



Support & Advocacy Committee - 2025 Year-End Report

Nova Scotia RCMP Veterans' Association

Highlights: In 2025, the Support & Advocacy Committee conducted the usual monthly meetings in the spring and fall, held a Training Day for the Nova Scotia S&A Committee and Consultants, two full-day Benefits and Information Workshops (Middle Sackville- HRM and Amherst) for the RCMP VA membership, and facilitated a half day familiarization session of the RCMP Veterans Homelessness Program for stakeholders and S&A.

In mid-October, Advocate Steve Graham and Co-Directors Vic and Jan Gorman were invited to attend and present at the second two-day Benefits and Information Workshop for other Divisions, this time held at The Bell's Corners, (Ottawa Ontario) Royal Canadian Legion. This session was once again coordinated by the National Advocate Mike Duffy and the RCMP VA CAO Glen Siegersma and was geared towards providing the Support units from Ontario, Quebec, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland/Labrador with a framework to develop their own versions in their various Veterans' Associations Divisions.

Who Has Been Served:

Statistical returns for the 2025 Support and Advocacy Committee activities were gathered in late December 2025 and include actions from December 1, 2024 to November 30, 2025 inclusive.

This year's tally indicated a slight increase in the number of contacts from the previous year. It is important to note that casual conversations at meetings, coffee gatherings or other brief encounters generally do not get counted for the purposes of this data collection, however they could result in an individual eventually moving forward on their own to pursue the required support. There is value in these casual conversations in that the "seed" has been planted, the myths debunked, and more accurate information is circulating. The most positive result is that many topics (such as having a VAC disability pension, the specific allowances available to RCMP and life-long benefits to the member with some residual benefits to the spouse, and the specifics around operational stress injuries) are no longer "off limits" in discussions.

The Committee and Consultants remain a highly visible part of the Nova Scotia RCMP veterans' community and have linkages to various seniors' groups, military associations and community resources. These interactions serve to enhance the knowledge within the S&A group and also ensure that more of the former members and spouses know where to go for guidance and are engaged in the processes.

TOTAL CONTACTS

The "client" contacts made in 2025 included dealings with all categories of persons (serving RCMP employees and spouses, former and retired employees of the RCMP - whether or not Association members - and their spouses, and friends/family/ first responders/ military). When the current number of contacts tallied (552) is

compared to the contacts in the first year of the pandemic in 2020 (381), the **increase in activity for 2025 is 44.8% from five years ago (2020)**.

2025 – 552 2024 – 540 2023 – 529 2022 – 465 2021 – 436 2020 – 381

- **FORMER & RETIRED EMPLOYEES**

Most of the interactions reported in 2025 – approximately 88% (484) - were with former /retired employees and spouses/families of the RCMP in Nova Scotia. This percentage is slightly higher than in the previous year (78%). Of the current 2025 total of 484 persons included in the RCMP “family”, **69% (334 persons) were in fact, members of the RCMP Veterans’ Association;** the remaining persons served (150) were at that time, non-Association former/retired members and their spouses. Some have subsequently joined the NS RCMP VA.

Note: It is the position of the NS RCMP VA and the Support and Advocacy Committee and Consultants is that service will be provided to ALL who have served, regardless of membership in the Veteran’s Association.

- **SERVING RCMP EMPLOYEES**

Serving members and employees of the Force continue to be referred by the “H” Division RCMP Wellness unit and by other serving employees or, they make contact on their own with the Committee and Consultants. In 2025, 68 current RCMP employees reached out to the Committee and Consultants, a very slight reduction from the previous year. Of that number, 55 were classified as Regular Members and 5 as Civilian Members. **Since 2020, there have been a total of 510 serving uniformed RCMP members and employees access the services of the S&A Committee and Consultants in NS.** Most continue to request assistance with the VAC process and clarification of the benefits while serving and post-employment. In several cases, some persons are facing a Medical Discharge from the Force and working towards ensuring that their conditions were also awarded VAC Disability Pensions.

- **OTHER REFERRALS**

- Included in the numbers in both categories above were referrals that came from **out of the province** as employees and families referred fellow members and retirees in other Divisions. In 2025 there were 31 such referrals with seven provinces represented. It is not known if any were members of the RCMP VA in those areas. This is a slight decrease over the previous year.
- The remaining contacts came from **friends or adult children of members**, from Military and other First Responders. This is a slight increase over the previous year’s activity in this category. Eighteen (18) contacts were from Military and other first responders and another thirty-two (32) were from adult children and friends of a veteran.

What was Done:

Benefits and Information Workshops for the NS RCMP Veterans and Families:

- **May 6 – Middle Sackville/HRM - S&A Benefits and Information Workshop:** The full-day session attracted 76 veterans, serving members, spouses and presenters. Presentations included: NS RCMPVA President Dan MacNaughton and Treasurer Ian Atkins provided an update on the NS activities; Past President (National) Sandy Glenn highlighted the current focus of the National Executive and Directors. Commissionaires Nova Scotia (CNS) representatives Mark Bulter and Teresa Yetman provided information on the work of the CNS, and the employment opportunities open to former RCMP and

their families. The keynote speakers in the morning were two serving RCMP from the H Division Digital Forensic/Cyber Crime unit who explained various Cryptocurrency Fraud schemes and fraud issues for seniors. The afternoon keynote speaker was psychologist Dr Dion Goodland who expanded upon the definitions, perceptions and current treatments for operational stress injuries. The final part of the day included updates and reminders by the S&A Committee on benefits available to retirees through Canada Life, Veteran's Affairs Canada, various travel insurance options and with the tools developed by the S&A Committee such as the Survivor and Executor package. As usual, a soup/sandwich lunch prepared by a St John Evangelist Church group and the two break times served to provide the participants to socialize and to chat with the presenters.

- **October 30, 2024 – Amherst - S&A Benefits and Information Workshop:** This session was attended by 47 persons and was also open to the RCMP VA membership in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. The day began with NS RCMPVA President Dan MacNaughton and Treasurer Ian Atkins providing an update on the NS activities, followed by Commissionaires Nova Scotia (CNS) representatives Mark Bulter and Teresa Yetman providing information on the work of the CNS and the employment opportunities open to former RCMP and their families. The morning keynote speaker was Chris McNeil, Chair of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board Canada who explained the role of the Board and the processes followed when someone appeals a decision by VAC. The afternoon session began with Dr Dion Goodland presenting information on operational stress injuries and treatments. Following that, Jonah Emery – H Division SOSI Coordinator (Support for Operational Stress) spoke of the supports available to serving and former RCMP employees. The day wrapped up with updates from Vic and Jan Gorman on processes for VAC applications, CRA DTC, the sharing of donated mobility items and other items of interest to the membership.

● **S&A Committee & Region Consultants Training Day:**

- **October 20, 2025** - The annual full-day Training Day was conducted with attendance by 37 Committee and Consultants including the Prince Edward Island Advocate. Topics included updates from NS RCMPVA President Dan MacNaughton, the National RCMP VA Past President Sandy Glenn, and the National Benefit Trust Fund Coordinator Steve Graham, and the Committee Co-Directors Vic and Jan Gorman. Guest presentations were from Jonah Emery – H Division SOSI Coordinator (Support for Operational Stress) who spoke of the supports available to serving and former RCMP employees, and from Commissionaires Nova Scotia (CNS) as they introduced the employment opportunities offered by the CNS. The highlight of the day was the full-day attendance of three program managers from Veteran's Affairs Canada (Halifax). They were present to hear the discussion and concerns, to answer questions from the Committee/Consultants and they also provided an in-depth presentation clarifying the processes and requirements for applicants.

Special Meetings – SHARING the KNOWLEDGE:

- **May 21, 2025 - Familiarization Session – RCMP VA Homelessness Initiative – HRM/Province** – at the request of the RCMP Veterans' Association (HQ) Homelessness Program Manager, a half-day session was organized in Fall River to include 42 representatives from local agencies within Nova Scotia who interact with homeless/potential homeless persons. The attendees included RCMP, Salvation Army, various shelters and food banks, First Nations, chaplains, Royal Canadian Legion, military veterans and RCMP Veteran Association reps from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island,

Emergency Health Services and others. The RCMP VA Homelessness Initiative was outlined, the Benefit Trust Fund and RCMP Veteran's Foundation provisions were explained and the resources of the RCMP VA in NS were explained. There was also some sharing of capabilities of the various agencies present.

- **October 15 -16, 2025 – Support & Advocacy Workshop Ottawa** – The second national-focus workshop was held in Bell's Corners, (Ottawa) and included Veterans' Divisional representatives from Ontario, Quebec, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland/Labrador. As with the session the previous year in Edmonton Alberta, one of the presentations described the development of the NS model and structure for Support & Advocacy within the RCMP VA, and with the sharing of Nova Scotia best practices. Once again, Steve Graham, Vic Gorman, and Jan Gorman delivered the presentation to those representatives in attendance. Other presentations were from Katie Holzauer, the (national) RCMP Manager of Employee Supports and Family Services, Graeme Shaw - one of the RCMP Liaison Officers with VAC in Charlottetown, and from the Veterans Ombudsman, Col Nishika Jardine (Ret'd). The Chair of the Veteran's Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) – Chris McNeil also spoke about the role of the VRAB. The final speaker was from ATLAS, describing the work on behalf of all veterans.

Veterans Affairs Disability Pensions and Supports:

- As with every year, most of the activities undertaken by all Committee and Consultants continues to involve assisting with Veteran's Affairs Canada (VAC) initial applications for disability benefits and allowances, or re-assessments of conditions and, when making application for Attendance Allowance. Of the tallied 1200+ actions* recorded by the Committee and Consultants, almost 60% of the efforts were related to working through the various VAC applications and processes.
** "actions" include assistance with VAC and CRA DTC document preparations and processes, referrals to medical professionals, funeral and post-death assistance, headstone provisions, retirees' benefits for health and dental insurances, sourcing of mobility aids, CF1 cards and MORE.*
- Often, the support in the preparation of VAC applications, reassessments and appeals may involve multiple sessions in person / online/ by telephone with some of the applicants and can include an initial meeting with the member and spouse to explain the processes and to explore the conditions that might be covered. Generally, these first meetings can be up to two hours long. Following that, the Committee and Consultants may assist with developing and then reviewing the narratives to support the applications, sometimes suggesting other sources of information that could be used to support a claim (such as medical/service/personal files, statements from spouses and co-workers and other related items to attest to the injury).
- When in discussions with the veterans, the Committee/Consultants also take the opportunity to periodically review the current statuses of the veterans' pensions to determine if the members should be re-evaluated/re-assessed for changes in their condition. Requests have continued to increase for the VAC Attendance Allowance, Exceptional Incapacity Allowance, and other VAC benefits following awarding of initial VAC disability pensions.

Benefit Trust Fund:

- While there had been several enquiries during 2025, no new applications came to the Benefit Trust Fund from Nova Scotia. No other candidates receiving BTF assistance are currently resident in Nova

Scotia. The program is promoted each year at the annual S&A Training Day to ensure the Support Team remain aware of its potential for those in need.

Bereavement Assistance at the time of funerals and timely Post-Death Transitions of pensions:

- For families and their surviving spouses, this activity continues to be one of the most valued services offered to retirees and spouses. Often the survivors have no idea of the entities to contact following the death of a retiree and that their medical and dental insurances plans are also linked to the requirement for timely notification of a passing. Such notification is also essential to eliminate the chances of overpayment of pensions. As with any of the assistance provided by S&A Committee and Consultants, the services are offered regardless of membership in the Veterans' Association.
- **Pre-death preparation** has also been an emerging trend as many retirees understand the need to prepare their affairs for the eventually of their passing. This is especially true for those who have chosen Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) provisions.
- **The Survivor's and Executor' Guides and Checklists** was updated in 2024 with the current Nova Scotia details.

Research Undertaken:

- In 2025, research was conducted to assist in gathering information related to environmental conditions and medical issues that impact the former employees of the RCMP and to support going forward with some VAC applications. This function also serves to create a resource library for the Committee and Consultants and to provide more in-depth knowledge of the various workplace hazards, of the impacts of certain injuries, and of the success in pursuing compensation for such injuries. Often, the research becomes an added document to the VAC applications. Some of the topics covered in 2025 included: respiratory issues around Burn Pits, hernias, cumulative joint trauma disorder, liposarcoma, temporomandibular joint syndrome, lead styphnate exposure, and acoustic neuroma.
- A frequently used resource in the preparation of some VAC applications is the **published findings of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB)** as it is valuable when determining the wording used in appealed cases that were successful and unsuccessful: that wording often provides clues to the elements that make for a successful appeal.

Mobility aids and Equipment for the Disabled:

- The generous donations of various mobility aids and sick-room furniture to the NS RCMP Veterans' Association continued in 2025. These donations, representing thousands of dollars, have been distributed cost-free to members of the NS VA and families. Sometimes, the item is only required for a short time pre- / post-surgery; in other instances, the mobility aids have been lent out for much longer terms. Again, over 20 aids were distributed in 2025. In all cases, the recipients would not have qualified for these apparatuses to be provided to them through any VAC program, and they would have needed to personally purchase them and then apply for partial reimbursement from the Public Service Health Care Plan. In some cases, there would have been no opportunity for such payments. Some items continue to be re-gifted several times over. Any minor repair requirements (such as new wheels or seats) have been absorbed from the S&A budget and those funds come from the redemption of the aluminum pop/beer can tabs. The members are encouraged to offer up any items that are in good working order if they are no longer of use in their own lives.

Division Advocate Activities for the 2025 period specific to Nova Scotia – Advocate Steve Graham:

- Provided input to VAC via the Service Excellence Transition Advisory Committee on potential improvements to MyVAC: user friendliness, information specific to RCMP users, and improvement of plain language responses of decisions and enquiries.
- Sustained relationship between NSRCMPVA and Commissionaires Nova Scotia: annual grant, meeting space, sponsorship, employment opportunities for veterans and their families, and shared veterans' interests.
- Outreach and advocacy to RCMP management, RUSI, and other veterans' organizations.
- Advocacy for individuals on a case-by-case basis.

Big Foot Moose Mounties:

Stuffed Toys for Detachments – this program is now into its sixth year of providing stuffed toys for the use by the Nova Scotia RCMP Detachments. Each year a request for sponsorship of these items has gone to the membership and the replies have always resulted in a generous out-pouring of donations to the project. To date, 490 toys were sponsored and donated. Since the first campaign in early 2020, the individual NS RCMP VA members have sponsored these Big Foot Moose and Bears at an average cost of \$30.00. Not a penny has come from the Association assets cover these items – they were all purchased through “sponsorships” (donations). The 2026 campaign will commence later in the spring.



And Finally - With THANKS

Appreciation is extended to all those who gave of their time and energies in 2025 to contribute to the work of the **Support and Advocacy Committee**: Brian Flanagan, Wayne Maxwell, Gerry LaPierre, Gary Grant, Karen Broydell, Ed Walsh, Keith Boutilier (Researcher), Steve Graham (Advocate), Donalda Walsh, Brian Carter, Keith Sherwood, National RCMP VA Past President Sandy Glenn, NS Division President Dan McNaughton and to all **Region Consultants within Nova Scotia** – Jim Arsenault, Don LeGrow, Baxter Upshall, Lindy Glenn, Sharon Eaton, Mary Lane, Steve Mills, Bruno Deveau, Fred Sinclair, Tom Bennett, Barry Lannon, Chris Paley, Karen

Paley, Allan Wellwood, Gary Bishop, Larry Archibald, Cheryl Young, Karen Holmes, Jeff Holmes, Ken Jaquard, Lee Fraser, John Ryan, Jamie Greene and Gary Smith.

Special mention to previous members of the S&A Committee and Region Directors who continue to offer their assistance throughout the year, when the need arises – Ian Atkins, Garry McCay, and Darryl Cook. Thank You to Master-at-Arms Pat Moran for his timely communications and coordination when there has been a death within the Association. And Thank You to Communications Director Joanne Caruso for the efficient posting of the S&A messages to the membership.

This report has been compiled based upon the statistics and reports submitted in December 2025 by the Support & Advocacy Committee and Region Consultants.

Respectfully submitted:

Jan & Vic Gorman, Co-Directors Support & Advocacy Committee,

Nova Scotia RCMP Veterans' Association

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