



VETERAN VOICE.INFO


Feature: **Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment, Part - 2**

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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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Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment

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The government may be appalled by the treatment of Omar Khadr at Guantanamo Bay; however, it seems completely oblivious to the harsh conditions to which Veterans are exposed in many hazardous work places, not counting foreign deployments. The military is often a dumping ground for bad equipment and bad territory.

Equipment has to last far beyond its optimum life span (Sea King helicopters) or requires constant repair (Victoria class submarines - Stephen Saunders, editor of Jane's Fighting Ships, argued that "there is something inherently wrong with the class of submarines"). DND required 14 years to upgrade CF-18 fighters after the Gulf War (1991) despite considering the need essential because of budgetary constraints.

Some of the equipment was provided by the lowest bidder and resulted in many of the health issues discussed below.

Over one billion grams of Agent Orange, Agent Purple and Agent White were sprayed on CFB Gagetown and surrounding communities from 1956 to 1984. Thousands of civilians and military personnel became sick and were/are dying from being poisoned by the carcinogenic toxins.

When the government reluctantly settled with some of the victims, the compensation was pitiful compared to Omar Khadr. The government was very unwilling to disclose information and its own involvement in the use of these hazardous chemicals.

Hundreds of thousands of Canadians may have been affected by these chemicals because Gagetown is a major training base, and the Trans-Canada Highway passes through the base. It may never be known how many victims there are, and the government probably never wants too much scrutiny.

The current deputy minister of VAC, Walt Natynczyk, is well aware of the typical medical conditions that Veterans may develop because of the normal working conditions and environments. Whether it is hearing loss because of loud noise and explosions or chronic back ache from sitting in non-ergonomic seats, there is a long list of complaints. He has publicly acknowledged and in fact has experienced some of these problems.

Yet VAC has regularly denied compensation.

VAC has the money to be more generous. In fact, it returned over \$1 billion between 2005 and 2013. The money was not used because senior management received bonus pay for being "financially responsible".

Of note, the deputy minister receives over \$400,000 in pay and bonuses. Does this person really need a few extra thousand so that billions can be denied to Veterans?

Every government advertises how much money it will "lavish" on the CAF and Veterans, but much of this is never spent or poorly spent. The current government will spend \$6 billion on Veterans and billions more on the CAF...only if it wins the 2019 election. The government reduced the DND budgets by \$8.4 billion until after 2020, so VAC may also be subject to similar clawbacks.

Meanwhile senior managers will be given bonuses as long as they do not spend all of the money still in the budgets.

In fact, one of the reasons that the Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP) was established was to supplement financial benefits provided by VAC. For many Veterans, it was viewed as a way for the government to shirk its responsibilities to properly compensate Veterans. VAC is notorious for lowballing many claims for illnesses, injuries and wounds suffered by Veterans. VAC believes that a range of 20-30% is satisfactory even for serious medical conditions.

For Canadians unaware of SISIP, military personnel must contribute to the plan if they wish to benefit

from it, and participation is compulsory. Even then the government was stingy with compensation, which is why there was a class action law suit begun. The government considered SISIP and VAC benefits as the same and limited payment to a total of 75% of a Veteran's salary. The government wasted millions fighting Veterans before it grudgingly settled.

Unlike Omar Khadr's settlement, SISIP and VAC benefits are often taxable.

The CAF is one of the few militarises in the world required to pay for its own disability insurance. And even then, Veterans had to sue because of clawbacks.

With regards to foreign service, the potential hazards increase significantly. The typical peacekeeping mission, which the government likes so much, is often not so tranquil. There are numerous health risks from disease, climate and environment. There is often a hostile population, which does not abide by the rules of war or the Geneva Convention.

Omar Khadr was a child soldier in Afghanistan. He is an example of one of the modern horrors of war; exploitation of children. Canadian Veterans have faced child soldiers in Somalia, Rwanda, Afghanistan and other countries. They often do not wear uniforms so that the only possible way to identify them as enemy combatants is to witness them committing a warlike act, such as throwing a grenade.

The biggest problem that Veterans face is the complex rules of engagement that must be obeyed before taking any action. There are two primary international rules of engagement manuals that are internationally available: NATO ROE Manual MC 362-1; and the San Remo Rules of Engagement Handbook. There is even a formal course to study the second. To fully understand rules of engagement and the laws of war requires much more training than the average soldier, professional or non-professional, is likely to have in a combat situation.

Here is a scenario for the politicians and lawyers to consider. A Canadian soldier has to make a critical decision while distracted by the side effects of Mefloquine and other drugs, and also tired because of lack of sleep, food and water, and the constant stress of being in a hostile workplace, and the question is can this soldier be expected to make a reasonable decision. Remember that Mefloquine can cause headache, ringing in your ears, dizziness, loss of balance, problems with coordination, anxiety, depression, paranoia, hallucinations, or thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself.

The real world answer is yes. But this is not reasonable based on the Khadr case. He provided information when subjected to legally recognised torture (sleep deprivation), while the Canadian soldier was just subjected to something other than torture. So sleep deprivation plus combat stress plus hunger plus bad drugs is not torture, but sleep deprivation is in a US military detention facility.

Why should any Canadian Veteran be held to a higher standard?

Unfortunately, the government expects nothing less. And also expects its military and paramilitary personnel to fill many roles for which they are not always fully qualified to perform with the above mentioned equipment and in hazardous environments.

A Veteran has probably served as or with part-time aid, humanitarian, and social workers, medical assistances, therapists, parents, diplomats, and many more. Heck even Toronto wanted the CAF to supplement snow removal crews!

While doing so, the Veteran is expected to be very responsible, experience social separation from

family and friends, lose basic human rights and freedoms, and most importantly do not embarrass Canada. The problem with being a jack of all trades is that you are master of none.

The big difference between domestic and foreign service is that the second may be tax exempt. The government keeps waffling on what monies are tax free as was noted during a recent period of indecision involving CAF personnel serving in operations against ISIS.

A Veteran making the minimum from VAC financial benefits without any military pension would have to live for over 233 years to earn what allegedly will be paid to Omar Khadr (\$10.5 million/\$45,000). Of course, tax deductions will significantly increase this timespan.

Where is the equality?

Perry Gray is a Regular Force veteran, serving as the Chief Editor of VVi. Perry has been with VVi for 15 years.



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

Facebook Messenger: <https://www.facebook.com/VeteranVoice.info>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/VetVoiceinfo>



 VeteranVoice.info (VVi)	http://VeteranVoice.info
 VVi Bulletin Board	http://VeteranVoice.info/bulletinboard.htm
 VVi Database	http://www.veteranvoice.info/db/all_records.asp
 VVi CSAT Forum	http://csat.top-talk.net/

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VVi on Facebook

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VVi on Twitter

<https://twitter.com/VetVoiceinfo>



Veteran's Aide Memoire

http://veteranvoice.info/archive/aide_memoire/Vet_Aide_Memoire.pdf



Marijuana For Trauma Inc.
VETERANS HELPING VETERANS
MARIJUANA For Trauma (MFT)

<https://mftgroup.ca/>

National (US) Gulf War Resources Center, Inc.

<http://www.ngwrc.org/>



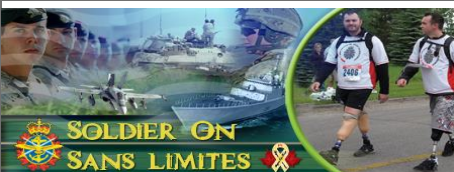
**PPCLI Association
Volunteer Patricia Program
(VPP)**

<http://vpp.ppcliassoc.ca>



Sean Bruyea

<http://seanbruyea.com>



**SOLDIER ON
SANS LIMITES**

<https://www.cfpsa.com/Splashpages/SoldierOn/>



**Veterans Affairs Canada
Anciens Combats Canada**

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/>

<p>V.E.T.S Veterans Emergency Transition Services</p>	<p><i>http://www.vetscanada.org/</i></p>
<p> Veterans Ombudsman Ombudsman des vétérans</p>	<p><i>http://www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/</i></p>
<p> VeteransofCanada.ca A Community for Canadian Heroes</p>	<p><i>http://veteransofcanada.ca/</i></p>
<p> Wounded Warriors Fund</p>	<p><i>http://www.woundedwarriors.ca/</i></p>

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