

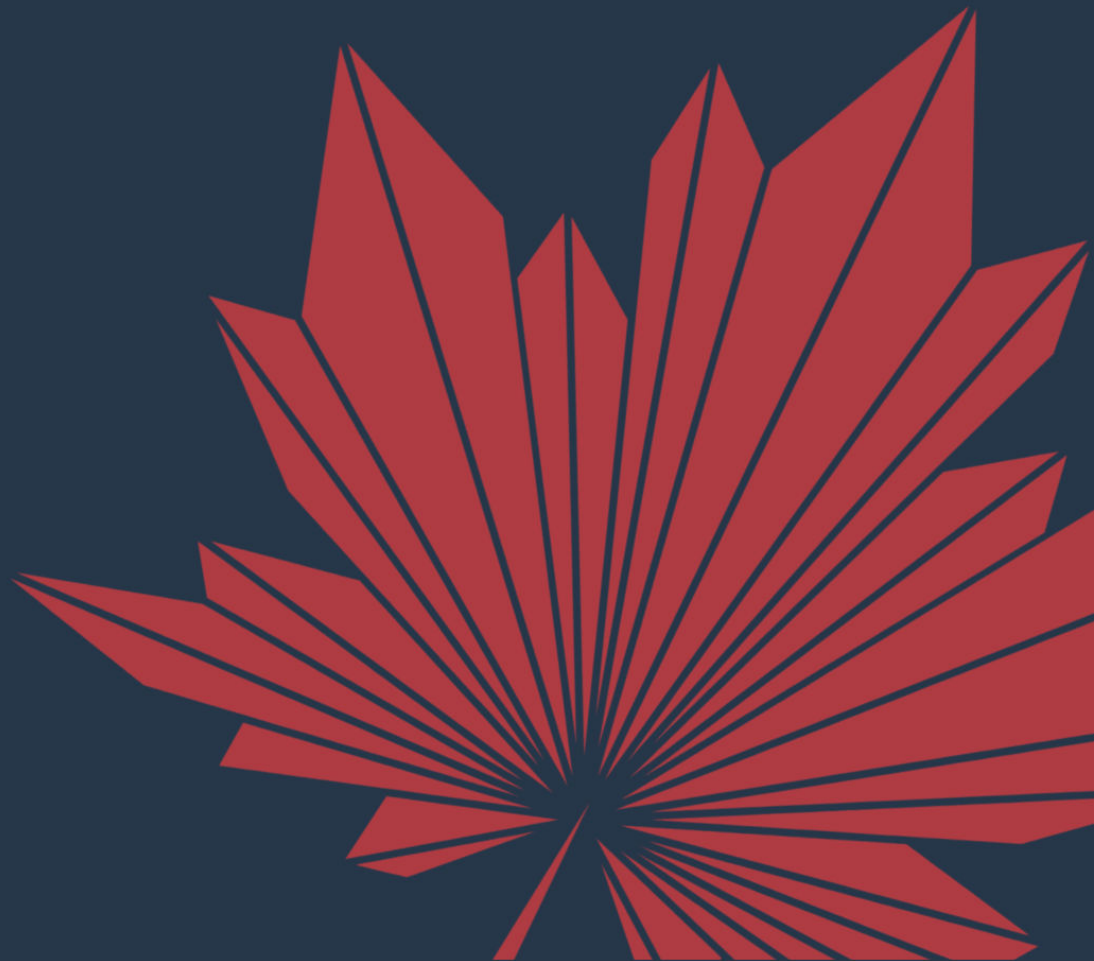


Veterans Review and
Appeal Board Canada

Tribunal des anciens combattants
(révision et appel) Canada

MINISTER'S TRANSITION BOOK

AUGUST 2023



Minister's Transition Book

Veteran's Review and Appeal Board

Submitted on behalf of Christopher J. McNeil, Chairperson

August 2023

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Minister's Quick Reference Lines

Veterans Review and Appeal Board

- The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring Veterans receive the benefits they are entitled to for service-related disabilities.
- The Veterans Review and Appeal Board plays an important role in the disability benefits system: it ensures Veterans and other applicants have an independent avenue of Appeal for their decisions.
- The Board is an independent organization, operating at arm's-length from the Department.
- For this reason, I am unable to comment on the decisions or other adjudicative affairs of the Board.
- Questions related to Board decisions and policies should be directed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board.

General Overview

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board provides Veterans (VRAB), Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members, and their families with an independent Appeal process for disability decisions made by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC, the Department). The Board operates at arm's-length from the Department/Minister to ensure a fair and independent Appeal process for applicants.

Veterans who are not satisfied with a VAC decision on disability benefits have the right to two levels of redress at the Board: a Review Hearing and an Appeal Hearing. At both levels of redress, applicants may bring forward new information and present arguments at their Hearing, where no one is arguing against them. All applicants have access to free legal representation by the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA). Some Veterans organizations like the Royal Canadian Legion also offer advice and representation.

The Board's program is governed by the Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act and delivered by up to 25 Members and more than 100 staff. The Chair of the Board is accountable for the delivery of the Appeal program and reports directly to Parliament through the Minister of Veterans Affairs. The Minister may require the Chair to report on performance and on the use of the Board's resources; however, the Board operates at arm's-length with respect to all adjudicative matters.

There is a diversity of professional experiences among our current panel of Members at the Board. Members qualify for appointment through a selection process managed by the Privy Council Office and are appointed by the Governor in Council on recommendation from the Minister of Veterans Affairs. All Members undergo a comprehensive training program. The

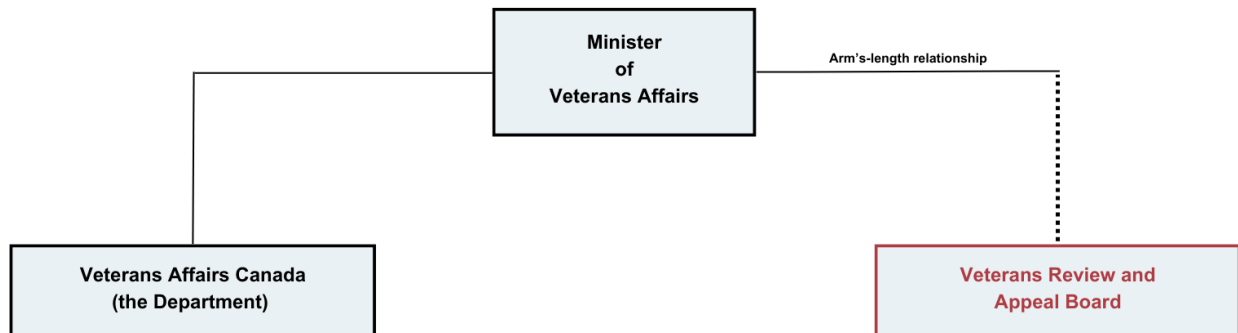
Board also supports Members in making fair and well-reasoned decisions through ongoing training, quality Review of decisions, and performance feedback.

Many individuals are satisfied with decisions from Veterans Affairs Canada on their disability benefits. In a given year, approximately 30 per cent of the Bureau of Pensions Advocates' work proceeds to the Board. Last year the Board finalized close to 4,400 cases during this time, and awarded new or increased benefits to more than 3,900 Veterans. Testimony and/or new medical or other documentary evidence are the basis for most of the Board's favourable Review decisions.

What we do for Veterans

- Ensure that Canada's Veterans receive the disability benefits to which they are entitled
- Provide timely, respectful and Veteran-centric Hearings
- Deliver fair, plain-language, and timely decisions with well explained reasons

An Independent Board



Alt Txt: Chart showing VRAB's arm's-length relationship to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and separate from Veteran's Affairs Canada.

To learn more about the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, check out our informational video called, [What We Do](#).

Our Organization

- Quasi-judicial administrative tribunal led by Chair (Deputy/Head), supported by Deputy Chair, that operates independently of the Minister and/or Veterans Affairs Canada
- Reports directly to Parliament through the Minister
- Board Members are appointed by the Governor in Council through a merit-based selection process, and hold arings at locations across the country
- There are more than 100 employees at the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, which is based in Charlottetown, PE

Member Overview

- There are currently 22 full-time Board Members (10 women and 12 men), including the Chair and Deputy Chair
- Nine Board Members work in Charlottetown and 13 are deployed across Canada
- 11 Board Members are fluent in both of Canada's official languages
- Board Members have varied professional experiences, including Veterans (CAF and RCMP), lawyers and law enforcement

Member Appointment Process

- Applicants are screened and assessed against merit-based criteria:
 - Written assessment, interviews and reference checks
- A roster of qualified candidates is established and recommended to the Minister of Veterans Affairs
- The Board Chair advises the Minister of appointment needs in terms of operational requirements, location, language, gender, diversity and experience
- Minister recommends candidates for appointment by the Governor in Council
- High priority is placed on appointments to ensure there is a sufficient compliment of Members to provide timely Hearings and decisions

Guiding Legislation

- Applications for Appeal are made to the VRAB under the [Pension Act](#), the [Veterans Well-being Act - Part 3](#), the [War Veterans Allowance Act](#) and other Acts of Parliament.
- All matters related to Appeals are authorized under the [Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act](#).
- The VRAB also receives Appeal applications for on duty-related pension cases made under the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pension Continuation Act](#) and the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act](#).

Avenue for Redress

The VRAB provides an independent avenue of Appeal for VAC decisions relating to:

- Disability Pensions
- Disability Awards
- Additional Pain and Suffering Compensation
- Detention Benefit
- Critical Injury Benefit
- Survivor's Pension
- War Veterans Allowance
- Compassionate Award
- Special Awards (Exceptional Incapacity Allowance; Attendance Allowance; Clothing Allowance)

Applications to the VRAB

In 2022-23, 77 per cent of the cases that came to the Board were for new/increased entitlement, while 23 per cent of cases that came to the Board were for assessment increases.

Top 5 medical conditions in 2022-23:

- Tinnitus (20%)
- Hearing loss (17%)
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (9%)
- Low back conditions (8%)
- Knee conditions (6%)
- Other (40%) Examples include neck conditions, anxiety/depressive disorders, etc.

Our Workload in Context

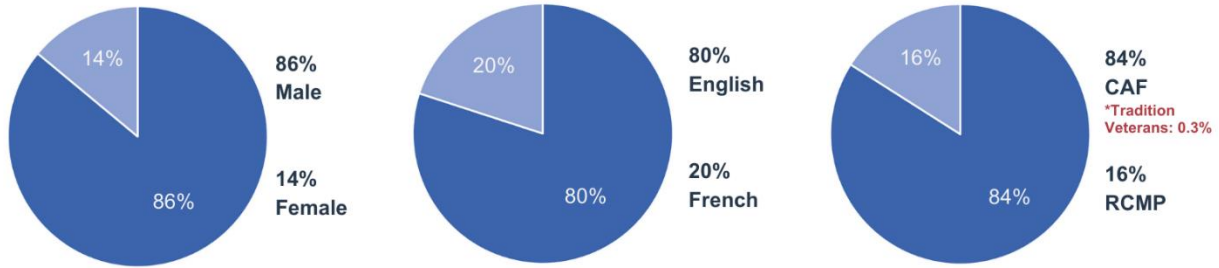
Veterans who are dissatisfied with their VAC disability benefits decision can apply to the Board for an independent review of that decision, and to the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA) for free legal representation before the Board. Approximately 30 per cent of the Bureau's work proceeds to the Board.

| Fiscal Year | BPA completed & counselled out cases | BPA completed VRAB cases | % of BPA's cases to VRAB |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2022-23 | 12,184 | 4,091 | 34% |
| 2021-21 | 15,353 | 6,335 | 41% |
| 2020-21 | 6,835 | 2,726 | 40% |
| 2019-20 | 11,407 | 2,980 | 26% |
| 2018-19 | 10,177 | 1,987 | 20% |

Alt text: Table showing the number of BPA completed and counselled out cases, BPA completed VRAB cases and percentage of BPA cases to VRAB

The Board ensures Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP members, and their families obtain the benefits they are entitled to for service-related disabilities. The following provides further information on the demographics of the clients that applied to the Board in 2022-23.

Client Demographics for 2022-23



Alt text: Graphics show breakdown of client demographics for 2022-23

Our Decisions (2022-23)

Volume:

- 3,600 Review decisions, 474 Appeal decisions and 312 Reconsideration decisions
- Increased favourability rates (i.e. decision to award new/increased benefits):
 - Ability to rule favourably often due to:
 - New evidence (e.g. testimony, medical opinions)
 - Arguments by representative
 - Application of benefit of the doubt

Hearing Process

- As stated above, Veterans have the right to two levels of redress if they are dissatisfied with a VAC decision: a Review Hearing and an Appeal Hearing
- No time limits placed on these rights
- Fresh new look at application and new evidence
- Informal Hearings - no one opposes the Veterans
- All Veterans have access to free representation by the Bureau of Pensions Advocates
- Some Veterans' organizations, such as the Royal Canadian Legion, also offer advice and representation
- Veterans can bring witnesses and/or support person(s) with them
- Most favourable interpretation of the law stands – Benefit of the Doubt

Review Hearing

- Veterans only opportunity to present oral testimony and share their stories
- Represented by Advocates with two Board Members conducting Hearings across Canada where Veterans are present
- Veterans are sworn/affirmed before the Hearing starts
- Board Members explain the Hearing process
- Board Members may ask questions to better understand the case
- Non-oppositional process, with only one Member needed to make a favourable decision

Appeal Hearing

- If the Veteran is not satisfied with the Review decision, an Appeal Hearing is another opportunity to provide evidence and arguments through a representative to a new panel of three Board Members
- Held in Charlottetown by video or teleconference
- No oral testimony from Veteran
- Opportunity for Veterans to have a reconsideration Hearing(s) if there is an error of fact or law, or new evidence is established
- Veterans have the right to apply for a judicial Review under the *Federal Courts Act* if all Appeal options have been exhausted

Evidence

- Health Evidence
 - Health documentation (e.g. medical exams and surgery reports)
 - Expert opinions (e.g. report on the status and origins of the disability)
- Documentary Evidence
 - Service records
- Witness Statement(s)
 - Opportunity to confirm circumstances helpful to describe incidents
- Testimony
 - Personal testimony provided at the Review Hearing that describes the disability, incident or military service
 - New evidence that Veterans Affairs Canada did not have

Workload Information

The Board's annual workload is determined by the number of individuals who decide to request a Review of a disability pension/disability award decision made by VAC.

In summary, a **Review Hearing** is the first opportunity for applicants to appear before the decision-makers and testify about the facts of their case. To make it easier for them to attend, the Board convenes Review Hearings in locations across the country.

If applicants are not satisfied with their Review decision, they may request an **Appeal Hearing**. While the legislation does not permit oral testimony at this level, the Appeal Hearing provides a further opportunity for applicants, through their representative, to submit new information and make arguments in support of their case.

For more information, check out our informational video on [How to Apply and Prepare for Your Hearing](#). To learn more about what to expect during the Review Hearing, check out our video called [What Happens at Your Review Hearing](#).

Briefing Notes

VRAB ADDITIONAL FUNDING: BUDGET 2022 & 2023

August 3, 2023

PURPOSE

To provide information on the Veterans Review and Appeal Board's 2022 and 2023 Treasury Board requests for additional funding.

SUMMARY

- The Board has seen an increased workload over the past few years largely as a result of the Department's efforts to reduce the disability benefits backlog. An increase in the decisions being issued by the Department results in an increased number of Appeals coming to the Board.
- The Board has not received an increase to its A-base budget in more than a decade and is no longer able to meet the increasing demands for its services within the existing budget.
- To mitigate these workload pressures, the Board has explored new ways of working and has successfully requested additional funding to support increased decision-making capacity.
- This additional funding will continue to allow more decisions to be issued to Veterans and their families.

BACKGROUND

- As a result of the significant increase in VAC's processing of applications in recent years to address the backlog, the Board has seen a 30 per cent increase in the amount of applications received since 2020.
- As a result of a Budget 2022 Treasury Board submission, the VRAB received two years (2022-23 and 2023-24) of temporary funding. This funding allowed the Board to add resources focused on increased decision-making for Veterans.
- In 2022, the Board received direction to work with the Department and the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA) to develop a long-term strategy to reduce wait times for Veterans.

CURRENT STATUS

- Budget 2022: In Year 1 of the two-year temporary funding, the Board exceeded its performance targets and is currently in Year 2 of the project.
- The Board is now working with the Department and BPA to finalize its long-term strategy that will be presented via a joint 2023 Treasury Board submission.

ISSUES

- Without additional resources for the Board, the backlog will not be eliminated for Veterans but merely shifted to the Board level.
- With the Board's existing A-base budget, we do not have enough resources to keep pace with the incoming workload, resulting in a delay in finalizing decisions for Veterans.

COMMUNICATION APPROACH

- An internal and external communications appendix/strategy was prepared to support both the Budget 2022 and Budget 2023 Treasury Board submissions.

NEXT STEPS

- The Board will continue to implement its two-year temporary funding project as it works towards the commencement of a long-term strategy in cooperation with the Department and BPA.

VETERAN WAIT TIMES

August 3, 2023

PURPOSE

To provide information on current wait times for Veterans and their families who Appeal their VAC decisions to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB).

SUMMARY

- As a result of a significant increase in the amount of applications processed at VAC in recent years to address the backlog, the Board has seen a 30 per cent increase in the amount of applications received since 2020.
- Approximately 30 per cent of BPA's work proceeds to the Board for Review and Appeal.
- The Board has not been able to keep up to this increased demand and therefore has struggled to meet its commitment to provide Veterans with timely Hearings and decisions.
- Currently the average wait time for a Veteran to receive their Review decision from their time of application to the Board is more than a year.
- To mitigate these workload pressures, the Board explored new ways of working and sought additional funding to support the long-term effective delivery of its program. *(See the included "VRAB Additional Funding: Budget 2022 and 2023" briefing note for more information.)*

BACKGROUND

- In 2018-19 the Board had 1,500 pending cases. In 2022-23 the Board reached 6,100 pending cases.
- The Board is committed to issuing full and fair decisions as quickly as possible. The Board established a service standard to issue decisions within six weeks of the Hearing.

CURRENT STATUS

- In 2022-23, 46 per cent of decisions were issued within six weeks of the Veteran's case being heard. This was up from 37 per cent in 2021-22.
- The Board has made progress in this area, and continues to explore opportunities to take steps to improve the turn-around time to deliver decisions to Veterans.
- In 2022-23 the average turnaround time from when a case was registered with the Board until the decision was issued was 54.7 weeks for female applicants and 50.4 weeks for male applicants.
- In 2022-23 the average turnaround time from when a case was registered with the

Board until the decision was issued was 57.1 weeks for French clients and 49.3 weeks for English clients.

CONSIDERATIONS

- The Board expanded the Simplified Hearing Model which has allowed us to increase the volume of cases that can be heard and support timelier decisions.
- The Board has implemented internal options including:
 - a reorganization of corporate to operational resources;
 - a reduction in senior management; and
 - streamlining processes to increase number of client Hearings and decisions.
- With hiring and retention of critical French and bilingual staff, it is expected parity will be achieved between francophone and anglophone applicants.

ISSUES

- Without additional funding moving forward, momentum of increased decision-making gained through Budget 2022 will be lost and the Board will return to a state of being unable to keep pace with the volume of work, leading to longer wait times for Veterans.

COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

- Increased wait times for decisions is being proactively communicated to Veterans at the time of their Hearing and if/when the Board receives an inquiry via phone, email, mail or My VAC account.

NEXT STEPS

- The Board is currently working with the Department to finalize a joint long-term strategy to reduce wait times for Veterans and their families.

Governor in Council Appointment Process for Board Members

Recruitment Advertisement

- Merit based criteria and vacancies are advertised through:
 - GIC appointments website
 - VRAB website
 - Social media channels
 - Gazette (quarterly)

Screening

- Past practice included the following as Members of the Selection Committee: VRAB Chair or Deputy Chair and representatives from PMO, OMVA, PCO, and VAC.
- Committee reviews applications against pre-determined education and experience criteria and recommends candidates for written assessment.

Written Assessment

- The Screening Committee recommends candidates to be interviewed based on assessment results.
- Administered by the VRAB and completed online by candidates.

Interviews

- Selection Committee assesses candidates through oral interviews and reference checks.

Establish Roster of Qualified Candidates

- Selection Committee uses results of written assessment, oral interview and reference checks to determine if candidates meet the qualification criteria and can be placed in the roster of qualified candidates.
- Chair recommends the roster of qualified candidates to the Minister.

VRAB Appointment Needs

- Chair advises the Minister of the Board's appointment needs in terms of operational requirements, location, language, gender, diversity and experience.

Appointment Process

- Candidates who meet the VRAB's appointment needs are drawn from the roster of qualified candidates for consideration by the Minister.
- Minister recommends candidate(s) for appointment by the Governor in Council.
- A representative of the Minister's Office and VRAB work together to prepare/obtain appointment documentation package for PCO.

Member (GIC) Reappointment Context/Process

Background

The selection process for GIC appointments reflects the fundamental role that more than 1,500 Canadians play in our democracy as they serve on commissions, boards, Crown corporations, agencies and tribunals across the country.

Following a selection process, a roster(s) of qualified candidates is established from which Ministers make appointment recommendations for positions within their respective portfolios. The new strategy results in the recommendation of high-quality candidates that reflect the gender balance and diversity of Canadian society.

- The Board should consist of up to 25 permanent Members and any number of temporary Members based on the workload of the Board.
- All Members work full-time.
- A permanent Member can be appointed for a term not exceeding 10 years and is eligible to be reappointed.
- A temporary Member can be appointed for a term not exceeding two years and is eligible to be reappointed for one additional two-year term.
- Permanent Members can be reappointed as temporary Members, and temporary Members can be reappointed as permanent Members.

Context

Permanent Members have typically been appointed for terms of three to five years.

To ensure high-quality, consistent decisions for Veterans, the Board must maintain a cadre of experienced Members alongside newly-appointed Members; it takes at least one year for a new Member to be comfortable in their role as an adjudicator and benefit from the mentorship of more experienced Members.

In order to ensure timely Hearings and decisions for Veterans, appointments and reappointments must be timely and coordinated with the Board's needs.

It is useful to maintain a membership that reflects diversity, military, policing, health, and legal backgrounds, as well as lay people, to reflect Canadian society.

The number, location, and language proficiency of Member appointments should align with the Board's workload and budget.

Reappointment Process

- **One year prior to the expiry of a Member's term:** The VRAB Chair notifies the Minister; the position then goes on PCO Vacancy Report.
- **Six months before a Member's term expires:** The Chair provides the Minister with a report on the Member's performance, as well as the Board's

appointment needs for the next six to 12 months by taking into consideration performance, backgrounds, gender, language, diversity, geographic location and workload.

- **Six months before a Member's term expires:** The Minister makes a decision to reappoint a Member or not, and notifies them in writing of their decision.

Appointment Documentation

The Minister recommends candidate(s) for reappointment to the Governor in Council.

At the request of the Minister's Office, the Board obtains and prepares appointment documentation to support the recommendation, including the draft Orders in Council.

To ensure a timely new appointment or reappointment, appointment documents should be sent to PCO at least two months before the Member's term expires.

Current Board Member Biographies

Christopher McNeil, CHAIR

Chris McNeil was first appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board as a Member in April 2015. He was appointed Chairperson in July 2018. Mr. McNeil spent more than 30 years serving with the Halifax Regional Police before retiring in 2013 as Deputy Chief. Mr. McNeil has extensive public sector leadership experience. In the course of his career, he also acted as a workplace rights coordinator and adjudicator in discipline matters. In addition to his policing career, Mr. McNeil worked as a solicitor for the Nova Scotia Department of Justice. Mr. McNeil holds a Bachelor of Commerce from Saint Mary's University and a Law Degree from Dalhousie University.

Jacques (Jack) Bouchard, DEPUTY CHAIR

Jacques A. Bouchard was first appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in July 2017. He was reappointed to the board on 2 July 2018 and designated as Deputy Chairperson. Mr. Bouchard is a Veteran, having served over 36 years in the Canadian Armed Forces from 1980 to 2017. Amongst his many roles, he served as the Chief of Staff Support to the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and as Commanding Officer/Administrative Officer to Canadian Forces Base Borden and Canadian Forces Support Training Group. Along with serving throughout the country, he served for four years with the Canadian Embassy in Rome, Italy and as the Senior Canadian Logistics Mentor/Officer with the Coalition Advisory Team embedded with 205 Corps of the Afghan Army at Forward Operating Base Lindsay, near Kandahar.

Mr. Bouchard had a unique career with the Canadian Armed Forces. He served in the ranks from Private to Warrant Officer from 1980 to 1999, prior to being Commissioned from the Ranks as a Logistics Officer. He was subsequently promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel in 2010 assuming command of the Administrative Branch, where he was also twice appointed as Official Languages Champion.

Mr. Bouchard is a graduate of the Advanced Program in Human Resources, University of Toronto, is a member of the Order of Military Merit, and is a recipient of the Liz Hoffman Memorial Commendation from the Ombudsman National Defence and Canadian Forces for bringing about positive and lasting change to the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces.

Laurie Blakeman, BOARD MEMBER

Laurie Blakeman was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2017. Prior to joining the Board, she spent 18 years as an MLA in the Alberta Legislature making a substantial contribution to her community through her parliamentary activism and commitment to human

rights and women's issues advocacy. Prior to serving in public office, Ms. Blakeman spent two decades working in theatre, the arts, and with not-for-profit organizations in various creative and leadership roles. Ms. Blakeman holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Certificate in Public Administration from the University of Alberta.

Richard Boughen, BOARD MEMBER

Richard Boughen was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2017. He brings with him more than 26 years of experience in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, during which he gained a wealth of expertise in leadership, human resource development, and policy creation. Mr. Boughen holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Manitoba and a Master of Leadership and Management from Charles Sturt University.

Sundeep Burm, BOARD MEMBER

Sundeep Burm was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2020. After earning his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of British Columbia, he went on to pursue JD studies in the United States. Mr. Burm has spent the past decade providing poverty law advocacy services at the Sources Newton Resource Centre, providing advice and representation to injured workers and their dependents for the Worker's Advisers Office and as a WCB/LTD representative for the Hospital Employees' Union.

Patrice Carrière, BOARD MEMBER

Patrice Carrière was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2019. Mr. Carrière is a Veteran with 32 years of service in the Canadian Armed Forces having attained the rank of Commander. He has served with the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Medical Service and has been posted to various Navy, Army and Air Force bases across Canada. His career includes specialization in health services administration and significant experience in military personnel management. Mr. Carrière is originally from St. Boniface, Manitoba. He holds a Certificate in Health Care Administration from the University of Saskatchewan, a Bachelor of Arts from the Royal Military College of Canada and a Masters of Arts from Central Michigan University. He is married and is the father of five children. He is fluent in both English and French.

Gabrielle F. Fortin, BOARD MEMBER

Gabrielle Fortin was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2020. Gabrielle Fortin served in the Canadian Armed Forces before working as a regulated immigration consultant and as a director on the board of a national regulatory body. Gabrielle then worked as Executive Director for a non-profit organization with a mandate to promote bilingualism in Canada. More recently, Ms. Fortin worked for the Government of Canada on the project to

modernize the Official Languages Act. She holds a Certificate in Immigration Law, Policies and Procedures, a B.A. in Public Affairs and International Relations and an Executive Master of Business Administration from Laval University. Gabrielle Fortin was appointed as a Board Member for a five-year term.

Zine El Abidine (Zine) Ghediri, BOARD MEMBER

Zine Ghediri was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2020. He has worked as a legal consultant for TRIAL International in Switzerland, a non-governmental organization that fights the impunity of international crimes and supports victims.

Most recently, he worked as a corporate law advisor for Thomson Reuters and as an administrative decision maker for the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST).

In 2022, he was appointed by the Minister of Public Safety as a part-time independent Chairperson of the Federal Penitentiary Disciplinary Tribunals in the Quebec region. His diverse professional experiences at the international and national levels have provided him with a solid background in interpreting and applying laws and decision-making.

Mr. Ghediri holds a Master's degree in International Law from the University of Nice in France, a Bachelor's degree in Law from the Private University of Applied Sciences in Jordan, and a Certificate in Law from the University of Montreal.

Zine Ghediri was appointed as a Member of the Tribunal for a five-year term.

Jason Glover, BOARD MEMBER

Jason Glover was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2020. Jason Glover has more than 15 years of experience in the public sector. He worked as a Probation and Parole Officer for the Ministry of Solicitor General in Ontario and as a Tribunal Member for the Employment & Social Development Canada Social Security Tribunal. Jason has held roles on numerous Boards, including as Vice President of the Society of Ontario Adjudicators & Regulators, as President of the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTS) Alumni Association and as a Trustee on the Board of Directors for OPTrust. Jason earned a Bachelor of Arts from UTS and has since completed the Director Education Program at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, and he has earned ICD.D Designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors. Prior to commencing his post-secondary education, Jason spent time as an Armoured Crewman with the Canadian Forces Primary Reserve. Jason Glover was appointed as a Board Member for a five-year term.

Wilfred Jephson, BOARD MEMBER

Wilfred Jephson was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2014. Prior to joining the Board, he spent 25 years in the RCMP. He has a strong operational background as an investigator, and gained experience in administrative and Human Resources support functions. During his career, he was posted in Manitoba, Nunavut, British Columbia and he finished his career in Ottawa at National Headquarters. He worked with international law enforcement Partners while in Ottawa, and had the opportunity to work closely with the Canadian Armed Forces on a number of occasions including the Red River flood in 1997 and the 2010 Olympics. He also spent six years as a Staff Relations Representative (SRR) advocating for the well-being of RCMP members at both the Provincial level as well as the National level.

Mr. Jephson is bilingual and holds a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from the University of Manitoba and a Master of Arts in Conflict Analysis and Management from Royal Roads University.

Ann Lavallée, BOARD MEMBER

Ann Lavallée was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2017. Prior to joining the Board, she spent 32 years in the Canadian Armed Forces, retiring as a senior leader at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. The last 14 years of her career were spent specializing in the fields of tuition benefits, healthcare and personnel management. Outside of her work, Ms. Lavallée has volunteered in her community, most recently with the Special Olympics of Ontario.

Ms. Lavallée holds a Bachelor of Arts from the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean and a Master of Business Administration from the Royal Military College of Canada.

Sean Layden, BOARD MEMBER

Sean Layden was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2020. Sean Layden brings 25 years of experience practicing law as a Partner for Boyne Clarke LLP, and later as an Associate for Lenehan Musgrave LLP. Sean earned a Bachelor of Arts from St. Francis Xavier University before graduating with a Bachelor of Law from Dalhousie University's Schulich School of Law. He has been involved in various groups throughout his community, including serving as President of the Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia. Sean was awarded the Queen's Counsel designation in 2011. Sean Layden was appointed as a Board Member for a five-year term.

Mélanie Leduc, BOARD MEMBER

Mélanie Leduc was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2017. She brings with her more than 15 years of experience with the federal government in the field of

immigration. This work has given her a strong background in the interpretation and application of legislation and in decision-making.

Ms. Leduc holds a Bachelor of Criminology and a Bachelor of Law from the University of Montreal.

Christine Lewis Cossette, BOARD MEMBER

Christine Lewis Cossette was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2020. Holding a Bachelor of Arts from Ottawa University and an LL.B in Civil Law from l'Université du Québec à Montréal, she has worked as a lawyer and advisor for more than 20 years. She began her career in a private law firm as a general practitioner before joining the federal public service in 2002. She has since occupied positions of policy analyst, legal counsel and administrative litigator in various areas within the federal public service. Christine is a skilled advisor with outstanding communication and client service skills.

Christine Lewis Cossette was appointed as a Board Member for five-year term.

Melanie Malchuk, BOARD MEMBER

Melanie Malchuk was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2019. Most recently, Ms. Malchuk worked as an Independent Hearing Adjudicator with Correctional Services of Alberta. She brings a combined 24-year in-depth work experience between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

Ms. Malchuk holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from the University of Great Falls and a Law Enforcement Diploma from Lethbridge Community College. A lifelong learner, she continues to participate in audio conferences about employment and human rights laws.

Corrado Micallef, BOARD MEMBER

Corrado Micallef was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2020.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree and Alternative Dispute Resolutions Certificate from the University of Prince Edward Island and is fluent in four languages. Corrado began his career in federal public service with Public Works and Government Services of Canada (Europe) while in Germany. In 2013, he joined the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman and most recently was Manager of Operations. Prior to joining the public service, Corrado was a professional hockey player and coach in Canada, USA, and Europe. He played in the NHL with the Detroit Red Wings from 1981-86. He is still involved in hockey with the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League as the current Director of Recruitment for the Maritimes. Corrado Micallef was appointed as a Board

Member for a five-year term.

Nancy Miller, BOARD MEMBER

Nancy Miller was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2020.

She began her career serving with the Canadian Armed Forces as a Military Police Officer, achieving the rank of Master Corporal. In 2019, she received the Canada Pride Citation, acknowledging unjust policies of the past. Nancy Miller spent more than 35 years in communications, educational media and video production. Nancy also served on the Alberta Community and Social Services Appeal Panel delivering fair and unbiased Hearings for citizen appeals related to support programs. Nancy Miller was appointed as a Board Member for a five-year term.

Valerie Moore, BOARD MEMBER

Valerie Moore, QC, was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2019. She brings with her 27 years of experience with the Government of Prince Edward Island as a Crown Attorney. She also has a strong background in regulatory and administrative law.

Ms. Moore holds a Bachelor of Laws from Dalhousie University and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Prince Edward Island.

Alex Robert, BOARD MEMBER

Alex Robert was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2019. Mr. Robert is a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) and he joins the Board following a successful career with Veterans Affairs Canada in a range of capacities in Internal Audit, Finance, Legislative Services, and, more recently, with Service Delivery. His extensive work experience, especially in Legislative Services supporting the advancement of government legislative and regulatory measures, has given him a strong background in the interpretation and application of legislation. He also brings from his previous public service career an understanding of Veterans' issues and a commitment to the overall well-being of Veterans and their families.

Mr. Robert served in a number of capacities with the CPA Association, where he developed experience in the management and regulation of professions, notably further to his tenure on the Discipline Committee. Mr. Robert is a native of Compton (Québec). He received a diploma in Pure and Applied Science from Champlain College (Lennoxville), and holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Bishop's University. He was also awarded the title of Fellow CPA in recognition of career achievements.

Tanya Robertson, BOARD MEMBER

Tanya Robertson was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2019. After working for a law firm in her earlier career years, Ms. Robertson worked for the Workers Compensation Board of Prince Edward Island for 16 years as Legal Counsel. Prior to being appointed to the Board, she worked as an analyst in both the program and policy areas at Veterans Affairs Canada. Ms. Robertson holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of New Brunswick.

Constance Robinson, BOARD MEMBER

Constance Robinson was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in August 2018. She is a lawyer with more than 20 years of experience in workplace law, labour relations and human resources in both the public and private sectors. Most recently, she was the Director of Labour and Industrial Relations for the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning of Prince Edward Island, and has worked for Health PEI as an Integrated Disability Management Coordinator. Ms. Robinson holds a Master of Arts from the University of Calgary and a Bachelor of Laws from Dalhousie Law School.

Richard Thibault, BOARD MEMBER

Richard Thibault was appointed to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in 2020.

Richard Thibault is a 35-year Veteran of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. During his career, he was deployed in missions with United Nations Mission in Haiti and with the Canadian International Development Agency in Jordan, Middle East. He received his Commission in 2011. Following a distinguished career with the RCMP, Richard worked for Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) as a Security Coordinator with Vimy Centennial. Since 2018, he has worked with VAC's Human Resources department. Richard also spent three years with the Canadian Armed Forces as a Reservist with the Fusiliers du Saint Laurent, Rivière du Loup, Quebec.

Richard has received many honours including the RCMP Exemplary Long Service Medal, the Canadian Peacekeeping Medal, Queen Jubilee, and Queen Diamond Jubilee Medal. Fluent in both French and English, Richard has been involved with various community initiatives including Habitat for Humanity in Regina, Saskatchewan, Rotary Club of Stratford in Prince Edward Island and serving as the Vice-Chair and Secretary for the Charlottetown Military Family Resource Centre. Richard Thibault was appointed as a Board Member for a five-year term.

Governor in Council Quasi-Judicial (GCQ)

Orders in Council (OIC)

| Governor in Council Quasi-Judicial (GCQ) Orders in Council (OIC) | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|-----------------|----------------|-------|--------------------|
| Name / Nom | Appointment Expiry Date / Date de fin de nomination | Date of Appointments / Date de Nominations | Length of term (per OIC) / Durée de la nomination (d'après le décret) | Location / Lieu | Level / Niveau | M / F | English / Français |
| McNeil, Christopher J. Chair/Président | 01 July / juillet 2026 01 July / juillet 2023 | 02 July 2023 02 July / juillet 2018 13 April / avril 2015 | 3 5 5 | Charlottetown | GCQ6 | M | English |
| Bouchard, Jacques Deputy Chair / Vice-Président | 01 July / juillet 2025 01 July / juillet 2023 | 02 July / juillet 2023 02 July / juillet 2018 31 July / juillet 2017 | 2 5 5 | Charlottetown | GCQ4 | M | Français (B) |
| Blakeman, Laurie Member / membre | 31 July / juillet 2027 31 July / juillet 2022 | 01 August / août 2022 01 August / août 2017 | 5 5 | Edmonton | GCQ3 | F | English |
| Boughen, Richard Member / membre | 23 July / juillet 2027 23 July / juillet 2022 | 24 July / juillet 2022 24 July / juillet 2017 | 5 5 | Ottawa | GCQ3 | M | English |
| Burm, Sundeep Member / membre | 13 December / décembre 2025 | 14 December / décembre 2020 | 5 | Surrey | GCQ3 | M | English |
| Carrière, Patrice Member / membre | 18 August / août 2024 | 19 August / août 2019 | 5 | Ottawa | GCQ3 | F | Français (B) |
| Fortin, Gabrielle F. Member / membre | 13 December / décembre 2025 | 14 December / décembre 2020 | 5 | Quebec | GCQ3 | F | Français (B) |
| Ghediri, Zine Member / membre | 13 December / décembre 2025 | 14 December / décembre 2020 | 5 | Montréal | GCQ3 | M | Français (B) |
| Glover, Jason Member / membre | 13 December / décembre 2025 | 14 December / décembre 2020 | 5 | Toronto | GCQ3 | M | English (B) |
| Jephson, Wilfred Member / membre | 19 October / octobre 2027 19 October / octobre 2022 | 20 October / octobre 2019 20 October / octobre 2017 20 October / octobre 2014 | 3 2 3 | Charlottetown | GCQ3 | M | English |
| Lavallée, Ann Member / membre | 30 July / juillet 2027 30 July / juillet 2022 | 31 July / juillet 2022 31 July / juillet 2017 | 5 5 | Ottawa | GCQ3 | F | Français (B) |
| Layden, Sean Member / membre | 13 December / décembre 2025 | 14 December / décembre 2020 | 5 | Halifax | GCQ3 | M | English |
| Leduc, Mélanie Member / membre | 30 July / juillet 2027 30 July / juillet 2022 | 31 July / juillet 2022 31 July / juillet 2017 | 5 5 | Montréal | GCQ3 | F | Français (B) |
| Lewis-Cossette, Christine Member / membre | 13 December / décembre 2025 | 14 December / décembre 2020 | 5 | Quebec | GCQ3 | F | Français (B) |
| Malchuk, Mélanie Member / membre | 18 August / août 2024 | 19 August / août 2019 | 5 | Edmonton | GCQ3 | F | English |
| Micallef, Corrado Member / membre | 13 December / décembre 2025 | 14 December / décembre 2020 | 5 | Charlottetown | GCQ3 | M | Français (B) |
| Miller, Nancy Member / membre | 13 December / décembre 2025 | 14 December / décembre 2020 | 5 | Calgary | GCQ3 | F | English |
| Moore, Valerie Member / membre | 09 June / juin 2024 | 10 June / juin 2019 | 5 | Charlottetown | GCQ3 | F | English |
| Robert, Alex Member / membre | 09 June / juin 2024 | 10 June / juin 2019 | 5 | Charlottetown | GCQ3 | M | Français (B) |
| Robertson, Tanya Member / membre | 09 June / juin 2024 | 10 June / juin 2019 | 5 | Charlottetown | GCQ3 | F | English |
| Robinson, Constance Member / membre | 6 August / août 2028 6 August / août 2023 | 07 August / août 2023 07 August / août 2018 | 5 5 | Charlottetown | GCQ3 | F | English |
| Thibault, Richard Member / membre | 13 December / décembre 2025 | 14 December / décembre 2020 | 5 | Charlottetown | GCQ3 | M | Français (B) |

Alt text: Table showing VRAB Board Members' appointment dates, length of term, location, level and language information etc.

Key Contacts

| Name | Title | Mobile | Email |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Christopher McNeil | Chair | 902-403-0685 | Chris.McNeil@vrab-tacra.gc.ca |
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