



ESTIMATES

Veterans Affairs Canada

Performance Report

For the period ending
March 31, 2001

Canada

Improved Reporting to Parliament Pilot Document

Each year, the government prepares Estimates in support of its request to Parliament for authority to spend public monies. This request is formalized through the tabling of appropriation bills in Parliament.

The Estimates of the Government of Canada are structured in several parts. Beginning with an overview of total government spending in Part I, the documents become increasingly more specific. Part II outlines spending according to departments, agencies and programs and contains the proposed wording of the conditions governing spending which Parliament will be asked to approve.

The *Report on Plans and Priorities* provides additional detail on each department and its programs primarily in terms of more strategically oriented planning and results information with a focus on outcomes.

The *Departmental Performance Report* provides a focus on results-based accountability by reporting on accomplishments achieved against the performance expectations and results commitments as set out in the spring *Report on Plans and Priorities*.

The Estimates, along with the Minister of Finance's Budget, reflect the government's annual budget planning and resource allocation priorities. In combination with the subsequent reporting of financial results in the Public Accounts and of accomplishments achieved in Departmental Performance Reports, this material helps Parliament hold the government to account for the allocation and management of funds.

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Foreword

In the spring of 2000 the President of the Treasury Board tabled in Parliament the document “Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada”. This document sets a clear agenda for improving and modernising management practices in federal departments and agencies.

Four key management commitments form the basis for this vision of how the Government will deliver their services and benefits to Canadians in the new millennium. In this vision, departments and agencies recognise that they exist to serve Canadians and that a “citizen focus” shapes all activities, programs and services. This vision commits the government of Canada to manage its business by the highest public service values. Responsible spending means spending wisely on the things that matter to Canadians. And finally, this vision sets a clear focus on results – the impact and effects of programs.

Departmental performance reports play a key role in the cycle of planning, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting of results through ministers to Parliament and citizens. Earlier this year, departments and agencies were encouraged to prepare their reports following certain principles. Based on these principles, an effective report provides a coherent and balanced picture of performance that is brief and to the point. It focuses on results – benefits to Canadians – not on activities. It sets the department’s performance in context and associates performance with earlier commitments, explaining any changes. Supporting the need for responsible spending, it clearly links resources to results. Finally the report is credible because it substantiates the performance information with appropriate methodologies and relevant data.

In performance reports, departments strive to respond to the ongoing and evolving information needs of parliamentarians and Canadians. The input of parliamentarians and other readers can do much to improve these reports over time. The reader is encouraged to assess the performance of the organization according to the principles outlined above, and provide comments to the department or agency that will help it in the next cycle of planning and reporting.

This report is accessible electronically from the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Internet site:

<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr/dpre.asp>

Comments or questions can be directed to this Internet site or to:

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Veterans Affairs

Portfolio Performance Report

**For the period ending
March 31, 2001**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ron J. Duhamel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

**The Honourable Ron J. Duhamel
Minister of Veterans Affairs**

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Executive Summary

In 2000-01, an estimated 204,903 veterans, eligible Canadian Forces (CF) members, qualified civilians and their families received benefits and services. The Portfolio expended \$2,108.6 billion, meanwhile employing a staff complement of 3,317 full-time equivalents.

Strategic Outcomes for Canadians

- ▶ in recognition of their sacrifices to the nation, the timely, fair and consistent delivery of benefits and services that contribute to the independence, quality of life, and standard of living of Canada's veterans, eligible Canadian Forces members, qualified civilians and their families;
- ▶ clients' rights protected through professional, legal representation in appealing decisions related to disability pensions and allowances;
- ▶ commemorative programming to improve the Canadian public's knowledge and recognition of the achievements and sacrifices of Canada's military in the defence of freedom and their significance in the development of Canada as a nation; and
- ▶ fairness in the Disability Pension and War Veterans Allowance (WVA) programs.

Challenges

In 2000-01 the Portfolio continued to be challenged by the diverse needs of our clients. Our increasingly frail, elderly war veterans require more expensive and complex health services, as well as increasing levels of personal individualized service. Our younger Canadian Forces clients have different, yet equally complex needs related to service injuries and peacekeeping medical conditions such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This diversity has increased the demands on our staff and further encouraged the adoption of workplace reforms and improved methods of service delivery.

In fulfilling its mandate, Veterans Affairs (VA) focused its attention on two issues: reaching out to better engage our clients and Canadians in general, and continuing to improve our services.

Performance Highlights

(Better Engaging our Clients and Canadians in General)

- ▶ The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was repatriated from May 22 - 25, 2000 with re-interment in Ottawa on May 28, 2000. Other commemoration initiatives included the 55th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands pilgrimage conducted from May 1 - 11, 2000, and the 55th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Hong Kong Prisoners of War pilgrimage from November 27 - December 8, 2000.
- ▶ The significant war time role played by Merchant Navy Veterans (MNVs) was recognized through compensation for demobilization benefits which they were not eligible to receive at the end of the Second World War, and opportunities lost due

to this. The compensation, as of March 31, 2001 was \$50.7 million paid out with an additional \$20 million allocated for distribution. A total of 13,928 applications were received and of those, 7,063 were paid by end of fiscal year.

- ▶ In November 2000, a National Round Table (NRT) process with First Nations veterans and the Assembly of First Nations was officially launched to conduct research on legislation, policies and programs available to First Nations war veterans and their spouses. The process included collection of personal testimonies from First Nations veterans and data to determine the number of veterans and surviving spouses and widows.
- ▶ Also in November 2000, the Canadian Virtual War Memorial was relaunched. Members of the public can now submit or view scanned images that illustrate the lives of Canada's honoured war dead, increasing awareness of their sacrifices and enhancing appreciation for the human toll exacted by war. From November 2000 to March 31, 2001, 1,377 images were scanned and from April 1, 2000 to December 31, 2000, the site received a total of 54,163 hits.
- ▶ On March 29, 2001, the Minister of Veterans Affairs announced that the Government of Canada would recognize as "veterans" former members of the Canadian Forces who meet two criteria: they fulfill the Department of National Defence's (DND) military occupational classification requirements; and, they have been honourably released from the Forces. These requirements apply equally to those Canadian Forces members who have served in the Reserves, Special Duty Areas and on domestic duty. Effectively, this recognizes the potential risk that all Canadian Forces members are exposed to when they swear the Oath of Allegiance and don a Canadian uniform.
- ▶ Finally, in fiscal year 2000-01, VAC completed a Five Year Strategic Plan that involved extensive consultations with veterans' organizations, other external and internal stakeholders and partners. The Strategic Plan provides a framework for implementing the Department's vision over the next five years.

Performance Highlights

(Continuing to Improve Our Services)

- ▶ In May 2000, in Calgary, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) hosted the inaugural networking meeting of VAC's ten largest Priority Access Bed sites in western Canada. Due to the overwhelming interest in this event VAC will host a national symposium annually.
- ▶ In July 2000, a VAC - Canadian Forces Advisory Council was established to serve as a forum for discussion and advice on the modernization of VAC's programs, policies and services so that they better meet the complex needs of the current and former members of the Canadian Forces and their families.
- ▶ *Bill C-41*, now Chapter 34 of the Statutes of Canada of 2000, came into force on October 27, 2000, ensuring improved benefits to members of the Canadian Forces who are injured in the line of duty and to civilians who served overseas in wartime in close support of the armed forces. Based on this legislation, Canadian Forces members with service-related disabilities incurred in Canada can now

receive a disability pension while still-serving. Bill C-41 also provided full access to veterans' pension and income support benefits to members of civilian groups with wartime service overseas, notably the Canadian Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance, Newfoundland Overseas Foresters, Canadian Fire Fighters, and Ferry Command (pilots who ferried aircraft over the Atlantic).

- ▶ The January 2001 launch of the Seniors Canada On-Line portal facilitates and improves client service delivery through single-window access to clustered relevant information about programs and services of interest to seniors. Designed for seniors, their families and caregivers, the portal will help citizens find federal and provincial / territorial information that is needed to make informed decisions on their day-to-day activities when it is most convenient for them.
- ▶ Also in January 2001, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) implemented its website as part of the Government On-Line initiative to improve service delivery and communications with its clients. The website is a convenient tool for clients and the public to access information about the Board and its program.
- ▶ In March 2001, VAC implemented a comprehensive service and transaction processing system - the Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN). This new system is part of the Department's strategy to prepare for and migrate to on-line service delivery.
- ▶ The Federal Health Claims Processing Systems Service Contract renewal was begun, and will include the benefit administration aspect of both the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) and Treatment programs and the claims processing for VAC, Department of National Defence and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). It is estimated that the savings to the federal government from the development piece alone will exceed \$20 million.



Minister's Message



I am pleased to present to Parliament and to the people of Canada the Performance Report for the Veterans Affairs Portfolio for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2001.

Canada, through the efforts of its veterans in times of armed conflict and peacekeeping missions, has obtained a reputation throughout the world as a country that can be relied upon to support the efforts of the world community to bring peace and freedom to all nations. This reputation has not come without a price, reflected in the sacrifices and achievements of our veterans, including those currently serving in

Canada's Armed Forces. It is our role to serve those who have so ably served us.

During the period covered by this Report, Veterans Affairs' staff worked closely with veterans' associations to achieve even greater public awareness and recognition of the sacrifices made by those who have served Canada in times of war and peace. These efforts were reflected in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier repatriation, through pilgrimages on the Anniversaries of the Liberation of the Netherlands and the Liberation of Canada's Hong Kong Prisoners of War, and through a one-time compensation package for our Merchant Navy veterans and their surviving spouses. Veterans Affairs staff also focused on improving the quality of services offered to our Canadian Forces veterans and their families, who experience the physical and psychological stresses of peacekeeping abroad and often difficult operations within Canada. The importance of the contribution that Canadian Forces personnel make to Canada's peace and security was further recognized through the extension of the term "veteran", to include former Canadian Forces members and Reserve Forces personnel who meet certain service criteria.

This Report also allows me to highlight the professionalism and innovation of the staff of Veterans Affairs. This past year staff completed implementation of the Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN), bringing to conclusion the Benefits Redesign Project with the vision of providing an on-line service delivery platform to support our client service activities. The CSDN meets this vision and is an important technology building block for the national implementation of a Client Centred Service Approach (CCSA). Another notable accomplishment is the completion of the Department's Five Year Strategic Plan. The Plan, which establishes the future direction of the Department, was developed through an exhaustive consultation process involving veterans' organizations, staff and other stakeholders.

In conclusion, reflecting on the achievements of the past year, it is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the outstanding work and dedication of Veterans Affairs' employees. Their exceptional commitment to our veterans and other clients has been, and will continue to be, the most significant determinant of the Department's performance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ron J. Duhamel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

The Honourable Ron J. Duhamel

Agency Head's Message



I am pleased to submit to Parliament the 2000-01 Performance Report of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board.

The Board has amassed a great deal of knowledge and expertise in dealing with both war service veterans' and Canadian Forces cases and medical issues over the years. To this end, we have continued the very active process of augmenting the knowledge of both members and staff when complex medical and legal issues emerge. This has been achieved by consulting with leading researchers and practitioners in their relevant fields. The Board and its members not only know where the curve is, but also have considerable resources to stay ahead of it. It is very important to emphasize that new issues and medical research are of equal relevance and importance to both war service veterans and Canadian Forces members and we must be mindful of the issues of each distinct group of clients.

The priority for the Board in the 2000-01 fiscal year was to focus on training and professional development for its staff and members to achieve the highest quality of service. A continuous learning environment ensures a highly skilled, diverse and talented workforce. Training workshops were available to Board members to emphasize professionalism and informality in the conduct of Board hearings.

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board has a well founded reputation of serving with professionalism, integrity and excellence. This year's Performance Report will outline the Board's accomplishments in this regard.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian W. Chambers". The signature is stylized with large, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brian W. Chambers
Chair, Veterans Review and Appeal Board



1.0 Mandate and Mission

1.1 Mandate

Canada has long recognized the hardship, suffering and sacrifice experienced by veterans, Canadian Forces personnel, civilians and their families during our nation's periods of armed conflict and peacekeeping. The Veterans Affairs Portfolio exists to serve them.

The **Veterans Affairs Portfolio** consists of:

- ▶ Veterans Affairs Canada
- ▶ Veterans Review and Appeal Board

Veterans Affairs Canada's mandate¹ is to provide benefits and services to eligible Canadians who served their country during periods of armed conflict and peacekeeping and to honour their sacrifice and achievements in the defence of freedom. Its legislative authorities are contained in the *Department of Veterans Affairs Act*, 14 other Acts of Parliament and 27 Regulations and Orders-in-Council.

The **Veterans Review and Appeal Board's** mandate provides for full and exclusive jurisdiction to hear, determine and deal with all applications for review and appeal that may be made to the Board under the *Pension Act*, the *War Veterans Allowance Act* and other Acts of Parliament. All matters related to appeals under this legislation are authorized under the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act*.

1

The Mandate and Mission stated here were pertinent at the time of this report, however, as part of our Five Year Strategic Plan 2001-06 they have been updated and will appear in revised format in future documents.

1.2 Mission

Veterans Affairs Mission Statement is to provide veterans, eligible Canadian Forces members, qualified civilians and their families with the benefits and services to which they are entitled; to promote their well-being and self-sufficiency as participating members of their communities; and to keep the memory of their achievements and sacrifices alive for all Canadians.

2.0 Program Descriptions

The Portfolio's Planning, Reporting and Accountability Structure approved in October 1997, identified two programs and three distinct business lines to support its program delivery. The *Benefits and Services Business Line* and the *Corporate Administration Business Line*, fall within the **Veterans Affairs Program**. The third business line, *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line* falls within the **Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program**.

2.1 Veterans Affairs Program

2.1.1 Benefits and Services Business Line

Business Line Objective

This business line contributes to the financial, physical and social health and well-being of veterans and other eligible clients in recognition of their sacrifices while serving our country; and to keep the memory of these sacrifices alive for all Canadians.

The Benefits and Services Business Line provides departmental clients with benefits and services that contribute to their financial, mental, physical and social health and well-being. It is responsible for commemorative activity with a view to keeping the memory of their sacrifice and achievements alive for all Canadians.

Business Line Description

The Benefits and Services Business Line consists of four constituent **service lines: Pensions and Allowances, Health Care, Pensions Advocacy and Commemoration**. These service lines provide, in a fair and timely manner:

- ▶ compensation for hardships arising from disabilities and lost economic opportunities;
- ▶ the delivery of innovative health and social programs;
- ▶ professional legal representation; and
- ▶ programs aimed at recognizing and honouring the achievements and sacrifices of Portfolio client groups.

Pensions and Allowances Service Line

Service Line Description

The Pensions and Allowances Service Line provides veterans and other eligible clients with disability pensions, prisoner of war compensation, special awards (attendance allowance, clothing allowance, exceptional incapacity allowance), war veterans allowance, survivor benefits and other economic benefits. In providing these benefits, the following services are included: counselling, assisting in the preparation of applications, medical exams, adjudication, payment, account maintenance and client information and referral. In 2000-01, the Department spent about \$1.3 billion in direct client pension and allowance benefits.

Health Care Service Line

Service Line Description

Health and social programs and services are designed and implemented so as to anticipate and adapt to the evolving needs of eligible clients, including their smooth transition into an appropriate institutional environment, if this becomes necessary. It includes the administration of Ste. Anne's Hospital, a 600 active-bed hospital in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec. These Health Care Programs provide funding for the Veterans Independence Program, Health Care Benefits and Long-Term Care. In addition to program benefits, key services such as assessment, counselling and health promotion are also provided. In 2000-01, the Department spent approximately \$583 million on health care program benefits.

Pensions Advocacy Service Line

Service Line Description

The Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA) provides free legal advice and representation to veterans and other eligible clients who are seeking a review or appeal of a pension or allowance decision before the Veterans Review and Appeal Board.

The Bureau, alone or in conjunction with other organizations, represents approximately 95% of veterans and other eligible clients appearing before the Veterans Review and Appeal Board.

Commemoration Service Line

Service Line Description

Education, special events, programming and other commemorative activities are carried out at the field level, across the country, under the direction of the Commemoration, Public Relations and Bureau of Pensions Advocates Branch. Commemorative activities are aimed at instilling in Canadians an appreciation for the sacrifices made by veterans and others during periods of conflict. They strengthen the nation's cultural identity and ensure that this legacy is not lost for future generations. The Commemoration Program expenditures (including grants to the

Last Post Fund, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea) were approximately \$28 million in 2000-01.

2.1.2 Corporate Administration Business Line

Business Line Objective

The Corporate Administration business line provides corporate direction and operational support services that meet the specific needs of Portfolio program delivery as well as the Minister's and the Chair's priorities, the requirements of Parliament and Central Agencies.

Business Line Description

The Corporate Administration Business Line is composed of the following corporate functions that provide the corporate management and administrative support necessary to enable the organization to set direction, manage change and assess performance: Offices of the Minister, the Deputy Minister, the Associate Deputy Minister, Corporate Planning, Office of Early Conflict Resolution, Audit and Evaluation, Communication, Policy Coordination and Ottawa Headquarters (including legislation and regulation), the Assistant Deputy Minister Corporate Services, Finance (including Property Management functions), Human Resources, Information Management and Information Technology, Management Support Services, Access to Information and Privacy and Security Services.

2.2 Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program

2.2.1 Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line

Business Line Objective

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board business line provides clients with full opportunity to request review and appeal hearings to ensure a fair adjudicative process for disability pension and War Veterans Allowance claims.

Business Line Description

The **Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program** is delivered by the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, a separate independent administrative tribunal. The Board renders decisions in reviews and appeals of disability pensions and final appeals of war veterans allowances. These activities were delivered by 105 full-time equivalents which in 2000-01 included 19 full-time members in Charlottetown and 14 full-time members located in major cities across Canada. The organizational layout of the VRAB is shown on page 12, Figure 2 .

The formal program structure of the Portfolio reflects the required independence between the Department and the Board as an administrative tribunal. It emphasizes the autonomy each has in representing the rights of clients and serving their needs.

The Board provides applicants with two levels of appeal for disability pensions and the final level of appeal for War Veterans Allowance claims.

Cases at both review and appeal may be presented to the Board in two ways: by way of an oral hearing or through a written submission. Clients are primarily represented before the Board by Advocates from the Bureau of Pensions Advocates; however, they may also be represented by the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL), the War Amputations of Canada, a private solicitor, any individual of their choice, or they may represent themselves.

Review hearings are held in over 40 locations across Canada and require at least two board members for each review panel. However, review hearings can proceed with one member with the consent of the client. A key opportunity for clients at the review level is that they may attend their review hearings and have the option to provide oral testimony.

Appeal hearings are held in Charlottetown and require at least three board members who have not heard the claim at the review level. As only documented evidence is allowed, clients do not usually attend.

The Board also makes effective use of technology by offering video conferencing for hearings where clients, representatives and Board Members can be in various locations across Canada and linked together by video conference technology to conduct the hearing. All client services are offered in the clients' official language of choice.

The Board also manages a range of activities supporting the hearing process which include the preparation of claim documentation, adjudicative support, scheduling, quality assurance, legal and advisory services, members' professional development and training, systems support, communications / inquiry services, and general administration.

3.0 Portfolio Role

Since 1944, the overall role of VA, in cooperation with other federal departments, provincial governments and the private sector, has been to lead in the development, coordination and administration of federal policies and programs that provide support for the financial, social, mental and physical well-being of veterans, eligible CF members and qualified civilians and their dependants.

3.1 Responsibilities

Minister

The Minister of Veterans Affairs is accountable to Parliament for Veterans Affairs Canada. The Chair of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, an independent, quasi-judicial tribunal, reports to Parliament through the Minister and is accountable to the Minister for the use of the Board's resources.

Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada is responsible for two business lines under the Veterans Affairs Program and has an Associate Deputy Minister and three Assistant Deputy Ministers who report to him.

Associate Deputy Minister

The Associate Deputy Minister reports to the Deputy Minister and, at the Deputy Minister's request, takes a lead role specific to selected issues within the business lines.

Assistant Deputy Ministers

The Assistant Deputy Minister, **Veterans Services**, is responsible for two service lines, Pensions and Allowances and Health Care, under the Benefits and Services Business Line, and reports to the Deputy Minister.

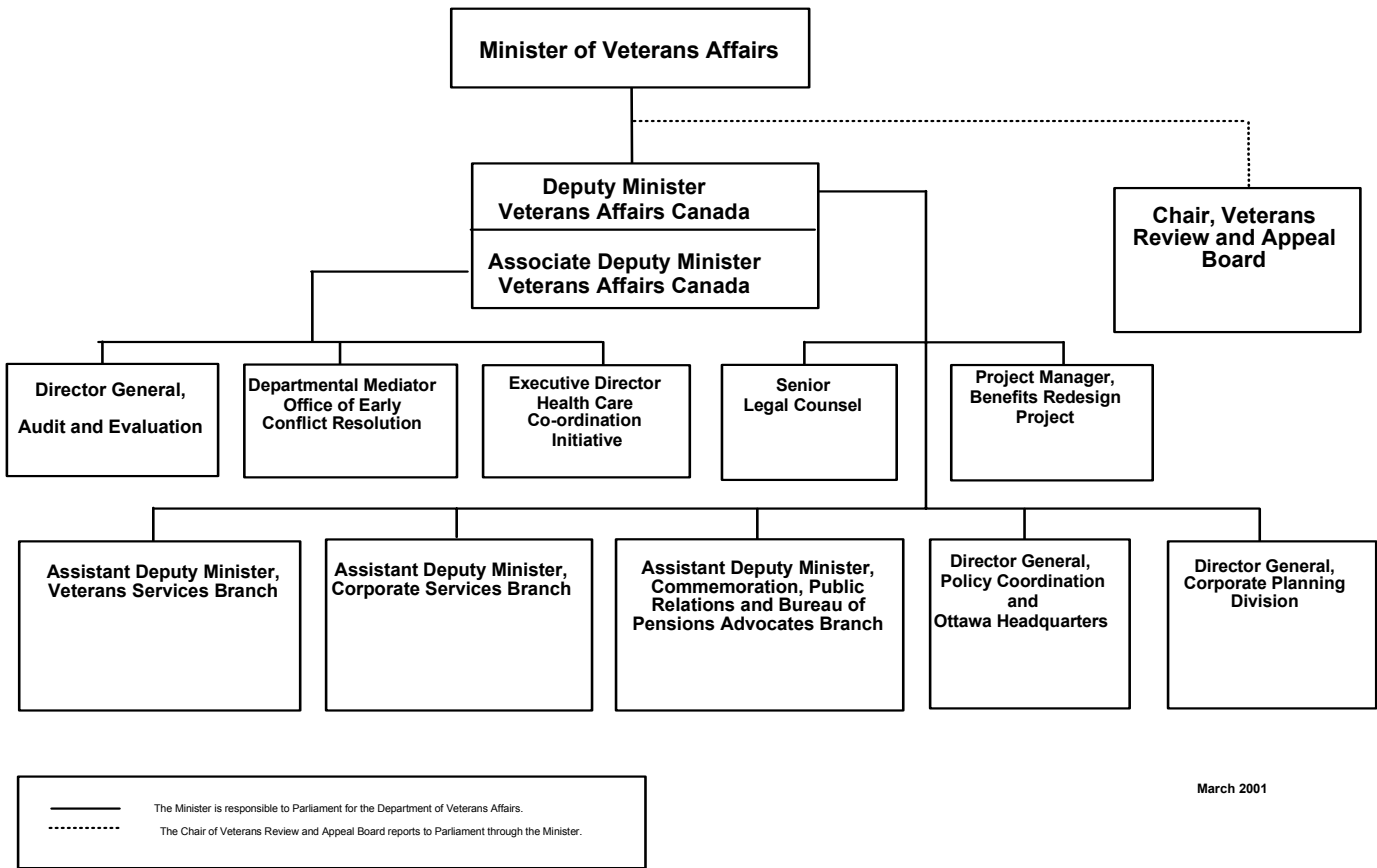
The Assistant Deputy Minister, **Commemoration, Public Relations and Bureau of Pensions Advocates**, is responsible for two service lines, Pensions Advocacy and Commemoration, under the Benefits and Services Business line, and reports to the Deputy Minister.

The Assistant Deputy Minister, **Corporate Services**, is responsible for the Corporate Administration Business Line and reports to the Deputy Minister.

Veterans Review and Appeal Board

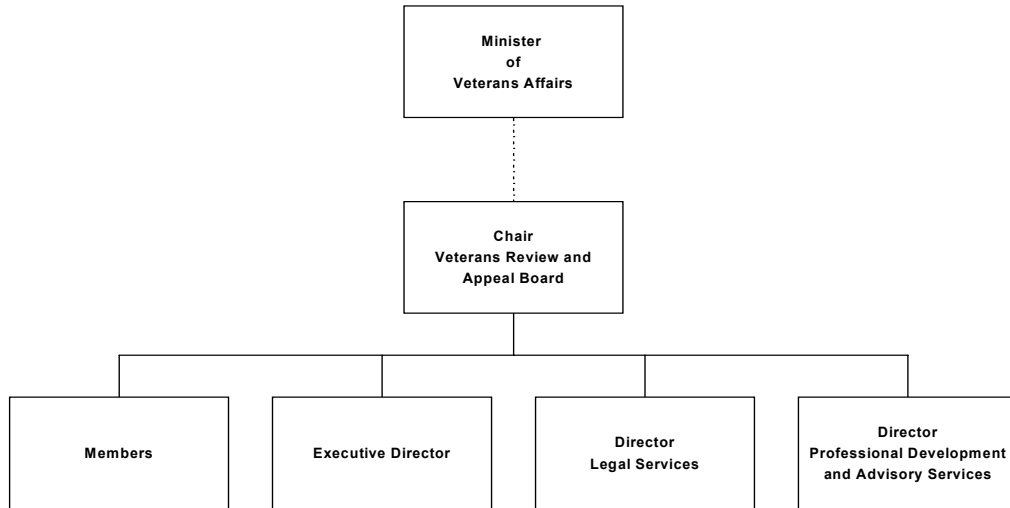
The **Chair, Veterans Review and Appeal Board**, is responsible for the Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line and reports to Parliament through the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Figure 1: Veterans Affairs Portfolio Organization



Recent changes in the VA Portfolio Organization will be reflected in future reports.

Figure 2: Veterans Review and Appeal Board Organization



The Chair of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board reports to Parliament through the Minister and is accountable to the Minister for the use of the Board's resources.

March 2001



The social and economic influences of the Portfolio are best illustrated in the two challenges facing it: Continuing to Improve Our Services and Better Engaging our Clients and Canadians in General.

1.0 Continuing to Improve Our Services

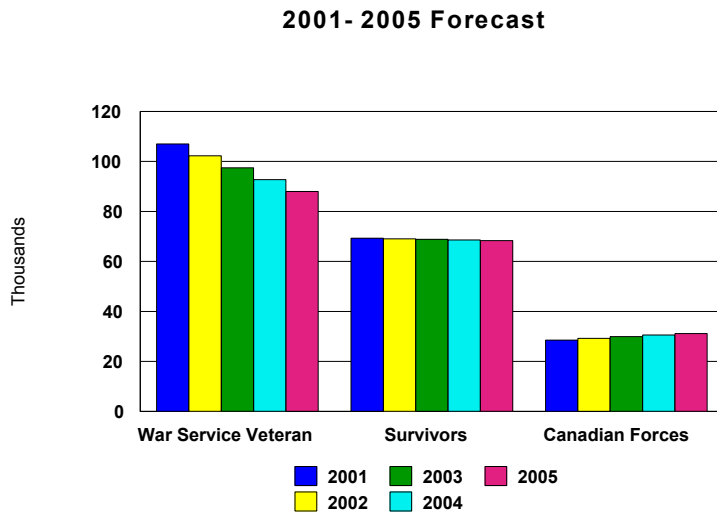
The overall aging and decline of the Portfolio’s war service veteran client base, coupled with the steady increase of Canadian Forces clients continues to pose the most significant external influence on the Portfolio.

Figure 3: Canada’s War Service Veterans

In Canada, approximately 10% of all seniors are war service veterans and 30% of these veterans are receiving benefits and services from Veterans Affairs. The total war service veteran population at March 31, 2001 was estimated at 356,813.		March 31, 2001	Average Age
	First World War	282	100
	Second World War	339,690	78
	Korea	16,842	69
	Total	356,813	78

War Service Veterans (i.e. veterans of the First World War, the Second World War or Korea) account for a large proportion of the senior population. In Canada, approximately 10% of all seniors are war service veterans and one in five Canadian male seniors is a war service veteran. Nevertheless, the veteran population continues to decline. While the life expectancy of males in Canada is currently 75, the average age of veterans in 2001 was 78 and is projected to increase to 82 by 2005. The total war service veteran population in 2001 was 356,813. It is projected to decrease by about one third to 255,027 by 2005. It should be noted that not all war service veterans are receiving benefits from Veterans Affairs although an increasing number are applying for the first time.

Figure 4: Forecast of Veterans by Type



This decrease in the number of war service veterans means that the composition of Veterans Affairs' clients in receipt of benefits is expected to change significantly over the next five years. At the same time, the number of war service veterans declines, the number of Canadian Forces veterans and those still serving will increase. This trend, combined with a relatively stable survivor population, will result in Veterans Affairs war service veterans decreasing as a percentage of the Department's total client population from 52.2% to 46.9% in 2005. In this same period, Canadian Forces clients as a percentage of the total client population will increase from 13.9% to 16.6% and survivors will increase from 33.8% to 36.5%.

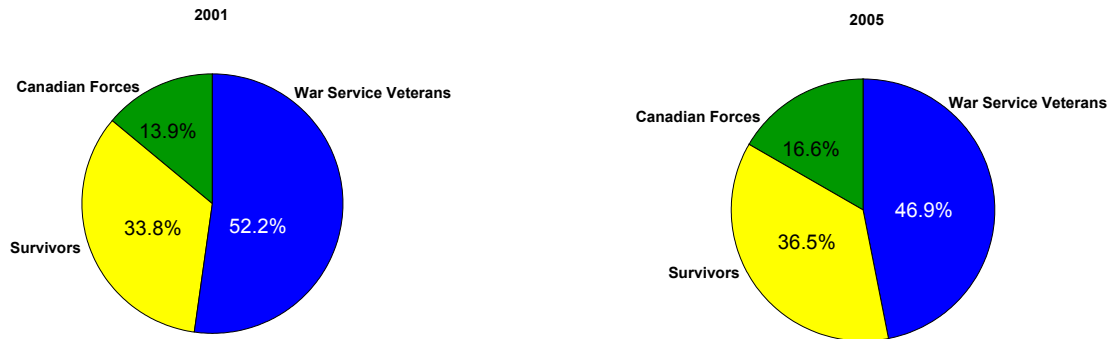
Veterans Affairs experienced a rapid growth in the number of Canadian Forces clients throughout most of the last decade but this growth is now expected to increase at a slower pace of 2% per year for the next five years. Over and above these forecasts are the still serving Canadian Forces clients who, since October 2000, became eligible to receive pension benefits for injuries incurred while serving in Canada. At that time, some 1,300 clients became entitled to receive benefits.

Each client group has varying needs, therefore, requiring a broad range of services and benefits. The care required by the war service veterans is gerontological in nature. War service veterans require more frequent assessments as their conditions are deteriorating at a rapid rate. The staff, especially counsellors and health care professionals, have a more demanding task in providing all the care plans.

The Canadian Forces clients are younger and as a rule, their claims are more complex. There is a vast amount of documentation available on these clients and their medical conditions are much more comprehensive and therefore, require extensive research in some cases. If these clients are not satisfied at the first level of claim, they are more likely to proceed to a review and if not successful there, to an appeal. Some of these clients have served in Special Duty Areas, have young families and when it comes time to retire from the military, have to integrate back

into civilian life. This transition has been recognized by Veterans Affairs and is facilitated by such initiatives as Veterans Affairs Canada - Canadian Forces Project (VAC-CF).

Figure 5: Veterans Affairs Clients



The composition of VAC clients is expected to change significantly over the next five years as older war service veterans decline rapidly in numbers and combined with expected increases in the number of Canadian Forces clients, less than half the client population will be war service veterans in 2005. This resulting change in our client demographics will not lessen, but actually increase the demands in our staff to provide service to these client groups.

2.0 Better Engaging our Clients and Canadians in General

Involving citizens in the decisions that affect them is an essential component of a strong vibrant nation. Canada believes that to be an effective democracy, its citizens must be consulted and engaged. At Veterans Affairs, we engage not only our veterans and other clients but also all Canadians.

As a matter of conducting our day-to-day business, we consult our veterans and clients, or their representatives. We have worked closely with all veteran associations and have partnered with many of them to improve the programs and services we provide. On every major initiative, they are either consulted extensively or are in some cases active participants in the projects. An example of this was the cooperative work done by our Department to assist the Royal Canadian Legion to repatriate the remains of an unknown serviceman for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Another example of engaging our clients in concert with veterans' organizations is our Client Centred Service Approach which was fully implemented this past year. Clients and their caregivers are actively encouraged to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

Apart from our clients who access benefits and services, it must not be forgotten that we also serve a much larger community, all Canadians, through our Commemoration Program. This program is designed to focus primarily on public education and community outreach. Our public education is focused on developing innovative products for Canadian youth. Our community outreach activities are designed to develop and promote commemorative activities at the community level.



During the summer of 2000, VAC conducted the most comprehensive national consultation ever conducted within Canada on the subject of remembrance, involving more than 5,500 contacts with veterans' organizations, provincial and municipal officials and citizens from all walks of life. The results of this review are expected during mid-2001.

The week leading up to Remembrance Day on November 11 has now been named Veterans' Week. It is during this time of the year that Canadians turn their thoughts to those who made the supreme sacrifice for their country. It is at this time that pride in Canada's service men and women past and present, is at its peak. It is our role to engage all Canadians through our commemorative activities so as to instill that sense of national pride throughout the year.

3.0 Definition of a Veteran



On March 29, 2001, it was announced that the Government of Canada would recognize as "veterans" former members of the Canadian Forces who meet two criteria: they fulfill the Department of National Defence's military occupational classification requirements; and, they have been honourably released from the Forces. These requirements apply equally to those Canadian Forces members who have served in the Reserves, Special Duty Areas and on domestic duty. Effectively, this recognizes the potential risk to which all Canadian Forces members may be exposed when they swear the Oath of Allegiance and don a Canadian uniform.



Performance Accomplishments

Veterans Affairs Portfolio 2000-01 Financial Resources (\$ millions)		
	Veterans Affairs Canada	Veterans Review and Appeal Board
Planned Spending (Estimates Part III)	1,995.1	9.7
<i>Total Authorities</i>	<i>2,129.2</i>	<i>10.3</i>
Actual Spending	2,098.6	10.0
Actual FTEs (Full-Time Equivalents)	3,212	105

The summary of financial information is intended to show: what the plan was at the beginning of the year (Planned Spending); what additional spending Parliament has approved to reflect changing priorities and unforeseen events (Total Authorities); and, what was actually spent (2000-01 Actuals). The actual Full-Time Equivalents totals for the year have also been included.

In order to achieve our strategic outcomes the Portfolio has depended greatly on the dedication and professionalism of its people. It is through their tireless efforts to serve our clients that VA has become a leader in service excellence. Not only are they proud to serve their clients, but all Canadians as well. Some of the more meritorious accomplishments have been recognized by the Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada and the Chair of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board. The acknowledgements of their efforts can be seen on page 84 of this report.

***"You are so very compassionate,
kind, supportive and understanding.
I hope that DVA realizes you're an
important part of a veteran's life."***

1.0 Pensions & Allowances and Health Care

Strategic Outcome:

The delivery of benefits and services that contribute to the independence, quality of life and standard of living of Canada's veterans, eligible Canadian Forces members, qualified civilians and their families in recognition of their sacrifice to the nation.

Resources Allocated to Strategic Outcome	FTEs	(\$ millions)
	2,519	1,979.8

Key Partners

- ▶ Veterans' Organizations
- ▶ Provincial and territorial health care departments
- ▶ National Defence
- ▶ Health Canada
- ▶ Community volunteer agencies across Canada
- ▶ Blue Cross Atlantic Canada
- ▶ Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- ▶ Province of Quebec
- ▶ Industry Canada
- ▶ Human Resources Development Canada

Continuum of Service

Under the Continuum of Service Project, Veterans Affairs Canada is now developing options to respond to the needs of Canadian Forces veterans and their families. Continuum of Service refers to the seamless approach to program and service delivery upon which all program and policy changes are based, with the objective of meeting client needs using all available resources. This partnership-based approach focuses on brokering for services and filling gaps where necessary, as opposed to recreating programs and services that are currently available outside of VAC. Through a series of ongoing regional fora, VAC is initiating dialogue with the key federal, provincial, municipal and voluntary sector agencies who share the Canadian Forces veteran as a common client.

These discussions are helping to identify strategies to address the complex needs of CF veterans. An evidence-based policy paper, which can be used to plan and implement changes in programs, eligibility and service delivery for CF veterans, is currently being developed.

Client Centred Service Approach / Client Service Delivery Network / Benefits Redesign Project

As part of its overall service delivery strategy, Benefits Redesign Project (BRP) implemented Release II of the Client Service Delivery Network on March 19, 2001 to support the delivery of VAC's core programs and services related to economic support, disability pensions and health care. The CSDN is part of VAC's strategy to prepare for and migrate to on-line service delivery - a process which calls for new

business models, revitalized partnerships and direct interaction with our clients. This integrated software is streamlining and modernizing business processes; enhancing VAC's ability to contribute to the evolution and delivery of Canada's social programs (specifically those pertaining to veterans' benefits); and adhering to the principle of excellence in service delivery by incorporating appropriate support processes and systems.

Expected Result

- ▶ timely, fair and consistent service delivery

National implementation of the related Client Centred Service Approach was also completed in March 2001. Implementation followed a nationally coordinated plan, developed on a region-by-region basis. Over the course of 2000-01, each District Office across the country undertook the training underlying the philosophical approach and operational tools associated with CCSA, including Screening and Client Centred Assessment and Care Planning processes and tools. By March 2001, all District Offices were fully utilizing all the CCSA client service and case management related tools and instruments which were completed and available on the Department's Client Centred Service Delivery Network. With the integrated system in place, employees in offices across Canada are working together as one team with one objective, that being, better service to clients.

The principal benefits of the Client Service Delivery Network are:

- ▶ maintenance and improvement of client services
- ▶ long term continuity of service to veterans
- ▶ security and accuracy of client information
- ▶ operational efficiency
- ▶ a work environment that provides meaningful work and promotes employee well-being

The Client Service Delivery Network was a **gold medal recipient** at the October 2000 Technology in Government, Distinction Awards ceremony.

Veterans Affairs Canada - Canadian Forces Project

In June 1998, the VAC-CF Project was formally established within VAC to provide leadership and to act as a departmental focus for Canadian Forces issues related to improving services. A staff exchange - in the form of Department of National Defence and VAC Liaison Officers - has also been established to promote better awareness and understanding of each department's programs and services.

Expected Result

- ▶ improved quality of life

In concert with DND, VAC provided advice to Government on its response to the *Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs* recommendations contained in the "Moving Forward: A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces" Report (October 1998). The 89

recommendations dealt with the issues of Pay and Allowances, the Housing Crisis, the Injured, Retirees and Veterans, the Military Family and Transitions. (Sixteen of the recommendations involve VAC with respect to Care of the Injured, Retired and Veterans). On March 25, 1999, the Government accepted all of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs recommendations and its response was presented as a comprehensive *Quality of Life* package.

Since that date, the Project has managed the coordination of activities in support of the Department's *Quality of Life Initiative* with progress achievements reported each year in the Annual Report to the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs on Quality of Life in the Canadian Forces. The Report for the 2001 fiscal year was completed in February 2001.

VAC has worked closely with DND and other partners on a host of issues throughout this time period. In addition to establishing working groups to resolve issues related to the timely transfer of records, electronic records and medical reports, other accomplishments in the 2000-01 fiscal year included:

- ▶ in collaboration with DND, the ongoing operation of the *DND-VAC Centre for the Support of Injured and Retired Members and Their Families*. An evaluation of the first year operation of The Centre was completed in September 2000 and its recommendations are currently being examined with a view to implementation;
- ▶ development activities in support of the April 1, 2001 implementation date for VAC's *Assistance Service*, a voluntary and confidential professional counselling service for former Canadian Forces members and their families. It is delivered through a nation-wide team of counsellors, where the first client contact is made through a toll-free telephone service that operates 24-hours a day / seven days a week;
- ▶ establishment of the *VAC-Canadian Forces Advisory Council* in July 2000. Council membership is drawn from the academic / research / practitioner community, key federal government organizations serving current and former members of the CF, stakeholder groups and a current and former member of the CF community. An advisory body, the Council will serve as a forum for discussion on modernization of VAC's programs, policies and services to meet the complex needs of the CF and their families;
- ▶ the launch of the *VAC Transition Coordinator Pilot Project* with VAC employees working full-time with VAC District Office area counsellors (as required) and in liaison with CF case managers on key CF bases to assist releasing CF members and their families through the transition from military to civilian life; and

- ▶ increased effort directed toward improving the awareness of CF members about VAC program benefits and services, and of VAC staff with respect to CF issues. In the range of 20,000 CF members received briefings or attended workshops / seminars in activities carried out across the VA Portfolio at the corporate, regional and district office level. Understanding the needs of the CF personnel is a priority across the Portfolio as an important ingredient in improving client service. This is accomplished through ongoing workshops and the development and distribution of learning tools (e.g. a booklet on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder that was distributed to all VS Branch employees in the Fall of 2000, and a video on Casualties of Peace, currently under development).

Veterans Independence Program

The Veterans Independence Program assists clients to remain healthy and independent in their own homes or communities by offering a variety of services to those who meet the eligibility requirements. A number of positive client outcomes have been achieved through this program in the past year, including:

- ▶ ongoing improvements in the quality of care provided to clients in long term care facilities;
- ▶ significant support to family caregivers to alleviate the physical, emotional and financial burden of caring for an elderly or disabled relative; and
- ▶ coordinated palliative care assistance to enable veterans to “die with dignity” in their own homes, surrounded by family and friends.

In 2000-01, the total number of clients accessing the program was approximately 68,900 with associated expenditures of \$163 million. Actual expenditures confirmed that while the number of clients is decreasing, the number of elements and expenditure levels per client are increasing, due to an increase in the number of frail, elderly clients with extensive and complex health care needs.

Ste. Anne’s Hospital



Located in the town of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue in the province of Quebec, and renowned as a centre of excellence within Canada and abroad, Ste. Anne’s Hospital is the last long-term care and geronto-psychiatric establishment in Canada still administered by Veterans Affairs Canada. In fact, over 550 eligible veterans and civilians are hospitalized in this centre.

The Government of Canada considers health care services for veterans a priority. At Ste. Anne’s Hospital, we strive to provide the highest quality care and services. Cutting edge programs are implemented to assure that residents are able to maintain their dignity and autonomy. Among the many programs are the Falls Prevention Program, the Physical Restraint Reduction Program and the Pain Awareness Program, which all contribute to broadening the Hospital’s scope.

During the course of 2000, the Hospital was awarded a plaque by the Montreal Chapter of the Alzheimer Society in honour of its level of excellence in connection with the implementation of programs focussing on individuals suffering from cognitive deficits. The Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada

prestigious Award for Leadership in Service Innovation was also awarded to the dysphagia team for having designed a reformed food program that is unique in North America. These programs, along with many others, will be presented in Montreal in April 2001 during the National Conference on Best Practices in Long-Term Care.

While pursuing its research to provide leading edge services to an aging population, Ste. Anne's Hospital is looking towards the future, notably by taking part, every three years, in the accreditation process established by the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation and by pursuing its rigorous continuous quality improvement process. Furthermore, in order to enable its residents to live in an environment that is better suited to their needs, Ste. Anne's Hospital has committed itself to a modernization and revitalization process and is seeking financing for an important renovation project that will enable its aging clients to benefit from a safer and healthier environment.

Veterans' Organizations

Veterans Affairs values its strong relationships with the many veterans' organizations and other groups from across the country that are working to help address the issues facing today's veterans and their families. VAC's ongoing collaboration and communication with these groups continue to result in important benefits to our shared clients. Some highlights of our collaboration with our partners include among other things:



- ▶ During the 2000-01 period, VAC participated in a very productive consultative process with the Merchant Navy Veterans' organization regarding the MNVs one time compensation package. Advice was also received on wartime service and historical documentation. Meetings also occurred with the head of various Overseas Civilian groups who are positively implicated with Bill C-23 (the *Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act*).
- ▶ In July 2000, Health Promotion Directorate held a major consultation exercise in the context of our falls prevention partnership with Health Canada. Royal Canadian Legion, War Amps, Peacekeepers, Korean Veterans, Aboriginal Veterans and Nursing Sisters participated. This led to the present continued involvement of these groups in the implementation of the Falls Prevention Initiative at the local level in the three pilot areas (Atlantic, Ontario and Pacific Regions).
- ▶ Residential Care Directorate consulted on a regular basis with the Gerontology Advisory Committee and Long Term Care Committee, on ways to enhance the quality of care in long term care facilities. This Directorate also worked with the Royal Canadian Legion to prepare material for submission to the Canadian Council Health Services Accreditation. VAC also continued to work closely with the Gerontological Council which is strongly represented by Veterans' Organizations.

- ▶ In July 2000, the VAC-Canadian Forces Advisory Council was established. The mandate of the Council is to provide guidance, expert advice and recommendations to Portfolio management on the development of new or adjustments to existing policies, programs and services to meet the needs of Canadian Forces veterans and their families. The Council consists of representation from: Canada's Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans, the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping, the Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans' Association, the Gulf War Veterans' Association of Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion; and the National Council of Veterans' Associations in Canada.

- ▶ A National Roundtable consisting of representatives from VAC, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, DND and First Nations Veterans progressed towards completion of a report on the treatment accorded to First Nations Veterans of the Second World War and the Korean War and their dependents. VAC will continue to work with the other government departments and aboriginal veterans' organizations to address the issues facing First Nations Veterans and their dependents. VAC will also continue a similar effort to identify the concerns of Métis and Non-Status Indian veterans of the Second World War and Korean War.

- ▶ As part of the development and design of the highly successful Seniors Canada On-line Internet portal, VAC engaged the Royal Canadian Legion to share information regarding the purpose of the site as well as the key deliverables such as client outreach and seniors engagement. The RCL and the National Veterans' Service Organization have been invited to contribute to the on-going development of the Seniors web site. *

- ▶ As a complementary initiative to the Seniors Canada On-line Internet portal, 46 Community Access Program (CAP) sites were established in Royal Canadian Legion branches across the country through a three-way partnership involving Industry Canada, VAC and the Legion branches. These CAP sites are intended to be delivery sites for health promotion programming in the Fall of 2001. The success of this initiative is largely attributed to the strength of the partnership between VAC and the RCL.

*(Additional information on these initiatives can be found on page 29 of this report.)

Merchant Navy Veterans

On February 1, 2000, the government announced a one-time compensation package for Canada's Merchant Navy Veterans and surviving spouses. Canadian and Newfoundland Merchant Navy Veterans who served during the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War, and who were not wartime members of the Armed Forces for a year or more, were eligible to apply.

Expected Result
▶ compensation for sacrifice in service to Canada

These payments compensated MNVs for demobilization benefits which they were not eligible to receive at wars' end, and lost opportunity because of this.

Originally \$50 million was allocated by the Government for this package. Maximum length-of-service payments ranged between \$5,000 and \$20,000 with an extra 20% paid to prisoners of war. Merchant Navy Veterans or surviving spouses had until July 31, 2000 to apply for this benefit.

As the Department did not know the total liability until all applications were adjudicated, only 60% of their entitlement was paid. Due to the large number of applications, an additional \$20 million was allocated in October 2000. As of March 31, 2001, 13,928 applications had been received. Total funds paid out by March 31, 2001 amounted to \$50.7 million in the processing of 7,063 claims. The Department also received 2,695 requests for review.

The Table of Disabilities and Entitlement Guidelines Project

The Table of Disabilities and Entitlement Guidelines Project was established to develop and implement new entitlement and assessment guidelines for the disability pension program. In 1999, consultations began within the Department and with veterans' organizations, and a project team was established in the Fall of 2000.

The objectives of the project are to improve the consistency, equity and quality of decisions in awarding and assessing pensioned disabilities; to increase the transparency of the process and decision making; and to enhance accountability. The revised Table of Disabilities will adopt a more holistic approach to rating disabilities, which will include an evaluation of both impairment and quality of life. The effects of pensioned conditions on an individual's body systems and capacity to meet certain social and domestic demands will be rated.

The Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines contain a current medical and scientific description of injuries and diseases for which pension application will be made. The completed guidelines will be based on credible peer review, medical research and literature, as well as comprehensive guidelines from various disability compensation bodies in Canada, the United States and Australia. A comprehensive draft of the Table of Disabilities and the Entitlement Guidelines were completed in March 2001. Consultations in the field and with veterans' organizations and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board are ongoing. Piloting and testing of the new guidelines and associated business process is currently underway.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder & Gulf War Committee

The VAC Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Committee and Gulf War Committee were amalgamated to coordinate all VAC activities, communications, research and initiatives in the areas of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Gulf War issues. This was in response to the special needs of those clients with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and / or other stress-related psychiatric disorders as well as those who served in the Gulf War. In February 2001, a number of deliverables were produced including the Psychiatric Assessment Guidelines - Table of Disabilities, Diagnosis and Reporting Guidelines for Psychiatric Disabilities, Disability Pensions and Health Care Protocol and the Pensions and Health Care Information Sheet for Clients with

Psychiatric Disorders. A PTSD health promotion information booklet was also produced.

Bill C-41 (Act to Amend the Statute Law in Relation to Veterans' Benefits)

Expected Result

- ▶ improved basic standard of living

In 2000-01, the Department supported the development and passage of Bill C-41 which contained amendments to 17 acts. Now Chapter 34 of the Statutes of Canada of 2000, this legislation was brought into force on October 27, 2000. It repealed subsection 21(4) of the *Pension Act*,

thereby allowing all members of the Canadian Forces who have service-related disabilities to receive disability pensions while they are serving, ensuring equity of access to benefits to all CF members, regardless of whether the injury occurred in Canada or on a foreign deployment.

Bill C-41 also extended full access to veterans' pension and income support benefits to members of civilian groups with wartime service overseas, notably the Canadian Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance, Newfoundland Overseas Foresters, Canadian Fire Fighters, and Ferry Command (pilots who ferried aircraft over the Atlantic). This legislation also made a number of minor improvements to veterans' legislation, such as:

- ▶ permitting disability pensioners who are married to (or living common-law with) each other to each receive the married rate;
- ▶ extending remission authority to all types of overpayments of clients' benefits, while improving the ability to collect without causing hardship;
- ▶ reformulating the provisions governing the assessment of outside disability benefits (e.g. workers' compensation, U.N. disability compensation, court-awarded damages for personal injury);
- ▶ providing for a one-year continuation of a deceased client's pension to the guardian of the client's orphaned children;
- ▶ correcting the pension indexation formula; and
- ▶ clarifying the exchange and use of client personal information.

As of March 2001, over 1,300 disability pensions were put into pay for still-serving regular members of the Canadian Forces.

Bill C-23 (the Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act)

Most of the programs administered by Veterans Affairs contain provisions pertaining to the spouse or common-law partner of qualifying veterans and civilians. Amendments to seven of the governing statutes were enacted, effective July 31, 2000, by Bill C-23 (the *Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act*), now

Chapter 12 of the Statutes of Canada of 2000, to extend equal benefits and obligations to all common-law partners, while maintaining the clear legal distinction between married and unmarried relationships. These amendments are consistent with amendments made by the same Bill to 61 other federal statutes that provide for benefits and obligations that are a function of a person's relation to another individual. Similarly, consistent amendments were drafted, in cooperation with the Department of Justice, to implement the same policies with respect to the regulatory texts administered by Veterans Affairs.

Federal Health Claims Processing Systems

The Federal Health Claims Processing Systems is a proprietary system of a third party contractor that is utilized by VAC, DND and RCMP to process health care claims for our clients. The Federal Health Claims Processing Systems Service Contract will include the benefit administration aspect of both the Veterans Independence Program and Treatment programs and the claims processing for Veterans Affairs Canada, DND and the RCMP. Health Care Division undertook bilateral discussions which resulted in agreements with its two partner departments to share the services of the VAC health claims contract. It is estimated that the savings to the federal government from the development piece alone may exceed \$20 million. A further outcome is that the provision of detailed management information has allowed VAC's two partners to better manage the health programs for their members.

The current initiative to further expand the scope of the contract to include the administration of the Veterans Independence Program, as well as the management of the transition for VAC and its partners, represents significant savings to the three departments. The costs to the government of having the three departments re-tender separately and ultimately develop three virtually identical processing systems under separate contracts would be redundant and wasteful.

Long-Term Care Strategy

In accordance with the multi-year long-term care strategy to effectively provide long-term care, VAC has:

- ▶ authorized payment for 850 previously unused priority access beds;
- ▶ continued the Overseas Veteran at Home Pilot to ensure the required care for clients awaiting placement in a long-term care bed;
- ▶ coordinated a "best practices" meeting for long-term care providers;
- ▶ continued the "Quality-of-Care" questionnaire for families and clients;
- ▶ initiated communication with the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation to establish awareness of VAC clients and their eligibility within long-term care facilities; and
- ▶ opened a Day Centre at Broadmead Lodge.

Expected Result

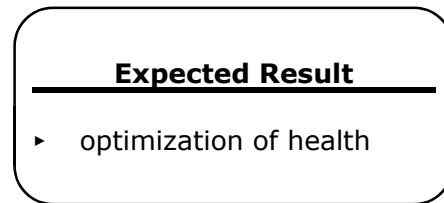
- ▶ appropriate care in logical location

National Health Promotion Strategy

The following are the accomplishments achieved this fiscal year, 2000-01, under the strategy:

Falls Prevention Initiative

Veterans Affairs Canada and Health Canada are collaborating in a joint initiative to invest in a community-based falls prevention pilot program. Atlantic Canada, Ontario and British Columbia / Yukon are involved in the pilot.



Falls are the leading cause of fatal injury among Canadian seniors and account for more than half of all injuries in the seniors' population. They often lead to an irreversible decline in personal function, institutionalization and death. Falls are costly to the health care system and have enormous consequences to seniors themselves. Approximately one million or one in every three seniors living in the community will experience at least one fall per year. For veterans who are over the age of 65, whose health status is not as good as that of the general senior population, the incidence of falls is 38%.

The pilot has the potential to reach almost 70% of Veterans Affairs Canada's war service veterans and approximately 60% of all Canadian seniors.

Veterans Affairs Canada has committed \$10 million to this pilot project over a four-year period. The funds will be distributed through Health Canada's Population Health Fund. The pilot will allow both departments to advance falls prevention knowledge in Canada. It will identify best practices, program models and community settings that effectively reach community dwelling veterans and seniors, as well as address the range of risk factors in a meaningful way. This project is consistent with the broader governmental horizontal management approach because of its unique operational partnership delivery mechanism.

There is also a need to create broader awareness of the issue. By involving new sectors, creating new partnerships and developing tools for use by organizations and communities that want to implement falls prevention strategies, the initiative will help to create safer home and community environments for older Canadians. There are three phases of project funding. The priority for Phase 1 funding is projects that develop working partnerships among key organizations and assess community strength and capacity to address issues related to falls prevention. The priority for Phases 2 and 3 funding is on establishing partnerships which address the priority areas of physical environment and personal health practices within high risk populations. The release of the phases for Atlantic, Ontario and Pacific Regions were: Phase 1 in October 2000, Phase 2 in February 2001 and Phase 3 to be released in November 2001.

Caregiver Symposium

Expected Result

- ▶ client independence and healthy lifestyle

Veterans Affairs Canada is presently providing service to a group of clients who are part of the oldest subset of Canadian society. As a result, VAC is ideally positioned to contribute to policy development regarding caregiving issues that emerge from present demographic trends.

In May 2000, VAC sponsored a Caregiver Symposium in Halifax. This public symposium consisted of presentations from a panel of experts in this field, as well as discussion with people actually undergoing the caregiver experience.

The purpose of this forum was two fold:

- ▶ to provide an opportunity for the Canadian public to participate in an ongoing policy discussion regarding caregiving issues in our modern day society; and
- ▶ to contribute to the creation of learning tools to be used in conjunction with learning programs focused on gerontology. A video, entitled *Connecting Caregivers*, was created and is intended for use both as part of such learning programs and as part of the VAC Caregiver Kit.

Future plans include enabling further policy discussion, and creating additional tools and products to assist veterans and Canadians in dealing with their caregiver dilemmas.

Telehospice

The Telehospice project was set up as a pilot project in West Prince County, Prince Edward Island, to test improved ways to deliver palliative care in that community. The project provides palliative care clients, some of whom are veterans, with the equipment to enable video nursing visits 24 hours a day. After two years of operations, the initial evaluation data indicates the following outcomes: a high degree of satisfaction for both clients and their caregivers; a more efficient use of scarce nursing resources; and a dramatic reduction in hospital outpatient visits and hospital admissions for these clients. A more detailed evaluation will be conducted in the near future. Emerging plans include building on this knowledge to expand this project to a broader client base and to start building on resulting learnings so as to adapt this delivery mechanism to areas of care other than palliative care.

"Dear (name): This note is long overdue. I want you to know how much I appreciated your concern and assistance during my husband's last illness. (Name) was a beautiful person and accepted his illness with great courage and acceptance. He wanted so much to remain at home and I am so grateful he could. I was with him when he died and although I miss him sorely, his death was so peaceful, just as he was. Thank you for your kindness. I am most grateful."

Royal Canadian Legion Computer / Internet Access Projects

In 1999 a pilot project was conducted in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion. The objectives of the project were: 1) to provide VAC clients with access to modern computer technology and with the skills necessary to navigate the internet; and 2) to assist clients in accessing health-related and other pertinent information on the internet and in their local communities.

Based upon the success of this pilot, work has been underway to extend this initiative across the country. VAC and Industry Canada have collaborated by using the urban Community Access Program to develop the infrastructure to deliver the health promotion project in 2001. Two Intergovernmental Agreements have been signed between VAC and Industry Canada to establish 18 CAP sites at Legion branches in Ontario and 26 CAP sites at Legion branches in six other provinces.

To date, seven contracts have been approved between VAC and the RCL Provincial Commands of Pacific, Alberta and Northwest Territories, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Once the CAP sites are established, the health promotion project will be delivered at selected Legion branches in the Fall of 2001.

The main goal of Seniors Canada On-Line is to collaborate and build partnerships to ensure that multi-service delivery channels compliment each other in providing citizens with a variety of choices for accessing information they need. Citizens will be able to choose the most appropriate method of service delivery to suit and meet individual needs and preferences.

To further this goal, Veterans Affairs Canada signed a partnership agreement and governance model with six federal partners and has initiated discussions for partnering with Ontario and Prince Edward Island. In addition, the Seniors Canada On-Line Project Office has developed a seniors engagement strategy based on consultations with seniors and representatives from seniors' associations and organizations, which outlines the best way to involve seniors in the development of the portal. Another step taken was to hold focus testing sessions with seniors, their families and caregivers in Halifax and Montreal to verify client satisfaction with the site and identify needs that will be incorporated into future development.

2.0 Pensions Advocacy

Strategic Outcome:

The rights of Veterans Affairs Canada clients protected through professional, legal representation in appealing decisions related to disability pensions and allowances.

Resources Allocated to Strategic Outcome	FTEs	(\$ millions)
	85	7.4

Key Partner

- ▶ Royal Canadian Legion

In 2000-01 the Bureau of Pensions Advocates was solely responsible for the case presentation and client representation at 3,958 review hearings and 1,821 appeal hearings. The Bureau worked jointly with the Royal Canadian Legion on 256 additional review hearings, and the RCL was solely responsible for 90 appeal hearings.

The Bureau's average service standard delivery time was 91 days for review hearings and 86 days for appeal hearings.

Expected Result

- ▶ professional case preparation and representation

Expected Result

- ▶ clients being informed of the process and their rights

A random sample of two cases per Advocate for 15 Advocates were chosen to evaluate the effectiveness of marshalling of evidence, argumentation and presentation of cases on behalf of clients. The Chief Pensions Advocate studied 30 BPA files and 15 hearing tapes and interviewed Advocates responsible for preparing appeal level cases. Eighty percent of cases were rated as excellent and 12% were rated fully-satisfactory. In 8% of cases there were noted areas of improvement. The Chief

Pensions Advocate will institute discussions with Advocates to address areas of concern.

A study of adjudicative results in terms of similar awards for similar conditions was conducted to verify consistency with respect to legislation. In the coming year, the Bureau will establish an ongoing dialogue with the Veterans Review and Appeal Board and other departmental officials to resolve any areas of perceived weakness.

From the client satisfaction survey conducted in 2000, of immediate concern was the low satisfaction rating expressed by respondents for having their lawyer spend a reasonable amount of time with them before the hearing. To improve this service, the Bureau has reduced the number of hearings per day to allow for more time between hearings to meet with clients, prepare them for the hearing process, and answer questions.

3.0 Commemoration

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.

Resources Allocated to Strategic Outcome	FTEs	(\$ millions)
	33	27.7

Key Partners

- ▶ Provincial and Territorial Departments of Education
- ▶ Canadian War Museum
- ▶ Veterans’ Organizations
- ▶ STEM~Net
- ▶ Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- ▶ Foreign Governments
- ▶ Last Post Fund
- ▶ Canadian Heritage
- ▶ National Defence
- ▶ Industry Canada
- ▶ Public Works and Government Services Canada

The Commemoration Program, anchored by public education and community outreach activities, provides the framework for continued and expanded commemorative efforts.

Public Education

Educational efforts were directed towards the development of innovative products for Canadian youth, including the completion of two videos for the Second World War education kit; the completion and distribution of a resource kit on the “Tomb of the Unknown Soldier”; continued distribution of previously produced products; and, the production of a public service announcement about the “Black Battalion”, which will be used to promote the “Black Battalion” Education Kit in 2001.

Expected Result

- ▶ increased knowledge and public awareness of commemoration subject matters by Canadians, especially youth

The interactive learning exhibit of "Chronicle of an Unknown Soldier" was presented to approximately 2,000 cadets, including exchange cadets from the United States, Bermuda and other Caribbean countries, and staff at the cadet camp HMCS Acadia in Nova Scotia from July 31, 2000 to August 11, 2000. The Merchant Navy scenario of the exhibit was performed at Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia from November 6 - 10, 2000 during Veterans' Week. This exhibit was considered by youth to be informative, memorable and inspired them to seek further information about their family history, and also Canadian military history.

Community Outreach

Community outreach efforts were focused on three priorities: 1) the development of products, publications, displays; 2) conducting ceremonies and other special events; and 3) developing the commemoration portion of the Portfolio's web site.

Canada 1945-2000 Netherlands was published for the pilgrimage to commemorate the 55th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands, *British Commonwealth Air Training Plan* was published highlighting the important contribution Canada made in this area.



A major advancement was made in the Canadian Virtual War Memorial which was relaunched on November 10, 2000. The relaunch announced the site's ability to accept scanned images from the public and allow the public to view submissions - giving increased meaning to the names and lives of those who died in the service of Canada. From November 2000 to March 31, 2001, 1,377 images were submitted. The site had a total of 54,163 hits from

April 1, 2000 to December 31, 2000. This program preserves Canada's past and encourages Canadians to actively participate in the building of a virtual memorial to Canada's war dead.

Documents of Second World War soldiers were repatriated from Russia in late 2000. The documents belonged to 30 Canadian soldiers. Of these soldiers, 19 had been casualties. Eighty-six related images were scanned and mounted on the Canadian Virtual War Memorial. These images consisted of paybooks, photographs and service books. To date, the documents for 27 of the 30 soldiers have been returned to the individual or their next of kin. This effort recognized the sacrifice of lives and of families, and resulted in very emotional and touching responses from many next of kin.

The Books of Remembrance, continue to receive high visitation rates at the Memorial Chapel on Parliament Hill. Fifty-six new entries have been identified for inclusion in 2001 and 14 corrections are scheduled. The Canadian Virtual War Memorial continues to have a link directly to the Books of Remembrance website.

Honours and Awards

On November 6, 2000 a Ceremony of Remembrance was held in the Senate marking the start of Veterans' Week and honouring the 60th Anniversary of the

Expected Result

- ▶ veteran recognition in life and death

establishment of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. The late Gildas Molgat, then Senate Speaker, presented Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medals to five Air Force Veterans who began their Royal Canadian Air Force careers at British Commonwealth Air Training Plan training sites and completed peacekeeping tours in the post-war period. Medals were also presented to five serving members of the air force in recognition of more recent peacekeeping services. A Commemorative Distinction in the form of a pennant was also unfurled for presentation to museums and air stations across Canada that have worked to keep alive the important story of the BCATP and the key contribution it made towards allied victory in the Second World War.

Veterans Affairs provides the first issues of war service medals and awards to eligible veterans or their next of kin, free of charge. We also supply replacement sets, but at a cost.

Pilgrimages and Ceremonies



The 55th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands pilgrimage was conducted from May 1 - 11, 2000. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier repatriation occurred from May 22 -25, 2000 with re-interment in Ottawa on May 28, 2000. The 55th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Hong Kong Prisoners of War pilgrimage took place from November 27 - December 8, 2000.

The remains of two Canadian soldiers were discovered overseas and funeral ceremonies were organized and held for each. The services were held in France and Holland, respectively.

The Department also held its annual Commemorative ceremonies in France, at the Beaumont-Hamel Memorial in July 2000, and at the Vimy Memorial in November 2000.

Veterans' Week

The Veterans' Week theme for 2000 was "Legacy of Peace". Across Canada, commemorative ceremonies and events take place during the week leading up to Remembrance Day. This week continues to be one of the most highlighted and high impact times for commemoration to occur.



Funeral and Burial

The Last Post Fund Corporation is a non-profit organization closely associated with Veterans Affairs Canada and is mandated to ensure, insofar as possible, that no veteran who served Canada in wartime is denied a dignified funeral and burial for the lack of financial resources at the time of death. The overall transfer of the administration of the Department's Funeral and Burial program to the Last Post Fund is not complete, but continues to move towards this goal.

Graves, Grave Markers and Cemeteries

The Department continued to carry out its responsibility for grave maintenance for approximately 110,000 Canadian war dead located in 74 countries. This responsibility also encompasses an estimated 300,000 grave sites located in about 15,000 cemeteries across Canada where service personnel, veterans and others, buried at the expense of Canada, rest. VAC began supporting Canadian war graves in South Africa and obtained initial material for assessing current conditions of these grave sites. Discussions have occurred with the Department of National Defence regarding the care of post-war graves located in Europe.

Memorials

During 2000-01, a Treasury Board submission was prepared requesting funding for a restoration project for the Department's 13 European monuments, including the Vimy Memorial. To date the preliminary discussions have been receiving favourable support. The Vimy Monument has had a stone assessment completed. Tests have been performed on the stone and the original quarry in Croatia has been located and found to be still open.

Expected Result

- ▶ maintenance, preservation and showcasing of Canada's commemorative resources



Further measures were undertaken to assess, restore and enhance the historical and environmental integrity of our European memorial sites, including landscape restoration, forestry management and battlefield terrain monitoring. Significant attention was again devoted to historical and on-site research at both Vimy and Beaumont-Hamel. Construction also commenced on an interpretive center for the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial Park. Plans call for the center to be completed and opened on July 1, 2001.

Since the 1970's VAC has provided young Canadians with the opportunity to serve as guides at the Vimy Canadian Memorial, and since 1997, at Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial as well. Guides are hired under the Federal Government's Student Employment Program. They offer site interpretation and tours during one of three 3 ½ month sessions: January to May; May to August; or August to November. During fiscal year 2000-01, thirty-three Canadian students were afforded this excellent opportunity to learn about, and share, Canada's First World War heritage.

4.0 Corporate Administration

Although Corporate Administration does not have a specific strategic outcome, the staff who fulfill these administrative responsibilities, do so in support of their fellow staff members providing direct client service. Work in this business line supports all employees. The following is a description of some of their accomplishments:

VAC Five Year Strategic Plan

Following extensive consultations with veterans' organizations, other external and internal stakeholders and partners, VAC has developed a strategic plan that provides a framework for implementing the Department's vision over the next five years. The two strategic objectives described in the plan - Integrity of our Programs and Service Improvement, and Organizational Effectiveness - are supported by ten strategic priorities that aim to ensure that our core health, disability pension, compensation and commemoration programs meet the evolving needs and changing circumstances of veterans and other clients. The plan also reaffirms a commitment to maintain personalized services to all our clients while providing the necessary direction, infrastructure and training and learning opportunities for staff so that they can achieve their service improvement initiatives.

Progress in advancing the strategic initiatives identified in the plan will be reviewed twice a year, beginning in September 2001.

Human Resources Initiatives

VACs highly dedicated and skilled workforce was supported through a variety of employee-focused initiatives. A Portfolio Coordination Response Team including management, union representatives and staff was formed to address immediate issues of concern raised in the Public Service Survey. VAC continues to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to a supportive work environment. Initiatives include the formation of a Family Friendly Workplace Committee and a Workplace Well Being Sub-Committee in support of general well-being of staff; the development of a Leadership Workshop module to better equip our managers in positively influencing the work environment; the implementation of a pilot Employment Equity Mentoring Program and the Employment Equity Development Program to offer specific opportunities for employment equity group members; and on-going initiatives to sensitize staff regarding the use of both official languages.

Information Management / Information Technology

The new Information Management / Information Technology Division (IM/IT) became effective April 3, 2000. During the 12-month reporting period, the organization has been stabilized through the completion of senior management staffing actions. The IM/IT model was implemented and the new IM/IT governance process has been confirmed and is operating.

The second release of the CSDN occurred on March 19, 2001, followed a week later by its associated database. All activities related to implementation, such as user training and basic technical knowledge transfer, were brought to successful conclusion for this major initiative.

Knowledge Economy Partnership

The Knowledge Economy Partnership (KEP) is a partnership between the Federal and Provincial governments as well as with educational institutions. KEP continues to be involved in a number of cross-jurisdictional initiatives to support client-centred co-delivery and the development of a knowledge economy on Prince Edward Island.

Financial Information Strategy

All Financial Information Strategy related initiatives were completed with the associated training and policy work, as scheduled. This included implementation of a new financial system called FreeBalance, and an upgraded National Inventory supported by a new asset and materiel management system called Automated Material Management Information System.



Audit and Evaluation

The Audit and Evaluation Division conducted numerous studies during the 2000-01 fiscal year which looked at various components of programs and operations. Recommendations raised in each study were presented to senior managers and each report was subsequently approved by the Departmental Executive Board.

Reviews, audits and evaluations completed in the 2000-01 fiscal year included:

- ▶ The Assurance Study On The Year 2000 Project
- ▶ Evaluation Framework - DND/VAC Centre For The Support Of Injured And Retired Members And Their Families Evaluation
- ▶ Audit of Security
- ▶ VAC Conflict Resolution Process Review
- ▶ Workload Analysis Phase II Review
- ▶ Review of Contract Administration
- ▶ Veterans Services Ethics Advisory Committee Evaluation Framework
- ▶ Pension Review Evaluation Assessment
- ▶ Review Of The Implementation of PeopleSoft at VAC
- ▶ Audit of Modifications To The VAC Prescription Drug Program
- ▶ VAC Transition Coordinator Pilot Project Evaluation Framework
- ▶ Baseline Study of the Benefit Processing Unit
- ▶ Veterans Independence Program Evaluation Framework

Examples of the studies conducted with their recommendations and management response are as follows:

	Recommendations	Management Response
VAC Conflict Resolution Process Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Conflict resolution training be mandatory for all employees ▶ Promotion of services ▶ Focus on facilitation and mediation rather than advice ▶ Relocation of office for privacy considerations ▶ Statistics be used to identify issues and trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Training options will be identified ▶ Responsibilities for promotion to be established ▶ New facilitation / mediation model is to be prepared ▶ Office will be relocated ▶ Data collection and use will be reviewed
Audit of Modifications to the VAC Prescription Drug Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establish time lines for the drug utilization review ▶ Utilize VAC nurses more effectively in team approach ▶ Develop and update policies ▶ Provide an audit trail to track system access and usage ▶ Implement initiatives to manage costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Drug Utilization Review to become an integral part of administration ▶ Role of nurse will be clarified and strengthened ▶ Commitment to re-evaluate and update policy ▶ Periodic usage requests of the Pharmacy Point of Sale System will be made ▶ Cost management remains a priority

Three planned studies identified in the 2000-01 Report on Plans and Priorities were replaced with other work due to changed priorities and operational circumstances. The Pension Program Operations and Benefits study was deferred due to implementation of a new program delivery system. Assistance to Results Measurement Studies was not required as these studies were not undertaken during the year. The Veterans Affairs Canada - Canadian Forces Initiative study was deferred and replaced in the interim by two evaluation frameworks for specific activities within the Initiative.

5.0 Veterans Review and Appeal Board

**Strategic Outcome:
Fairness in the Disability Pension and War Veterans Allowance Programs.**

Resources Allocated to Strategic Outcome	FTEs	(\$ millions)
	105	10

Service Delivery

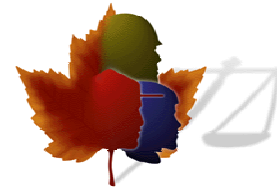
The Veterans Review and Appeal Board is committed to providing clients with faster, more convenient, and seamless access to information about the Board and its

"This lady showed compassion and understanding that behind a file number is a person that has emotions and worries that everyone has in life."

program in both official languages. Modernization of service delivery has resulted in the Board's implementation of two new points of access: the Veterans Review and Appeal Board website and a toll-free number for client enquiries.

In January 2001, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board launched its website as part of the Government On-Line initiative to improve service delivery and communications with its clients. The website raises awareness of the Board's role, mandate and how it operates for clients, representatives and other stakeholders.

The creation of the VRAB website generated a need to develop visual interest that reflected clients and the quasi-judicial role of the Board. That image is reflected on our website.



The Veterans Review and Appeal Board's website enables browsers worldwide, specifically our Canadian Forces clients, to electronically access information and e-mail enquiries about the Board and its program 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The VRAB Website Address is <http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca>.

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board has also implemented a toll-free number to provide clients with convenient access to information about the status of their claim. The toll free number for the Veterans Review and Appeal Board is 1-800-450-8006. On-line information and services of equal quality are provided in both official languages to serve our English and French clients.

Raising Awareness of Emerging Canadian Forces Issues and Needs

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board is sensitive to the needs of former and current CF clients and has participated in a number of VAC-CF initiatives. Canadian Forces clients made up 49% of all review and appeal claims before the Board in 2000-01. The number of Canadian Forces clients in comparison to other client groups has been increasing and the Board has responded by providing targeted training for members and staff to raise their awareness of emerging CF Members' issues and needs and to address the differences and complexities of their claims.

Veterans Review and Appeal Board Client Satisfaction Survey

In the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board conducted a client satisfaction survey to provide clients with an opportunity to comment on the quality of service they received from the Board. The majority of clients (72%) were either very satisfied or satisfied with the

Expected Result

- clients informed of their rights

overall quality of service they received from the Board. These results are excellent when consideration is given to the fact that 30% of the clients surveyed received fully favourable decisions. The Veterans Review and Appeal Board has published the results of the client satisfaction survey and has received favourable feedback.

To improve the level of satisfaction with its services, the Board continues its commitment to quality service by evaluating and implementing opportunities for improvement.

"Always room for improvement, but they did a very good job."

The Board has taken action to address issues from the survey with respect to hearing facilities, conduct of hearings, oral and written communications and timeliness in the processing of decisions. Training continues to be an on-going process and the feedback from clients has been a helpful tool to ensure that members and staff receive the appropriate training to ensure a consistent, timely and independent review and appeal process and to inform clients of their rights.

Members' Training

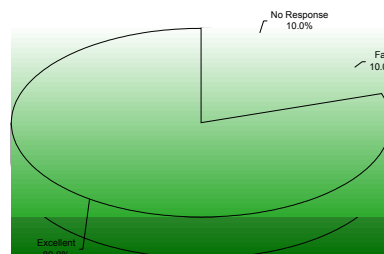
As part of its commitment to professionalism, the Board conducts ongoing Professional Development Programs for its members. Following their initial training program, all members take part in training sessions and workshops held at various times throughout the year.

"The more training and courses that can be given to members the better, as I believe training is most important."

Annually, the Board conducts a week long Members' conference as part of their ongoing professional development. This year, as part of the follow-up to the VRAB Client Satisfaction Survey, the Board arranged an additional week long training session consisting of workshops on dictation, decision writing, conduct of hearings, case scenarios, the Table of Disabilities and Entitlement Guidelines and Professionalism by Design.

To measure the consistency and effectiveness of its training program for Members, the Board conducted a Members' Training Survey. The survey's goal was to assist the Board in the refinement of its training and education program and to respond to the ongoing professional developmental needs of Board members.

Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the training you received?



Based on the survey results, in which 90% of the Members responded, 80% rated the overall effectiveness of the training received as excellent. As well, 80% of the Members responding rated the training as excellent in that it had properly prepared them to assume their duties.

Even though the survey results revealed a high level of satisfaction and reinforced the benefits of the training program, the Board is implementing several additional training and development initiatives.

Public Service Employee Survey Follow-up

In addition to being an active participant in the follow-up activities by the Portfolio in response to the Public Service Employee Survey, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board took action to address concerns raised by its own staff and members. The Board conducted a goals and objectives exercise with staff which included individual learning and development, creating a harmonious and supportive work environment and improving communications with staff. This exercise resulted in the development of VRAB learning guidelines, increased support to staff in the identification and achievement of their learning goals and objectives as well as career development, and improved communications throughout the Board. The Board also conducted conflict resolution training for all staff and members to reinforce the Board's commitment to ensuring its work environment remains free of harassment and discrimination.

Review and Appeal Process

Expected Result

- ▶ consistent, timely, independent review and appeal process

Under Section 40 of the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act*, "all proceedings before the Board shall be dealt with as informally and expeditiously as the circumstances and consideration of fairness permit".

The Board conducts review level hearings in over 40 locations across Canada and arranges for new hearing locations to accommodate Canadian Forces clients when warranted, such as Cold Lake, Alberta.

In the spirit of client service delivery and to increase

the accessibility and efficiency of the Board, there are a variety of hearing options available to clients: in person, video conferencing, written submissions and single member review panels. Hearings conducted using video conferencing technology is extremely effective and responds to challenges around geographic distances and urgent claims. In the 2000-01 fiscal year, the Board heard 824 claims by video conference.

The Board's hearing proceedings are informal as well as non-adversarial and clients can expect open and respectful communication throughout the proceedings. Based on the Board's recent results of the client satisfaction survey, clients rated very high levels of satisfaction with their hearing. Clients rated that they were most satisfied (94%) that Board members treated them with courtesy and respect.

At the review hearing, clients are provided with an important opportunity to present oral testimony or produce witnesses to testify on his or her behalf. Clients are not

"While the decision was not in my favour, I could not fault the individuals who represented the Board. They were courteous and respectful in every aspect of the hearing."

required to attend appeal hearings, and even if they choose to, only documentary evidence can be presented. Reasons for Board decisions are written in clear and simple terms to provide clients with

straight forward explanations as to their decision results. Decisions are normally issued one month from date of hearing and in the case of written submissions, approximately one month from the time that the Board receives the claim and submission. The Board monitors issues of fairness and openness and inquires into such through any written complaints received from its clients and when warranted, takes appropriate measures to resolve the complaint.

Whitehead Study

Over the past number of years the Board observed that a large proportion of its workload consisted of claims for noise induced hearing loss, many of which came from still serving or recently retired members of the Canadian Forces. Each of these claims documents imparted the human suffering and loss of quality of life of those who have had their hearing damaged by occupational noise while in military service. The magnitude of claims received by the Board caused it to commission Gordon Whitehead, an eminent audiologist and teacher, to conduct a study of hearing loss claims.

The written findings of Mr. Whitehead's study have been shared with the Canadian Forces and they, in conjunction with Veterans Affairs Canada, are considering further studies based on those findings.

Veterans Review and Appeal Board - Legal Unit

The Legal Unit of the Board monitors Federal Court decisions on the Board's rulings that are taken to the Court on judicial review. The Board's training materials and aids to interpretation are updated on a continual basis to reflect the decisions of the Federal Court.

New Member Appointments

In the 2000-01 fiscal year, there were four new members appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in addition to reappointments of current members. Every new Board member receives intensive training on all aspects of the adjudication process, including the legislation, administrative law, medical and legal issues, conduct of hearings, conflict resolution and decision writing. New members are matched with experienced members, as well as Pension and Allowance Analysts as part of their mentoring process, to learn the various complexities of the adjudicative and hearing processes.

Liaison with Veterans' Organizations

A top priority of the Board is continuing liaison with Veterans' groups and organizations. During the past year, the Chair and senior staff attended the Biennial convention of the Royal Canadian Legion in Halifax. The Board also participated in the RCL Service Officers' Annual Conference held last fall in Charlottetown. A panel of members and senior staff shared perspectives on the review and appeal processes in terms of best practices and responded to questions raised by the Service Officers. The Board also conducts ongoing consultations and visits with the War Amputations of Canada, the National Council of Veterans Associations, the Hong Kong Veterans Association and the Army, Navy and Air Forces Veterans Association.

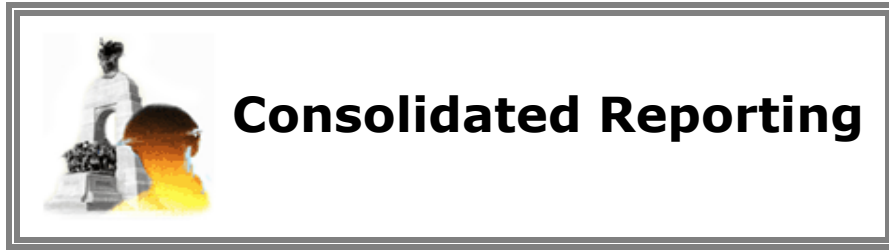
Table of Disabilities Briefings

During the 2000-01 fiscal year, Veterans Review and Appeal Board members participated on a number of consultative briefings on the revisions to the Table of Disabilities and Entitlement Guidelines as part of a familiarization and education process to the revisions being carried out.

Service Standards Measurement Results

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board is committed to providing timely delivery of service to its clients. When you apply for a review or appeal to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, it strives to send a decision within one month from the date of the review or appeal hearing. In the case of written submissions, the Board strives to process claims and send a decision within one month. The Veterans Review and Appeal Board publishes its service standards in the "*At Your Service*" booklet and on its website.

In the 2000-01 fiscal year, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board adjudicated on 4,281 reviews and 1,758 appeals and heard 281 applications for reconsiderations. The Board also issued 84 decisions for War Veterans Allowance appeal hearings.



1.0 Social Union Framework Agreement

The following activities reflect the spirit of the Social Union Accountability Framework.

All Canadians are Equal

Aboriginal Peoples of Canada

For many years, Aboriginal Veterans have claimed that they and their dependents were not treated fairly by the Government of Canada during and after the wars. A National Round Table process with First Nations veterans and the Assembly of First Nations was officially launched in November 2000 to: conduct research on legislation, policies, and programs available to First Nations veterans and their spouses; collect personal testimonies from First Nations veterans; and gather data to determine the number of veterans and surviving spouses and widows. The NRT was a collaborative effort of the Government of Canada, Assembly of First Nations, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and First Nations Veterans from across Canada.

The NRT is expected to complete its work in May 2001. An analysis of the findings in the report will be completed over the summer months. The NRT process has contributed towards improving relations and understanding between government and First Nations veterans.

Métis and non-status Indian veterans have also expressed grievances with respect to their treatment during and after the wars. Discussions are now underway with Métis and non-status Indian veterans' organizations to set up a fact-finding process to examine their concerns.

Informing Canadians - Public Accountability and Transparency

Achieving and Measuring Results

Client / Family Satisfaction Questionnaires

Since 1999, VAC staff have completed annual client satisfaction questionnaires by interviewing veterans who reside in our large Priority Access Bed facilities. The questionnaire is based on VAC's ten care outcomes areas which include: safety and security; food quality; access to clinical services; medication regime; access to spiritual guidance; socialization and recreation; activation and ambulation; personal care; sanitation; and, access to specialized services. Veterans and / or their family members in all PAB sites and community bed sites are asked about their level of

satisfaction with the services they receive.

A three year rotational plan has also been developed for the completion of questionnaires with veterans and / or their family members in the smaller PAB facilities and the community facilities in order to continue the monitoring of the quality of care.

During the interview process, should concerns or issues be raised by the veteran or their family member, the Area Counsellor will ensure that appropriate follow-up action is taken. This may include resolving issues with the facility administrator or requesting a visit by VAC's District Office Nurse to complete a facility review.

Following the completion of client / family questionnaires, a statistical roll-up report is prepared. These reports provide valuable information for VAC management in ensuring quality of care.

Facility Questionnaires

A comprehensive facility questionnaire, which is administered by VAC's District Office Health Professionals, is conducted on an annual basis in VAC's ten largest PAB sites. The facility questionnaire is conducted on a three year rotational basis in the smaller PAB facilities and the community facilities.

Working in Partnership for Canadians

Continuum of Service Policy

VAC's client services has as its policy objective to provide a holistic continuum of service, which ensures that the health and service needs of VAC's clients are met in partnership with health, social and voluntary agencies at federal, provincial and community levels across Canada.

This objective implies the provision of a continuum of service to eligible clients notwithstanding varying program eligibility. The continuum of service crosses jurisdiction and program lines, provides needs screening to clients who may be at risk, and more intensive care plans and follow-up, depending on the degree of need.

Portfolio Performance

Sharing Best Practices in Long-term Care

On May 16 and 17, 2000 in Calgary, Veterans Affairs Canada hosted the inaugural networking meeting of VAC's larger Priority Access Bed sites in western Canada. The meeting focused on the facilities sharing their best practices in dementia, palliative and respite care for veterans.

At the end of the meeting, participants were asked to provide their comments about the two day event. Responses were very positive and significant interest in having a national best practices meeting was expressed. As a result of this positive outcome, VAC will be hosting a national best practices in long-term care meeting in the Spring of 2001.

Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation

Responsibility for the delivery of direct health care rests with the provincial governments. VAC, therefore, relies on the provincial standards of care. To provide assurances that the level of care provided is meeting the needs of veterans, VAC is strongly encouraging all of its Priority Access Bed sites to obtain their accreditation from the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation. In collaboration with the Royal Canadian Legion, VAC is partnering with the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation to ensure an understanding of the special needs and eligibility of veterans, and that VAC's ten care outcomes are integrated into the accreditation process.

Royal Canadian Legion Alternative Housing Project

In partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion, VAC initiated this project to develop and

"These are difficult days ... but you have helped make him comfortable being home and happy to be with his family."

implement a housing program to address the current and long-term needs of Canadian veterans and seniors. It has been extended for another 12 month period.

During the initial 12 month period, in cooperation with the Dominion Command, various Provincial Commands and individual Legion Branches, the following activities and functions were carried out through the Office of the Coordinator, Legion Seniors' Housing: the Legion National Housing Directory was up-dated; a "How To" guide was developed to assist Legion Branches get started in housing projects; working partnerships were established with various Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation offices; talks were initiated to examine preferred funding opportunities for Legion Housing Projects through the Royal Bank of Canada; assistance was provided to various Provincial Commands on issues relating to real property; and "hands-on" assistance was made available to individual Legion Branches that were involved in housing projects and other property related matters.

Integrated Services for Seniors and Veterans Pilots



VAC is engaged in a partnership with the provinces of Prince Edward Island and Ontario in conducting Integrated Services for Seniors and Veterans (ISSV) pilots. From November 1999 to March 2001, ISSV was sponsored by the Treasury Board's Service Canada Initiative with a shared objective to provide citizens with one-stop access to a range of government services in a fast, reliable, convenient and cost-effective way.

The ISSV pilot sites in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and Owen Sound and London, Ontario, are offering our veteran and senior clients a point of service from which they can access health and social services programs in an effective, reliable and timely way. The pilots are exploring the viability of a model of integrated client services targeting veterans and seniors and offer services such as common access, client screening and assessments using a client centred approach and collaboration in the delivery of health care. Where possible, these pilots will promote co-location of services.

A key focus of Service Canada is to enhance delivery networks and expand and refine responsive core service content. Linkages are being made horizontally and vertically with other federal departments, such as Human Resources Development Canada and other provincial departments and agencies.

2.0 Service Improvement Initiative

Positioning Veterans Affairs for the Service Improvement Initiative

Veterans Affairs has long been recognized as a Leader in delivering Quality Service within the Federal Government of Canada. Our ongoing commitment to service improvement is prominently profiled throughout the recently announced Five-Year Strategic Plan (2001-2006). Service improvement is not only one of the overarching strategic objectives in this plan, it is also firmly entrenched in the values and ethics espoused by Veterans Affairs. Over the past several years, the Portfolio of Veterans Affairs has implemented a significant number of initiatives aimed specifically at determining and improving client satisfaction. The Review of the Veterans' Care Needs, the Canadian Forces Client Survey, the client satisfaction surveys conducted by the Veterans Review and Appeal Board and the Bureau of Pensions Advocates and the creation of the Service Quality Division within the Veterans Services Branch are but a few examples of the efforts to continuously improve service. As such, the Portfolio of Veterans Affairs is well-positioned to respond to the government-wide Service Improvement Initiative which was announced by the Treasury Board Secretariat.

Within the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Service Improvement Initiative is being led by the Corporate Planning Division. In 2000-01, a Work Plan was developed and approved by senior management. In the initial phase of this project, reliable baseline data will be established on the overall level of client satisfaction with respect to our key programs and services. To accomplish this, Veterans Affairs Canada developed a National Client Satisfaction Survey to be conducted in June 2001. The survey was designed around the five key service drivers, namely: timeliness of service; knowledge and competence of staff; courtesy of staff; fair treatment; and outcome. In addition to the five areas identified above, questions on preferred method(s) of communicating with the organization, accessibility of services and facilities, and Commemoration activities were incorporated into the survey questionnaire.

Client Satisfaction Measurement Activities

As part of the ongoing strategy for the Service Improvement Initiative, a Client Satisfaction Survey is scheduled to be conducted on a regular basis to determine the incremental progress toward the overall objective of 10% improvement in the level of client satisfaction by 2005.

Client Comment Cards

The VAC Client Comment Card, also known as the "*Help Us Serve You*" Card, continued to be available to clients at all service sites across the country. The cards allow clients the opportunity to comment on the quality of service they have received,

as well as provide suggestions for improvement. In 2000-01, information was gathered from 1,685 cards and again this year, 97% of our clients who completed the cards rated the overall quality of service they received as either Very Good or Good. A summary of the findings is presented in Figure 6 on page 48.

Portfolio Service Standards

Following the results of the National Client Satisfaction Survey, which are anticipated in August 2001, a review of the Portfolio Service Standards is planned. A table, containing summaries of the service standards measured this year and our accomplishments, can be found in Figure 7 on page 49.

Figure 6: Client Comment Card Feedback at VAC District Offices in 2000-01

Quality Element	Yes	No	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A	No Response
Overall Quality of Service			82.6	14.7	1.0	0.1	0.3	1.1
Courtesy			85.7	12.4	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.9
Helpfulness			85.1	12.3	0.9	0.0	0.1	1.3
Speed			71.8	22	3.1	0.7	0.7	1.4
Respect for Your Privacy			84.0	12.9	0.3	0.0	1.4	1.0
Clarity of Information / Explanations			79.1	17.6	1.3	0.4	0.3	1.0
Receipt of all Information, Help and Material Required	95.1	2.4						2.4
Service in Official Language of Choice	98.2	0.5						1.1
Office Easy to Access	86.1	4.4						9.3
Convenient Hours of Operation	90.8	1.1						8.0

Figure 7: Veterans Affairs Client-Based Service Standards Measurement Results in 2000-2001

Hours of Service

Summary:

We will provide you with at least eight hours of service each business day and we will post our hours in each office.

Accomplishments:

Eight hours of service each business day:

All offices reported meeting the standard 100% of the time.

Hours of service posted:

All offices reported meeting the standard 100% of the time.

Language of Choice

Summary:

We provide our services in the official language of your choice in many of our offices.

Accomplishment:

Language:

Portfolio monitored its performance of actively offering services in both official languages through spot checks, VAC Client Comment Cards, and complaints. In 2000-01, four complaints were received by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages of which two were from sources outside the Portfolio.

Office Visits

Summary:

If you visit one of our offices, you will be able to discuss your needs with a Veterans Affairs employee who will either address your requirements immediately or arrange an appropriate referral.

Accomplishment:

Needs discussed with VA employee:

All offices reported meeting the standard 100% of the time.

Telephone Inquiries

Summary:

When you call us during normal working hours, we will endeavour to have your call answered by one of our employees, rather than by a voice mail system. We will respond during the first call to all routine telephone inquiries not requiring investigation or research. If your call requires further investigation, we will contact you within one week to provide either a response or a status report on our progress.

Accomplishments:

Calls Answered by Employees:

All offices reported meeting the standard 100% of the time.

Telephone Inquiry Response Time:

All offices reported meeting the standard 100% of the time.

Telephone Messages

Summary:

We will respond to telephone messages by the end of the next working day.

Accomplishment:

Response Time for Telephone Messages:

All offices reported meeting the standard 100% of the time.

Correspondence

Summary:

We will respond to correspondence or provide an acknowledgement, in writing or by phone, within three weeks from the date of receipt.

Accomplishment:

Responses to Correspondence:

All Veterans Services Branch offices reported meeting the standard.

Confidentiality

Summary:

All personal information you provide us will be kept in strict confidence and used only for the purposes intended.

Accomplishment:

Privacy:

Of the 1,124 privacy requests processed and the 165 access to information requests processed by VAC in 2000-01, no privacy breaches or complaints by clients were reported to the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

Monthly Payments

Summary:

Your monthly Disability Pension or War Veterans Allowance cheque will be delivered to your home (or deposited in your bank account) by the second last banking day of the month.

Accomplishment:

Monthly Payment Delivery:

Between April 1, 2000 and March 31, 2001, VAC's production of cheques and deposits were issued to Public Works and Government Services Canada within the scheduled cut-off dates to meet the published standard.

Change of Address / Direct Deposit

Summary:

If you move, you must inform Veterans Affairs so that any correspondence or payment sent to you will reach you at your new address. You may also request that your War Veterans Allowance or Disability Pension cheques be directly deposited into your bank account. Any request for payment destination received by the 5th working day of the month will be reflected in that same month.

Accomplishment:

Requests for change of address / direct deposit

With the turn-on of the Client Service Delivery Network, all requests for changes of address and direct deposit are done immediately.

Disability Pensions

Summary:

If you make an application for a disability pension, we will send you our decision within eighteen weeks from the time that you and your representative complete your application and provide us the necessary supporting medical and other information.

Accomplishment:

Disability Pension Decisions:

Decisions were rendered on 8,984 or 74.5% of 12,059 claims within eighteen weeks.

Summary:

If you have a pensioned condition and you think it has worsened, we will reassess it and send you the results within fifteen weeks of your request to us, unless a specialist referral is required, or the examination takes place outside Canada.

Accomplishment:

Reassessment Decisions:

Decisions were rendered on 3,755 or 60.6% of 6,199 claims within fifteen weeks.

Summary:

If you submit a claim for Attendance Allowance, Clothing Allowance or Exceptional Incapacity Allowance, we will send you a decision within eight weeks.

Accomplishment:

Special Awards Decisions:

Decisions were rendered on 4,387 or 75.6% of 5,800 claims within eight weeks.

Summary:

If you have new or additional evidence and ask for a Departmental Review of a previous decision, we will send you the results of the review within four weeks.

Accomplishment:

Departmental Review Decisions:

Decisions were rendered on 375 or 61.8% of 607 claims within four weeks.

War Veterans Allowance Applications

Summary:

When you apply, we will send you a decision within seven weeks from the time we receive your application and all the necessary documentation.

Accomplishment:

War Veterans Allowance Decisions:

Decisions were rendered on 3,086 War Veterans Allowance claims. The service standard of seven weeks was met.

Assistance Fund Applications

Summary:

If you submit a request for financial aid for an emergency from the Assistance Fund, you will be informed of the decision within one week.

Accomplishment:

Assistance Fund Application Decisions:

All offices reported meeting the standard.

Income Assessment for Health Benefits

Summary:

If you wish to apply for health benefits which require that we assess your income, we will send you a decision within seven weeks from the time we received your application and all the necessary documentation.

Accomplishment:

Decisions on Income Assessment:

All offices performing this activity reported meeting the standard.

Summary:

If you are not satisfied with the WVA or income assessment decision and request a review, a decision will be provided within seven weeks.

Accomplishment:

Reviews of Decisions:

All offices performing this activity reported meeting the standard.

Bureau of Pensions Advocates Appointments and Interviews

Summary:

Requests for appointments with an Advocate will be responded to within one week and an interview will be scheduled for a mutually agreed upon time. If you are being represented by the Bureau of Pensions Advocates on a review or appeal hearing, you will be offered the opportunity to discuss your upcoming case with our Advocate, either in person or by telephone, whichever is most practical under the circumstances.

Accomplishments:

Request for appointment responded to within a week:

Reviews

17 sites: 8 sites or 47% met the standard 100%
9 sites or 53% met the standard 95-99%

Appeals

18 sites: 9 sites or 50% met the standard 100%
9 sites or 50% met the standard 95-99%

Opportunity offered to discuss case:

18 sites: 10 sites or 55% met the standard 100%
8 sites or 45% met the standard 95-99%

Bureau of Pensions Advocates Communications

Summary:

You will be informed of who will be representing you, how we will proceed with your case and an estimate of the time it will take to present your review or appeal claim.

Accomplishments:

Clients informed of representative:

18 sites: 11 sites or 61% met the standard 100%
7 sites or 39% met the standard 76-94%

Clients informed of how Advocate will proceed with case:

18 sites: 11 sites or 61% met the standard 100%
6 sites or 33% met the standard 95-99%
1 site or 6% met the standard 50-75%

Clients informed of time estimate:

18 sites: 7 sites or 39% met the standard 100%
4 sites or 22% met the standard 95-99%
7 sites or 39% met the standard 76-94%

Summary:

We are committed to presenting your review case to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board within four months of your application and your appeal case within three months of your request for an appeal hearing.

Accomplishments:

Present review cases to VRAB within four months:

4,214 review cases were presented by BPA, itself, or jointly with the Royal Canadian Legion to VRAB in an average of 91 days*

76% of all review cases presented by BPA, itself, or jointly with the Royal Canadian Legion were presented in 120 days or less.

Present appeal cases to VRAB within three months:

1,821 appeal cases were presented by BPA to VRAB in an average of 86 days.*

1,095 or 60.1% of 1,821 appeal cases were presented in 90 days or less.

An additional 462 or 25.4% were presented within 91-120 days or contact by the client.

* Reporting period April 1, 2000 to February 28, 2001. Statistics not available for March 2001 due to reporting database.

Veterans Review and Appeal Board Reviews and Appeals

Summary:

When you apply for a review or appeal to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, you will be sent a decision within one month from the date of the hearing.

Accomplishments:

Reviews of Decisions:

2,398 or 56% of 4,281 review cases met the standard. The monthly averages for processing all decisions ranged from 0.7 to 1.3 months. 80% of all review decisions were issued within 40 days of the hearing.

Appeals of Decisions:

1,108 or 63% of 1,758 appeal cases met the standard. The monthly averages for processing all decisions ranged from 0.8 to 1.2 months. 80% of all appeal decisions were issued within 38 days of the hearing.

Summary:

If you present your review or appeal to the Board by written submission, we will ensure that your case is processed and a decision issues to you within one month.

Accomplishments:

Reviews of Decisions:

18 or 78% of 23 written submissions met the standard. The monthly averages for processing all decisions ranged from 0.3 to 1.2 months.

Appeals of Decisions:

94 or 56% of 167 appeal cases met the standard. The monthly averages for processing all decisions ranged from 0.8 to 2.0 months.

Health Care Decisions and Claims

Summary:

If you contact us regarding a health care benefit which you feel you are entitled to, or submit a claim for reimbursement on a current benefit: You will receive a decision or we will process your claim within four weeks or our receipt of all the necessary information.

Accomplishment:

Health Care Decisions or Claims:

All offices reported meeting the standard.

Health Care Appeals

Summary:

If you are not satisfied with a decision, you can appeal it and you will receive a decision within eight weeks of our receipt of all the necessary information.

Accomplishment:

Health Care Appeals:

All offices performing this activity reported meeting the standard.

Long-Term Care Facilities

Summary:

When clients require long-term care, Veterans Affairs can offer financial support, where facilities meet standards set by the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation, or provincial or territorial standards, or Veterans Affairs guidelines.

Accomplishment:

Long -Term Care:

All offices reported meeting the standard.

Funeral and Burial Assistance

Summary:

You will receive a decision within five weeks from the time you submit all the necessary documentation.

Accomplishment:

Funeral and Burial Assistance Decisions:

The standard was met 95% of the time.

Summary:

If you are not satisfied with the Last Post Fund decision concerning your application, you may request a review and a decision will be provided within four weeks.

Accomplishment:

Review of Decisions:

No statistics available. Although both Last Post Fund and VAC officials are occasionally involved in redress activities, the number of files involved is too small to permit the generation of meaningful statistics.

Honours and Awards

Summary:

Veterans Affairs provides the first issue of medals and awards to eligible veterans or their next of kin, free of charge. Replacement sets are available at a cost.

Accomplishment:

Medals Issued:

1,990 clients received 5,251 medals as first issue.

772 clients received 2,628 replacement medals.

3.0 Health Care Coordination Initiative

The Health Care Coordination Initiative (HCCI) was established in 1994 to develop and implement a strategy to coordinate federal government purchasing of health care services and products for federal clients at the lowest possible cost through coordination of effort among departments and agencies. Ten departments and agencies with common interests formed a partnership to minimize inefficiency and duplication in their delivery of health care programs, while maintaining or improving the quality of the services they provide. VAC is a major partner in HCCI and hosts the HCCI Secretariat.

During this reporting period HCCI produced its second Annual Report in the Fall of 2000 as well as a cumulative Three-Year report which was completed in the Spring of 2001 covering the Initiative's performance for the period of its first Business Plan 1998-2001. These reports clearly demonstrated the benefits, both quantitative and qualitative, of horizontal management in health care. During the period covered by these reports HCCI has exceeded all expectations. The activities completed during this reporting period through the cooperative efforts of the HCCI partner departments

will continue to produce savings of \$9 million per year well into the future.

The partner departments have completed vision care agreements covering six provinces and two pharmacy agreements in Saskatchewan, resulting in savings of over \$2.5 million per year (by year three). They have completed an agreement for the purchase of hearing aids which is expected to save \$2.2 million per year. Standing offers for oxygen therapy, started in British Columbia, will yield savings of over \$1 million in that province alone. As well as a plan for the recycling of medical devices. Together these and the other initiatives will produce savings of over \$9 million per year for partner departments.

During this reporting period the departments have started work on the development of a health information management strategy for the federal jurisdiction in health. They have agreed to work together to address such complex issues as data security, privacy protection and linkages to provincial initiatives.

The departments have also collaborated in activities which support improved program management. The planned joint policy advisory committees for pharmacy and dental have been approved and in the case of pharmacy have been meeting for one year. Joint policy reviews have been carried out for both the audiology and oxygen programs which have led to changes in the departments' policies.

The HCCI departments also developed a second Three-Year Business Plan which focuses on the activities planned for the period of 2001-04. The Business Plan follows a well defined results-based Accountability Framework in order to measure performance and set performance targets for monitoring and reporting of each achievement. The activities planned for this period include agreements in the areas of audiology, dental care, oxygen therapy, pharmacy, vision care, and an equipment recycling program. As well, new initiatives have been planned in the areas of pain management, provision of health care professional services, development of a health information management strategy and a joint health promotion program.

4.0 Government On-Line

The Seniors Canada on-Line Pathfinder Project is a VAC led initiative to deliver client services on-line. The launch of this new internet site improves access to information already available on hundreds of federal web sites and supports the Government of Canada's commitment of better informing Canadians. This site promises to provide all seniors, including veterans, with fast, easy access to the kinds of information they need to improve their well-being, preserve their dignity and maintain their independence.

The development of Seniors Canada Online is a key innovation of the Government of Canada's newly-redesigned Canada Site www.canada.gc.ca. The redesign of the Canada site and the development of Seniors Canada Online are the first visible deliverables of the Government On-line initiative that will provide Canadians with on-line access to all federal information and services by 2004.

The Portfolio met the "Tier One" requirements by December 2000. Treasury Board's planning requirements for "Tier Two" due on September 30, 2000 were also met (including areas requiring central funding support). Work has commenced on input for "Tier Three". Several initiatives have been identified to Treasury Board as potential steps towards the goal of delivering client services on-line. Veterans Affairs is working in partnership with other government departments and is the lead department in the Seniors Portal initiative which is linked to the Government of Canada website.

5.0 Modernizing Comptrollership

During the year, the Department passed a significant milestone on the road to modernizing comptrollership. Two assessments; 1) Modern Management Practices Assessment and 2) Human Resources Capacity Check were conducted to provide a holistic and comprehensive picture of the Department's management capacity as it relates to Modern Comptrollership. These assessments have proven valuable in assisting Senior Management to identify and target areas of comptrollership practice requiring improvement; they will also provide a meaningful reference to help measure the Department's future progress. Further information on both assessments, including their full reports, can be found at http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/CMO_MFC/contents.asp.

Initially, it was the Department's intention to use the two assessments as a basis for establishing a multi-year integrated Comptrollership Action Plan aimed at improving management capacity. In the end, however, it was decided that a fluid approach with built-in flexibility to target areas for improvement would be a more practical and productive alternative. Following this approach, Senior Management has identified three priorities for the near term; 1) enhancing the Department's Values and Ethics Framework, 2) moving to a more mature integrated Risk Management Environment and 3) cultivating Modern Management Practices by raising awareness and understanding of Modern Comptrollership among the Department's management cadre. As conditions change, VAC will continue to identify, prioritize and pursue other opportunities to improve its Comptrollership Capacity.

In addition to work already started on the priorities mentioned previously, VAC has also made progress in closing a number of the gaps to some of the Department's fundamental comptrollership practices. A Strategic Plan has been prepared and approved which sets Departmental priorities for the next five years and establishes a framework to guide the Management Agenda. The Department's Business Planning Process has been revised to align with the Strategic Plan and better facilitate the allocation of internal resources. As well, the Department's efforts related to the Financial Information Strategy have successfully met established goals, and will continue to be one of the key components of Modern Comptrollership, i.e., the linking of financial and non-financial data with results achieved.

6.0 Transfer Payments

Veterans Affairs Program Benefits and Services Grants and Contributions (\$ millions)					
.....					
2000-01					
	Actual 1998-99	Actual 1999-00	Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual
Grants					
Disability Pensions	1,154.3	1,182.4	1,199.2	1,245.7	1,244.7
War Veterans Allowances and Civilian War Allowances	42.9	37.9	36.9	36.9	34.1
Last Post Fund	12.1	13.6	16.3	16.3	11.4
Commonwealth War Graves Commission	6.8	6.9	7.6	7.6	6.6
Contributions					
Contributions to veterans, under the VIP, to assist in defraying costs of extended health care not covered by provincial health programs.	152.5	156.4	163.3	168.1	162.7

Only those Grants and Contributions in excess of \$5 million have been reported. All Grants and Contributions to VA are legislated. The expected results and outcomes of Grants and Contributions can be found in the Pensions & Allowances and Health Care section beginning on page 18.

7.0 Sustainable Development

Veterans Affairs developed, in parallel with the Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan, a second Sustainable Development Strategy which was tabled in Parliament on February 14, 2001.

The Sustainable Development Strategy for 2001-04 contains an assessment of the first strategy and this can be found in Appendix B, page 33 on the website, http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/content/department/reports/susdev2001_e.pdf. This assessment recognizes what was accomplished and what was not accomplished.

The second strategy was organized under four themes:

Sustaining Our Government Operations

Efforts for this theme will focus primarily on the development and fostering of partnerships to improve our provision of services and preservation and presentation of our physical commemorative sites.

Sustaining Knowledge and Information

Development and sharing of knowledge and information is showcased through our commitment to integrating sustainable development into our policy and decision making processes, therefore allowing us to shape and sustain the social values of the Canadian Public.

Sustaining the Health of Our Clients

Activities to advance this theme will be demonstrated through health promotion and the partnering with the Department of National Defence to facilitate the seamless transition of Canadian Forces veterans to civilian life.

Sustaining the Health of Our Staff

Staff are essential to the provision of service of our clients. Our activities in this theme will focus primarily on the balance between a safe productive learning environment and the pressures experienced by working families.

The strategy is a continuation of our first strategy which was tabled in December 1997. It is intended to build on our past experiences and partnerships that we have established.

We conducted an assessment of the first strategy identifying what we accomplished as well as what we did not accomplish, and followed through with recommendations. It was recommended that:

- ▶ there be a review of current resource levels committed to the sustainable development initiative;
- ▶ divisional roles and responsibilities be clearly delineated and approved by the Departmental Executive Board;
- ▶ sustainable development awareness and / or training be provided to all staff with more intensive training approved and provided to those responsible to implementing and managing the initiative; and
- ▶ the completed Environmental Management System manual be presented for approval to the Chief Environmental Officer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services.

As well, the goals, objectives and targets from the first strategy are listed and shown as achieved and how they have advanced Sustainable Development at VA, or in certain cases, not achieved. This is available at the website listed in the previous paragraph, at page 39.

In June 2000, we celebrated Environment Week with information booths in our various locations across the country. This work was facilitated by our Green Teams and Green Champions. As well, in March 2001, Head Office in Charlottetown hosted a Winter Environment Day.

During the year, we developed an Environmental Management System for both the Department and Ste. Anne's Hospital and these are available on our website as referred to on page 88.

8.0 Storage Tanks

Status of Fuel Storage Tanks on Veterans Affairs Owned Land

Annual Report for April 30, 2001

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, 2000.

The following number of aboveground storage tank systems:

Are registered with Veterans Affairs: 7.

Comply with the *Federal Aboveground Storage Tank Technical Guidelines*: 7.

Do not comply with the *Federal Aboveground Storage Tank Technical Guidelines*: 0.

Should be upgraded in accordance with Schedule I of the *Federal Aboveground Storage Tank Guidelines*:

a) 0 in 2001

b) 0 in 2002

The following number of underground storage tank systems:

Are registered with Veterans Affairs: 0.

Comply with the *Federal Aboveground Storage Tank Technical Guidelines*: 0.

Do not comply with the *Federal Aboveground Storage Tank Technical Guidelines*: 0 in 2001.

Should be upgraded in accordance with Schedule II of the *Federal Underground Storage Tank Guidelines*:

a) 0 in 2001

b) 0 in 2002

9.0 Regulatory Initiatives

Initiative (*)	Planned Results (*)	Results Achieved
<p><i>Veterans Health Care Regulations</i></p>	<p>Amendments pursuant to the Quality of Life initiative, to improve benefits and services for Canadian Forces personnel disabled as a result of peacetime service in other than Special Duty Areas</p> <p>Program adjustments concerning seriously disabled veterans, income-based eligibility and chronic care</p> <p>Address observations made by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations</p> <p>Implementation of other housekeeping amendments</p>	<p>Amendments to the Veterans Health Care Regulations were submitted in October 2000 for examination in accordance with the terms of the <i>Statutory Instruments Act</i>. The Department since continued to work with its legal advisors on this regulatory text, providing eligibility for the Veterans Independence Program to peacetime disability pensioners and to wartime overseas-service civilian groups (complementing Bill C-41, now S.C. 2000, c. 34, see page 25). Also included are program adjustments benefiting seriously disabled veterans, low income veterans and those in need of chronic care.</p> <p>Amendments correcting observations made by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations and implementing other housekeeping changes were prepublished in January 2001 and came into effect in April 2001 (SOR/2001-157).</p>

Initiative (*)	Planned Results (*)	Results Achieved
Modernizing benefits and obligations	Modernize benefits and obligations contained in Veterans Affairs' regulations	Provisions pertaining to the spouse or common-law partner of qualifying veterans are found in several of the regulations administered by Veterans Affairs. Amendments required to provide for equal treatment of all common-law partners have been developed, implementing the policies enacted by the <i>Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act</i> , now Chapter 12 of the <i>Statutes of Canada</i> of 2000. Such amendments to the <i>Canadian Volunteer Service Medal Order</i> came into effect in 2000-01. Modifications to others, such as the <i>Veterans Allowance Regulations</i> , the <i>Veterans Burial Regulations</i> and the <i>Veterans Health Care Regulations</i> are following the regulatory process. (See also "Bill C-23", page 25.)
<i>Veterans Burial Regulations, 1995 and Last Post Fund Regulations, 1995</i>	<p>Merger of two regulations</p> <p>Transfer of administration of burial program to the Last Post Fund</p> <p>Address observations made by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations</p> <p>Implementation of other housekeeping amendments</p>	New proposed <i>Veterans Burial Regulations</i> , amalgamating both veteran's burial programs under the terms of a single legal text and delegating program delivery to the Last Post Fund were submitted in October 2000 to Justice Canada for statutory examination pursuant to the <i>Statutory Instruments Act</i> . The new regulations also include technical and housekeeping amendments, as well as corrections addressing the observations made by the joint House of Commons / Senate committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations.

Initiative (*)	Planned Results (*)	Results Achieved
<p>Regulatory amendments consequential to omnibus legislation: Bill C-61 (now S.C. 1999, c. 10) and Bill C-41 (now S.C. 2000, c. 34)</p>	<p>Regulations updated to reflect amendments to legislative framework or enabling statutes</p> <p>Miscellaneous consequential amendments implementing government policy</p>	<p>Amendments consequential to Bill C-61, along with other minor program adjustments, were prepublished in the <i>Canada Gazette Part I</i> in January 2001 and came into force in April 2001 (SOR/2001-157). These amendments are a step in a continuing process that will improve access to health care for veterans and other clients. They provided for clearer, easier to use Regulations to govern veterans' health programs, clarified rules for reimbursement of past health care expenses and updated authorities for the prescription of pharmaceuticals.</p> <p>The <i>Canadian Volunteer Service Medal Order</i> was amended effective March 1, 2001 (SI/2001-40) to extend eligibility for the medal to volunteer members of specific wartime overseas-service civilian groups, complementing amendments recently passed by Parliament (S.C. 2000, c. 34); and to reflect recently enacted amendments relating to merchant navy personnel (S.C. 1999, c. 10).</p> <p>Amendments to the <i>Veterans Allowance Regulations</i> were forwarded for statutory examination to Justice Canada in October 2000. They notably establish a new definition for "blindness" required further to the repeal of the <i>Blind Persons Act</i>, facilitate the recovery of overpayments and harmonize the accounting period for temporary absences from Canada.</p>

(*) Note: The initiatives and the planned results are identified in the *Veterans Affairs' Report on Plans and Priorities*.



1.0 Financial Performance Overview

Veterans Affairs Canada

Total spending authority for the Veterans Affairs Program in 2000-01 was \$2,129.3 million, or \$134.2 million higher than the planned spending reported in the 2000-01 Report on Plans and Priorities. The increased authority was obtained through Governor General Special Warrants, Supplementary Estimates and access to the Treasury Board Votes 10 and 15 for centrally funded programs and is comprised mainly of the following items:

- ▶ additional net funding of \$51.3 million for Disability Pension payments and Contributions under the Veterans Independence Program;
- ▶ an operating budget increase of \$21.5 million for completion of the Benefits Redesign Project and other IT related projects;
- ▶ additional funding of \$20.0 million for one-time payments to Merchant Navy Veterans;
- ▶ additional funding of \$19.7 million for the purchase of services under the Other Health Purchased Services program;
- ▶ additional funding of \$7.5 million as compensation for signed collective bargaining agreements and pay equity settlements;
- ▶ an operating budget carry forward from 1999-2000 of \$4.5 million; and
- ▶ other spending authority increases totalling \$9.7 million, including adjustments to statutory authorities.

Actual expenditures for 2000-01 in the Veterans Affairs Program were \$30.6 million less than the total authorized funding, for a lapse of 1.5 per cent of the total authorized. Of this amount, \$18.4 million consisted of lapses spread across various Grants and Contributions, and there was a lapse of \$7.4 million in the Other Health Purchased Services allotment. The remaining \$4.8 million lapse related to various projects under the Department's operating budget.

Veterans Review and Appeal Board

Total spending authority for the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2000-01 was \$10.3 million, or \$0.6 million higher than the planned spending reported in the 2000-01 Report on Plans and Priorities. The increased authority was obtained through Governor General Special Warrants and Supplementary Estimates, and related to a carry forward from 1999-2000, funding to compensate for signed collective bargaining agreements, and the bonus on the transfer of funds from salaries to other operating.

2.0 Financial Summary Tables

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Financial Summary Tables

Table 1 Summary of Voted Appropriations for 2000-01

Financial Requirements by Authority (\$ millions)				
		Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual
Veterans Affairs Program				
1	Operating Expenditures	535.8	615.1	602.9
5	Grants and Contributions	1,429.6	1,480.9	1,462.5
(S)	Minister of Veterans Affairs - Salary and motor car allowance	--	--	--
(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 Land Act</i>	--	--	--
(S)	Returned Soldiers Insurance Actuarial Liability Adjustment	--	--	--
(S)	Veterans Insurance Actuarial Liability Adjustment	0.2	0.1	0.1
(S)	Spending of proceeds from the disposal of surplus Crown assets	--	0.1	0.1
(S)	Refunds of amounts credited to revenues in previous years	--	--	--
(S)	Contributions to employee benefit plans	29.4	32.9	32.9
Total Program		1,995.1	2,129.3	2,098.6
Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program				
10	Program expenditures	8.2	8.7	8.4
(S)	Contributions to employee benefit plans	1.5	1.6	1.6
Total Program		9.7	10.3	10.0
Total Portfolio		2,004.8	2,139.6	2,108.6

Note: 1. Operating includes minor capital and other health purchased services
2. Total Authorities are main estimates plus supplementary estimate plus other
authorities.
3. Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.

Table 2 Comparison of Total Planned Spending to Actual Spending

**Portfolio Planned versus Actual Spending by Business Line
(\$ millions)**

Business Lines	FTEs	Operating	Capital	Voted Grants and Contributions	Total Gross Expenditures	Less: Respendable Revenues*	Total Net Expenditures
Benefits and Services	2,848	523.8	4.0	1,429.8	1,957.6	--	1,957.6
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	<i>2,848</i>	<i>556.2</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>1,481.1</i>	<i>2,041.3</i>	--	<i>2,041.3</i>
<i>(Actuals)</i>	2,637	548.3	4.0	1,462.6	2,014.9	--	2,014.9
Corporate Administration	462	37.5	--	--	37.5	--	37.5
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	<i>462</i>	<i>88.0</i>	--	--	<i>88.0</i>	--	<i>88.0</i>
<i>(Actuals)</i>	575	83.7	--	--	83.7	--	83.7
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	123	9.7	--	--	9.7	--	9.7
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>10.3</i>	--	--	<i>10.3</i>	--	<i>10.3</i>
<i>(Actuals)</i>	105	10.0	--	--	10.0	--	10.0
Total Portfolio	3,433	571.0	4.0	1,429.8	2,004.8	--	2,004.8
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	<i>3,433</i>	<i>654.5</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>1,481.1</i>	<i>2,139.6</i>	--	<i>2,139.6</i>
<i>(Actuals)</i>	3,317	642.0	4.0	1,462.6	2,108.6	--	2,108.6
Other Revenues and Expenditures							
Non-respendable revenues**							(33.8)
<i>(Total authorities)</i>							<i>(33.8)</i>
<i>(Actuals)</i>							<i>(33.7)</i>
Cost of services provided by other departments							
							22.1
<i>(Total authorities)</i>							<i>22.1</i>
<i>(Actuals)</i>							<i>23.4</i>
Net Cost of Program							
							1,993.1
<i>(Total authorities)</i>							<i>2,127.9</i>
<i>(Actuals)</i>							<i>2,098.3</i>

* These revenues were formerly called "Revenues Credited to the Vote"

** These revenues were formerly called "Revenues Credited to the General Government Revenues (GGR)"

- Note: 1. Operating includes minor capital, 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, and Refunds of amounts credited to revenues in previous years.
 2. Grants and Contributions include both Voted and Statutory Items.
 3. Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.
 4. Actual and Total Authorities for Corporate Administration include the amounts for Information Technology Projects and Merchant Navy Payments.

Table 3 Historical Comparison of Total Planned Spending to Actual Spending

Historical Comparison of Portfolio Planned versus Actual Spending by Business Line (\$ millions)					
Business Lines	Actual 1998-99	Actual 1999-00	2000-01		
			Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual
Benefits and Services	1,915.6	1,950.1	1,957.6	2,041.3	2,014.9
Corporate Administration	72.7	117.1	37.5*	88.0*	83.7
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	8.5	9.4	9.7	10.3	10.0
Total Portfolio	1,996.8	2,076.6	2,004.8	2,139.6	2,108.6

Note: Due to rounding, figures may not add to totals shown.
 Actual and Total Authorities for Corporate Administration in 2000-01 include amounts for Information Technology Projects and Merchant Navy Payments.

Table 4 Resource Requirements by Organization and Business Line

Comparison of 2000-01 (RPP) Planned Spending and Total Authorities to Actual Expenditures by Organization and Business Line (\$ millions)					
Organization	Program / Business Lines				
	Veterans Affairs Program			Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program	
	Benefits and Services Business Line	Corporate Administration Business Line	Total Veterans Affairs Program	Veterans Review and Appeal Board Business Line	Total Portfolio
Veterans Services Branch	1,910.1	--	1,910.1	--	1,910.1
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	1,985.3	--	1,985.3	--	1,985.3
(Actuals)	1,967.0	--	1,967.0	--	1,967.0
Corporate Services Branch	1.1	32.4	33.5	--	33.5
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	1.1	82.2	83.3	--	83.3
(Actuals)	1.1	78.5	79.6	--	79.6
Commemoration, Public Relations and Bureau of Pensions Advocates Branch	37.9	--	37.9	--	37.9
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	44.7	--	44.7	--	44.7
(Actuals)	37.1	--	37.1	--	37.1
Benefits Redesign Project	8.5	--	8.5	--	8.5
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	10.2	--	10.2	--	10.2
(Actuals)	9.7	--	9.7	--	9.7
Portfolio Executive Services	--	1.6	1.6	--	1.6
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	--	1.9	1.9	--	1.9
(Actuals)	--	1.6	1.6	--	1.6
Audit and Evaluation	--	2.1	2.1	--	2.1
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	--	2.1	2.1	--	2.1
(Actuals)	--	2.0	2.0	--	2.0
Corporate Planning	--	1.4	1.4	--	1.4
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	--	1.7	1.7	--	1.7
(Actuals)	--	1.6	1.6	--	1.6
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	--	--	--	9.7	9.7
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	--	--	--	10.3	10.3
(Total actuals)	--	--	--	10.0	10.0
Total Portfolio	1,957.6	37.5	1,995.1	9.7	2,004.8
<i>(Total authorities)</i>	2,041.3	87.9	2,129.2	10.3	2,139.5
(Total actuals)	2,014.9	83.7	2,098.6	10.0	2,108.6
Percentage of Total	95.5%	4.0%	99.5%	0.5%	100.0%

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

Table 5 Non-respendable Revenues *

Non-Respendable Revenues by Business Line (\$ millions)					
Business Lines	Actual 1998-99	Actual 1999-00	2000-01		
			Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual
Benefits and Services	37.2	32.3	32.6	32.6	32.5
Corporate Administration	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
Veterans Review and Appeal Board	--	--	--	--	--
Subtotal	38.8	33.5	33.8	33.8	33.7
Unplanned	--	--	--	--	--
Total Non-Respendable Revenues	38.8	33.5	33.8	33.8	33.7

* Formerly "Revenues Credited to the General Government Revenues"

Table 6 Statutory Payments

Statutory Payments by Business Line (\$ millions)					
Business Lines	Actual 1998-99	Actual 1999-00	2000-01		
			Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual
Benefits and Services	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Corporate Administration	--	--	--	--	--
Total Statutory Payments	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2

Table 7 Transfer Payments

Transfer Payments by Business Line (\$ millions)					
Business Lines	Actual 1998-99	Actual 1999-00	2000-01		
			Planned Spending	Total Authorities	Actual
Grants					
Benefits and Services	1,219.1	1,244.3	1,265.1	1,311.6	1,299.9
Corporate Administration	--	--	--	--	--
Total Grants	1,219.1	1,244.3	1,265.1	1,311.6	1,299.9
Contributions					
Benefits and Services	158.0	157.7	164.7	169.5	162.7
Total Contributions	158.0	157.7	164.7	169.5	162.7
Total Transfer Payments	1,377.2	1,402.0	1,429.8	1,481.1	1,462.6

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

Table 8 Status Summary of Major Crown Projects

Benefits Redesign Project	
19. Overview	
<p>The Benefits Redesign Project developed and implemented a new, integrated Client Service Delivery Network to support the delivery of benefits and services associated with the Disability Pensions, Economic Support and Health Care program areas of the Department. The CSDN was introduced in stages, or releases. Implementation began with the first release in February 1999, with full implementation completed in March 2001.</p> <p>The CSDN, the technological solution for the delivery of VAC benefits and services, will result in faster, high quality decisions that are consistent and standardized; faster and more accurate payment and case processing; and, more comprehensive services to clients.</p>	
2. Lead and Participating Departments	
Sponsoring Department:	Veterans Affairs Canada
Contracting Authority:	Public Works and Government Services Canada
Participating Departments:	Treasury Board Secretariat Public Works and Government Services Canada Senior Project Advisory Committee (consisting of all departments that could be impacted by the project)
3. Prime Contractor and Major Sub-Contractor and Addresses	
EDS	45 O'Connor Street, Suite 5000, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1A4
AGRA Monenco	1145 Hunt Club Road, Suite 600, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 0Y3
4. Major Milestones	
Project Commencement	April 1993
Initiation (Concept) Phase	August 1993
Preliminary Project Approval - Definition Phase	February 1995
Effective Project Approval	
- Implementation Phase	October 1997
- Gate 1 Certification	November 1998
- Release 1	February 1999
- Gate 2 Certification	November 1999
- Release 2	March 2001
- Project Close-out	June 2001

Benefits Redesign Project

5. Progress Report and Explanation of Variances

The BRP has been underway since 1993 and, on October 30, 1997, the Department received Treasury Board approval to complete the project at a total estimated cost of \$95.2 million. Funding was shared between the Department and Treasury Board. Treasury Board's contribution was an interest-bearing loan of \$60 million.

In accordance with Treasury Board's Major Crown Project Policy and the *Enhanced Framework for the Management of Information Technology Projects*, gates have been established by Treasury Board. Funding was released in stages when the requirements of a gate were met.

The requirements for the first and second project gates were met in November 1998 and November 1999 respectively, at which time Treasury Board released the frozen allotments of funds required to proceed to the subsequent project gate.

On February 15, 1999, CSDN Release 1 became the official "system of record" for the delivery of War Veterans Allowance and for determining the eligibility of Canada Service Veterans for health care programs and services. WVA monthly payments are now being processed using the CSDN. WVA legacy systems have been deactivated.

On March 19, 2001, Release 2 of the CSDN was implemented to support the delivery of the Disability Pensions Program.

Delays in the project schedule have impacted the implementation dates for the releases, but have only marginally increased the overall estimated cost of the project to \$98.3 million. This represents an increase of \$3.1 million from the original estimate developed in 1997.

6. Industrial Benefits

To ensure that businesses had an opportunity to use the Benefits Redesign Project to develop their competitive positions and enhance their abilities to undertake similar projects elsewhere, the contract with EDS included industrial regional benefits objectives which were evaluated as the project progressed.

Table 9 Loans, Investments and Advances

Loans, Investments and Advances (\$ millions)			
Business Line	Actuals		
	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Corporate Administration - Property Contracts (Active Agreements of Sale - Veterans and Clients)			
Number of Accounts	1,089	558	32
Outstanding Balance	2.4	1.3	0.7
Amounts due on Instalments plus Arrears *	1.4	--	--
Amounts collected	1.3	1.1	0.7
Percentage collected *	93.2%	--	--

* Information not available for 1999-00.

Table 10 Contingent Liabilities

Contingent Liabilities (\$ millions)			
List of Contingent Liabilities	Amount of Contingent Liability		
	March 31, 1999	March 31, 2000	Current as of March 31, 2001
Claims and Pending Threatened Litigation			
Litigations	600	480	500
Non-litigations	--	--	--
Total	600	480	500

Veterans Affairs Legislation is presently the subject of litigation in a number of cases. The issues involved are major and decisions in favour of the plaintiffs would have significant financial consequence for the Government.



1.0 Contact List

This document is coordinated by Corporate Planning Division on behalf of the Portfolio.

Your comments and suggestions for improving the information contained in this publication would be appreciated. We invite you to forward your comments to the:

Communications Division
Veterans Affairs Canada
P.O. Box 7700 (I.B. 012)
Charlottetown, PE C1A 8M9

For information on this document, as well the Report on Plans and Priorities, please contact:

Director General
Corporate Planning Division
Veterans Affairs Canada
P.O. Box 7700 (I.B. 046)
Charlottetown, PE C1A 8M9

Telephone: (902)566-8150
Facsimile: (902)368-0437
E-mail Address: plan@vac-acc.gc.ca

Internet Access

Additional information on the Portfolio may be accessed at Veterans Affairs' award-winning, multi-media website at: <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca> .

Information about Veterans Review and Appeal Board can be found at <http://www.vrab-tacra@gc.ca>.

Information about the graves and memorials of more than 116,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders who served valiantly and gave their lives for their country, can be found at: <http://www.virtualmemorial.gc.ca> . This site also contains digital images of photographs and personal memorabilia about individual Canadians.

Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Offices

Atlantic Regional Office
Veterans Affairs Canada
Belmont House, 3rd Floor
33 Alderney Drive
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 2N4
Toll Free 1-800-565-1528
Toll Free for Hearing Impaired
1-800-757-6308

Atlantic Sub-Regional Office
Veterans Affairs Canada
Cabot Place
10 Barters Hill
P.O. Box 5068
St. John's, NF A1C 5V4

Quebec Regional Office
Veterans Affairs Canada
4545 Queen Mary Road
Montreal, PQ H3W 1W4
Toll Free 1-800-361-7705

Ontario Regional Office
Veterans Affairs Canada
145 Government Road West
Bag Service 4000
Kirkland Lake, ON P2N 3P4
Toll Free 1-800-387-0930

Prairie Regional Office
Veterans Affairs Canada
610-234 Donald Street
P.O. Box 6050
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4G5
Toll Free 1-800-665-8717

Pacific Regional Office
Veterans Affairs Canada
900-605 Robson Street
P.O. Box 5600
Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3
Toll Free 1-800-647-1822

Veterans Review and Appeal Board Office

Veterans Review and Appeal Board
P.O. Box 9900
Charlottetown, PE C1A 8V7

2.0 Legislation Administered and Associated Regulations

The Minister has sole responsibility to Parliament for the following Acts:

<i>Children of Deceased Veterans Education Assistance Act</i>	R.S.C. 1985, c. C-28, as amended
<i>Civilian War-related Benefits Act</i>	R.S.C. 1985, c. C-31, as amended
<i>Department of Veterans Affairs Act</i>	R.S.C. 1985, c. V-1, as amended
<i>Pension Act</i>	R.S.C. 1985, c. P-6, as amended
<i>Returned Soldiers' Insurance Act, The Soldier Settlement Act</i>	S.C. 1920, c. 54, as amended R.S.C. 1927, c. 188, as amended
<i>Special Operators War Service Benefits Act</i>	R.S.C. 1952, c. 256, as amended
<i>Supervisors War Service Benefits Act</i>	R.S.C. 1952, c. 258, as amended
<i>Veterans Benefit Act</i>	R.S.C. 1970, c. V-2, as amended
<i>Veterans Insurance Act</i>	R.S.C. 1970, c. V-3, as amended
<i>Veterans' Land Act</i>	R.S.C. 1970, c. V-4, as amended
<i>Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act</i>	S.C. 1994-95, c. 17, 18, as amended
<i>War Service Grants Act</i>	R.S.C. 1970, c. W-4, as amended
<i>War Veterans Allowance Act</i>	R.S.C. 1985, c. W-3, as amended
<i>Women's Royal Naval Services and the South African Military Nursing Service (Benefits) Act</i>	R.S.C. 1952, c. 297, as amended

The Minister shares responsibility to Parliament for the following Acts:

<i>Aeronautics Act, section 9</i>	R.S.C. 1985, c. A-2, s. 9 (Minister of Transport)
<i>Halifax Relief Commission Pension Continuation Act</i>	S.C. 1974-75-76, c. 88, as amended (Minister of Finance)

<i>Indian (Soldier Settlement) Act</i>	R.S.C. 1927, c. 98, as amended (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development)
<i>Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pension Continuation Act, section 5</i>	R.S.C. 1970, c. R-10, s. 5, as amended (Solicitor General)
<i>Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act, sections 32 to 34</i>	R.S.C. 1985, c. R-11, s. 32-34, as amended (Solicitor General)

The Minister has sole responsibility to Parliament for the following regulations and orders:

<i>Assistance Fund (W.V.A. and C.W.A.) Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1578, as amended
<i>Award Regulations</i>	SOR/96-66, as amended
<i>Canadian Volunteer Service Medal Order</i>	SI/94-62, as amended
<i>Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island as Head Office of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, Order Designating</i>	SI/96-66
<i>Children of Deceased Veterans Education Assistance Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 399, as amended
<i>Civilian Government Employees (War) Compensation Order</i>	P.C. 1944-45/8848
<i>Deceased or Former Members Dependents Payment Order</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1599
<i>Gallantry Awards Order</i>	SI/90-95, as amended
<i>Guardianship of Veterans' Property Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1579
<i>Infant or Person of Unsound Mind Payment Order</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1600
<i>Last Post Fund Regulations, 1995</i>	SOR/95-468
<i>Memorial Cross Order (World War I)</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1622, as amended
<i>Memorial Cross Order (World War II)</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1623, as amended
<i>Merchant Seamen Vocational Training Order, The</i>	SOR/49-533
<i>Pension and Allowance Adjustment Regulations</i>	SOR/91-620, as amended
<i>Pensioners Training Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1581, as amended

<i>Prescribed Persons and Organizations Regulations</i>	SOR/96-68
<i>Returned Soldiers' Insurance Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1390
<i>Vetcraft Shops Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1582
<i>Veterans Allowance Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1602, as amended
<i>Veterans Burial Regulations, 1995</i>	SOR/95-467
<i>Veterans Health Care Regulations</i>	SOR/90-594, as amended
<i>Veterans Insurance Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1587
<i>Veterans Review and Appeal Board Regulations</i>	SOR/96-67
<i>Veterans Treatment Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1585, as amended
<i>Veterans' Land Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1594, as amended
<i>War Service Grants Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1601, as amended

The Minister shares responsibility to Parliament for the following regulations and orders:

<i>Flying Accidents Compensation Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 10, as amended (Minister of Transport)
<i>Special Duty Area Pension Order</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 350, as amended (Minister of National Defence)
<i>Special Force Superannuation Regulations</i>	C.R.C. 1978, c. 1586 (President of the Treasury Board)

3.0 Recognizing Our People and Their Performance

Some of the most appreciative recognition that our people receive is directly from the clients.

"Thank you for all your support in our time of need. We will never forget how much you did for us and how far you went out of your way to help us, both during your work hours, and after you went home. Your kindness and thoughtfulness will never be forgotten especially like us in our state of not knowing what was going on and where we were headed. Again thank you for everything and may God bless you in all you do."

Outstanding Achievement Award

The Outstanding Achievement Award is distinct in that it comes from the Prime Minister and accords the highest expression of recognition within the Government of Canada. This award recognizes sustained and exceptional performance of duties and accomplishments by senior public servants. Considered to be the most prestigious in the Public Service, it emphasizes the importance that the Government of Canada attaches to efficient operations in the Public Service and to the provision of quality service to Canadians.

Rachel Corneille Gravel, Executive Director, Ste. Anne's Hospital

For her caring, compassionate and visionary leadership in fostering excellence at Ste. Anne's Hospital, an example the Prime Minister of Canada deemed worthy of emulation across the Public Service, throughout Canada and around the world.

Deputy Minister Commendation and Chair of VRAB Commendation Awards

The Deputy Minister Commendation and Chair of VRAB Commendation recognize meritorious achievements by personnel of Veterans Affairs. The achievements, exceptional and outstanding in nature, may involve the performance of a deed or activity considered beyond the demands of normal duties, may relate to community or volunteer service, may have resulted in a benefit to the Portfolio, or may have brought credit to the Portfolio. The following people and teams are the recipients of the 2000 Deputy Minister Commendation Awards, " In recognition of your remarkable contribution to Veterans Affairs or the Veterans Review and Appeal Board".

R2 Task Team (Lloyd Bryenton, Bernard Butler, Doug Clorey, Sandra Gaudet, Suzanne Lalonde, John MacAskill, Heather Parry, Derek Sullivan, and Howard Williams)

For their tremendous contribution to the R2 Review Team which lead to the successful implementation of the CSDN.

Nancy McLure and Kathy Stewart

Recognized for their exemplified excellence and commitment to their work in serving clients and supporting staff and members of the VRAB on systems issues. They also represented the Board on teams and committees working toward the implementation of the CSDN and demonstrated to others the meaning of being "team players" in all their activities.

Pat Atkinson, Karen Clare, Joe Cormier, Dan Fenety, Jim Mitchell, Catherine Murray-Grandjean, David Robinson and Deborah Wood-Salter

For their outstanding team performance and exceptional contribution to the production of the VAC's 5 Year Strategic Plan.

Martin MacDonald

In recognition of his outstanding leadership in the successful development and implementation of a special compensation award for Canada's Merchant Navy Veterans.

Suzanne Lalonde

For her outstanding efforts to improve the quality of life for our Canadian Forces personnel and her exemplary contribution as Leader of the VAC-CF Project Team.

Patricia Smith

For her outstanding contributions to the success of Veterans' Week 2000 and her unwavering kindness and compassion towards Canada's veterans.

Bob Atkinson

For his remarkable contribution to Review of Veterans' Care Needs Project.

Veterans Affairs Employment Equity Award

Harmonie Group - Ste. Anne's

This group, representing different equity groups, was in charge of organizing a Multicultural Day. Harmonie's goal, via this original and interesting activity, was to highlight the representativeness of all the cultural groups present at the Hospital while achieving the corporate goal of promoting a good work environment.

Treasury Board Head of the Public Service Award

This award recognizes employees who best exemplify the work of public servants in meeting the challenges outlined in the Clerk of the Privy Council's Annual Report to the Prime Minister of Canada. The Award consists of an inscribed trophy and is presented annually.

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Coordination Team (William Aikman, Simon Coakeley, Monique Deschênes, Lorraine Gailey, Bob Gardham, Mireille Labelle, Sandra Lavigne, Teresa MacLean, Richard Massicotte, Jacques Morel, Larry Murray, Kevin Mycroft, J. André Smith, Janice Summerby, and Diane Turmaine)

The award was presented to the entire Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Implementation Team, in recognition of their outstanding efforts in the area of service delivery.

As a Royal Canadian Legion Millennium project, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier represented an extraordinary strategic partnership forged across government departments and with outside organizations. The complicated logistical aspects of the project required the team to coordinate all of the ceremonial and diplomatic requirements in both France and Canada.

Technology in Government Distinction Awards 2000

Benefits Redesign Project

At the Technology in Government Distinction Awards 2000, the 8th Annual Celebration of Excellence in the Management of Information Technology in the Public Sector, the Benefits Redesign Project was awarded a very prestigious Gold medal for implementing a large IT project in the category of "Serving Canadians Better Through IM / IT Innovations".

They were honoured for successfully using information technology to improve the way Government does business, and specifically to enhance our service to our very special group of clients. The BRP staff across the Department contributed to the design, development and implementation of BRP over the past several years.

Veterans Affairs Award of Excellence 2000

Lynn Landry - Ste. Anne's

Recognized for always providing our clients and members of their families with exceptional health care and management services while making a contribution beyond the requirements of her position. Over the years, she has been a major advocate for clients, and her accomplishments over the years are numerous. She creates a positive work environment in partnership with her peers and employees. She is a very dedicated person, who is always available and very close to the clients whom she visits. She always gives more than is required because of her strong belief in the mission of VAC, Ste. Anne's Hospital and the Nursing Directorate.

Debbie Thomas - VRAB Head Office

Recognized for her significant contribution to Veterans Affairs through the launching of *"My Grandmother's Wartime Diary"*. Through her drive, dedication and determination, as well as countless hours of reviewing and editing stories, she worked towards the eventual publication of the stories received from staff and their families across Canada. She is also being recognized for her constant efforts to improve turn

around times and achieve excellence in the quality of the VRAB's decisions; her caring gestures to the staff of her unit; and her keen sense of humour which makes "coming to work a joy" despite the heavy workload confronting her unit.

Aimée Chatelaine and Shelley Fiset - Ontario Region

Nominated for their work in creating the book "*2000 Memories - Jason and the Memory Box*". The book was dedicated to all the men and women who served our country in Canada and overseas and to the families who stayed behind, it was also promoted in primary schools and libraries throughout the province.

Sharel Duplessis, Penny MacLaughlin and Sean Rigter - Pacific Region

Nominated for their demonstrated innovation and leadership in designing a meaningful and credible program, that enhances the principles of the Departmental mandate and is tailored to the interests of the British Columbia veterans and their families. The Team has gone far beyond the requirements of their positions. They focused upon a vision of what could be possible and made it happen internally in the Department as well as externally.

4.0 Websites

Veterans Affairs	
VAC Home Page	http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/
VA 2001-02 Estimates Part III Report on Plans and Priorities	http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=Department/reports
VA Performance Report for the Period Ending March 31, 2000	
VA Sustainable Development Strategy	
VRAB Home Page	http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca
Treasury Board Secretariat	
Government on Line	http://www.gol-ged.gc.ca/index_e.asp
Universal Classification System	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ucs-ngc/english/home.html
Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/res_can/siglist_e.html
Treasury Board Secretariat Reports	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/repsproj_e.html
Financial Information Strategy	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/fin/fis-sif/
Service Improvement Initiative	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/sii-ias/home_e.shtml
Other Links	
Social Union Framework	http://www.socialunion.gc.ca/menu_e.html
Speech from the Throne to Open the First Session of the 37th Parliament of Canada, January 30, 2001	http://www.sft-ddt.gc.ca/
Seniors Canada On-Line	http://www.seniors.gc.ca

5.0 Acronyms Used

BPA	Bureau of Pensions Advocates
BRP	Benefits Redesign Project
CAP	Community Access Program
CCSA	Client Centred Service Approach
CF	Canadian Forces
CSDN	Client Service Delivery Network
DND	Department of National Defence
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HCCI	Health Care Coordination Initiative
IM/IT	Information Management / Information Technology
ISSV	Integrated Services for Seniors and Veterans
KEP	Knowledge Economy Partnership
MNVs	Merchant Navy Veterans
NRT	National Round Table
PAB	Priority Access Bed
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCL	Royal Canadian Legion
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RPP	Report on Plans and Priorities
VA	Veterans Affairs
VAC	Veterans Affairs Canada
VAC-CF	Veterans Affairs Canada - Canadian Forces
VIP	Veterans Independence Program
VRAB	Veterans Review and Appeal Board
WVA	War Veterans Allowance

