contacted regarding their ability to deal with these unforeseen extreme conditions.

A new French-language adjudication satellite office was established in Quebec to determine if French pension claims could be processed in a more efficient manner by providing this service in closer proximity to our clients. This pilot is still under review.

#### Management Centres

A review of the regional functional role in program and service delivery commenced during this period. The review outlined the need to strengthen organizational mechanisms and the accountability framework to better support operations at all levels of the organization.

To date, five Treatment Authorization Centres (TAC) have been established across the country. This TAC Network ensures that the delivery of treatment benefits, such as drugs and massage therapy, is consistent across Canada. Approximately 90,000 service providers that meet established professional criteria have registered with this Network. By using their VAC health care identification cards for eligible benefits, VAC clients can now obtain services from these providers, without waiting for reimbursement. Operational guidelines and business procedures to ensure the consistent delivery of benefits and services to clients across the country have been developed and implemented. As well, service standards have been developed to ensure that clients' needs are met.

*Service and Program Modernization Task Force*

In September 2003, VAC established the Service and Program Modernization Task Force to review and facilitate modernization of its existing programs and services to better respond to the needs of eligible Canadian Forces veterans and their families and to assist with their reintegration to civilian life. In March 2004, a report was presented by the Veterans Affairs Canada - Canadian Forces Advisory Council, chaired by Dr. Peter Neary. This report (Honouring Canada's Commitment: "Opportunity with Security" for Canadian Forces veterans and their Families in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century), called for action in addressing the changing face and needs of Canada's veterans and their families. In response to this report, VAC acknowledged that the needs of Canada's veterans continue to evolve and that VAC would work to enhance its programs and services accordingly through the work of its recently formed Task Force.

During the 2003-04 fiscal year, the Task Force undertook numerous initiatives. Consultations with stakeholders and other interested parties took place. The Task Force initiated related program design activities, including a draft policy framework and policy proposals for internal review. Supporting research was conducted to provide a knowledge base for program planning with respect to the types and levels of disabilities occurring in the CF population. Further work was undertaken in regard to best practices in rehabilitation and veterans' rehabilitation services in other jurisdictions. In a related development, VAC was asked to participate in the newly formed Canadian Council on Rehabilitation Education and Disability Studies. Finally, through VAC's working relationship with the Canadian Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (CARP), the CARP Ontario Practice Guidelines for Rehabilitation Counsellors were adopted as a reference document for future contracting with private sector rehabilitation services providers.

The Task Force is working diligently to modernize the services and programs that our CF clients require. The outcome of this Task Force's work will constitute the most significant change in veterans' benefits since the Second World War.

*Ste. Anne's Hospital*

Ste. Anne's Hospital, located in the West Island of Montréal, is the last hospital still administered by VAC. This long-term care facility accommodates more than 490 veterans and through its Day Centre serves 175 clients. The hospital is also home for the Ste. Anne's Centre, a mental health clinic, which officially opened in July 2002. This centre specializes in the assessment and treatment of operational stress injuries and actively treats more than 200 clients.

Ste. Anne's Hospital was built in 1917. To modernize the quality of care for our residents and bring the hospital in line with provincial standards, the hospital was allocated \$67.7 million to renovate its facilities over a five-year period (2002-03 to 2006-07). Construction of a new power plant and electrical sub-station commenced in 2003-04 and is on schedule for completion in the fall of 2004. Initially, approval had

been given to construct a new 130-bed pavilion that would be used to care for our residents with cognitive impairment. However, original bids submitted for this contract exceeded the budget. The scale of the project was reduced from 130 beds to 116 beds, and the bidders were asked to re-submit bids by the end of the fiscal year. With respect to the renovation of the main building, final plans and specifications were completed this fiscal year. This project presented us with a number of challenges both in this fiscal year as well as throughout the duration of the project, including: remaining within a pre-defined budget and time lines; coordinating the involvement of the stakeholders; designing a living environment that would be home-like for our veterans, while, at the same time, adapting to their clinical needs; and maintaining our high quality of care given to our veterans. We addressed these challenges by constant attention to detail in the planning of the project.

During the year there was a major review of two key clinical programs: the Dementia Care Program and the Dysphagia Program. Research was added as a key component to support our clinical programs to advance our objective of becoming a Centre of Excellence. During the course of the year, eleven research projects were submitted for funding in the areas of pain management, dementia care, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

During this fiscal year, there were a number of accomplishments at our Ste. Anne's Centre. We played a leadership role in the establishment of several clinics to address the emerging needs of our clients. Through educational forums, we have sponsored local workshops for community health professionals. Together with VAC, the hospital sponsored a National Conference on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Operational Stress Injuries which was held in May 2003 in Montréal.

### *Legislation*

On November 7, 2003, Bill C-50 (*An Act to amend the statute law in respect of benefits for veterans and the children of deceased veterans*) received royal assent. This Bill was designed to improve financial compensation for former prisoners of war, re-establish the Education Assistance Program for children of deceased veterans, and clarify service requirements for the War Veterans Allowance program.

As a result of Bill C-50, the amount of monthly compensation was increased for all former POWs who were held captive, or evaded capture, by the enemy for 911 days or more. By the end of December 2003, most of the 1,500 clients had started to receive the increase in compensation, plus any retroactive payments that were due. Compensation was also extended to former POWs who were held captive, or evaded capture, by the enemy for 30 to 88 days; over 55 applications have been approved.

Because of the re-establishment of the Education Assistance Program, 63 post-secondary students received tax-free benefits this fiscal year. Another fifteen students received lump sum benefits. This program supports children whose Canadian Forces parent

died as a result of military service or was pensioned at 48% or greater at the time of death.

Bill C-50 also implemented clearer eligibility rules for the War Veterans Allowance program. It amended a section of the *War Veterans Allowance Act* governing the eligibility of war-time Canadian veterans, to state clearly that only those who had enlisted, served and been discharged from service may be considered eligible for benefits.

Bill C-31, *An Act to amend the Pension Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act*, was enacted on June 19, 2003. This Bill recognizes, for the purpose of extending more comprehensive disability pension coverage, service in the Canadian Forces or in the RCMP as part of a "special duty operation." As well, the authority to designate "special duty operations" and "special duty areas" was delegated to the Minister of National Defence and to the Solicitor General.

The Minister of National Defence exercised this authority by designating two "special duty operations" during 2003-04: Operation Peregrine and Operation Splinter. These followed another designation made earlier in 2003-04, when Afghanistan and certain areas of the Mediterranean Sea, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea were designated as a "special duty area" by the Governor in Council (SOR/2003-177).

### *Partnerships*

During this fiscal year, VAC partnered with the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL) to assess the level of client satisfaction of veterans residing in community long-term care residences through a survey conducted by volunteer Legion members. As well, a Voluntary Sector Initiative study (Review and Determination of Housing Issues for Veterans and Seniors) led by the RCL, was completed in February 2004 with the release of their report containing information on cost analysis and demographics, available housing programs and examples of successful and unsuccessful projects. It also discussed the pillars of supportive housing environments and concluded with eight recommendations relating to such topics as supportive affordable housing, home adaptations for seniors' independence, and a residential rehabilitation assistance program. VAC also participated in one other Voluntary Sector Initiative. The "Giving Voice to Seniors' and Veterans' Interests," led by the Victoria Order of Nurses issued its report in June 2003. This report summarized gap analysis research that was conducted as to what community and home care veterans and seniors had and what their actual needs were.

In April 2000, Veterans Affairs Canada and Health Canada initiated a four-year partnership known as the Falls Prevention Initiative. VAC committed \$10 million over this time period toward funding distributed through Health Canada's Population Health Fund. In the final year of this initiative, 23 funded projects continued their activities to promote the independence and quality of life of veterans and seniors by preventing the number and/or reducing the severity of falls. During this fiscal year,

many of these project teams participated and made presentations at the Gerontological Association of Canada's annual conference held in Toronto, Ontario in October 2003. An evaluation of this overall project is currently being finalized. Preliminary findings indicate that, as a result of these community-based projects, there was increased awareness of risk factors for falls, changing attitudes toward falls prevention, and seniors and veterans have been encouraged to make positive changes to their personal health practices and in their homes to reduce the risk of falling. This initiative has also helped to identify a number of promising falls prevention interventions/models. Through increased awareness of falls hazards and preventative measures, falls prevention has become an important public health issue on the national health care agenda.

There has been extensive partnering with the Department of National Defence on many initiatives in support of our Canadian Forces veterans, members and their families. Among others, these include health care and mental health. Specifically, VAC and National Defence have been working on a national mental health strategy for treating operational stress injuries that includes networks of excellence, educational forums, continuing education program, and research.

We have two Networks of Excellence: the DND network is comprised of five Operational Trauma Stress and Support Centres (OTSSCs) and the VAC network is comprised of the Ste. Anne's National OSI Centre, La Maison Paul-Triquet OSI Clinic, Parkwood OSI Clinic, Deer Lodge OSI Clinic and other out-patient Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Clinics that are currently being established at selected VAC Priority Access Bed facility sites. With respect to our educational forums, VAC has hosted two educational conferences and participated in two. There are four components to our Continuing Education Program - educational workshops, advanced clinical training, VAC OSI education/support Web Site, and the World Health Organization tool kit. In regard to our research, a clinical and research database is being developed to serve the VAC Mental Health Clinic Network through Ste. Anne's Hospital.

### *Authorson*

Authorson v. Canada is a class action lawsuit which claims damages (1) from the alleged failure of the Crown to invest or provide a rate of return on monies administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs for the benefit of veterans (the "interest" claim), and (2) from the Crown's alleged improper withholding of payment to the deceased's estate of the principal amount administered at the date of death (the "estates" claim). The claims relate to the funds held in a specified purpose account in the Consolidated Revenue Fund and administered on behalf of veterans.

The "interest" claim spans the period from 1916 to January 1, 1990 when, at the request of the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the payment of interest on the administered accounts was approved by the Minister of Finance pursuant to the *Financial Administration Act*. On the "interest" claim, both the Ontario Superior Court of Justice and Ontario Court of Appeal ordered the Crown liable for damages. On appeal, the Supreme Court of

Canada (SCC) on July 27, 2003 declared that Parliament had validly enacted legislation which lawfully denied any claims against the Crown for, or on account of, interest for periods prior to 1990.

The Plaintiff then filed a motion with the lower court of original jurisdiction for an order that the Crown remained liable for damages. On December 22, 2003, the Ontario Superior Court released a decision which concluded that the legislated bar to claims, that was upheld by the SCC, simply requires a deduction from any damages of an amount for, or on account of, interest which might otherwise have been paid had the Crown chosen to do so. The Superior Court held that the claim survives; the judgment as to Crown liability is carried forward and the Plaintiff is entitled to an aggregate assessment and quantification of damages based on the Crown's fiduciary obligation to have invested or have provided a rate of return on administered accounts. A hearing to quantify the liability is scheduled for late September 2004. Both parties have expressed their intent to appeal and/or cross-appeal to the Ontario Court of Appeal for hearing probably in 2005.

The "estates" claim was the subject of a summary judgment issued March 24, 2003 by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. Both parties appealed portions of the judgment to the Ontario Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal framed the issue as: 'whether the government scheme for the economic protection of veterans and their dependants should be interpreted in a way that interferes with the priority currently given to spouses and dependants of deceased veterans.'

The Court of Appeal issued a judgment on March 25, 2004 in favour of the Crown. The Court concluded that the Crown was under no obligation to pay pensions and allowances to veterans and that *prima facie* the Crown was entitled to impose restrictions and conditions as it saw fit upon the statutory benefits. The Crown had correctly interpreted and applied the legislation in a manner that was consistent with the scheme of veteran's benefits, the language of the provisions, and the government's goal of ensuring that the primary beneficiaries of those public funds were the veterans, their spouses and their dependants, not distant relatives or creditors. The plaintiff has filed an Application for Leave to Appeal to the SCC. The hearing date has not been scheduled.

### ***First Nations Veterans***

As of March 31, 2004, a total of 2,700 applications were received for the First Nations Veterans Package. Of this number, 1,298 applicants met the eligibility criteria. Extensive time was required to verify post-War residency and Status of the veteran and, in some cases, further investigation and resolution with respect to spousal eligibility and estate issues. As a result, 1,109 cheques were issued by the end of the fiscal year, with the remaining cheques to be issued in 2004-05.

With respect to the research being conducted as to what happened to Métis and Non-Status Indian veterans after the wars, discussions with the National Métis Veterans

Association and the National Aboriginal Veterans Association are ongoing. As well, a Departmental Aboriginal Outreach Strategy is being developed in consultation with Aboriginal organizations. This will ensure that eligible First Nations, Métis and Non-Status Indian veterans and their spouses are informed about, and benefit from, the full range of programs and services that VAC offers.

*Other Accomplishments*

In addition to the above, progress was also made in a number of other initiatives. Our Federal Health Care Processing System, designed to integrate processing of health claims for its three partners (VAC, National Defence, and the RCMP), was fully operational by March 2004.

**• • • BENEFITS TO CANADIANS • • •**

Implementation of our Integrated Service Delivery Framework will provide Canadians with the consistent delivery of affordable services and quality programs that respond to their needs. Modernization of our programs and services for our Canadians Forces veterans and members will provide this group with the benefits and services they require.



## Web Site Access

### Clients:

- Bereavement
- Canadian Forces Activities
- Contact Us
- Foreign Countries
- Health Promotion
- Medals and Decorations
- Veterans Services
- What's New

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/>

### Providers and Professionals:

- Care for the Caregiver
- Client Centred Service Approach
- Disability Pensions
- Health Care Provider Information
- Research
- What's New

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/providers/>

### Ste. Anne's Hospital:

- Articles Published by our Researchers
- Leading Edge Programs
- New Research Environment
- Our Philosophy Towards Care and Service
- Our Services
- Our Statistics

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=steannes>



## PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME

### PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME:

#### PENSIONS ADVOCACY PROGRAM

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#### STRATEGIC OUTCOME

THE RIGHTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CANADA CLIENTS PROTECTED THROUGH PROFESSIONAL, LEGAL REPRESENTATION IN APPEALING DECISIONS RELATED TO DISABILITY PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES.

#### PRIORITIES

Improving and expanding services for Canadian Forces veterans

Partnering to serve the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and eligible civilians

Evaluating the effectiveness of the disability pension process and its flexibility to adapt to the emerging and changing needs of our veterans and other clients

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Actual Spending for 2003-04: \$8.2 million

85 Full-Time Equivalents

#### • • • INTRODUCTION • • •

Veterans Affairs Canada's Bureau of Pensions Advocates (the Bureau) provides free legal advice, counselling and representation for war service veterans, Canadian Forces veterans, still-serving CF members, RCMP, and other eligible clients. These services are provided to individuals who are unclear about, or dissatisfied with, any aspect of their disability pension decision. The Bureau also represents clients at the final appeal of a War Veterans Allowance decision.

Generally, after studying a case, the Bureau may request a Departmental Review by a Pension Adjudicator; represent a client at the Review level before the Veterans Review and Appeal Board; counsel a client not to proceed; or counsel a client to obtain additional evidence. Of the claimants who do proceed to VRAB, approximately 95% are represented by the Bureau. The remaining 5% are represented by a Service Officer of the Royal Canadian Legion or another veteran's organization, or a private solicitor. Alternatively, claimants may choose to represent themselves. If a client is dissatisfied with the decision at the Review level, the case may be taken to a VRAB Appeal Hearing. In 2003-04, of the 11,924 claims received by the Bureau, 3,621 did not proceed, while 8,303 proceeded to redress.

Our Pensions Advocacy Program Strategic Outcome is aligned with the Government of Canada Outcome – Caring Communities – in the *Canada's Performance 2004 Report* (<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/est-pre/estime.asp#OSD>).

• • • **PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS** • • •

During this fiscal year, the Bureau undertook a number of initiatives, both to improve and increase awareness of its services. In early 2004, the Bureau began to collaborate with VRAB on a pilot project to implement a “case management” initiative. The intent of this initiative is to improve case preparation and, where possible, identify issues before the hearing takes place. A review of this pilot will be conducted in 2004-05 to determine future viability and further opportunities for improvement.

In order to provide RCMP members and their families with more information, the Bureau led a Veterans Affairs Canada initiative to develop a series of media materials on the benefits and services available through VAC. These media materials included a booklet, fact sheets, a video, and a presentation package for use by VAC staff in briefing RCMP audiences. Bureau managers also worked with RCMP Headquarters’ staff to give them a better understanding of how VAC administers its pensions and redress process. As well, the Bureau provided information to a variety of audiences through one-on-one meetings and information sessions, and participated in briefings of RCMP personnel in Halifax and Ottawa.

In the spring of 2003, the Bureau initiated a pilot on Canadian Forces Base Valcartier. For one half day every two weeks, an Advocate was available on the Base to answer CF members’ inquiries. Clients were able to drop in, telephone or book an appointment to see this representative. Feedback has been positive and CF members are supportive of this initiative. As well, the pilot has strengthened the working relationship between the Bureau and their colleagues in the Department of National Defence.

Throughout the fiscal year, the Bureau continued to participate in Second Career Assistance Network seminars by presenting information to Base medical and release personnel on the Veterans Affairs’ pension and redress process.

Improvement of services to clients is an ongoing priority for the Bureau. This year, three major reforms were introduced to staff:

- ▶ an initiative to enhance personal communication with clients;
- ▶ development of printed information sheets designed to better inform clients at each level of the redress process; and
- ▶ development of a feedback questionnaire in which clients may indicate where they feel opportunities for improvement exist.

Upon introduction to our clients, these initiatives will be completed by the fall of 2004.

• • • BENEFITS TO CANADIANS • • •

If veterans are dissatisfied with decisions regarding their disability pension claims relating to military/RCMP service, they may contest them. Canada, unique among nations, offers those Canadians and their families, free legal advice and representation provided by lawyers working for the Bureau of Pensions Advocates.



**Web Site Access**

**Bureau of Pensions Advocates:**

- The Role of Bureau of Pensions Advocates
- The Review and Appeal Process
- How to Contact the Bureau

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/organization/bpa1>

## PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME

### PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME:

#### CANADA REMEMBERS PROGRAM

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#### STRATEGIC OUTCOME

A KNOWLEDGEABLE CANADIAN PUBLIC THAT RECOGNIZES THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND SACRIFICES OF CANADA'S CITIZENS IN THE DEFENCE OF FREEDOM AND APPRECIATES THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANADA AS A NATION.

#### PRIORITY

Providing strong leadership in the delivery of Remembrance programming through effective partnerships

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Actual Spending for 2003-04: \$41.2 million

70 Full-Time Equivalents

#### • • • INTRODUCTION • • •

The Canada Remembers Program endeavours to keep alive the memory of the sacrifices and achievements of the brave men and women who have served Canada in times of war, military conflict, and peace. The program does this by engaging communities in Remembrance activities, the maintenance of foreign battlefields and memorial sites in Canada and abroad, providing learning opportunities and materials and promoting an understanding of the significance of veterans' contributions to life in Canada as we know it today. The Canada Remembers Program has three components: Community Engagement, Public Information and Research, and National and International Memorials, which are broken down into six elements: Ceremonies and Events, Learning Initiatives, Public Information, Funeral and Burials, Cemetery Maintenance, and Memorials.

Our Canada Remembers Program Strategic Outcome is aligned with the Government of Canada Outcome – Vibrant Canadian Culture and Heritage – in the *Canada's Performance 2004 Report* (<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/est-pre/estime.asp#OSD>).

#### • • • PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS • • •

Through community engagement, VAC's goal is to have Canadians participate in and lead events that recognize Canada's role in global peace and how this role has contributed to the nation's development. During 2003-04, there were a number of ceremonies and events that marked significant periods in Canada's military history.

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic was remembered through events held throughout Canada and the United Kingdom. Veterans' parades and ceremonies took place in Ottawa, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Halifax, and communities throughout the Atlantic provinces. Ceremonies held in Liverpool, England were also attended by a

delegation that included veterans, Parliamentarians, and representatives from various veterans' organizations. In recognition of this anniversary, a public "Information Sheet" and educator's learning guide were created and distributed across the country.

In June 2003, the Juno Beach Centre was officially opened in France in a ceremony attended by approximately 3,000 people, including the Minister of Veterans Affairs, representatives of the Government of France, as well as veterans and their families. VAC contributed approximately \$3 million for the development and operation of this Centre which will ensure that knowledge of Canada's contribution during the Second World War will be preserved to inspire and inform all who visit.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean War Armistice was marked with events held across the country as well as an overseas event in Korea. Thirteen young Canadians representing every province and territory accompanied the veteran delegation to Korea in August 2003. The youth were chosen by Encounters With Canada from Canadian youth who participated in the Canada Remembers theme week at Encounters in the fall of 2002. While in Korea, the youth participated in a commemorative learning program designed to increase their awareness of the sacrifices and accomplishments of Canada's veteran population and to facilitate the "passing of the torch." Parades and memorial services were held at the Calgary Cenotaph and at the Citadel in Quebec while a national Ceremony of Remembrance was held on July 27, at the Korea Veterans National Wall of Remembrance in Brampton, Ontario.

In September 2003, VAC held a ceremony in Ottawa to unveil the "Monument to Canadian Fallen," a replica of the Monument unveiled in 2001 in Busan (formerly known as Pusan), South Korea. This monument of peace features a Canadian serviceman accompanying Korean children to the graves of fallen Canadians. The children represent the generations who were made free by those who served and those who died. A reception held after the ceremony, hosted by VAC and Canadian Heritage, was attended by more than 2,500 individuals.

Veterans' Week continues to be one of the highlights of our yearly Remembrance activities in recognition of Canadian veterans. Numerous events were held across the country. This year's theme was "Canada Remembers the Korean War," which paid tribute to all of Canada's veterans, in particular those who served for Canada during the Korean War.

In response to two Private Members' Bills, two special days for veterans were recognized by Parliament in 2003-04. Bill C-227, the *Vimy Ridge Day Act*, took effect on April 3, 2003. It designates April 9<sup>th</sup> of each year as a national day of Remembrance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. As well, Bill C-411, the *Merchant Navy Veterans Day Act*, was enacted on June 19, 2003, and designates September 3<sup>rd</sup> of each year as a day to acknowledge the contribution of Merchant Navy Veterans.

On June 6, 2003, further to the Order amending the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal Order (SI/2003-120), eligibility to the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal was extended

to members, reserve constables and special constables of the RCMP who voluntarily served during World War II. As a result, Veterans Affairs Canada issued 136 Medals during 2003-04 to former RCMP members (or next of kin).

Each year, our Minister has the opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of those who have either contributed to the care and well-being, or to the Remembrance of the sacrifices and accomplishments, of veterans through "The Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation Award." In 2003-04, 62 individuals were given this prestigious award.

VAC is currently confronted with the reality that, as traditional war veterans advance in age, they are becoming less and less able to lead Remembrance activities. As such, the Department recognizes the need to "pass the Remembrance torch" to our youth so that future generations "never forget" our military history and heritage. One way to do this is through Community Outreach activities and learning initiatives. During 2003-04, innovative learning products were developed and distributed to Canadian educators across the country. As well, we continued to provide a multitude of learning resources on Canada's participation in the First and Second World Wars and other areas of military conflict. Also, at the Association of Canadian Studies' national convention in Halifax in October 2003, our former Minister launched VAC's latest multi media learning kit, "Canada Remembers The Korean War 1950-53." Over 2,000 of these kits have been subsequently distributed to Canadian schools.

VAC partnered with Encounters with Canada to offer a one-week program for Canadian youth to learn about the role played by veterans of the Second World War and the Korean War in the development of Canada and the preservation of freedom. During this fiscal year, 140 youth participated in this program. In association with the Battle of Normandy Foundation, a Youth Learning Tour of nine students visited Bardi, Italy.

VAC continues to use electronic media as a means to provide information to Canadians on Remembrance subjects. For example, in 2003, VAC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Canadian Heritage to complete the Oral History Digitization Project. This project, targeted at audiences of youth, educators, lifetime learners, and the Canadian public who have an interest in Canadian military history, made available audio and video interviews of the experiences of Canadian veterans - interviews that VAC has collected over the past 30 years. As well, the Canada Remembers Web Site, which is continuously enhanced with additional information, was updated to improve navigation and retrieval of information.

The Canadian Virtual War Memorial Web Site is an on-line registry of information on graves and memorials of more than 116,000 Canadians who served and died in service to Canada. Visitors to the Canadian Virtual War Memorial Web Site may also preserve their copy of photographs, letters, postcards and newspaper clippings on the "Help Us Build a Picture Collection" portion of this Web Site by submitting an electronic copy of their memorabilia to VAC using an on-line submission form. During 2003-04, over 6,000 memorabilia were submitted.

VAC continues its partnership with the Last Post Fund to provide funeral, burial and grave marker assistance to Canada's veterans. In 2003-04, almost 2,800 burial applications were approved (at a cost of \$10.9 million). In June 2003, at the Passchendale Cemetery in Belgium, the remains of three unidentified Canadian soldiers were interred.

To honour those who have died in service to Canada, VAC continually maintains their graves and memorials. There are approximately 116,000 Canadian war dead located in 74 countries, as well as approximately 350,000 other grave sites located in about 15,000 cemeteries across Canada where service personnel, veterans and others have been laid to rest. A pilot project to map the physical locations of all veterans' graves in Quebec began in 2003-04. This will be the first step in the mapping of all veterans' graves in Canada.

The Student Guide Program in France is an opportunity for Canadian students to work, for a period of four months, as interpretative guides at the Canadian National Vimy Monument and the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial in France. There were approximately 40 students working as guides during 2003-04.

In the Memorial Chamber of the Peace Tower there are six Books of Remembrance. The names of those who have fallen in service to Canada are recorded in these books. In 2003-04, VAC began work on the Seventh Book of Remembrance, titled "In the Service of Peace." It will recognize those who died as a result of their military service, and who are not already recognized in the previous Books of Remembrance. This book is expected to be completed and installed in the Memorial Chamber in 2005.

There are thirteen Canadian First World War memorials in France and Belgium. These memorials were erected in tribute to events of particular historical importance to Canadians and to commemorate the sacrifices of our servicemen and servicewomen of the First World War. It is estimated that over one million people visited these sites during 2003-04. With an average age of 75 years, these memorials are in need of refurbishment in order to preserve and safeguard their dignity and cultural integrity, and to ensure the health and safety of both visitors and employees. Therefore, the Canadian Battlefield Memorials Restoration Project was initiated in 2001 to restore each of these sites, the most notable being Vimy. This project is scheduled for completion in December 2006 at a cost of \$30 million.

During this fiscal year, progress was made on a number of sites. The Vimy restoration project and the Beaumont-Hamel site conservation work continued in 2003-04. Construction was expected to commence on the Vimy site during this fiscal year but delays in the contracting process have postponed the start-up to early fall 2004. Work on the remaining memorials is proceeding on schedule. Prior to April 1, 2003, work on three of the smaller sites (Courcellette, le Quesnel, and Dury) had been completed and it was anticipated that another five sites would be completed during 2003-04. Construction and restoration work on three of these sites (Masnieres, Gueudecourt, and St. Julien) was completed. However, contracting delays in the Vimy restoration project

caused the work scheduled at the other two sites, Bourlon Wood and Monchy le Preux, to be postponed and it is anticipated that these will be completed in late 2004. Lastly, three sites (Hill 62, Passchendaele, and Courtrai) will be completed in 2005-06.

• • • **BENEFITS TO CANADIANS** • • •

A strong Remembrance Program is essential for the development of our country. It instills a sense of pride in the accomplishments of Canadians and provides the historical backdrop necessary to understand the values and principles upon which our country was built. It explains to all Canadians, especially our youth and new Canadians, the significance of past events and how they helped to shape our society of today. It also provides Canadians with a true understanding of how Canada became a nation and how it achieved its present place in the nations of the world.



**Web Site Access**

**Canada Remembers:**

- Books of Remembrance
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial
- History
- Memorials
- Records and Collections
- What's New

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/>

**Canadian Battlefield Memorials Restoration Project:**

- First World War Memorials in Europe
- Interactive Vimy
- Rehabilitation of Canada's Memorial Sites
- Restoration and Rehabilitation of Vimy

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=Memorials/cbmr>

**Youth and Educators:**

- Activities
- Doing Research?
- Fun Stuff
- Multi-Media
- Student Guide Program
- Teachers' Resources
- Working on a Project?

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/youth/>



## PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME

### PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME:

#### CORPORATE ADMINISTRATION

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ACTIVITIES FOCUS ON SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF OUR STAFF, IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS, EXPANDED USE OF TECHNOLOGIES AND A GREATER CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS THAT ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE WELL-BEING AND RECOGNITION OF OUR VETERANS AND OTHER CLIENTS.

#### PRIORITIES

Enhancing our policy capacity to ensure more effective use of information and analysis in support of evidence-based decision-making and better public accountability

Aligning our strategic human resources plan to support the goals of the organization and the aspirations of our people

Advancing the development of our information technology capacity in support of service improvement, organizational effectiveness and Government On-Line

• • •

Actual Spending for 2003-04: \$67.4 million

615 Full-Time Equivalents

#### • • • INTRODUCTION • • •

Our Corporate Administration activities and priorities support the Portfolio by ensuring that the necessary resources are in place to efficiently deliver our benefits and services to our Veterans and other clients.

#### • • • PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS • • •

Effective management of our resources is key to meeting the needs of our clients. To operate efficiently, Veterans Affairs focusses its efforts on service improvement, management of its staff, and competent decision-making. To do this, we have a number of multi-year strategic plans in place to guide our progress:

Our *VAC Five-Year Strategic Plan 2001-06* profiles the Department's strategic objectives and priorities and these are reflected in this *2003-04 Performance Report*. The Strategic Plan is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Update 2003 is available for public viewing on the VAC Web Site. From the *VAC Five-Year Strategic Plan*, flow three related strategic plans:

- 1) The *VAC Human Resources Five-Year Strategic Plan 2002-07* focusses on a variety of staff-related issues including learning and development opportunities, staff retention and recruitment, and workplace diversity. During this fiscal year, staff were provided with an opportunity to complete learning plans. Research continues in improving our selection process for recruitment of new employees. As well,

leadership workshops were completed for senior, middle, and front-line managers.

- 2) In the second year of *Ste. Anne's Hospital's 2002-07 Strategic Plan*, work was completed toward fulfilling its objectives and vision statement. This strategic plan focusses primarily on the hospital's modernization project, various clinical initiatives, and human resourcing requirements, and is updated annually to reflect current priorities. During this fiscal year, progress was made on a number of the hospital's priorities. These priorities relate to research, dementia care, pain management, and dysphagia. Further information is available in the Benefits and Services Strategic Outcome section of this report.
- 3) The *Veterans Affairs Information Management/Information Technology Strategic Plan 2003-06* ensures that its infrastructure and services are clearly aligned with the broader corporate strategic objectives contained in the *VAC Five-Year Strategic Plan*. During this fiscal year, we continued to identify and replace critical infrastructure. We also put in place asset management policies and procurement controls. Lastly, we continued to fulfill VAC's IT requirements as new and evolving programs and services were introduced this year.

VAC also produces an annual Corporate Communication Plan that has an overall goal of integrating governmental, ministerial and institutional communication priorities. This plan outlines the Department's strategic communication approach to client and stakeholder outreach, supports service and benefit delivery, and involves all Canadians, particularly youth, in paying tribute to Canada's war Veterans and modern military heroes.

VRAB developed its *Strategic Plan 2003-06* to address present and emerging issues and focus on improvement in the areas of communication, service delivery, management structure and transition management. This Strategic Plan and Update 2004 are available on the VRAB Web Site.

In addition to the above plans, we continue to advance our strategic planning, policy and analytical capacities. This is particularly important as we work with our external partners and stakeholders to advance Veterans Affairs' initiatives.

• • • **BENEFITS TO CANADIANS** • • •

The effective and efficient management of costs associated with the provision of corporate support services ensures optimal use of resources, both human and material, toward serving our clients. By having long-term plans in place allows us to manage our resources and prepare for emerging issues, and continue with the high quality of services we provide our clients.



**Web Site Access**

- VAC Five-Year Strategic Plan 2001-06
- VAC Human Resources Five-Year Strategic Plan 2002-07  
<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/reports>
- VRAB Strategic Plan 2003-06  
[http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca/VRAB-TACRA\\_Documents.htm](http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca/VRAB-TACRA_Documents.htm)

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**PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME**

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**PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME:**

**VETERANS REVIEW AND APPEAL BOARD PROGRAM**

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**STRATEGIC OUTCOME**

FAIRNESS IN THE DISABILITY PENSION AND WAR VETERANS ALLOWANCE PROGRAM.

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**PRIORITIES**

Improved communication with appellants, staff and stakeholders

Improved service delivery

Improved management accountability framework

Smooth transition

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Actual Spending for 2003-04: \$11.1 million	109 Full-Time Equivalents
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• • • **INTRODUCTION** • • •

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board is a quasi-judicial tribunal which operates independently of VAC, and provides a redress process that ensures each individual is treated fairly, efficiently and in accordance with the legislation. Its Board Members are independent adjudicators who conduct hearings and issue written decisions which outline the reasons supporting the outcome.

Canadians who apply to VAC for a disability pension or War Veterans Allowance will receive a favourable, partially favourable, or unfavourable decision. Those who are dissatisfied with their decision, may request a review hearing by the Veterans Review and Appeal Board. If the results of the review hearing are not satisfactory to the applicant, he or she may request an appeal hearing with VRAB. If there is an error in fact or law in the appeal decision or if there is new evidence to present to the appeal panel, the applicant may submit an application for reconsideration. The applicant's final recourse is to make an application for Judicial Review to the Federal Court of Canada. Although VRAB is not a party to the Judicial Review process, and rarely seeks intervenor status, it is required to analyse Federal Court decisions and ensure that the guidance given is reflected in its decisions, policies and operations.

• • • **PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS** • • •

In order to meet its commitment to provide an independent redress process, adjudicate claims consistently and in a timely manner, and improve communications with clients, the Board developed a Strategic Plan to streamline and improve its program. This framework focusses on the four priorities mentioned above. Improvements made, as a

result of the Board's work under this Strategic Plan, will ensure that the redress process is fair, impartial, accessible, transparent, and meets established service standards.

The workload preceding a hearing includes compiling the documentary evidence for the Board Members and representatives, the representative's work in preparing the claim, and scheduling the hearing once the representative and client have indicated they are ready to proceed. Oral review hearings are held in 35 locations across Canada based on the volume of cases in the particular area. The appeal hearings are generally held in Charlottetown. While the average length of time between registration of a claim and the scheduled hearing is four to five months, part of the time period may be due to waiting for additional documents or reports from the client. The Board is working with the representatives to identify strategies to bring cases to hearings more quickly.

During this fiscal year, VRAB undertook a number of initiatives to modify and strengthen its program. Increased consultations and collaboration with the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, the Royal Canadian Legion, and Veterans' organizations have resulted in improvements in the scheduling and processing of claims. A case management pilot, conducted with the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, focussed on improving claim preparation. As well, alternate methods of holding more hearings via videoconference or telephone conference continued to be explored.

Conferences for Board Members on medical conditions, legal information and emerging issues increased their knowledge base and strengthened the consistent application of the legislation. The publication of practice notes, specialized resource materials and customized computer training collectively supported the timely preparation of decisions.

A Communication Audit undertaken during the year assessed current practices and identified priorities which the Board will address. Efforts continued to improve communication with clients at each level of the decision-making process and included development of a revised format to communicate the written decision. The Board responded effectively to an increasing number of telephone and written inquiries and surpassed established service standards. A valuable source of information is the VRAB Web Site which has been significantly enhanced to provide program details for the public.

Effective implementation of these various initiatives exemplify the Board's commitment to improve its service to all clients. However, there are factors that impact VRAB's ability to meet increasing workload demands. The Board prepared documentary evidence for 10,720 claims, however, only 7,054 claims were finalized which demonstrates a significant volume of claims that did not result in a hearing but required the same preparatory work. Claims are withdrawn by clients for various reasons. Therefore, it is difficult to anticipate the volume of claims withdrawn during the process and those not proceeding at their scheduled hearing. To respond to this challenge, the Board ensured resources were effectively allocated and worked with the representatives to take measures to reduce the number of claims withdrawn following the production of

the documentary evidence.

The Board continued to experience an evolving client mix as evidenced by a marked increase in decisions issued for Canadian Forces applicants (from 48.4% in 2000-01 to 65.6% in 2003-04) and RCMP applicants (from 5.1% in 2000-01 to 7.0% in 2003-04). This has been offset by a decrease from 46.5% to 25.8% in decisions issued for war service applicants over the same time period.

Younger Canadian Forces clients are dealing with circumstances that are different from those of our older traditional war service Veterans. As a result, Members must expand their capacity to make decisions on claims that present a wide spectrum of disabilities, increased complexity of medical conditions, and new legal arguments. Therefore, continuous training, as well as up-to-date research and medical information, are crucial for the Board Members to apply the legislation to the specific facts, evidence and circumstances of each case. While the legislation affords that the benefit of doubt be applied, applicants have the obligation to provide factual and medical evidence which will demonstrate that there is a causal link between the medical disability suffered and their military service.

At the same time, applicants expect a timely decision following their review or appeal hearing. During 2003-04, 90% of Review decisions were issued in 28.7 days and 90% of Appeal decisions were issued in 22.8 days, which compares favourably with the service standard to issue a decision within 30 days of the hearing date. When all VRAB redress avenues have been exhausted, clients may apply to the Federal Court of Canada for a Judicial Review. In 2003-04, fourteen appellants filed Notices of Application with the Federal Court (less than 0.2% of the Board's 7,054 decisions for this fiscal year). Of the thirteen rulings handed down by the Federal Court this fiscal year, six applications were allowed and returned to the Board for rehearing, and seven applications were dismissed.

The following chart summarizes the Board's finalized decisions activity over the last three years.

<b>Finalized Decisions</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>In Progress*</b>
Reviews	4,056	5,213	5,015	3,322
Appeals	1,316	1,363	1,755	849
Reconsiderations	223	120	258	79
War Veterans Allowance	185	56	26	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,780</b>	<b>6,752</b>	<b>7,054</b>	<b>4,255</b>

\* As of March 31, 2004, these are the number of claims that have been registered but are still in progress and have not reached the hearing stage. These numbers include applications which may be withdrawn by applicants prior to scheduling a hearing, or at the time of their scheduled hearing.

## PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME

At the Review hearing, Board Members take into consideration the applicant's testimony, any new evidence submitted and the representative's arguments. On average, 50.3% of the 5,015 finalized Review decisions and 32.1% of 1,755 finalized Appeal decisions varied a previous ruling.

### • • • BENEFITS TO CANADIANS • • •

Through the dedicated work of its Board Members and staff, VRAB endeavours to provide high quality and responsive service to its clients. As well, applicants are treated fairly and receive an impartial and timely adjudication of appealed decisions. With the implementation of its various initiatives, VRAB's commitment to improve upon its service, accountability, and communication, benefits all clients that it serves.



#### Web Site Access

##### Veterans Review and Appeal Board:

- About VRAB
- Contact Us
- Documents (including Strategic Plan 2003-06)
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Service Commitment
- What's New

<http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca>

## ANNEXES:

## EVALUATIONS AND REVIEWS

Throughout the year, there are a number of evaluations and reviews conducted across the Portfolio. Our evaluations improve the effectiveness of our programs and their delivery in two ways. First, they help our managers to design (or improve the design of) policies, programs and initiatives. Second, they provide a) periodic assessments of policy or program effectiveness; and b) information on impacts (both intended and unintended) and alternative ways of achieving expected results. Our reviews, on the other hand, provide decision-making information to senior management on selected issues. The chart below provides information on various evaluations and reviews that were in progress or completed during 2003-04.

Evaluation or Review	Completion Date
<i>Criteria and Approach for Rating Partnership Arrangements</i> - verify the relevancy and applicability of partnership guidelines/criteria developed by VAC's Strategic Partnership Coordination Initiative.	July 2003
<i>Disability Pension Program Evaluation (Volume 1)</i> - assess the relevancy of this program, address client impact, and provide input to future program design.	Fall 2004
<i>Final Evaluation of the Health Canada/Veterans Affairs Canada Falls Prevention Initiative</i> - assess the progress, impacts and lessons learned from the Initiative and to provide the information required to support decision-making at the overall Initiative and individual project level.	Fall 2004
<i>Institute of Internal Auditors/International Standards Operation (IIA/ISO) Conversion</i> - remap our Audit and Evaluation Division's current ISO Quality Policy to meet the requirements of the new standard and apply for re-certification.	November 2003
<i>Integrated Service Delivery Framework (ISDF)</i> - provide an evaluation framework for ISDF to allow for a future evaluation of the implementation of this initiative.	Spring 2005
<i>Modern Comptrollership / Modern Management Practices</i> - assist management to manage departmental operations and administration in an integrated manner.	Ongoing
<i>Peer Support Network (Operational Stress Injuries Social Support)</i> - draft an evaluation framework and provide monitoring to a contracted evaluation of the Peer Support Pilot Project.	August 2004
<i>Sustainable Development Strategy</i> - Work with Portfolio staff on responding to recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor General as well as developments under the Sustainable Development Strategy.	Ongoing
<i>Transition Coordinator Pilot Project</i> - evaluate effectiveness of this project.	February 2004



**ANNEXES**

Evaluation or Review	Completion Date
<i>Veterans Independence Program Baseline Study</i> - take a snapshot of VIP payment processing prior to the change-over to the Federal Health Claims Processing System to allow for a comparison after its implementation.	April 2004
<i>VRAB Risk Analysis</i> - assist VRAB in preparing its risk identification and assessment.	February 2003 and March 2004



**Web Site Access**

Our reviews are normally not available on-line. However, upon completion, all of our evaluations and audits are available on the following Web Site:

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/reports/deptaudrep>

## ANNEXES:

## EXTERNAL CHARGING INFORMATION

Veterans Affairs Canada charges fees at Ste. Anne's Hospital. During the 2003-04 fiscal year, total fees collected amounted to \$21.5 million. All revenues generated are non-respendable and are credited to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Below are details of our fee activities followed by our revenue figures from 2003-04 through to 2006-07.

**Ste. Anne's Hospital: In-Patient Charges to the Quebec Provincial Plan  
(Other Goods and Services)**

When a patient is admitted to Ste. Anne's Hospital for a condition that is related to a pensioned condition, VAC assumes all costs and, therefore, no costs are charged to the Government of Quebec. On the other hand, when a patient is admitted for a non-pensioned condition, the hospital charges a daily rate to the Government of Quebec for the type of care (chronic or acute care) that the patient received. VAC charged the Government of Quebec for these type of patients for a total of 145,337 patient-days in chronic care and 1,064 patient-days in acute care.

**Fee Setting Authority:** Letter received from Quebec's Department of Health and Social Services which specifies the amount that will be paid.

**Service Standard:** Medical, professional, nursing and support services are delivered according to the standards and practices that prevail in the health care field.

**Performance Results:** In December 2002, the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation awarded Ste. Anne's Hospital the highest type of accreditation (three-year) that can be awarded to a health institution.

**Consultation and Analysis:** Daily rates are set by Quebec's Department of Health and Social Services at \$115 for chronic care and \$198 for acute care.

**Dispute Management Process:** As appropriate, conflicts are dealt with by telephone, correspondence and/or meetings.

**Date Last Modified:** The daily rates have not changed since 1988-89.

**Other Information:** Construction and renovations at the hospital has an impact on the admission of patients because the number of beds set up will decrease from 568 (April 2003) to 446 (upon completion of the project).

### Ste. Anne's Hospital: Dietary Meals (Other Goods and Services)

VAC charges fees to employees and visitors who use the cafeteria at the hospital to take their meals.

**Fee Setting Authority:** In accordance with current practices in the Quebec Health and Social Services network.

**Service Standard:** Service standards are based on the Sanitation Code for Canada's Food Service Industry and the Food Retail and Food Services Code, among others. Users' suggestions are assessed and implemented whenever possible.

**Performance Results:** Cafeteria users (employees and visitors) are asked to fill out periodic and ad-hoc surveys. A suggestion box is also available for users' comments.

**Consultation and Analysis:** The cost for employees is based on the rate established in Quebec provincial hospitals and mainly covers the cost of the ingredients included in the meal. As for the cost for visitors, it is based on the cost for employees, plus an increase (ratio) of between 1.10 and 1.75.

**Dispute Management Process:** Disputes about food are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Further to the evaluation, if the user's request has merit, corrective measures are taken.

**Date Last Modified:** Last increase was effective May 28, 2003. Increase in cost of ingredients is taken into consideration.

### Ste. Anne's Hospital: Domiciliary Care (Regulatory Service)

Accommodation and meal fees are not charged to patients admitted for a pensioned condition. However, when a patient is admitted for a non-pensioned condition, charges are levied to a maximum monthly fee of \$778 based on the patient's revenues and other considerations. In 2003-04, approximately 466 beds were occupied by patients with non-pensioned conditions.

**Fee Setting Authority:** Veterans Health Care Regulations; P.C. 1990-1825; August 28, 1990.

**Service Standard:** Medical, professional, nursing and support services are delivered according to the standards and practices that prevail in the health care field.

**Performance Results:** In December 2002, the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation awarded Ste. Anne's Hospital the highest type of accreditation (three-year) that can be awarded to a health institution.

**Consultation and Analysis:** The maximum monthly rate for accommodation and meal expenses is set by VAC to match the lower of the following two amounts: 1) the lowest monthly provincial user fee for accommodations and meals in effect on the previous July 1<sup>st</sup>; or 2) the maximum monthly rate applicable for accommodations immediately before October 1<sup>st</sup>, multiplied by the percentage representing the WVA rate for married persons in effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year compared with the WVA rate for married persons in effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year. Residents are advised by letter of the new monthly rate they will be charged.

**Dispute Management Process:** As appropriate, conflicts are dealt with by telephone, correspondence and/or meetings with residents or their representatives. Also, compensatory measures with regard to pensions may be taken and, if applicable, legal proceedings may be taken to arrive at a settlement.

**Date Last Modified:** The last increase for the monthly fee was October 1, 2003.

**Other Information:** Construction and renovations at the hospital has an impact on the admission of patients because the number of beds set up will decrease from 568 (April 2003) to 446 (upon completion of the project).

**ANNEXES**

The following is a summary of our actual and forecasted revenues for the period 2003-04 through 2006-07.

\$ Thousands								
Actual Revenue	Forecast Revenue				Estimated Full Cost to Provide Good or Service			
2003-04	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
<b>Ste. Anne's Hospital: In-Patient Charges to the Quebec Provincial Plan (Regulatory Service)</b>								
\$16,924	\$17,501	\$15,587	\$14,402	\$14,056	\$50,827	\$48,336	\$46,113	\$46,390
<b>Ste. Anne's Hospital: Dietary Meals (Other Goods and Services)</b>								
\$347	\$333	\$357	\$368	\$379	\$1,132	\$1,165	\$1,120	\$1,236
<b>Ste. Anne's Hospital: Domiciliary Care (Regulatory Service)</b>								
\$4,194	\$4,169	\$4,137	\$3,947	\$3,971	\$17,742	\$16,872	\$16,096	\$16,193
<b>Totals</b>								
\$21,465	\$22,003	\$20,081	\$18,717	\$18,406	\$69,701	\$66,373	\$63,329	\$63,819

**ANNEXES:****GOVERNMENT ON-LINE**

Over a six-year period ending in 2005, Veterans Affairs Canada and all other federal government departments have made a commitment to have key services delivered over the Internet to individuals and businesses. In support of this government-wide initiative, VAC is focussing its efforts in three key areas relating to benefits and health services, Remembrance, and seniors.

With respect to our Pensions and Allowances, and Health Care Key Service, significant progress has been made. As of June 2003, VAC's District Office nurses have been able to enter their nursing assessments on-line. A small pilot is currently underway to determine the feasibility of contract health professionals and agencies also having the ability to complete their nursing assessments on-line for VAC. VAC completed a business case regarding a Consolidated Disability Assessment system showing the potential savings that could accrue if health assessments technology is shared. Recently, other departments have begun to consider adopting VAC's approach. A project (allowing clients to apply on-line on their own behalf for a VAC disability pension or to request a re-assessment of their pensioned conditions) is in the final stages of development. On-line disability pension applications will be made available in partnership with the implementation of Public Works and Government Services Canada's Common Registration System. Both are scheduled for implementation in the fall of 2004. As well, the design of a system, which will allow clients to track the progress of their disability pension applications or re-assessment requests on-line, was initiated this year. VAC already delivers much of the day-to-day benefit transactions under this service to our established clients using different electronic methods. Most payments for War Veterans Allowance and disability pension payments are delivered through direct deposit to client bank accounts. Health care services are delivered through "VAC Health Care Identification Cards" which results in nearly four million pharmacy transactions per year being processed in real time through the Federal Health Claims Processing System.

The Canada Remembers Key Service continued to expand the Canadian Virtual War Memorial Web Site and ended the year with 14,957 on-line memorabilia linked to the names of war dead memorialized in Canada's Books of Remembrance. This year, the Canada Remembers portion of the VAC Web Site became a major partner in the Canadian Military History Gateway in partnership with National Defence and Canadian Heritage. As well, in partnership with Canadian Heritage, a number of audio/video oral histories were placed on-line. The Canada Remembers Key Service was also a focal point for information concerning plans for D-Day celebrations. It should be noted that, in the months leading up to Remembrance Day, more than 40,000 educational products were downloaded from the Canada Remembers portion of the VAC Web Site.

Over the fiscal year, the Seniors Cluster Horizontal Service continued to increase its support to the Canadian Seniors Partnership. This support, together with concepts

emerging from the Transitions in Care business case completed over the period, led to the launch of a Collaborative Seniors Portal in partnership with the Province of Ontario and the City of Brockville. Considerable interest has been generated in other municipalities, and presentations on this portal have been made to these municipalities as well as Service New Brunswick. The Seniors Canada On-line Web Site has been enhanced by adding a “retirement life event” feature. “Life events” greatly reduce the amount of time spent searching on-line for information that is relevant to a senior’s particular circumstances. By choosing a life event (life care transition, death and bereavement, or retirement), indicating the province of residence, and answering a short questionnaire, seniors are provided with a variety of Web Site links specific to their interests. The Seniors Cluster team also had a strong role in developing a “Seniors Service Strategy” which is part of the Government of Canada’s “Service Delivery Vision for Canadians.” This vision goes beyond Government On-Line and will transform service delivery networks so that programs and services are integrated, easy to access, simple to navigate, and flexible. To improve services to seniors, this involved development of a Seniors Service Mapping which allows jurisdictions to see the overlaps and gaps in service delivery. Plans can then be initiated to better integrate the delivery of services to seniors. Results of this mapping have generated considerable interest in the service transformation community.

Canadians are increasingly accessing VAC’s Web Site for information and for downloading of documents, forms and guidelines. During this fiscal year, approximately 1,415,000 visits were made to the VAC Web Site and 173,909 documents were downloaded. Notably, this download activity has increased 145% over the previous fiscal year. For our Veterans and other clients, this provides quick and easy access to our guidelines and forms. For the Department, this represents savings in printing and distribution costs.

Progress on our Government On-Line initiatives could not be achieved without the collaboration and assistance of our many Federal Government partners, Provincial Government partners, and members of the Canadian Seniors Partnership. We face a number of challenges, including limited resources, differing jurisdictional policies, technical delays, long-term sustainability, as well as the challenge of meeting and respecting all partners’ needs. Therefore, emphasis is placed on a strong working relationship with our partners, including good communication.



## Web Site Access

### Canada Remembers:

- Books of Remembrance
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial
- History
- Memorials
- Records and Collections

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/>

### Canadian Forces Activities:

- Disability Pension Benefits for CF Clients
- PTSD
- VAC Canadian Forces Advisory Council
- Veterans Affairs Canada's Responsibility to the Canadian Forces
- Vision for a Modern-Day Veteran's Charter

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub.cfm?source=forces>

### Canadian Seniors Partnership:

- CSP Networking Registry
- CSP Information Kit

<http://www.seniors.gc.ca/scolPortAux.jsp?contentPageId=25&font=0&lang=en&geo=104>

### Seniors Canada On-line:

- E-Forms and Services
- Government Contacts
- Life Events
- My Province or Territory
- Search by Subject
- Stay in Touch

<http://www.seniors.gc.ca/index.jsp>

**Seniors' Info** – A Collaborative On-line Resource – Brockville, Ontario

<http://www.seniorsinfo.ca>

### Veterans Affairs Government On-Line Plan

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/golrep>

### Veterans Services:

- Disability Pension Program
- Health Care Program
- Your Health Care Identification Card
- Veterans Independence Program

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub.cfm?source=services>

## ANNEXES:

## HORIZONTAL INITIATIVES

Veterans Affairs Canada is currently the lead department for the Federal Healthcare Partnership (FHP), a partnership of ten departments and agencies. Established in 1994, this partnership was mandated to develop and implement a strategy to coordinate federal government purchasing of health care services and products for federal government clients at the lowest possible cost through coordination of effort among the departments and agencies involved. This has resulted in greater efficiencies and less duplication in the delivery of common health care programs, while maintaining or improving the quality of the services these departments and agencies provide. In total, over one million Canadians benefit from the work of this partnership, and they include Veterans, Canadian Forces members, RCMP, First Nations living on reserve, the Inuit, inmates at federal institutions, immigrants and landed refugees.

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**In 2003-04, jointly negotiated fees, bulk purchases and collaborative policy development, collectively resulted in improved quality of services to clients and \$19.9 million in cost savings.**

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In addition to performing Secretariat functions for the Federal Healthcare Partnership, VAC contributes to this partnership in several ways. Our Associate Deputy Minister serves as Chair of the FHP Executive Committee. Operational costs for the Secretariat are covered by VAC. We also actively participate in joint policy development among the departments involved as well as in joint negotiations with the providers of health care goods and services. Examples of these goods and services include vision care, equipment recycling, audiology, dental care, oxygen, and pharmacy.

Significant monetary savings have resulted from the collaborative efforts of this partnership. This, along with improved management of the various programs involved, means that federal clients across the country (including our Veterans) will benefit through a better quality of life.



#### Web Site Access

For more information, including contact information, on this and other federal government departments' horizontal initiatives, please visit Treasury Board Secretariat's Horizontal Results Database Web Site:

[http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/eppi-ibdrp/hr-rh\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/eppi-ibdrp/hr-rh_e.asp)



**ANNEXES:****MODERN COMPTROLLERSHIP**

Veterans Affairs Canada, like other federal government departments and agencies, is committed to the principles of Modern Comptrollership. Modern Comptrollership is based on four pillars: integrated financial and non-financial performance information, sound risk management, appropriate control, and values and ethics.

Veterans Affairs Canada demonstrates its commitment to excellence in serving Canadians by taking steps to improve its management of resources and strengthen its decision-making processes. During this last fiscal year, VAC has made progress in two of its Modern Comptrollership initiatives – values and ethics, and integrated risk management.

With respect to values and ethics, the new Values and Ethics Code was distributed to all employees in September 2003. Subsequently, information sessions were held to increase staff awareness and ability to deal with ethical dilemmas. It is anticipated that these sessions will continue in 2004-05.

Integrated risk management has become an integral part of planning throughout the Department. Department-wide assessments are conducted periodically with senior management which help ensure that the organization is aware of key risks and has strategies in place to manage them. In addition, staff at all levels are encouraged to promote a supportive and pro-active environment in regards to risk management. We believe that discussions of risks and challenges encourages more realistic expectations and provides a more supportive climate for change and innovation.

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board has made significant progress with respect to Modern Comptrollership. As a result of a Modern Management Practices Assessment, strengths and opportunities were identified where VRAB could focus its energies to integrate modern management practices into its day-to-day operations. For example, a systematic process was developed for gathering, analyzing, and sharing information for decision-making and reporting. An Awareness and Assessment Session was held in November 2003, where senior managers and staff discussed the potential risks highlighted in environmental scans. This analysis identified opportunities for mitigation and provided a foundation for the development of a Corporate Risk Profile which was completed in January 2004. During this fiscal year, VRAB also initiated a process for linking its program activities to results. As this process continues, steps are being taken to incorporate measurement and accountability in all activities which will strengthen performance information. All of these activities contribute to increased accountability, stewardship and transparency, and reflect the Board's commitment to serving Canadians in a responsible and effective manner.



### Web Site Access

- Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service  
[http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/veo-bve/vec-cve/vec-cve\\_e.asp](http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/veo-bve/vec-cve/vec-cve_e.asp)
- VRAB's Commitment to Modern Comptrollership  
<http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca/Modern.htm>

**ANNEXES:****PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Parliamentary Committee Reports fall under three broad categories: administrative (reports on committee membership, expenses, requests, and budgetary approvals), legislative (reports on bills), and substantive (reports on special or major topics). In 2003-04, a number of legislative and substantive reports relating to Veterans Affairs were presented in the House of Commons or the Senate. The House of Commons committee that addresses Veterans' issues is the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs. The Senate Committees that address Veterans' issues are the Standing Committee on National Security and Defence and the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. Both Senate Committees have a sub-committee on Veterans Affairs. The following is a summary of the parliamentary committee reports relating to Veterans Affairs.

***Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA)***

Presented in the House on May 12, 2003, Report 1 regarding *Bill C-31, an Act to amend the Pension Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act*, was intended to recognize, for the purpose of entitlement to pension benefits, service as part of a "special duty operation." Members of the Canadian Forces and the RCMP will be covered on a continuous basis (24 hours per day, 7 days per week) while serving as part of a special duty operation. In the event of the member's disability or death, they or their survivors will be entitled to pension benefits. As well, the authority to designate "special duty operations" and "special duty areas" was delegated to the Minister of National Defence (in the case of the *Pension Act*) and to the Solicitor General of Canada (in the case of the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act*).

Presented in the House on June 12, 2003, Report 3, entitled *Honouring the Pledge: Ensuring Long Term Care for Veterans*, was issued in response to a study regarding long-term care for Veterans throughout Canada. This report contains SCONDVA's 25 recommendations for enhancing Veterans' care in long-term care facilities and focusses on three main themes: food services, type of accommodation (private versus shared rooms), and management of waiting lists. The Government's Response is available at [http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/reports/scondva\\_response](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/reports/scondva_response).

Presented in the House on October 10, 2003, Reports 5 and 6 regarding *Bill C-50 - An Act to amend the statute law in respect of benefits for Veterans and the children of deceased Veterans* were issued to address the most urgent needs of Canada's Veterans. This Bill was designed to improve financial compensation for former prisoners of war, re-establish the Education Assistance Program for children of deceased veterans, and clarify service requirements for the War Veterans Allowance Program. The Bill was adopted and, as a result, the amount of monthly compensation was increased for all former POWs who were held captive, or evaded capture, by the enemy for 911 days or more.

Compensation was also extended to former POWs who were held captive, or evaded capture, by the enemy for 30 to 88 days. Re-establishment of the Education Assistance Program provides support for children who have a Canadian Forces parent who died as a result of military service or who was pensioned at 48% or greater at the time of death. Clarification of service requirements amends the definition of a “former member of His Majesty’s forces” to mean someone who enlisted, attested, served in a theatre of actual war and was discharged from such service. Report 6 also presented certain observations with respect to the extension of Veterans Independence Program services to survivors of eligible veterans.

***Standing Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)***

Presented in the Senate on April 2, 2003, the Seventh Report regarding *Bill C-227 - An Act respecting a national day of remembrance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge*, was examined and reported without amendment. The Standing Committee also provided certain observations relating to the Bill.

Presented to the Senate on April 10, 2003, the Eighth Report regarding *Fixing the Canadian Forces’ Method of Dealing with Death and Dismemberment* was issued in response to a dual scale of compensation whereby senior ranks received additional compensation that was not available to lower ranks. The Minister of National Defence responded quickly to the Sub-Committee's work and all ranks are now entitled to enhanced compensation.

Presented in the Senate on June 16, 2003, the Eleventh Report - *Bill C-31 regarding An Act to amend the Pension Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act*, was examined and reported without amendment.

Presented in the Senate on June 16, 2003, the Twelfth Report - *Bill C-44 regarding An Act to compensate military members injured during service*, was examined and reported without amendment.

Presented in the Senate on June 19, 2003, the Fourteenth Report regarding *Occupational Stress Injuries: The Need for Understanding* addressed the long-overlooked issue of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Recommendations centred primarily on increasing awareness of these conditions, as well as developing a proper diagnosis and treatment program to help veterans suffering from this debilitating condition.

Presented in the Senate on November 4, 2003, the Eighteenth Report regarding *Commemorative Activities* undertaken by the Canada Remembers Program of Veterans Affairs Canada. The Sub-Committee on Veterans Affairs made four specific recommendations to help ensure the restoration and preservation of Canadian Veterans’ achievements and sacrifices.

*Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology*

Presented in the Senate on November 5, 2003, the Sixteenth Report - Bill C-50 regarding *An Act to amend statute law in respect of benefits for veterans and the children of deceased veterans*, was examined and reported without amendment.



**Web Site Access**

**Parliament of Canada:**

- House of Commons
- Joint Committees
- Senate

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/committee.asp?Language=E>

## ANNEXES:

## REGULATORY INITIATIVES

The following table summarizes the principal regulatory initiatives carried out under the responsibility of the Minister of Veterans Affairs during 2003-04.

Expected Results	Performance Measurement Criteria	Results Achieved
<b><i>Regulations Amending the Veterans Health Care Regulations, addressing the urgent needs of Canada's veterans (SOR/2003-231, SOR/2003-362, SOR/2003-407)</i></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Extend Veterans Independence Program housekeeping and grounds maintenance services to survivors of veteran VIP recipients.</li> <li>▶ Provide comprehensive health care and services for veterans who suffer from a war-related disability assessed between 48 and 77%.</li> <li>▶ Extend VIP home-based care to veterans who are on waiting lists for care in an institution.</li> <li>▶ Enable veterans of Allied Forces who have moved to Canada after the war to receive long-term care.</li> <li>▶ Provide VIP home-based care to totally disabled former Prisoners of War.</li> </ul>	<p>Number of recipients.</p> <p>Financial value of benefits provided to recipients.</p> <p>Home care recipients are able to continue living independently in their own homes.</p> <p>Positive health outcomes.</p>	<p>More appropriate and effective elder care solution.</p> <p>By the end of the fiscal year, approximately 4,000 survivors were receiving VIP services at home, a number expected to increase to 20,000 in 2004-05. About 9,300 war service veterans who have a disability assessed between 48% and 77% no longer have to prove that their health needs are a result of their pensioned condition(s). Over 600 veterans on waiting lists for long-term care are receiving VIP services at home as an alternative. Over 25 Allied veterans are receiving long-term care. Approximately 25 totally disabled former POWs receive VIP home-based care and associated health care benefits.</p> <p>The results achieved by VAC's health care programs are further described in the Benefits and Services Programs Strategic Outcome section of this report.</p>

Expected Results	Performance Measurement Criteria	Results Achieved
<b>Regulations Amending the <i>Veterans Allowance Regulations</i> (SOR/2004-68)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Integrate definition of “blindness” directly into the regulations.</li> <li>▶ Remove obsolete provisions, including those related to overpayment of benefits.</li> <li>▶ Harmonize the accounting for Allied client absences from Canada with WVA payment period.</li> <li>▶ Modernize the regulations to fully recognize all common-law relationships.</li> <li>▶ Enable a greater use of information technology in the administration of the WVA program.</li> </ul>	Improved governance of the War Veterans Allowance program.	<p>Clearer terms and conditions, and procedures, for the administration and delivery of the War Veterans Allowance income support program.</p> <p>More efficient program administration and delivery.</p> <p>The regulations are now consistent with federal drafting standards.</p> <p>Equal treatment and access to benefits for all common-law partners.</p>
<b>Proposed <i>Veterans Burial Regulations</i></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Integrate and harmonize veterans' burial programs by consolidating their existing governing regulatory texts; the <i>Veterans Burial Regulations, 1995</i> and the <i>Last Post Fund Regulations, 1995</i>.</li> <li>▶ Provide for the implementation of a complete partnership with a veterans' organization (the Last Post Fund) for program service delivery.</li> <li>▶ Ensure equal treatment for all common-law partners.</li> <li>▶ Address technical observations made by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations.</li> </ul>	<p>The proposed regulations will contribute positively to client service quality, as they will streamline the delivery of benefits, eliminate overlaps and inconsistencies, and reduce the complexity of the program.</p> <p>Governance will be improved through integration of the funeral and burial program in a harmonized and more cohesive policy framework.</p>	<p>Important milestones were achieved over the past year, as Justice Canada completed the legal examination of the proposed new regulations, in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Statutory Instruments Act</i>. It is now anticipated that this initiative will be completed during the 2004-05 fiscal year.</p>



### Web Site Access

- Legislation Administered by Veterans Affairs:  
<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/Legislation>



**ANNEXES:****SERVICE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE**

The intent of the government-wide Service Improvement Initiative is to achieve significant and quantifiable improvement in client satisfaction with the programs and services provided by the Government of Canada. As a service organization, improving the quality of service delivery is not new to VAC. Client-centred service is very much the operational culture, as evidenced by the development of our Client-centred Service Approach and our Integrated Services Delivery Framework. The quality of, and the satisfaction of our clients with, the programs and services we provide are of the utmost importance.

*Programs and services covered by a service improvement plan*

The VAC 2002-05 Service Improvement Plan and its supporting Compendium of Action Plans outline initiatives the Department will undertake to ensure continuous service improvement. All aspects of our programs and services are covered by this plan, including our disability pension program, our health care benefits and services, and our Remembrance activities. Although many of the initiatives identified in the plan are specifically targeted towards front-line service improvements, there are also initiatives that target service improvements with internal corporate services that are essential support to front-line service delivery.

*Development of baseline client satisfaction levels and progress toward achieving satisfaction targets*

In 2001, VAC had an independent third party conduct its first National Client Satisfaction Survey – the purpose of which was to establish reliable baseline data regarding the level of client satisfaction. This Survey also formed the basis from which the 2002-05 VAC Service Improvement Plan was developed.

*Service standards for all key public services: setting of standards and performance against those standards*

In 1995, VAC published its first service standards brochure, “At your Service,” in which service standards were outlined for all of our major programs and services. This brochure was updated in 1998 and is now in the process of a third revision. Changes in our service delivery mechanisms have delayed production and it is now anticipated this revised brochure will be ready for distribution in the fall of 2004. Our performance against the service commitments in this brochure will be reported in the next reporting cycle.

*Main achievements in improving service from a citizen-centred perspective*

To gauge the extent to which satisfaction had improved after the implementation of the service improvement plan, a second National Client Satisfaction Survey was conducted

by an independent third party in April/May 2003. A total of 1,447 clients were surveyed; each of our major client groups, War Veterans, Canadian Forces Veterans and Survivors were participants in the survey and the overall satisfaction rating for each group was higher than level indicated in the 2001 survey. As shown in the chart below, the overall satisfaction rating increased from 85% in 2001 to 87% in 2003. Most notably, the greatest increase in the level of satisfaction was with our Canadian Forces Veterans clients group (72 % to 80%).

Client Group	Satisfaction Rating		Improvement
	2001	2003	
War Service Veterans	89%	90%	+1%
Canadian Forces Veterans and Clients	72%	80%	+8%
Survivors	84%	86%	+2%
<b>Overall Satisfaction Rating</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>+2%</b>

Although the results indicated a high level of client satisfaction there are still areas that our clients indicated we could improve. Therefore, we need to focus our attention on the following areas:

- ▶ time to wait for a written decision;
- ▶ time to wait for an appointment;
- ▶ information on applying for or accessing benefits and services;
- ▶ questions being answered; and
- ▶ better understanding of the issues facing Canadian Forces Veterans and clients.

Our increase from 85% to 87% in overall satisfaction rating confirms that we are making progress in improving service delivery for our Veterans and other clients. However, we will make improvements where our clients have indicated that we can provide better service.



#### Web Site Access

For more information on Veterans Affairs Canada's Service Improvement Initiative, please visit the following Web Site:

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/reports>

**ANNEXES:****STATUS OF FUEL STORAGE TANKS ON VETERANS AFFAIRS OWNED LAND**

In the last 40 years, thousands of storage tank systems for petroleum and allied petroleum products have been installed on federal lands. Many of these storage tank systems were fabricated from carbon steel without corrosion protection. As these systems age, they are more likely to fail due to corrosion. Leaks from storage tank systems can have devastating environmental and economic impacts. Therefore, federal government departments must register their in-use and abandoned tanks, and report annually on their status.

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As required under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, Part IV, *Registration of Storage Tank Systems for Petroleum Products and Allied Petroleum Products on Federal Lands Regulations*, this report provides the information set out in Schedule II of the aforementioned regulation, updated to December 31, 2003.

**The following number of aboveground storage tank systems:**Are registered with Veterans Affairs: **6**Comply with the *Federal Aboveground Storage Tank Technical Guidelines*: **6****The following number of underground storage tanks systems:**Are registered with Veterans Affairs: **0**Comply with the *Federal Underground Storage Tank Technical Guidelines*: **0****Web Site Access**

For more information on the Federal Storage Tank Systems for Petroleum and Allied Petroleum Products, please visit the following Web Site:

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/st-rs>

**ANNEXES:****SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

To-date, Veterans Affairs has released three strategies (1997, 2001 and 2004) as well as information on “Our Sustainable Development Journey,” which provides a historical context and an annual update on our progress. In our 2001-04 Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS), we envisioned a continued commitment to contribute to the Government of Canada’s goal of being a model of environmental excellence. Our focus was to maintain the quality of life and health of our clients and staff and to sustain among our citizens an understanding of the horrors of war and the nation building significance of the achievements and sacrifices of Canadians during periods of military conflict and peacekeeping. We sought to continue waste reduction and utilization of water and energy and enhance the environmental soundness of our operations as new technologies were introduced. Efforts were also made to integrate sustainable development considerations into our Portfolio’s policies, programs and operations.

In our 2004-06 SDS, we emphasized the importance of continuing in the direction we set for Veterans Affairs by validating and enhancing the four themes from our earlier Strategy and identifying concrete objectives, targets and milestones to support these themes. Each of these four themes (Sustaining Our Government Operations; Sustaining Knowledge and Information; Sustaining the Health and Well-Being of our Clients; and Sustaining the Health and Well-Being of our Staff) supports the Portfolio’s strategic outcomes through their focus on the needs of our Veterans and other clients in the communities and environments in which they live.

As part of our development of our 2004-06 SDS, a formal review was conducted by our Audit and Evaluation Division to assess our progress for the period 2001 to 2004. This review indicates that, while much has been accomplished, there are areas for improvement that could serve to strengthen Veterans Affairs’ overall capacity in advancing the SDS Agenda. The achievements over the last six months of the 2001-04 Strategy are not reflected in this assessment. Appendix B of the 2004-06 SDS contains the findings of the “*Review of the Performance Information Reporting - 2001-04 Sustainable Development Strategy.*”

The audits and reviews of our strategies, and input from across the Portfolio, combined with a knowledgeable team helped to determine what areas need to be addressed and what adjustments were necessary to achieve our SDS goals. Measuring and monitoring continued to be challenging. We have found that audits of waste are too costly and disruptive. A much more efficient practice is to use the data collected by haulers (recyclables, waste or compost). Environmentally, our goal has always been to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill sites and, therefore, we continued our efforts in recycling and reusing products. The biggest lesson we are learning is that any real reduction achievements start with the purchasing of goods. This goal is reflected in our 2004-06 SDS.

Detailed information on our targets, objectives, milestones and progress to-date can be found on VAC's Web Site. We remain committed to continuing to advance our sustainable development practices.



### Web Site Access

- 2004-06 Sustainable Development Strategy
- 2001-04 Sustainable Development Strategy
- Our Sustainable Development Journey

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/reports>

## ANNEXES:

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TABLES

TABLE I: SUMMARY OF VOTED APPROPRIATIONS

This table summarizes the financial authorities and actual spending by parliamentary vote for the Veterans Affairs Program. Additional financial authorities approved during the year related primarily to additional costs for health-related goods and services provided to clients, and to approved changes in the Veterans Independence Program.

2003-04 Financial Requirements by Authority (\$ millions)				
Vote		Total		
		Main Estimates	Planned Spending	Actual Spending
<b>Veterans Affairs Program</b>				
1	Operating Expenditures	665.2	689.4	751.6
5	Grants and Contributions	1,789.1	1,789.1	1,786.2
(S)	Minister of Veterans Affairs - Salary and motor car allowance	0.1	0.1	0.1
(S)	Re-establishment credits under Section 8 and repayments under Section 15 of the <i>War Service Grants Act</i> of compensating adjustments made in accordance with the terms of the <i>Veterans Affairs Land Act</i>	--	--	--
(S)	Returned soldiers insurance actuarial liability adjustment	--	--	--
(S)	Veterans insurance actuarial liability adjustment	0.2	0.2	0.2
(S)	Spending of proceeds from the disposal of surplus Crown assets	--	--	0.1
(S)	Refunds of amounts credited to revenues in previous years	--	--	0.1
(S)	Court awards	--	--	--
(S)	Contributions to employee benefit plan	33.1	33.1	33.5
<b>Total Veterans Affairs Program</b>		<b>2,487.7</b>	<b>2,511.9</b>	<b>2,571.8</b>

<b>2003-04 Financial Requirements by Authority (\$ millions)</b>				
<b>Vote</b>		<b>Total</b>		
		<b>Main Estimates</b>	<b>Planned Spending</b>	<b>Actual Spending</b>
<b>Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program</b>				
10	Program Expenditures	8.8	8.8	9.5
(S)	Contributions to employee benefit plans	1.6	1.6	1.6
<b>Total Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program</b>		<b>10.4</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>11.1</b>
<b>Total Portfolio</b>		<b>2,498.1</b>	<b>2,522.3</b>	<b>2,582.9</b>

- Note:
1. Operating includes minor capital and other health purchased services.
  2. Total authorities are Main Estimates plus Supplementary Estimates plus Other Authorities.
  3. Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

**TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF TOTAL PLANNED SPENDING TO ACTUAL SPENDING**

Actual expenditures by business line are displayed in this table. Expenditures in the Benefits and Services Business Line comprise 97% of the Portfolio total and consist primarily of grants and contributions to clients and expenditures related to client health needs.

Portfolio Planned Versus Actual Spending by Business Line (\$ millions)							
	FTEs	Operating	Capital	Grants and Contributions	Total Gross Expenditures	Less: Respendable Revenues	Total Net Expenditures
<b>Benefits and Services Business Line</b>							
(Main Estimates)	2,727	640.5	1.0	1,789.1	2,430.7	--	2,430.7
(Planned Spending)	2,738	641.6	24.1	1,789.1	2,454.8	--	2,454.8
(Total Authorities)	2,795	731.0	9.0	1,834.5	2,574.5	--	2,574.5
(Total Actual Spending)	2,735	709.4	8.8	1,786.2	2,504.4	--	2,504.4
<b>Corporate Administration Business Line</b>							
(Main Estimates)	475	56.0	1.0	--	57.0	--	57.0
(Planned Spending)	475	56.1	1.0	--	57.1	--	57.1
(Total Authorities)	627	68.2	1.0	--	69.2	--	69.2
(Total Actual Spending)	615	67.1	0.3	--	67.4	--	67.4
<b>Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line</b>							
(Main Estimates)	124	10.4	--	--	10.4	--	10.4
(Planned Spending)	124	10.4	--	--	10.4	--	10.4
(Total Authorities)	109	11.2	--	--	11.2	--	11.2
(Total Actual Spending)	109	11.1	--	--	11.1	--	11.1
<b>Total Portfolio</b>							
(Main Estimates)	3,326	707.0	2.0	1,789.1	2,498.1	--	2,498.1
(Planned Spending)	3,337	708.1	25.1	1,789.1	2,522.3	--	2,522.3
(Total Authorities)	3,531	810.4	10.0	1,834.5	2,654.9	--	2,654.9
(Total Actual Spending)	3,459	787.6	9.1	1,786.2	2,582.9	--	2,582.9



**ANNEXES**

<b>Portfolio Planned Versus Actual Spending by Business Line (\$ millions)</b>							
	<b>FTEs</b>	<b>Operating</b>	<b>Capital</b>	<b>Grants and Contributions</b>	<b>Total Gross Expenditures</b>	<b>Less: Respendable Revenues</b>	<b>Total Net Expenditures</b>
Other Revenues and Expenditures							--
Non-Respendable Revenues							30.9
<i>(Total Authorities)</i>							30.9
<i>(Actuals)</i>							34.8
Cost of services provided by other departments							24.5
<i>(Total Authorities)</i>							24.5
<i>(Actuals)</i>							23.1
Net Cost of Program							2,515.9
<i>(Total Authorities)</i>							2,648.5
<i>(Actuals)</i>							2,571.2

- Note:
1. Operating includes other health purchase services, and the following statutory items: contributions to employee benefit plans, Minister of Veterans Affairs - salary and motorcar allowance, spending of proceeds from the disposal of surplus Crown assets, refunds of amounts credited to revenues in previous years, and court awards.
  2. Grants and contributions include both voted and statutory items.
  3. Actual and total authorities for Corporation Administration include the amounts for information technology/information management and ex-gratia payments to First Nations Veterans, Merchant Navy Veterans and former Prisoners of War.
  4. Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

**TABLE 3: HISTORICAL COMPARISON OF TOTAL PLANNED SPENDING TO ACTUAL SPENDING**

This table displays actual spending over a three-year-period. Spending increases relate primarily to the indexation of some benefit payments based on the Consumer Price Index, inflationary increases for health related goods and services and services provided under the Veterans Independence Program, and an increase in demand for these goods and services due to an aging clientele.

Business Line	(\$ millions)					
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04 Total			
	Actual Spending	Actual Spending	Main Estimates	Planned Spending	Authorities	Actual Spending
Benefits and Services	2,144.9	2,360.9	2,430.7	2,454.8	2,574.5	2,504.4
Corporate Administration	91.3	102.7	57.0	57.1	69.2	67.4
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	10.3	11.5	10.4	10.4	11.2	11.1
<b>Total Portfolio</b>	<b>2,246.5</b>	<b>2,475.1</b>	<b>2,498.1</b>	<b>2,522.3</b>	<b>2,654.9</b>	<b>2,582.9</b>

Note: Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

**TABLE 4: CROSSWALK BETWEEN STRATEGIC OUTCOMES AND BUSINESS LINES  
– PLANNED SPENDING**

This table displays planned spending for each of the Portfolio's five strategic outcomes.

Business Line	(\$ millions)					
	Strategic Outcome					Total
	① Benefits and Services Programs ② Pensions Advocacy Program ③ Canada Remembers Program ④ Corporate Administration ⑤ Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program					
	①	②	③	④	⑤	
Benefits and Services	2,402.8	8.2	43.8	--	--	2,454.8
Corporate Administration	--	--	--	57.1	--	57.1
<b>Total for Veterans Affairs Canada</b>						<b>2,511.9</b>
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	--	--	--	--	10.4	<b>10.4</b>
<b>Total for the Veterans Affairs Portfolio</b>						<b>2,522.3</b>

**TABLE 5: CROSSWALK BETWEEN STRATEGIC OUTCOMES AND BUSINESS LINES  
– ACTUAL SPENDING**

This table displays actual spending for each of the Portfolio's five strategic outcomes.

Business Line	(\$ millions)					
	Strategic Outcome					Total
	① Benefits and Services Programs ② Pensions Advocacy Program ③ Canada Remembers Program ④ Corporate Administration ⑤ Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program					
	①	②	③	④	⑤	
Benefits and Services	2,455.0	8.2	41.2	--	--	2,504.4
Corporate Administration	--	--	--	67.4	--	67.4
<b>Total for Veterans Affairs Canada</b>						<b>2,572.8</b>
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	--	--	--	--	11.1	<b>11.1</b>
<b>Total for the Veterans Affairs Portfolio</b>						<b>2,582.9</b>

**TABLE 6: REVENUES – RESPONDABLE AND NON-RESPONDABLE**

The majority of VAC's non-respondable revenues comes from in-patient hospital services at Ste. Anne's Hospital covered by provincial insurance plans. Other revenue sources include recovery of disability pension payments from foreign governments and refunds of previous years' expenditures. Only a very minor portion of revenues relate to user fees and cost recovery policies. There are no respondable revenues.

<b>Non-Respondable Revenues by Business Line (\$ millions)</b>					
<b>Business Line</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>		
	<b>Actual Revenues</b>	<b>Actual Revenues</b>	<b>Planned Revenues</b>	<b>Total Authorities</b>	<b>Actual Revenues</b>
Benefits and Services	34.5	32.6	29.4	30.8	30.8
Corporate Administration	1.4	1.5	1.5	4.0	4.0
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	--	--	--	--	--
Sub-Total	35.9	34.1	30.9	34.8	34.8
Unplanned	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total Non-Respondable Revenues</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>34.8</b>	<b>34.8</b>

**TABLE 7: STATUTORY PAYMENTS**

Statutory payments relate to the *War Service Grants Act*, the *Veterans Land Act*, the *Returned Soldiers Insurance Act*, and the *Veterans Insurance Act*.

<b>Statutory Payments by Business Line (\$ millions)</b>						
<b>Business Line</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04 Total</b>			
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Main Estimates</b>	<b>Planned Spending</b>	<b>Authorities</b>	<b>Actual Spending</b>
Benefits and Services	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Corporate Administration	--	--	--	--	--	--
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total Statutory Payments</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>

**TABLE 8: TRANSFER PAYMENTS (GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS)**

This table displays spending information for the Portfolio's Grants and Contributions. In 2003-04 spending for Grants and Contributions comprised 70% of total Portfolio expenditures and consisted primarily of Disability Pensions, contributions under the Veterans Independence Program, and War Veterans Allowances.

<b>Transfer Payments by Business Line (\$ millions)</b>						
<b>Business Line</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04 Total</b>			
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Main Estimates</b>	<b>Planned Spending</b>	<b>Authorities</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Grants</b>						
Benefits and Services	1,386.3	1,518.1	1,596.0	1,595.9	1,610.1	1,585.2
Corporate Administration	--	--	--	--	--	--
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>1,386.3</b>	<b>1,518.1</b>	<b>1,596.0</b>	<b>1,595.9</b>	<b>1,610.1</b>	<b>1,585.2</b>
<b>Contributions</b>						
Benefits and Services	171.2	185.6	193.1	193.2	224.4	201.0
Corporate Administration	--	--	--	--	--	--
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>171.2</b>	<b>185.6</b>	<b>193.1</b>	<b>193.2</b>	<b>224.4</b>	<b>201.0</b>
<b>Total Transfer Payments</b>	<b>1,557.5</b>	<b>1,703.7</b>	<b>1,789.1</b>	<b>1,789.1</b>	<b>1,834.5</b>	<b>1,786.2</b>

**TABLE 9: RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS BY ORGANIZATION AND BUSINESS LINE**

This table displays spending information by organizational component within the Portfolio.

<b>Comparison of 2003-04 RPP Planned Spending and Total Authorities to Actual Expenditures by Organization and Business (\$ millions)</b>					
	<b>Business Line</b>				
	<b>Benefits and Services</b>	<b>Corporate Administration</b>	<b>Total Veterans Affairs Program</b>	<b>Veterans Review and Appeal Board</b>	<b>Total Portfolio</b>
<b>Veterans Services Branch</b>					
(Main Estimates)	2,385.5	--	<b>2,385.5</b>	--	<b>2,385.5</b>
(Total Planned Spending)	2,402.8	--	<b>2,402.8</b>	--	<b>2,402.8</b>
(Total Authorities)	2,520.9	--	<b>2,520.9</b>	--	<b>2,520.9</b>
(Total Actual Spending)	2,455.0	--	<b>2,455.0</b>	--	<b>2,455.0</b>
<b>Corporate Services Branch</b>					
(Main Estimates)	--	45.1	<b>45.1</b>	--	<b>45.1</b>
(Total Planned Spending)	--	45.2	<b>45.2</b>	--	<b>45.2</b>
(Total Authorities)	--	57.3	<b>57.3</b>	--	<b>57.3</b>
(Total Actual Spending)	--	56.2	<b>56.2</b>	--	<b>56.2</b>
<b>Public Affairs Branch</b>					
(Main Estimates)	37.0	3.4	<b>40.4</b>	--	<b>40.4</b>
(Total Planned Spending)	43.8	3.4	<b>47.2</b>	--	<b>47.2</b>
(Total Authorities)	45.4	3.4	<b>48.8</b>	--	<b>48.8</b>
(Total Actual Spending)	41.2	3.4	<b>44.6</b>	--	<b>44.6</b>
<b>Bureau of Pensions Advocates</b>					
(Main Estimates)	8.2	--	<b>8.2</b>	--	<b>8.2</b>
(Total Planned Spending)	8.2	--	<b>8.2</b>	--	<b>8.2</b>
(Total Authorities)	8.2	--	<b>8.2</b>	--	<b>8.2</b>
(Total Actual Spending)	8.2	--	<b>8.2</b>	--	<b>8.2</b>
<b>Policy Planning and Liaison</b>					
(Main Estimates)	--	6.3	<b>6.3</b>	--	<b>6.3</b>
(Total Planned Spending)	--	6.3	<b>6.3</b>	--	<b>6.3</b>
(Total Authorities)	--	6.3	<b>6.3</b>	--	<b>6.3</b>
(Total Actual Spending)	--	5.6	<b>5.6</b>	--	<b>5.6</b>

**ANNEXES**

**Comparison of 2003-04 RPP Planned Spending and Total Authorities to Actual Expenditures by Organization and Business (\$ millions)**

	Business Line				
	Benefits and Services	Corporate Administration	Total Veterans Affairs Program	Veterans Review and Appeal Board	Total Portfolio
<b>Audit and Evaluation</b>					
(Main Estimates)	--	2.2	2.2	--	2.2
(Total Planned Spending)	--	2.2	2.2	--	2.2
<i>(Total Authorities)</i>	--	2.2	2.2	--	2.2
(Total Actual Spending)	--	2.2	2.2	--	2.2
<b>Veterans Review and Appeal Board</b>					
(Main Estimates)	--	--	--	10.4	10.4
(Total Planned Spending)	--	--	--	10.4	10.4
<i>(Total Authorities)</i>	--	--	--	11.2	11.2
(Total Actual Spending)	--	--	--	11.1	11.1
<b>Total Portfolio</b>					
(Main Estimates)	2,430.7	57.0	2,487.7	10.4	2,498.1
(Total Planned Spending)	2,454.8	57.1	2,511.9	10.4	2,522.3
<i>(Total Authorities)</i>	2,574.5	69.2	2,643.7	11.2	2,654.9
(Total Actual Spending)	2,504.4	67.4	2,571.8	11.1	2,582.9
<b>Percentage of Total</b>	<b>97.0</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>

- Note: 1. Corporate Services Branch and Corporate Administration Business Line includes the Minister's Office, the Deputy Minister's Office, General Counsel, Office of Early Conflict Resolution, and the Federal Healthcare Partnership.  
 2. Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

**TABLE 10: PROJECTS**

The Portfolio has received effective project approval for the two capital projects identified below at a total estimated cost of \$97.7 million. The Ste. Anne's Hospital Renovation Project involves the construction of a power plant, the construction of a new 116-bed pavilion, and the renovation of the existing hospital tower. The Canadian Battlefield Memorials Restoration Project involves the restoration of thirteen Canadian First World War Memorials in Europe, including the Vimy Monument in France.

Projects by Business Line (\$ millions)							
Project	Current Estimated Total Cost	2001-02 Actual	2002-03 Actual	2003-04 Total			
				Main Estimates	Planned Spending	Authorities	Actual
<b>Benefits and Services Business Line</b>							
Ste. Anne's Hospital Renovation Project (Implementation Phase)	67.7	0.6	2.8	--	17.4	5.3	4.9
Canadian Battlefield Memorials Restoration Project (Implementation Phase)	30.0	1.7	3.0	--	6.8	3.3	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>97.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>8.2</b>

**TABLE 11: LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND ADVANCES**

This table shows the number of accounts still active for loans issued under the *Veterans Land Act*. No loans have been granted since March 31, 1977.

Loans, Investments and Advances (\$ millions)						
Corporate Administration Business Line	2001-02 Actual	2002-03 Actual	2003-04 Total			
			Main Estimates	Planned Spending	Authorities	Actual
<b>Property Contracts (Active Agreements of Sale - Veterans and Clients)</b>						
Number of Accounts	222	90	--	--	--	<b>42</b>
Outstanding Balance	0.4	0.1	--	--	--	<b>0.1</b>
Amounts Collected	0.3	0.2	--	--	--	<b>0.1</b>



**TABLE 12: CONTINGENT LIABILITIES**

There are a number of individual and class action suits against the Government. Because of the complexity of the cases and the uncertainty of their outcomes at this stage, the estimation of contingent liability at this point would be highly speculative and could not be said to be a reasoned evaluation.

**CONTACT Us:****GENERAL INQUIRIES**

If you wish to make a general inquiry about Veterans Affairs Canada, its programs or services, please call 1-866-522-2122. If you wish to make a general inquiry about the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, please call 1-800-450-8006.

**PORTFOLIO PUBLICATIONS**

The Portfolio produces a variety of publications on its programs and services. Copies of these publications can be obtained from your nearest Veterans Affairs Canada district or regional office.

Our staff in Policy Planning and Liaison are responsible for coordinating the development of this report, the associated Report on Plans and Priorities, as well as a number of other departmental reports. These are available on-line at <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=department/reports>. For more information or if you have any questions, please contact:

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