

Canadian Veterans Advocacy Situation Report . 29-Oct-11

Ladies and gentlemen, fellow veterans, serving members.

I hope all is well with you and your families and that you have made preparations to participate in CVNDOP-2 as we once again draw attention to the plight of our wounded warriors and, equally important, our battle to have Veterans Affairs Canada's budget excluded from any debt-reduction cuts currently planned for next year's budget.

...The Conservative government is cutting \$226 million from VAC's budget, over and above the planned "Strategic Review" which will result in a further \$175-350 million axing, and the department has already confirmed they will be getting rid of 500 employees...

...With up to half a billion dollars in cuts coming to the VAC and with 500 fewer employees in the department, it is highly unlikely that this department will have the human or financial resources to deliver services to our veterans they need and deserve," said Mr. Casey...

On the national level, the CVA has been very active. We attended the VAC Stakeholders Committee meeting on Monday, October 25 in Ottawa then traveled to Sainte Annes de Bellevue Veterans Hospital in Montréal, Québec the next day for a tour. I would note that there were new faces at the VACSC and Veterans Voice.info is represented by Perry Gray, Ron Cundell and Sean Bruyey. Mr. Clark, CVA Director of Veterans Services, has prepared a briefing on the context of this meeting and the one in June.

<http://www.canadianveteransadvocacy.com/blog/>

On Monday evening, we met with Member of Parliament Sean Casey, Charlottetown, PEI, wherein he informed us of the liberal plan to have transparent committee meetings in reference to the proposed VAC budget cuts and the impact that it would have on veterans lives. You may be pleased to note that the Canadian Veterans Advocacy was invited to be a witness at committee, that we were fourth on a list of many. Unfortunately, the conservatives have since quashed a motion that would have served veterans well and the CVA will not be called to testify. Our visit to Sainte Annes de Bellevue Veterans hospital was arranged through Veterans Affairs Canada in response to a stakeholders teleconference in reference to the facilities transfer to provincial control and a CVA request to visit. The Canadian Veterans Advocacy believes that our most vulnerable veterans, those who have been seriously wounded or those who require geriatric care, must be accorded a dignified quality of life. Our visit was very well organized and included briefings by about the history of the facility and the status of the OSI clinics both in Montreal and a national basis. The discussions were forthright and every question was answered with great sincerity. Ste. Anne's has over 400 residents, the average age is 90. I was also very impressed by the culture of respect the staff universally demonstrated as we were being escorted through various wards. No questions were deferred. To sum up, we were both very confident that Sainte Annes de Bellevue will maintain the same level of dignified care after transition as long as the same dedicated staff is in place. God bless them all!

CVNDOP-2

Parliament Hill pilgrimage. Thanks to Jacques de Winters, all is in order for Parliament Hill for 1100 hrs, 5 November, 2011, in front of the Peace Tower. Louise Richards, Gulf War veteran and staunch veterans advocate, will be joining us on Parliament Hill to speak on behalf of Gulf War veterans and the inexplicable illnesses may have endured. Meg Sears, a scientist who specializes in the effects of environmental toxins such as Agent Orange and Depleted Uranium, has also accepted our invitation to speak. Our mission is to enlighten Canadians of the hardships our abandoned veterans have confronted, to seek their understanding and compassion. Eric Rebiere will speak on behalf of RCMP and law enforcement veterans, men like Mel Pittman, who still has not be provided the dignified assistance he needs. Colin Pick, president of the venerable War Pensioners of Canada, has requested an opportunity to add his voice to ours. Dennis Manuge, leading the charge for the estimated 6000 veterans subject to the SISIP Clawback on their VAC pain and suffering pensions, will be journeying from Nova Scotia and will be our cornerstone speaker. I would encourage all veterans in the Ottawa area who have been subject to the unfair SISIP Clawback to join Dennis on Parliament Hill and offer your support for his/our ongoing advocacy for justice. This is a crucial time, the class action lawsuit is proceeding in a Halifax court in three weeks, if we can support this mission on Parliament Hill, we can send a message to our opponents that we will not be denied! We are also seeking

volunteers to sing the national anthem in both official anthems and God Save the Queen. If you know anybody whose dream is to sing on the anthem on Parliament Hill, this is the time for nominations. The same applies for buglers and pipers, if you want to perform on the Hill for veterans and their families, maybe get a spot on national tv, be there by 1030 hours. Opportunities to play before and after the rally will be provided.

CVNDOP National Events. Klaus Rimke is heading up the event in front of Prime Minister Steven Harper's riding office in Calgary. Due to the preeminent position of Mr Harper and the powerful voice he has in reference to excluding VACs budget for debt reduction plan, we are encouraging veterans from Calgary and Southern Alberta to rally to the call. These are important issues, a potential half billion dollar cut in the budget responsible for our wounded warriors is not acceptable, not after five years of hard combat, the consequences of which have yet to be told. Sandy Brace will be joined by liberals veterans Critic Sean Casey in front of VAC Headquarters in Charlottetown on FRIDAY afternoon 4 NOV and we are encouraging supporters to arrive early and participate in the support rally being held earlier in the day. Our objectives are the same, to honour our troops by ensuring VAC has the tools to do the job and the financial support to ensure our wounded warriors are compensated with dignity.

Sean Wilson will once again be assembling in Victoria Park in London, Ontario, a location we are encouraging all veterans in the immediate region to participate. The city's MP's, including veterans supporter Irene Mathysen, have been invited. In Sarnia, Wilma Mcniell just turned 80 years of age and is leading Team Sarnia at the office of MP Pat Davidson at 11 am. How can one not admire her spirit? Wilma has also been a staunch advocate for making Remembrance Day a national holiday and has been successful in her quest in several provinces. Let us join her in her quest! Another extraordinary demonstration of support comes from James Green, a WW2 veteran at 86, who will lead the way at Justice Minister Rob Nicholson's office in Niagara Falls. In Halifax, Veterans Advocate Gary Zwicker will parade in front the Cenotaph Memorial and MP Peter Stoffer, who will present Bill C-215 to end the annuity clawback at age 65, will be speaking to the issues. Martin Frechette will be at St Anne's in Montreal at a special location and we have concerns about disturbing the veteran residents and will be assembling at a location beyond their sight. Our quest is to draw awareness to the projected half billion dollars in cut backs to VACs budget, the visual inference, particularly in light that that this is the last VAC hospital and will soon be transferred to provincial control, is obvious. I would reiterate, Sainte Annes de Bellevue is a marvelous facility and the CVA is committed to ensuring the standard of care we witnessed during our visit this week will be the same standard of care today after the facility is turned over to the province of Quebec, something that I am quite sure will not be an issue. Kingston Team leader DAB McDonald will assembling be at the Princess and Gardiner intersection. Tom Beaver and Fred Doucette will be at the front gates of CFB Gaagetown while, in Chilliwack, Claude Latulippe and Joe Beauchene are well on the way to organizing one of the largest gatherings on the West Coast. All Nov 5th events commence at 11.

Team leaders of organized events are encouraged to send me a sit reps that we can publicize your actions. We are a week away from H-Hour, have you... called the MP and told him that you are coming? Called the press on a local basis ie radio, newspaper, local cable tv, real tv? Have you called your friends or any other force multiplier group that shares our interests? The legion may not be standing to, but this does not preclude legionnaires being counted without their uniforms. Mothers and fathers of serving members? Families? ANAVETS? Local military organizations? Remember, we are fighting to ensure that the department responsible for the care, treatment and financial well being of the wounded, many who have sustained catastrophic injuries in Afghanistan, be exempt from the governments 1/4 BILLION dollar debt reduction based budget cuts.

Sometimes, patriotic Canadians need to do more than wearing red on Friday or buying a poppy during the Remembrance period. .

This is one of those times.

Many have asked me as to the status of the other stakeholders in response to a letter sent about the need for their support on November 5th. Some responded, others did not, those who stand beside us will be seen or not seen on November 5th. What is important to our success is that we reach out to not to organizations, but to veterans who realize their is no expiry date on the oath of allegiance, to Canadians who *really do support our troops* and understand November 5th has been organized to ensure Canada's sons and daughters, when repatriated suffering the physical and mental consequences of war, have the very best of care and their well being is not subject to the adverse effects of a potential HALF BILLION DOLLARS IN CUTS!

Veterans of all eras, on Saturday, November 5th, 2011, when you wake up and look into the mirror, consider the oath of allegiance that you swore so many years ago, the devotion you held for your regiments, squadrons and units, the sacred bond you shared with those whom you served with. Get out your medals and beret and ask yourself, are we not obligated to stand for those who serve today? Doe they not deserve the same level of

allegiance on our behalf? Can we stand passive while those to whom we passed the torch are exposed to a much lower standard than we receive, or knowing that many of whom we have served with are having great difficulty receiving the assistance they require? There is a reason thousands of veterans have resorted to the courts over the SISIP claw back, that many have sought judicial review at their own expense after being denied on their claims. There is a reason that Afghan fathers love has translated into a nation-wide class action suit to fight on behalf of the wounded subject to Lump Sum Award. here4 is no doubt that these candains need our help, not only the wounded, but their mothers, fathers, wives and children.

What you wear is irrelevant, it is you, your presence, your voice, that matters. What is transpiring on Nov 5th is a direct reflection of the highest honor our forefathers fought to preserve, a democratic platform of legal assembly to speak out against injustice. To participate is a most noble act, a demonstration of love of nation and all that we stand for. Now is the time to talk to your MP, the time to protect the budget that cares for the wounded from the government's ¼ BILLION dollar debt reduction reduction schemes.

Phone your MP's office today!. Email him not once, but twice. Attend his office on Saturday or through the Remembrance Period. Speak to him after the Remembrance Day parade. Stand guard for those who stand on guard for three. Ask him to support the exclusion of VAC's budget from any debt reduction formula, ask them to treat Canada's Sons and Daughters the national treasures that they are and respect them with the same life-time standard of dignity this nation accorded treated warriors for generations. One veteran, one standard.

God bless our troops, our veterans and their families as we approach the Remembrance season. Let us remember to fight for the living with the same dedications we offer to the dead, now and in the future, ever loyal, lest we forget! Amen.

For more information on locations and information about the Canadian Veterans Advocacy, please visit and participate in our electronic forums.

Website <http://www.canadianveteransadvocacy.com/index.html>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CdnVetsAdvocacy/>
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Pro Patria Semper Fidelis

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