



Office of the Canadian Veterans Ombudsman

***5th International Conference
Ombuds Institution for the Armed Forces***

Oslo, Norway
21 Oct 2013



Government
of Canada
Veterans
Ombudsman

Gouvernement
du Canada
Ombudsman
des vétérans

Canada 

BACKGROUND

- **Office of the Veterans Ombudsman**

- Created in 2007
- Independent from Veterans Affairs Canada Department
- Reports directly to the Minister of Veterans Affairs

- **Ombudsman**

- Non-renewable term of 5 years
- Separate from the Ombudsman for the Canadian Forces

ROLES

- **Representative of all CF and RCMP Veterans of Canada**
 - Promote Veterans' contributions to society
 - Commemoration events
- **Overseer of fair treatment of clients of Veterans Affairs Canada (Veterans and serving members)**
 - Provide information and referrals
 - Address personal complaints
 - Conduct systemic reviews
- **Special Advisor to Minister of Veterans Affairs**
 - Timely advice on emerging issues
 - Continuous Improvement to programs, benefits and process

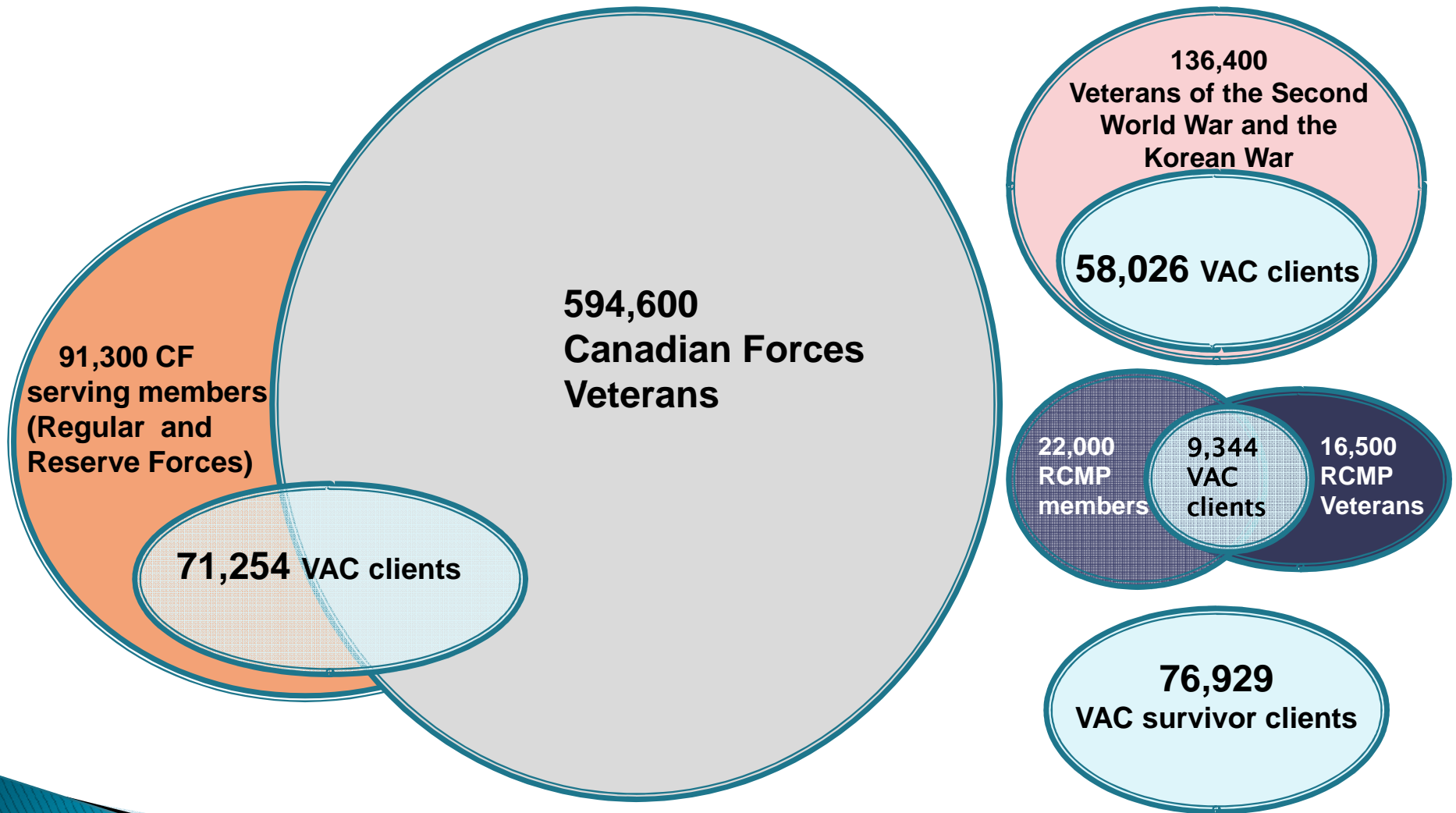
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Standards of practice of the International Ombudsman Association**
 - Independence
 - Confidentiality
 - Impartiality and neutrality
 - Informality
- **How the Office measures fairness**
 - Adequacy
 - Sufficiency
 - Accessibility

HOW WE INTERACT

- **Minister's office**
 - Informed and evidence-based advice and recommendations
- **Veterans Affairs Canada**
 - Arm's length relationship
 - Collaborative approach
- **Veterans community**
 - Ongoing dialogue with Veterans organizations
 - Veterans Ombudsman Advisory Council
 - Outreach to Veterans community
- **Elected officials**
 - Appearances before parliamentary committees
 - Outreach to MPs and municipal leaders

VETERAN POPULATION



One Veteran

CASES 2012-2013



- **Issues:** health care benefits, disability pensions and awards, Veterans Review and Appeal Board, Veterans Independence Program, New Veterans Charter
- **One case can help hundreds:** one complaint about the Exceptional Incapacity Allowance resulted in 600 Veterans getting \$14 million in retroactive payments
- **Individual cases help us identify systemic issues:** narrow interpretation of policies, inadequate decision letters, etc.

One Veteran

OUR INTERVENTIONS

Systemic Reviews Suite of Reports

- **Procedural fairness in disability benefits process**
 - *Veterans' Right to Know Reasons for Decisions* (2012)
 - *Veterans' Right to Fair Adjudication* (VRAB) (2012)
 - *Veterans' Right to Disclosure* (2013)
 - Application process overall (2013)

OUR INTERVENTIONS (2)

- **New Veterans Charter Review**

- *Published review*

- New Veterans Charter (NVC) (6 months prior to final)*

- *Systemic Report "Investing in Veterans Vocational Training)*

- *Systemic Report "Improving the New Veterans Charter*

- *Systemic Report " The Actuarial Analysis (NVC)"*

OUR INTERVENTIONS (3)

Other Published reviews

- Long Term Care
- Veterans Independence Program (Upcoming)

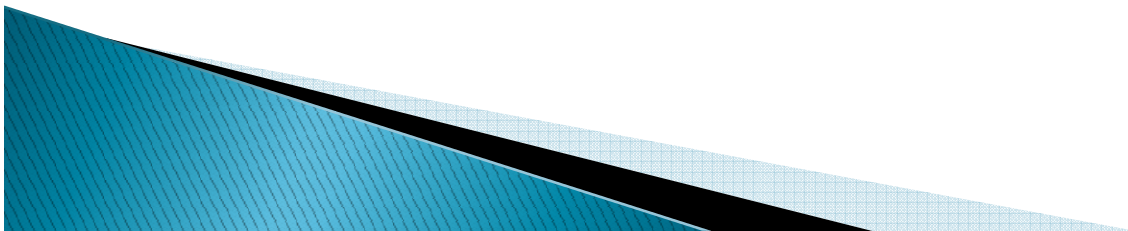
- **Raising awareness of Veterans' contributions to their communities**

- Ongoing outreach to mayors
- Best municipal practices

- **Reporting on issues and work of the Office**

- Annual reports

QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION





We can't help unless we hear from you!

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EXAMPLE OF INTERPRETING LEGISLATION

Canadian Forces/Veterans Affairs Canada Program Relationships

