

Women Veterans

Issue

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) recognizes the impacts of gender and sexual identity on the military and Veteran experience, and are committed to ensuring that Veterans are not experiencing inequities in systems, policies, programs, services and commemorations

Context

Since 2019, the Women and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Team has been dedicated to addressing women Veterans priorities by working collaboratively with Veterans, various government and community partners and subject matter experts to identify and address systemic issues specific to sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation of under-represented groups within the Veteran population.

According to the 2021 census, nearly one in six Veterans are women. Women Veterans represent the fastest growing segment of Veterans in Canada. Women represent approximately 13% of the Veteran population VAC serves.

Key Updates

On March 6th and 7th, 2025, the Department hosted the *Honouring Her Service: 2025 Women's Forum* in Ottawa. Approximately 75 women attended in person and approximately 113 attended virtually. Representatives from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) provided updates on the progress made since the 2024 Forum to support service women and Veterans.

Participants attended three breakout sessions: Menopause and Pelvic Floor Health: Empowering women through education; The Power of Connection: Women experiencing isolation; and, Shaping the Future: A Collaborative Workshop on VAC's Women Veterans Research Plan. Various optional wellness activities were offered on March 6th for in person participants. A summary report will be published in the coming months.

In December 2024 VAC established a Women Veterans Council. The Council, guided by its members' lived experiences and expertise, will offer insight to the Minister of Veterans Affairs on all matters of importance to women (CAF and RCMP still-serving and Veterans). The inaugural meeting of the Council was held on January 29th, 2025.

In 2023 VAC became an implementation partner of Canada's third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. This partnership will strengthen VAC's relationship with like-minded departments and agencies like the Department of National Defence (DND)/Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP),

and it will also provide VAC with the opportunity to influence the strategic direction of the third National Action Plan. Our Implementation Plan was officially launched on March 28, 2024.

VAC participated in the ACVA comprehensive study on the experience of women Veterans in an effort to continue to strengthen the treatment, transition supports, recognition, and care of women Veterans from all backgrounds. The Government Response to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs' Fifteenth Report entitled *Invisible No More. The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans* was tabled in the House of Commons in Fall 2024. The study concluded with 42 recommendations and VAC is now working on implementing the Committee's recommendations, one being the successful establishment of the Women Veterans Council.