




VETERAN VOICE.INFO

Feature: Failure to Communicate



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Veteran Voice.info

VVi is for you, all veterans, regardless of whether you belong to a veteran organization or not. VVi is a distribution centre, a conduit for making sure that the information you need as a veteran is there for you in a timely fashion. Our aim is to provide a forum for *all* Canadian veterans, serving members and their families to have access to information pertaining to veteran rights.

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Failure to Communicate

What we've got here is failure to communicate. (From the movie "Cool Hand Luke" and it is one of the most quoted movie lines in American cinema)

Receiving correspondence from VAC can be very annoying and even traumatic. There is a real possibility that the information will be disappointing or just negative. It can also be another example of how the department does not honour its commitment to treat Veterans with dignity and respect. I was reminded of this by the most recent correspondence. It was a letter stating that I had failed to communicate as required and as a consequence, VAC was suspending my VIP benefits. No, we are concerned that you have not been in touch with us and were wondering if you were okay. No just another cold and impersonal letter, which was not signed. It was dated 17 July, but benefits were suspended on 4 July, so much for some advanced notice!

I did have the option to have the decision reviewed by another section of VAC (National 1st Level Appeals), which is located in Dartmouth, NS. I live in Ottawa so it is very logical to have a different office handle the review.

God forbid that I have serious health conditions, which is why I am a client of VAC and entitled to VIP. I am not even sure if VAC knows or cares if I am still alive. Considering the only time that I meet with VAC officials is when I am advocating on Parliament Hill, I do not know if the Ottawa District staff know that I am one of their clients.

It would be nice to receive services and benefits because I am entitled to them for my military service to Canada. This is after all part of the social contract which the Minister of Veterans Affairs confirmed exists between Canada and its Veterans. It would also be nice to be treated with dignity and respect rather than made to feel as if I am greedy and demanding.

This is not the first time that VAC has "punished" me for a failure to communicate. My case manager sent me a letter last year and stated that I would have to complete another ream of forms to maintain my status as a client. Again she was not really worried about me just that I failed to comply with her timetable. It was the last time that she communicated with me to my knowledge.

I did call the district director once to express my concerns. She told me that she does not speak with Veterans. I thought that this was odd, but then VAC really is not interested in communicating with Veterans except when the department needs something. The director was probably kept busy striving for her next promotion. VAC gets plenty of information about its services from the few clients who complete its surveys. If you have anything negative to report, then do not bother as no one is really interested. I do not know anyone who has actually done a survey so the statistics could be developed in Charlottetown as pure bullshit. If you want to feel good, then compliment yourself.

It is not like I make a habit of trying to piss off VAC, it is just easy to do if you fail to dot the "i" and cross the "t". There must be a lot of happy people pushing paper in VAC because it certainly demands a lot of it. Again I am confused because the department has a very bad file management system. It is forever losing important data and misfiling documents. This may explain the long delays when a Veteran does complete all the correct forms. It is all right for VAC to make excuses when it can not meet deadlines, but it is not good for a Veteran. No a Veteran must provide satisfactory information in a timely manner or risk the consequences as stated above. Just another example of bureaucratic hypocrisy.

Ironically, VAC seems very able to retrieve personal information when it wants to defame a Veteran. No bureaucrat is going to be seriously punished for accessing our information in this regard contrary to Canadian law. So why is it just about anyone in VAC can find my personal information in such situations, but I have to keep submitting documents repeating what is already on file every time that I want service?

I have even been punished because of my medical conditions. In 2004, I was admitted to the VAC hospital for a three week assessment. Four days later I was expelled for failing to be cooperative. Again no consideration was given to the fact that the staff changed my medication, which basically turned me into a zombie. The normal procedure is do an assessment first and then prescribe medications. I guess the staff knew better, but I still do not know how I managed to drive to Ottawa from Montreal without crashing my car.

It really does not take much to piss off VAC bureaucrats. In October 2003, I was meeting with a lawyer of the Bureau of Pension Advocates and a nosey bureaucrat joined the conversation (so much for having a confidential discussion with a lawyer). I am not sure to this day what I did to upset him, but he decided that I was a threat to him and announced that he was calling the police. I quickly left the district office in confusion. Later he sent me a letter informing me that I needed permission to enter the office. Since then, I have avoided the district office as much as possible. Given that it is a very cold and impersonal environment like some of the people who work there, I prefer to visit only if necessary. The place holds too many bad memories, which cause me a lot of stress.

You are not expected to take my word for this information. The letters are attached so that you can make your own assessment.

VAC is responsible for providing services and information, but seems to have a knack for always failing to do a satisfactory job. This does not prevent it from harassing Veterans when we fail to perform in an exemplary manner. For the Veteran the consequences can be severe financial hardship, lack of medical care and abandonment. I am not sure if there are any consequences when VAC fails the Veterans Community.


So why do we merit punishment like the prisoners in "Cool Hand Luke", when we fail to communicate, but nothing is done to VAC?







You Can Help!

All veterans are encouraged to pass information, opinions, links to self-help sites onto VVi. VeteranVoice.info is a distribution centre and we are dependant on others to pass information. This is your site. Tell other veterans about your site. Email info@VeteranVoice.info .

Recommended Links

 <p>VeteranVoice.info (VVi)</p>	<p>http://VeteranVoice.info</p>
 <p>VVi Bulletin Board</p>	<p>http://VeteranVoice.info/bulletinboard.htm</p>
 <p>VVi Database</p>	<p>http://www.veteranvoice.info/db/all_records.asp</p>
 <p>VVi CSAT Forum</p>	<p>http://csat.top-talk.net/</p>
 <p>Veteran's Aide Memoire</p>	<p>http://veteranvoice.info/archive/aide_memoire/Vet_Aide_Memoire.pdf</p>
<p>National (US) Gulf War Resources Center, Inc.</p>	<p>http://www.ngwrc.org/</p>
 <p>PPCLI Association Volunteer Patricia Program (VPP)</p>	<p>http://vpp.ppcliassoc.ca</p>
 <p>SISIP Clawback</p>	<p>http://leavenovetbehind.ca/home</p>
 <p>Sean Bruyeya</p>	<p>http://seanbruyeya.com</p>
 <p>SOLDIER ON SANS LIMITES</p>	<p>https://www.cfpsa.com/Splashpages/SoldierOn/</p>

<p>Summary of CF Programs and Services for Ill or Injured CF Members (PDF)</p>	<p>http://www.veteranvoice.info/Archive/info_09dec_CF Programs and Services-Draft-Dec_16_09 1.pdf</p>
<p> Veterans Affairs Canada Anciens Combattants Canada</p>	<p>http://www.veterans.gc.ca/</p>
<p>V.E.T.S Veterans Emergency Transition Services</p>	<p>http://www.vetscanada.org/</p>
<p> Veterans Ombudsman Ombudsman des vétérans</p>	<p>http://www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/</p>
<p> Veterans of Canada.ca A Community for Canadian Heroes</p>	<p>http://veteransofcanada.ca/</p>
<p> Wounded Warriors Fund</p>	<p>http://www.woundedwarriors.ca/</p>



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