

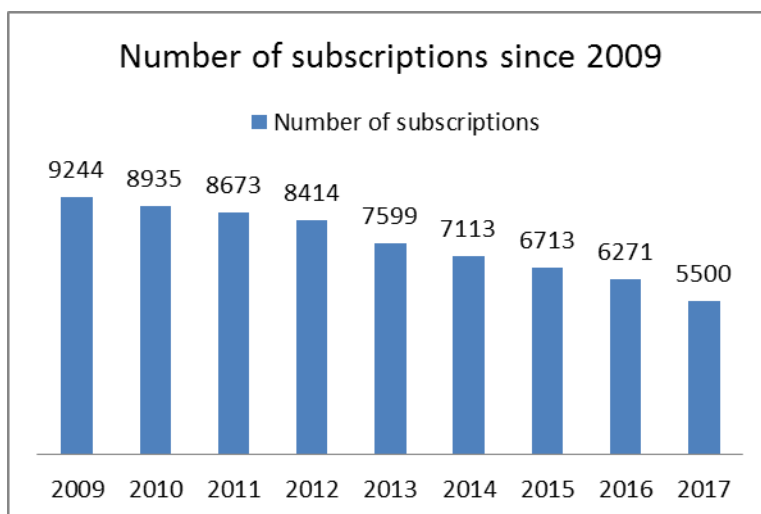
The Quarterly, Non-Subscribers Survey Final Report

Part I

Background

The Quarterly magazine has been promoted since 1999 as the official magazine of the RCMP Veterans' Association. Its target audience consists of approximately 40,000 readers of which 24,000 are current RCMP members and 16,000 are veterans.

In the last few years, subscription numbers to the magazine have continually decreased. Subscription rates have fallen by 40.5% in the past eight years, dropping from 9,244 in 2009 to 5,500, as of January 1, 2017. The number of current subscriptions represents less than 14% of the target audience.



Factoring in the 1,696 new subscribers that joined since 2009, the magazine has lost 5,440 subscribers in the last eight years, very close to 59% of its 2009 audience.

In order to ensure the continuation of this publication, the Board of Trustees (BOT) set an objective in October 2016 to raise the number of subscribers by 15% .

The member and veteran non-subscriber survey was established to provide insight into the decreasing subscription numbers of *the Quarterly* and to help guide discussions on ways to increase readership.

Timeline and Objectives of the survey

The online non-subscribers survey, was designed to complement the information gathered from the 74 responses to the reader survey conducted in 2016. Whereas the reader survey identified what readers preferred about the magazine, the non-subscriber survey addresses the important issues of why individuals are not subscribing to the magazine, or are choosing to discontinue their subscriptions.

Process

The views of approximately 500 respondents were sought, representing around 1.25% of the target audience. To meet the required population sample and to guarantee proper representation of potential readers, 20 member and 20 veteran responses were respectfully requested from each division of the RCMP, including HQ, and each region covered by the RCMP Veterans' Association.

Two distinct surveys were created: one designed for veterans and the other for current members. Every aspect of these surveys, from the writing and formatting of questions to the monitoring, quality control, processing and analysis of data was accomplished by the authors of this report, with assistance from members of the BOT and the *Quarterly* staff.

The hyperlink to the survey was posted on *the Quarterly* portion of the RCMP Veterans' Association web page. In addition, correspondence was forwarded by the Chair of the BOT to Presidents of Associations and to C.O.s seeking their support in encouraging the completion of the survey in their respective area. This correspondence contained the hyperlink to the survey, as well as information on how to access the survey via the RCMP Veterans' Association web page. Reminders were sent as time progressed.

The survey was provided in both official languages. To aid in the analysis and monitoring of the survey, participants were asked to provide the division/region in which they work/reside, as well as their years of service/years since retirement.

Google Forms was selected as the distribution medium for the online survey as it had no associated costs, did not require the collection of personal information and did not impose a participation limit.

Population Description

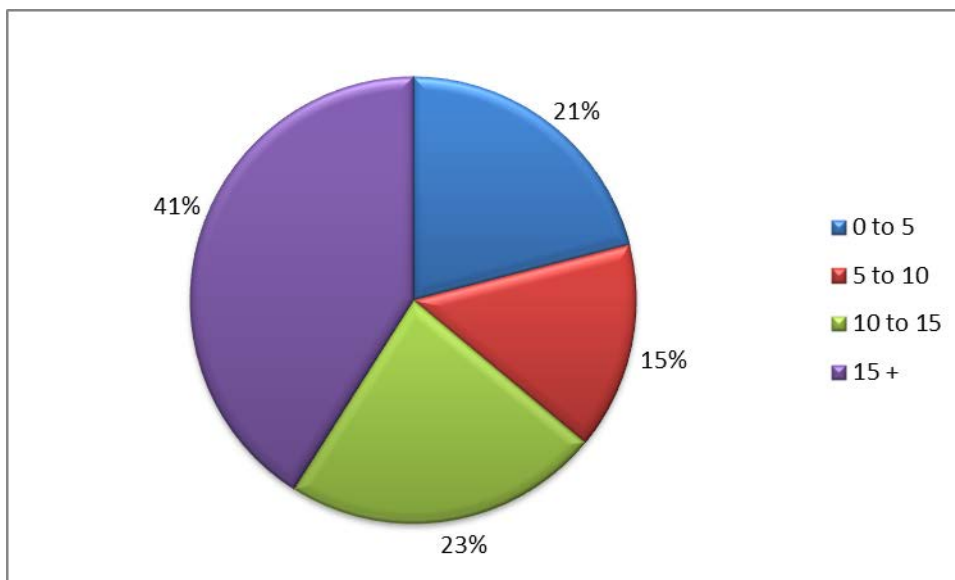
A total of 608 individuals replied to the non-subscribers survey, of which 293 answered the veterans' survey and 315 answered the members' survey.

The online veteran's survey received a better than expected response rate, representing approximately 2.15% of the non-subscribers amongst veterans. Responses obtained from members represented a 1.5% participation rate amongst them. A vast majority of veterans surveyed (98.7% in the French survey and 87.9% in the English survey) are members of the RCMP Veterans' Association.

As the Association represents around 40% of all the veterans, **this bias towards Association members can be explained by difficulties in communicating with non-association members or lack of contact information or coordinates.** It could also provide a partial explanation as to why participation to the survey was lower than requested in many divisions/regions.

Veterans participation

Years since retirement

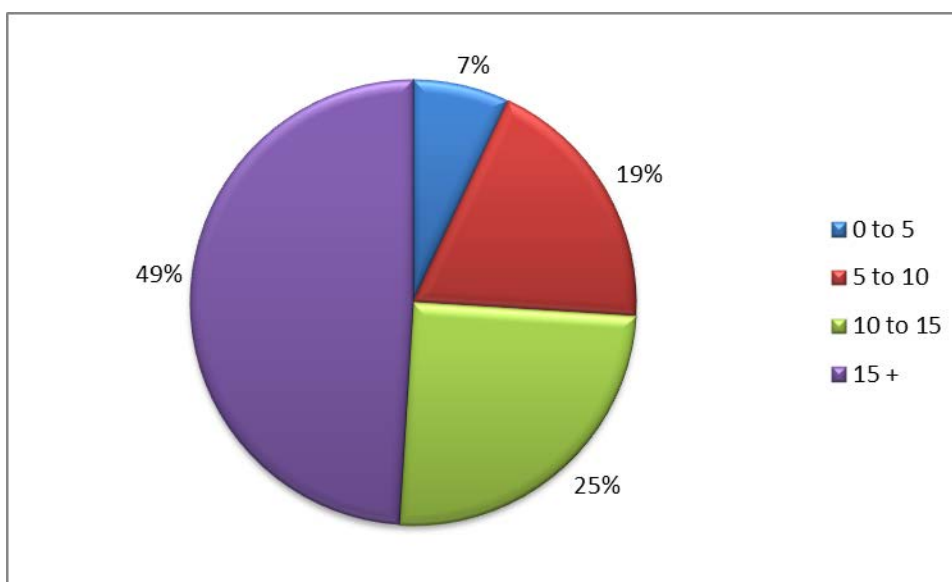


All divisions were accounted for except for V Division. C, E, H, K and O Divisions surpassed the suggested 20 participants number.

National Division & HQ – Ottawa, Ontario	11
B – St. John's, Newfoundland	3
C – Montreal, Quebec	94
D – Winnipeg, Manitoba	5
E – Vancouver, British-Columbia	60
F – Regina, Saskatchewan	5
G – Yellowknife, Northwest-Territories	10
H – Halifax, Nova Scotia	38
J – Fredericton, New Brunswick	6
K – Edmonton, Alberta	28
L – Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island	10
M – Whitehorse, Yukon	2
O – London, Ontario	24
V – Iqaluit, Nunavut	0

Members participation:

Years of service of respondents



Headquarters, Ottawa, Ontario	5
National Division – Ottawa, Ontario	22
B – St. John's, Newfoundland	1
C – Montreal, Quebec	100
D – Winnipeg, Manitoba	31
E – Vancouver, British-Columbia	5
F – Regina, Saskatchewan	2
G – Yellowknife, Northwest-Territories	3
H – Halifax, Nova Scotia	51
J – Fredericton, New Brunswick	51
K – Edmonton, Alberta	2
L – Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island	1
M – Whitehorse, Yukon	0
O – London, Ontario	41
V – Iqaluit, Nunavut	0

Among the members group, many divisions did not reach the minimum contribution sought for the survey. The lower than expected participation rate of RCMP members could be explained by the RCMP firewall which, at the beginning of the survey, prevented members from accessing the survey from their work stations. A notice asking members to use their personal computer to access the survey was included in correspondence and posted on the web site of the Association, in hopes of circumventing this issue. Returns were minimal until the access matter was fully resolved, then participation went up rapidly from 40 to 315 respondents .

It should be noted that within respondents to the non-subscribers survey, in the veterans group, 10 respondents are current subscribers to the magazine. In the members group, 11 of them are subscribers while two are retired members. Upon review, it was decided that these had little influence on the overall percentage obtained, so they were left in the areas they entered.

Results

The survey identified serious challenges faced by *the Quarterly* in relation to readership. It also brought forward elements that would allow the readers to identify and study options to address the situation.

The challenges:

- The content of *the Quarterly* is identified as the reason why nearly 60% of previous subscribers did not renew their subscription.
- To a lesser degree, the issue of cost, along with a lack of time, were provided by many respondents as the reasons for not renewing. These two factors could, in part, be attributed to a low level of interest toward the content of the magazine.

The positives notes:

- *The Quarterly* is well known by its target audience.
- Majority of respondents believed *the Quarterly* should contain information of interest to members and to veterans of the RCMP.
- Majority of respondents in the members group mentioned that they would subscribe if the content were of relative interest to them.
- E-Print is identified as an option that would be chosen by many should the content of the magazine match their interests. This option could assist in raising the numbers of subscriptions and lowering of the overall cost.

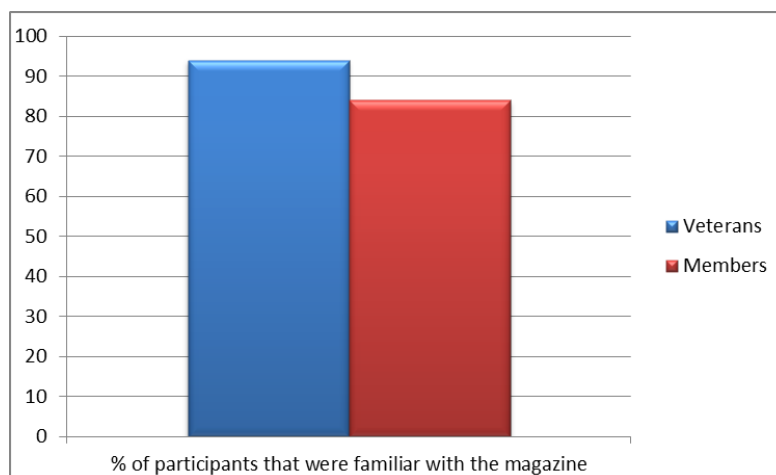
Part II

The online survey was structured in a way that allows for the analysis of different subgroups. For most of the analysis below, the English and French subcategories have been combined, as the results varied little within these groups. When subcategories

differ greatly, each will be analyzed separately. Mildly varying results or interesting trends will be written in text form below the graph in question.

Awareness of and familiarity with *the Quarterly* as a publication

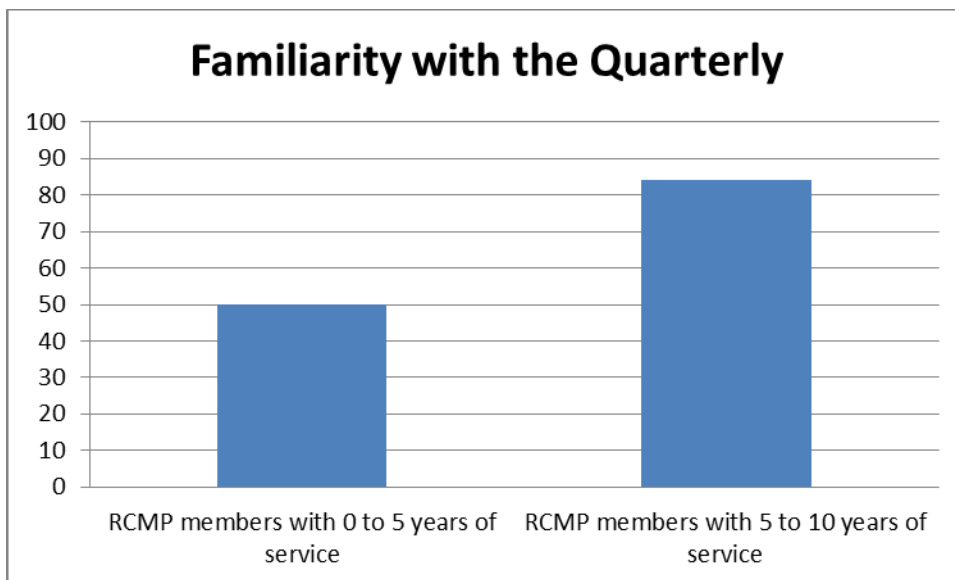
The survey verified the knowledge of the existence of the magazine within the non-subscribers. The purpose of this section was to ascertain whether or not a more aggressive publicity campaign could potentially resolve the issue regarding the decrease in subscription number.



Both editions of the magazine, *the Quarterly* and *la Trimestrielle*, seem well known from the members and the veterans of the RCMP.

A majority of participants who were not aware of the magazine (76%) were from C Division. Possibilities arise from this information: 1) that these members and veterans have a better option and that *the Quarterly* is simply not relevant in that particular location; 2) that persons with limited knowledge of the magazine in other divisions did not participate; 3) that a small publicity campaign might be beneficial in C Division.

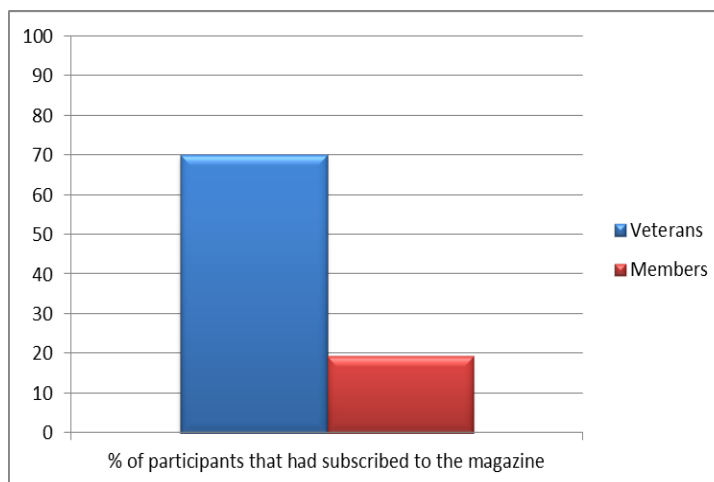
Answers from the members with 0-5 years of service indicate an important knowledge gap compare to the general average and the group with 5-10 years of service.



Previous subscribers

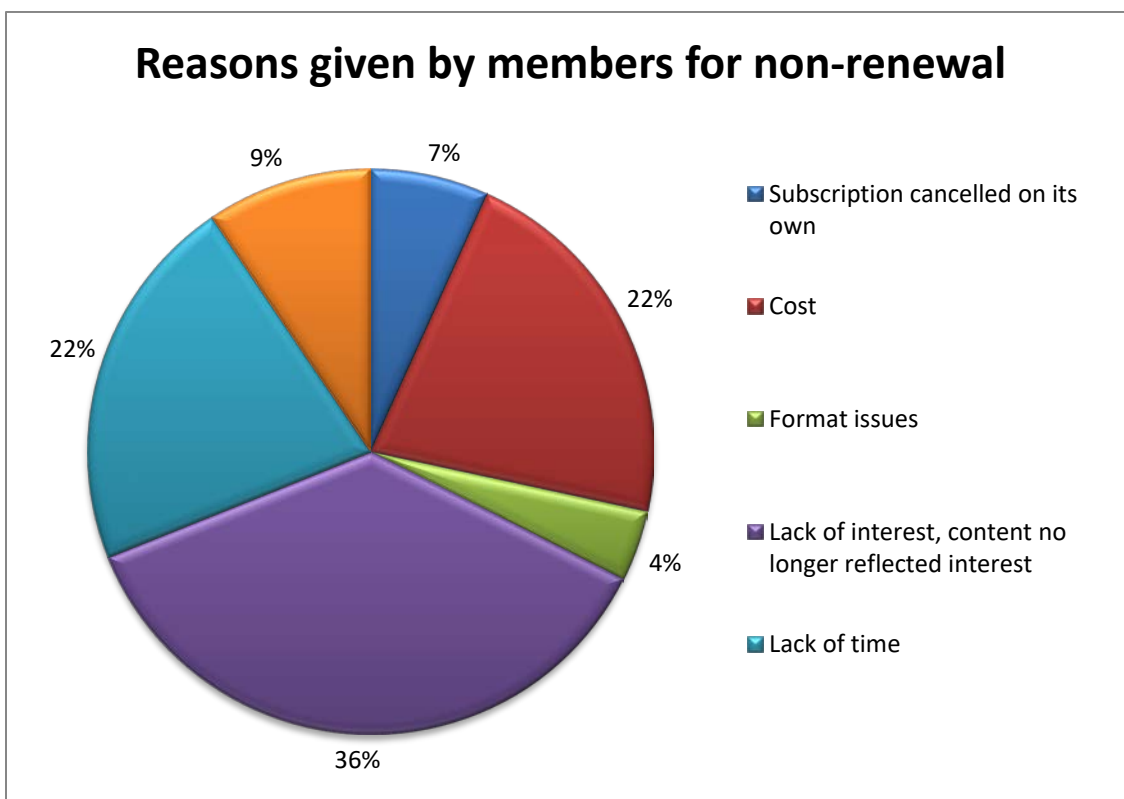
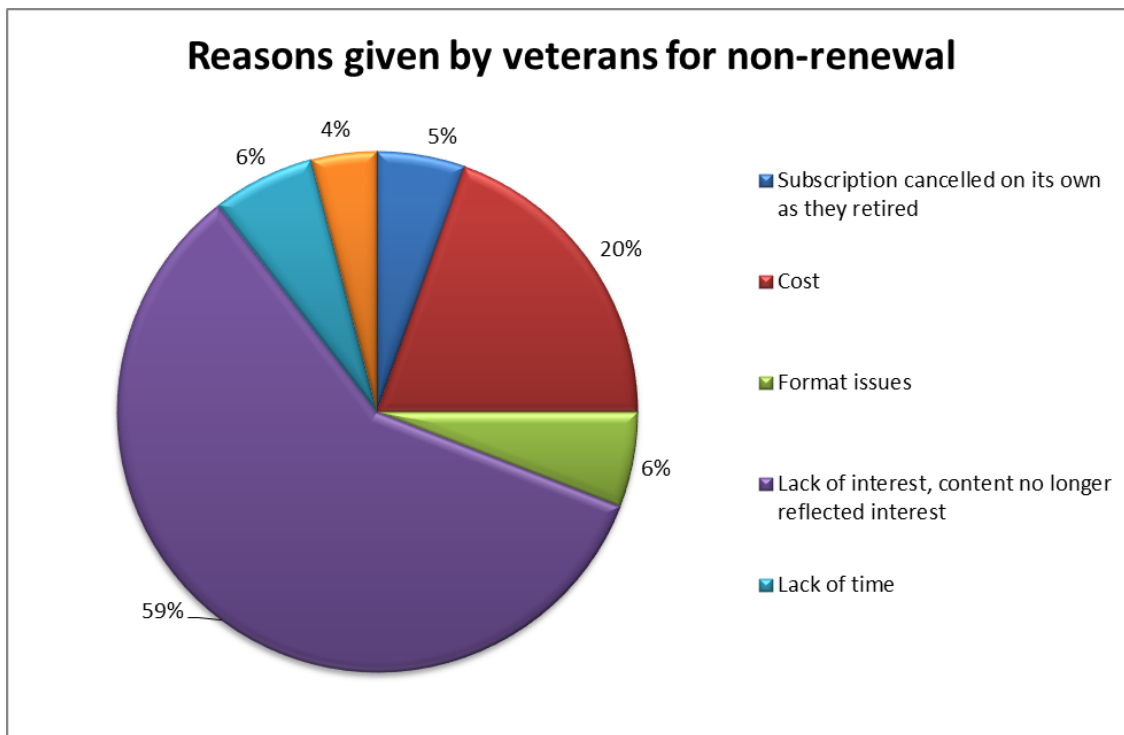
Another goal of this survey was to determine why many members and veterans failed to renew their subscriptions.

This section took on additional relevance as a vast majority of veteran participants had been subscribers at one point, and the lack of familiarity with the publication (even for the members who a majority never subscribed) does not seem to be the underlying issue.



The survey was designed to lead participants, which self-identified themselves as past-subscribers, to further questions regarding their motivation to cease the subscription. Participants were asked to select as many reasons that applied and were given the opportunity to supply their own reason. Therefore, the following graphs show the most common answers given by participants on why they did not renew their subscription. It is important to note that some participants felt negatively towards the magazine

because their subscription was cancelled upon retirement or that no effort from the magazine was made to maintain their readership (no renewal form sent, calls were not returned regarding cancelled memberships).

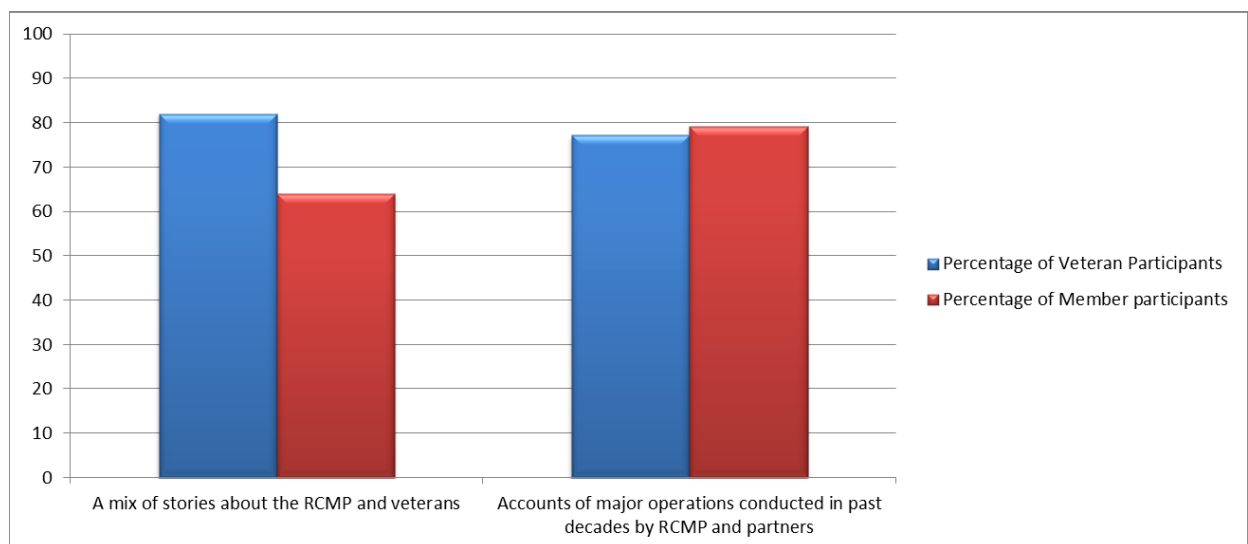


Content

The survey included questions on the interests and possible content of the magazine. The data collected from these questions becomes very relevant as, the most common justification provided by the members and veterans of the RCMP explaining the cancellation of subscriptions, is that the content no longer matched their interests.

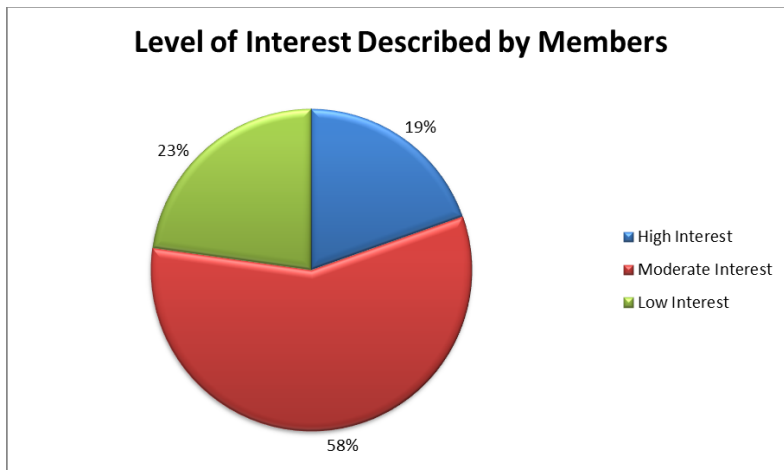
As mentioned in the positive notes, the majority of members and veterans believe that the content of *the Quarterly* should be articles of interest to both members and veterans.

Majority of veterans and members would like to read accounts of major operations conducted in past decades by RCMP and partners.

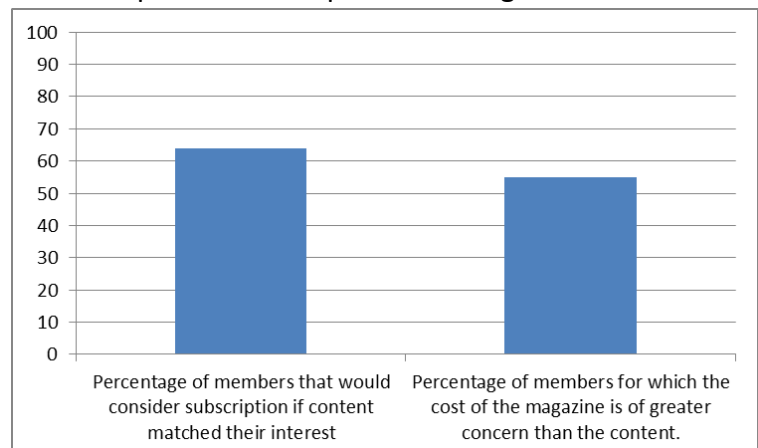


Many interesting ideas of new content for *the Quarterly* were proposed by current members and by veterans. Among the veterans who participated in answering the survey in French, 54% believed that the magazine should contain information of interest to veterans, i.e. pension and benefits.

Members were asked to identify their level of interest toward the content of a magazine that is intended to display the wealth of tradition, history and stories of the RCMP, just like *the Quarterly*.



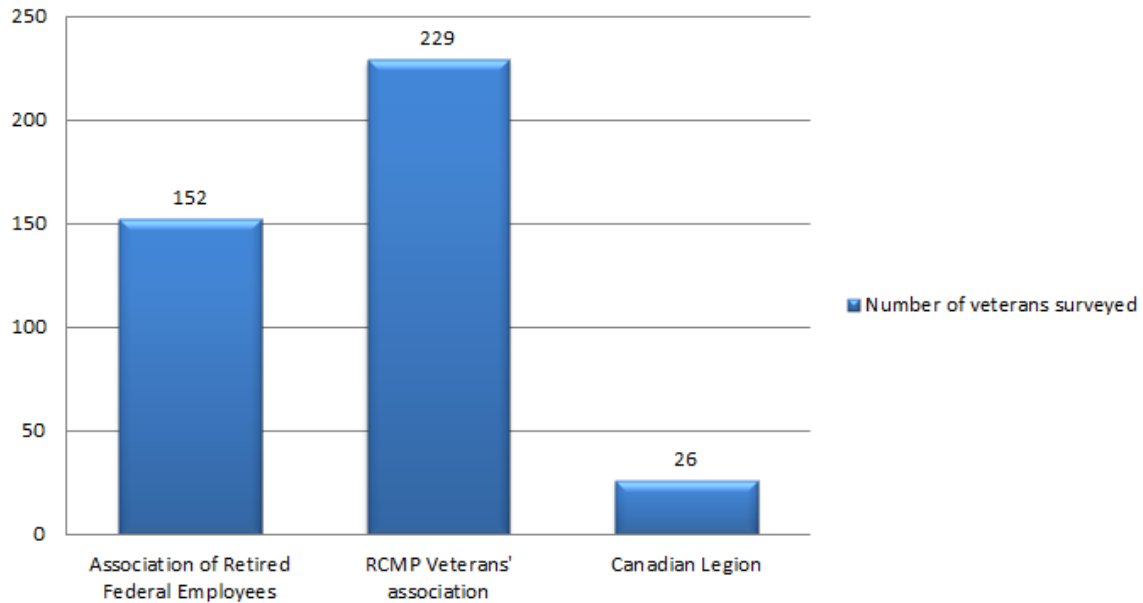
Members who participated in the survey were asked two additional questions regarding their intent to subscribe to the magazine. The first question attempted to distinguish whether the lack of subscriptions was due more to the cost of the magazine or to the content of the magazine. Based on the survey, cost and content are equally important to sustain and gather subscribers. The second question was to gather information on prospective subscribers; it asked whether or not people would consider subscribing if the content matched their interests.



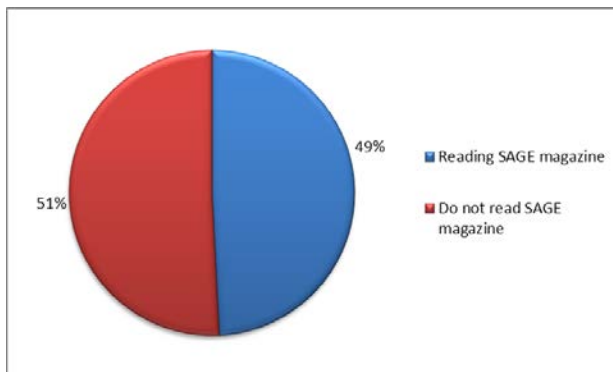
Competition with other veteran publications

The survey also wished to establish if veterans were receiving their information from other sources, publications and associations. Of the 293 participants in the veterans survey, 252 are either members of the NAFR, of the Canadian Legion or of the RCMP Veteran's Association. Some participants surveyed were members of more than one of these associations.

Veteran Membership to Other Associations



Of the veterans surveyed slightly less than half read SAGE magazine.



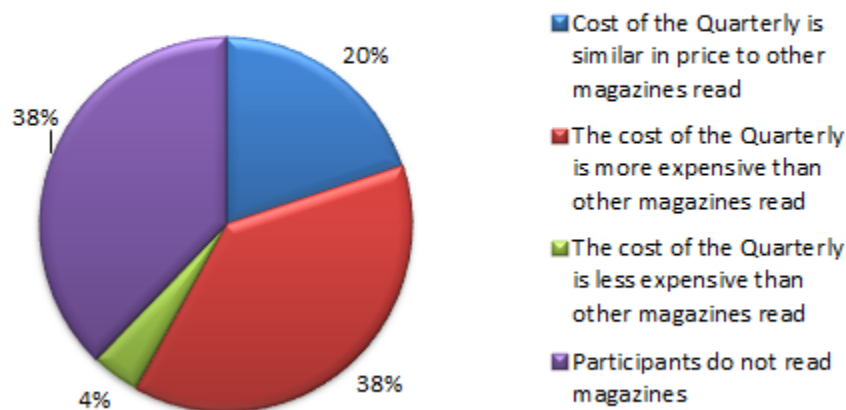
However, 133 respondents over 152 that are members of the NAFR do read the magazine SAGE or 87.5% of them. This is interesting considering that only 35% of veteran members of the Association read *the Quarterly*.

This could explain why a significant number of members were of the view that *the Quarterly* should contain information about pension and benefits.

Cost of Subscriptions

As reported earlier, the cost of the magazine seemed to play a role in the debate on whether to renew their subscription or not. The survey asked members of the RCMP whether they believed that the cost of the magazine, currently set at \$40 for a one-year subscription was a concern for members, and ask veterans how does such a cost compare to other magazines they read.

Cost Comparison (Veterans)



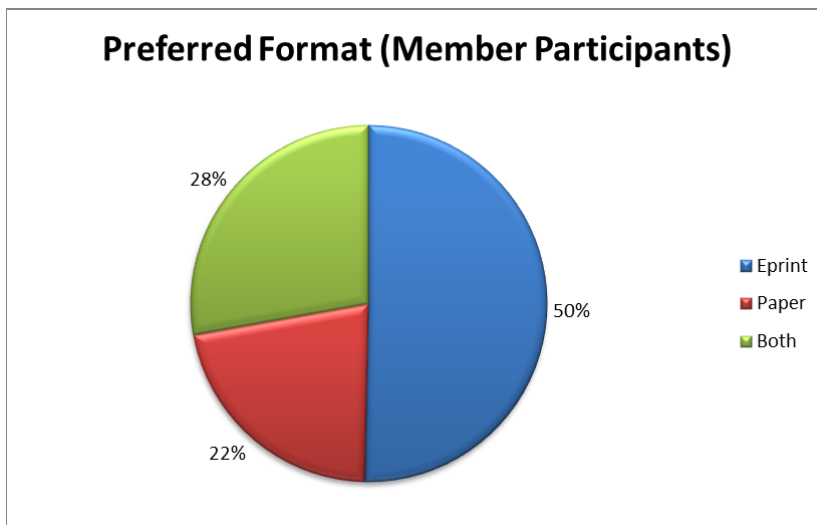
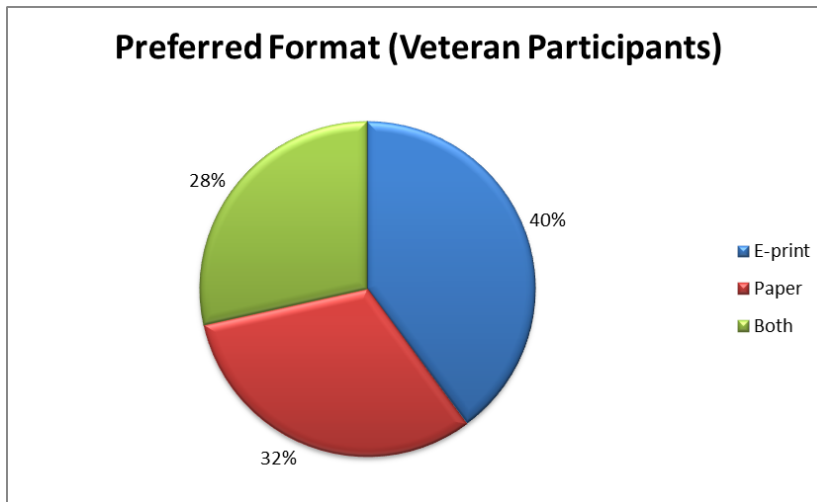
Members were asked if the cost of the magazine was more of a concern than its content; 45.5% identified that cost was more of a concern than the content.

Some respondents suggested that the cost of subscribing should be included in their association fees.

E-Print Format

The Quarterly is available in paper format only. The 2016 Readers Survey indicated some interest for E-Print. 25 respondents (37.8 %) stated they would continue to subscribe if it became electronic, 24 (or 36.3%) answered that they would not, while 17 of them (25.5 %) were not sure.

A similar question was asked in this non-subscribers survey adding an option to receive a subscription including both paper and E-Print access. This option stems from comments received surrounding the 2016 survey.



Although a paper copy would be preferred by those collecting the magazine or the ones preferring to read from paper prints, many of the participants of the survey stated that they cancelled their subscription for downsizing reasons and that the paper copies were taking up too much space. Offering an electronic version in addition to a paper version could solve many subscription renewal options ensuring that the subscribers could go online themselves to renew, that they could access the magazine wherever they may move to and that it could reduce the cost of the magazine.