

Invisible No More: June 12, 2025 – The First Anniversary of the Parliamentary Report on Canadian Women Veterans

Canadian women Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) have long served their country with distinction.* Many are thriving in civilian life: leading in their communities, serving others, and building successful new careers. While we honour their success, we must also stay focused on our shared responsibility to leave no Veteran behind. Despite now numbering nearly 100,000, the unique needs and experiences of women Veterans can still be systemically overlooked.

On June 12, 2024, the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) tabled a landmark report: *Invisible No More. The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans*. This comprehensive study, based on 23 meetings and nearly 100 testimonies, identified challenges uniquely faced by women Veterans and proposed actionable solutions. This summary highlights the report's key findings, testimonies, and recommendations, celebrating progress while underscoring the work ahead.



Key Findings and Testimonies

Despite recent improvements, women Veterans in Canada continue to face distinct sex- and gender-specific challenges:

- **Invisibility and lack of tailored supports.** Many women Veterans report feeling unseen and underserved. This invisibility affects access to appropriate health care, mental health services, government benefits, and community resources.
- **Health disparities.** Women Veterans experience higher rates of chronic pain, migraines, gastrointestinal issues, fibromyalgia, depression, anxiety, and PTSD compared to other Veterans.
- **Trauma.** Diverse sources of trauma include combat, vehicle/airplane accidents, and childbirth. Sexual assaults, workplace harassment, and discrimination also can contribute to the long-term physical, mental, and spiritual health impacts of trauma. These experiences increase risks of suicidality and homelessness for women Veterans compared to other groups.
- **Intersectional barriers.** Women Veterans who are racialized, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQI+, or part of other marginalized groups face compounded risks of discrimination and poor outcomes. Indigenous Veterans also report unique challenges accessing culturally appropriate care.

*Our use of the term “women Veterans” includes CAF and RCMP members who self-identify as women or have sex-specific medical needs.



- **Economic challenges.** Within three years of release, women Veterans experience a 17–22% income drop, while men Veterans' incomes remain stable.
- **Caregiving disparities.** Women Veterans are more likely to be caregivers and less likely to have someone providing care for them, compared to men Veterans.

Woman Veterans' testimonies revealed resilience and a powerful call for more institutional recognition. One Veteran described a particularly severe sexual assault that occurred during her basic training, which led to multiple untreated health issues and eventually resulted in homelessness. Her powerful account, like those of many others, underscores the ongoing need for urgent systemic reform. Testimony highlights can be found in this compilation by *Esprit de Corps* magazine and the Transforming Military Cultures (TMC) Network: <https://shorturl.at/Fd7QG>.



Key Recommendations

The ACVA report includes 42 recommendations. Among the most urgent are those that call for culture change, targeted services, and institutional accountability:

- **Strategic research and data collection.** Launch a long-term research program to study women Veterans' health, social, and economic needs across their lifespans.
- **Women-specific services and supports.** Ensure access to women's health specialists for serving members. Update Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) policies to address conditions specific to military and RCMP women and those predominantly experienced by them.
- **Services for uniformed personnel impacted by sexual trauma.** Expand trauma-informed care, peer support, and legal services for all those impacted by sexual misconduct. Design VAC claim processes to minimize re-traumatization.
- **Targeted housing and economic supports.** Provide targeted housing programs, such as subsidized rentals, and career transition programs to prevent homelessness and address economic disparities. Include retraining options that better reflect women's experiences and skills.
- **National recognition.** Create more national monuments honouring women Veterans.
- **Institutional accountability.** Issue a formal government acknowledgement and apology to women for the leadership culture that enabled workplace sexual misconduct to persist.





Conclusion: Celebrating Progress and Committing to Action

The ACVA's study recommendations are a critical step toward justice for Canada's women Veterans. True progress depends on meaningful, Veteran-led implementation of the report's 42 recommendations to ensure equitable support and recognition for all Veterans.

This work is about more than policy—it is also about healing institutional betrayal and empowering previously silenced voices. By addressing these longstanding inequities, the Canadian government can help all Veterans move from surviving to thriving, especially women Veterans. Readers are encouraged to read the report, share its findings, and watch the individual testimonies. Join us in ensuring *no Veterans, including women, are left behind*.



Next Steps

A Veteran-centred participatory research study is underway to examine the lessons learned from this ACVA report and to assess implementation progress of its 42 recommendations. Preliminary findings, including a public “Report Card” on implementation progress, will be released by June 12, 2026—the second anniversary of the report's tabling.

This joint effort between Veterans and researchers aims to strengthen government and community support for Canadian women Veterans past, present, and future.
#WomenVeterans #InvisibleNoMore

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Suggested citation: Eichler, M., & Breeck, K. (2025). *Invisible No More: June 12, 2025 – The first anniversary of the Parliamentary Report on Canadian women Veterans* [Briefing note]. Centre for Social Innovation and Community Engagement in Military Affairs (SICEMA), Mount Saint Vincent University.

This research project, “Invisible No More: Canadian Women Veterans Moving the ACVA Report Recommendations to Full Implementation,” is supported by funding from Veterans Affairs Canada and from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

