

The History of Serving and Veteran Women in Canada: *Canadian Armed Forces*

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Scope and approach

The Invisible No More (INM) team presents this chronology as a shared basis for work on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) report recommendations. It highlights policy, service, health, research, engagement and leadership milestones affecting serving and former military women in Canada. It complements the RCMP chronology document the team has developed while recognizing each community's distinct institutions and service experiences. It is not a complete history. Verification notes identify uncertain details; entries distinguish milestones from demonstrated implementation and outcomes.

Appendices

- A — Acronyms and abbreviations
- B — Military and Veteran women's representation over time
- C — Leadership and champion roles for women
- D — References and resources

Chronology

Date	Canadian Women's Milestone	Why It Matters / Detail
1885	First to serve with military	Women serve as nurses with Canadian forces during the North-West campaign.
1899– 1908	Nursing Sisters receive relative officer rank; first nursing matron	During the South African War, Nursing Sisters receive the relative rank, pay and allowances of an army lieutenant. This status does not confer the full command powers of a commissioned officer. In 1908, Georgina Fane Pope becomes the first matron of the Canadian Army Medical Corps nursing service.
1914– 1918	First World War	More than 2,800 military nurses serve during the First World War, mostly overseas. In 1917, the Military Voters Act enfranchises women serving in the military, including Nursing Sisters; eligibility rests on military service, rather than commissioned rank.
1941– 1946	Second World War	About 50,000 women serve in the CWAC, RCAF Women's Division and WRCNS, alongside more than 4,000 military nurses. The wartime women's services disband in 1946, and most women leave military service.

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Jun. 2, 1941	First military Veteran elected to Parliament	Cora Taylor Casselman, identified in the cited Esprit de Corps history as a First World War army nurse, wins election as MP for Edmonton East. The parliamentary record confirms her election date; her military service and the associated "first" remain subject to service-record verification.
Aug. 1941	First medical officer	Dr. Jean Platt Davey becomes the first woman physician commissioned in the medical branch of a Canadian armed force. She helps organize and oversee medical care for RCAF servicewomen; she does not command the entire Women's Division.
1942	Continued limits on nursing officers' command authority	The official Army medical history records that nursing officers command personnel placed under them but have no individual powers of punishment. They may sit on courts-martial involving members of their own service but may not preside. Their commissioned officer status does not yet remove every restriction remaining on their military authority.
1942	What these changes mean	Separate measures establish or clarify women's commissioned status across the services. They apply to women selected as officers, not to every woman who enlists. Commissioning, command authority and access to military occupations are all treated distinctly: these dates do not establish unrestricted equality across all roles.
Feb. 3, 1942	Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Women's Division	Order in Council P.C. 790 renames the CWAAF as the RCAF Women's Division. This name change precedes the separate order authorizing officer commissions.
Mar. 5, 1942	Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) women's officer commissions	Order in Council P.C. 1658 authorizes women selected as officers in the RCAF Women's Division to hold commissions as RCAF officers. It resolves doubt about their legal eligibility for commissions and takes effect retroactively from July 2, 1941.
Mar. 13, 1942	Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) women's officer commissions	Order in Council P.C. 1965 makes the CWAC part of the Active Militia and places it on active service, effective March 1, 1942. Women selected as officers may hold commissions and have legal officer status, subject to the applicable regulations.
May 15, 1942	Medical and nursing officer commissions	Order in Council P.C. 4059 authorizes commissions for women doctors and Nursing Sisters selected as officers in the Canadian Army and Air Force medical services. It grants the command powers of their rank, subject to government-prescribed restrictions. For nurses, it explicitly distinguishes this status from their earlier relative officer rank.
Jul. 31, 1942	Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS) and naval officer commissions	The WRCNS is established. Women selected as naval officers hold the King's commission, but their assignments remain shore-based, and employment opportunities remain restricted.
1951–1965	Military service re-opens for women, with restrictions	Cold War needs reopen limited Regular and Reserve positions for women, mainly in administrative, communications, medical and other support occupations. Restrictions on marriage, pregnancy and dependent children limit entry and continued service. In 1965, the government sets a ceiling of 1,500 women in the Regular Force, approximately 1.5% of its strength.

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1965–1974	First accepted into the Medical Officer Training Plan (MOTP)	Wendy Clay enters the MOTP in 1965, becomes first woman general-duty medical officer and flight surgeon. She qualifies for military pilot wings (non-operational) in 1974, a NATO first.
1967–1971	Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) challenges some key policy barriers	The RCSW reports in December 1970 and recommends removing unequal entry standards, occupational restrictions and compulsory release linked to marriage and motherhood. From 1971, policy changes permit married women to enroll and mothers to remain, remove the numerical ceiling and expand officer-training opportunities. The exact first enrollment date for women in the ROTP requires confirmation.
1978–1984	Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) continues to challenge; Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) responds with Servicewomen in Non-traditional Environments and Roles (SWINTER) trials	The CHRA takes effect in 1978 and requires justification of discriminatory employment restrictions through bona fide occupational requirements. A 1979 policy decision opens military colleges to women, with the first women entering in 1980. SWINTER trials assess women in selected previously closed roles and environments and identify the importance of leadership and organizational conditions to integration.
1985	Veteran women advocate for rights of serving women to Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights	A parliamentary committee reviews the implications of section 15 of the Charter. The Association for Women's Equity in the CF (AWECEF), co-founded by LCol (Ret'd) Shirley Robinson in 1985, advocates removing restrictions on women's employment. The CF argues for continued combat exclusions and restrictions on homosexual members. The resulting Toward Equality report links women's employment to operational effectiveness.
1987	First general/flag officer	BGen Sheila Hellstrom becomes the first woman Regular Force officer to reach general/flag officer rank. Commodore Laraine Orthlieb becomes the first woman Reserve Force flag officer in 1989.
1987–1991	Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) directs combat integration; Combat Related Employment of Women (CREW) changes purpose	Following the 1986 CF Charter Task Force, CREW trials begin in 1987; women enter combat occupations for the trials in 1988. In 1989, after considering testimony from CF leaders and veteran women members of the AWECEF, the CHRT ordered for CREW to cease being a trial and move to integration of women in all trades and environments except Submarines and Catholic faith padres. The integration was to be complete within 10 years. CREW officially closes in 1991.
1989	First Associate Minister of National Defence (MND)	Mary Collins holds the post from 1989 to 1993 and serves as Minister responsible for the Status of Women from 1990 to 1993. At a conference on Social Change and Defence, she highlights the challenges military leaders face in adapting to social change.
1990–1995; 1998–2001	Minister's Advisory Board (MAB) monitors integration	The MAB on the Integration of Women monitors the CHRT order from 1990 to 1995 and makes 90 recommendations concerning employment, training, physical standards, leadership, careers, recruitment, retention, harassment and health. A re-established MAB addresses gender integration and EE from 1998. Its final report in 2001 identifies a gap between plans and meaningful implementation.
1990 - ongoing	Defence research follows Servicewomen in Non-traditional Environments and Roles	A 1992 harassment survey and research through the 1990s and 2000s document harassment, attrition and career barriers. Military personnel researchers continue to develop sex-disaggregated evidence on recruitment, integration,

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	(SWINTER) and Combat Related Employment of Women (CREW)	careers, operational roles, retention and health to inform policy.
Jan. 4, 1993	First Minister of National Defence (MND) and Minister of Veterans Affairs (MVAC)	Kim Campbell becomes the first woman to hold both portfolios and serves until June 25, 1993. Anita Anand becomes the second woman MND in 2021 and serves until 2023. Ginette Petitpas Taylor serves as MVAC in 2023–2024, Élisabeth Brière from March 14 to May 13, 2025, and Jill McKnight from May 13, 2025.
1994 / Nov. 2002	Employment Equity Act (EEA) and Defence Women's Advisory Organization (DWAOW)	DND/CAF develops advisory-group arrangements to identify systemic barriers. The 1995 EEA provides for application to the CAF through regulations, which take effect in November 2002. In 1996, Major Sue Wigg becomes the founding military co-chair of the DWAOW; date requires confirmation.
1994	First Surgeon General First Major-General Rank	Wendy Clay becomes the first woman Major-General and the first woman Surgeon General in 1994. In 1996, she becomes the first woman Regular Force member appointed CMM, following Reserve Force Commodore Laraine Orthlieb in 1991.
1995	First Wing Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) appointment	Linda Smith becomes the first woman appointed Wing CWO, at 17 Wing Winnipeg. This is a senior appointment milestone, separate from the first promotion to CWO rank.
2001	Submarine service opens	Women become eligible for submarine service upon CAF's acquisition of Victoria-class submarines. This ends the operational exclusion retained in the 1989 CHRT decision. Official timelines identify 2001 as the opening of submarine service; some DND accounts distinguish an earlier policy announcement in 2000. Religious ordination requirements for Roman Catholic chaplains remain a separate issue.
2002	First Command Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) appointment	Camille Tkacz becomes the first woman appointed to a Command Chief position, serving as CWO for the Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Military).
2004–2009	Second (and Last) Surgeon General	Brigadier-General Hilary Jaeger serves as the second, and to date last, woman Surgeon General from 2004 to 2009.
Sept 2005	First racialized General or Flag officer	Andrea Siew becomes the first racialized woman and first woman in Intelligence Branch to wear General or Flag officer rank.
2008–ongoing	Defence Champions and employment equity (EE) advocacy — verification required	The draft identifies VAdm Drew Robertson (2008–2013), RAdm Jennifer Bennett (2013–2018), RAdm Rebecca Patterson (2018–2022), LGen Lise Bourgon (2022–2025) and LGen Jamie Speiser-Blanchet (from 2025) as successive champions. Earlier champions support EE advisory groups, including VAdm Greg Maddison. The full appointment chronology, role changes and introduction of separate CAF and DND champions in 2025 require formal confirmation.
2010	Department of National Defence (DND) and Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) join the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) National Action Plan	DND/CAF participates in Canada's first National Action Plan on WPS, launched in 2010 for 2011–2016. The plan connects defence policy, training and operations to the UN WPS agenda.
2011–2024	Representation rises, then stalls	Combined Regular Force and Primary Reserve representation: 15.0% (2011), 14.8% (Jan. 2014), 14.9% (2015–16), 16.3% (2020–21) and 16.6% (Dec. 2024). In Dec.

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		2024, women are 16.3% of the Regular Force and 17.4% of the Primary Reserve. Verification required: the representation snapshot below gives 14.8% for 2011. Reconcile source dates and populations before publication.
Apr. 30, 2015	Deschamps report on sexual misconduct and sexual harassment	The CAF publicly releases Marie Deschamps's External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces, dated March 27, 2015. It identifies a sexualized culture hostile to women and LGBTQ members and makes ten recommendations, including an independent centre for reporting, support and accountability. Major-General Christine Whitecross leads the initial CAF response.
May 26, 2015	First Lieutenant-General	Christine Whitecross becomes the first woman promoted to lieutenant-general and in June 2015 the first woman to command Military Personnel Command.
Oct. 19, 2015	Women Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Veterans enter Parliament	Former RCAF officers LCol (Ret'd) Karen McCrimmon and Captain (Ret'd) Leona Alleslev win election as MPs for Kanata—Carleton and Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.
2016	Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) directs Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) support to Women, Peace and Security (WPS)	The CDS directs support for WPS objectives, including integration of GBA Plus into policy and planning.
2016-2022	Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) (SSMCAF)	Statistics Canada administers the SSMCAF in 2016, 2018 and 2022. It measures sexual assault, unwanted sexualized behaviour and discriminatory behaviour; not every measured behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
2017	Strong, Secure, Engaged (SSE) defence policy sets a representation target	DND publishes SSE, including a commitment to increase women's representation in the CAF toward 25.1% by 2026. This is a policy target, not an achieved result.
2018–ongoing	Women-focused Veteran initiatives receive funding	VAC's Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund begins supporting women specific Veteran research and service initiatives.
2018	First person with a military nursing background promoted to General or Flag Officer	Rebecca Patterson becomes the first person with a military nursing background to reach general or flag officer rank. She retires as a Rear-Admiral in 2022.
2019	Women's health advisor to the Surgeon General	Col Helen Wright serves as women's health advisor to the Surgeon General, providing an early CFHS focal point for women's and diversity health.
May 2019	First Women Veterans Forum	VAC convenes about 60 participants in Charlottetown, bringing attention to women Veterans' sex- and gender-specific experiences.
Jul. 2019 / Mar. 2020	Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans	VAC creates the office in July 2019 and announces it publicly in March 2020. It addresses systemic barriers in policy, programs and services and initially works alongside the GBA Plus function. Its name later changes to the Office of Women and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans.
Nov. 25, 2019	Heyder-Beattie Class Action settlement	The Federal Court approves the CAF–DND sexual misconduct settlement, providing up to \$900 million in compensation, a restorative engagement program and policy measures. More than 25,000 people submit claims; the draft's estimate of the proportion of women requires a dated administrator source.

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Nov. 2019	First combat-arms Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) in the Primary Reserve	Margaret Stawarz becomes CWO, Regimental Sergeant Major of the Toronto Scottish Regiment.
Fall 2020	Second Women Veterans Forum	VAC holds virtual Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans engagement series.
2020	Canadian Forces Health Services (CFHS) women's-health program development begins—verification required	CFHS begins developing proposals for a long-term program to improve the health, well-being and occupational performance of women and members with diverse identity factors in the military environment.
2021–2022	Heyder-Beattie Settlement-mandated Schedule N and O reports	Survivor-informed reports recommend stronger support, engagement, research, representation, workplace redesign, education and accountability. Reports address challenges faced by women and men in the CAF.
2021–ongoing	Cross departmental research coordination starts with Canadian Military Women's Research Interest Group (CMWRIG)	CMWRIG, led by Dr. Karen Breeck, organized through WREN, brings researchers, government partners and women with lived experience together to share emerging work, identify gaps and improve research coordination. This external run body evolved to a government run body in 2023
2021	Canadian Forces Health Services (CFHS) commits to addressing systemic health barriers—verification required	CFHS prioritizes action on systemic health barriers affecting women and members with diverse identity factors. According to Col (Ret'd) Helen Wright, the Surgeon General's annual strategic plan prioritizes a sustained proposal, with support from then Acting Chief of Military Personnel LGen Lise Bourgon. Formal records remain to be confirmed.
Apr. 29, 2021	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) is established	DND/CAF creates CPCC, led by LGen Jennie Carignan, to coordinate work on professional conduct and organizational culture.
Sep.–Oct. 2021	Research field-building publications	The Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health publish a special issue on sex, gender and intersectionality, guest edited by Maya Eichler. The OVO publishes Megan Poole's scoping review of women CAF and RCMP Veterans, documenting evidence gaps.
Dec. 2021	Women's health added into mandate letter for Minister of National Defence (MND)	The mandate letter directs modernization of the CAF health system and appropriate care for women and diverse members.
Apr. 7, 2022	Federal Budget 2022 dedicates funding to military women's health	Federal Budget 2022 includes a specific funding line for CAF health services and physical-fitness programs responsive to women and gender-diverse military personnel: \$144.3 million over five years, beginning in 2022–23, and \$31.6 million annually thereafter. The commitment explicitly directs federal funding toward their health and fitness needs.
May 30, 2022	Arbour Independent External Comprehensive Review	The review makes 48 recommendations on misconduct, justice, complaints, recruitment, education, leadership, oversight and accountability. It applies across genders.
Nov. 2022	Treasury Board approves Women and Diversity Health and Fitness funding—verification required	Treasury Board approves DND funding to expand CAF health services and physical-fitness programs, so they are more responsive to women and gender-diverse military personnel, operationalizing the investment announced in Budget 2022.
Nov. 2022	National research gap analysis	Maya Eichler, Megan Poole, Kimberley Smith-Evans, and Leigh Spanner publish Advancing Canadian Research on

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		Servicewomen and Women Veterans. Funded through the CIMVHR–True Patriot Love Research Initiative, it calls for coordinated, longitudinal, sex- and gender-informed research.
Nov. 21, 2022	First Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Veteran appointed to the Senate	Rear-Admiral (Ret'd) Rebecca Patterson becomes the first woman CAF Veteran appointed to the Senate, representing Ontario.
2023	Dedicated Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) women's and diversity health function	CFHS formalizes a dedicated women's and diversity health function led by Col Helen Wright, building on advisory and program-development work underway since 2019.
2023 / Mar. 28, 2024	Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) joins Canada's third Women, Peace and Security (WPS) National Action Plan	VAC joins as the tenth federal implementing partner in Canada's third National Action Plan on WPS (2023–2029), launched on March 28, 2024. VAC and DND/CAF publish implementation plans, connecting departmental commitments with the wider federal agenda.
2023–2026	Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) health champion	VAC appoints Capt(N) (Ret'd) Cyd Courchesne "Champion of Women Veterans' Health"; by March 2025, the title evolves to "Women and 2SLGBTQI+ Health Champion".
Feb. 1, 2023	First Military Women's Health Workshop	The Canadian Embassy in Washington hosts a Canada–U.S. workshop to build military women's-health collaboration.
Feb. 9 and 16, 2023	Third Women Veterans Forum	VAC holds virtual and hybrid Women and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans Forum sessions.
May 2023	Atlas convenes the Athena Project working group	The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families convenes a working group of women CAF and RCMP Veterans within its Athena Project. Women Veterans and researchers collaborate on study questions, survey measures and recruitment to examine women Veterans' health, access to care and well-being. The work builds on consultations with women Veterans in fall 2022.
Jun. 22, 2023	First woman combat-arms Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) in the Regular Force	Deborah Attrux becomes the first woman from the combat arms to attain CWO in the Regular Force.
Dec. 2023–Jan. 2025	Women Veterans Council (WVC) Created	The MVAC announces plans for a WVC at ACVA in December 2023 and makes a public announcement in March 2024. Applications open on June 10, 2024, before the ACVA report is tabled on June 12. Twelve members are named on December 2, 2024; the Council first meets in January 2025.
Mar. 7–8, 2024	Fourth Women Veterans Forum	VAC holds a hybrid Women Veterans Forum in Montréal.
By Jun. 2024	Atlas includes a woman Veteran in a lived-experience staff role	Atlas identifies CAF Veteran Tabitha Beynen as a Lived Experience Lead supporting the Athena Project and other research.
Jun. 12, 2024	Invisible No More (INM) report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA)	ACVA tables INM. The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans, with 42 recommendations concerning research, health, transition, benefits, recognition, data and accountability.
Jul. 18, 2024	First Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS)	General Jennie Carignan assumes command as CDS and becomes the first woman to lead the CAF.

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Aug. 21, 2024	First woman Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Command Chief Warrant Officer (CWO)	Renee Hansen becomes the first environmental Command CWO, a service's senior NCM appointment.
Oct. 7, 2024	Women and Gender-Diverse Fitness and Wellness Program	CFMWS launches the Women and Gender-Diverse Physical Fitness and Wellness Program, with support relating to pregnancy, postpartum recovery, menopause, physical health and operational readiness.
Oct. 10, 2024	Government responds to "Invisible No More (INM)" Parliamentary Report	The Government tables its response to all 42 recommendations: 29 agreed to, nine agreed to in principle, three noted and one rejected on DND's advice.
Oct. 18, 2024	First Military Menopause Symposium	The Defence Team frames menopause as a health, workplace, retention and readiness issue.
Oct. 23, 2024	Women Veterans' well-being keynote	At CIMVHR Forum, Dr. Dawne Vogt (US) calls for a wider lens on the mental health and well-being of women and men Veterans.
Oct. 28, 2024	Second Parliamentary Reception Honouring Women Veterans	MPs Rachel Blaney and Luc Desilets host the second annual Parliament Hill reception recognizing women Veterans and sustaining cross-party attention following the report.
2025–2028	Invisible No More (INM) implementation project receives funding	The MSVU-led project receives support from the VAC Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund, a SSHRC Insight Grant and a DND Research Initiative supplement through the SSHRC–DRDC partnership. Research and engagement support implementation of the 42 INM recommendations.
2025	Library of Parliament publication on women veterans	"Women and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans in Canada" report consolidates demographics, service experiences, health and well-being evidence, programs and parliamentary developments.
Feb. 5–6, 2025	Warrior Care Conference	CFHS rep Col Helen Wright hosts more than 75 virtual presentations, including a women Veterans-specific presentation by Cdr (Ret'd) Cyd Courchesne.
Mar. 2025	Fifth Women Veterans Forum	VAC holds a hybrid Women Veterans Forum in Ottawa.
Jun. 12, 2025	First anniversary of the Invisible No More (INM) report	INM representatives meet with the MVAC on the first anniversary of the parliamentary report to maintain attention on implementation of its 42 recommendations.
Jul. 10, 2025	First woman to lead a military environment as RCAF Commander and Chief of the Air Staff	LGen Jamie Speiser-Blanchet assumes command of the RCAF and becomes Chief of the Air Staff. She becomes the first woman to lead the Air Force, one of the CAF's three military environments—Army, Navy and Air Force.
Sep. 2025	CAF women's-health reorganization—verification required	The function reportedly moves to Force Health Protection under DND Physician Dr. Nour Shehata.
Oct. 30, 2025	Women Veterans Engage-Ottawa	The INM project brings 30 women from across Canada together to review the report and its recommendations.
Oct. 30, 2025	National Association of Federal Retirees (NAFR) honours women Veterans	NAFR hosts a Parliament Hill reception following its Women Veterans Engage Ottawa workshop, connecting CAF and RCMP women Veterans with parliamentarians.
Nov. 3, 2025	Third Parliamentary Reception Honouring Women Veterans	MP Alana Hirtle co-hosts a reception on Parliament Hill to honour and celebrate women Veterans.

Date	Canadian Women's Milestone	Why It Matters / Detail
Jan. 13–14, 2026	VAC Women Veterans Council (WVC) resignations	According to project participants' account, five CAF Veteran members resign collectively after meeting with the MVAC, citing limited meaningful engagement and communication with the community. The exact dates and collective reasons require a public or authorized documentary source.
Apr. 13, 2026	Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence (CPCoE) research roundtable	The CPCoE convenes a women Veterans' roundtable and produces a subsequent report. The exact meeting date requires confirmation against the event record.
Jun. 9–10, 2026	Sixth Women Veterans Forum	VAC and DND/CAF co-host a hybrid forum in Ottawa. The event dates require confirmation against the final program.
Add start date	Parliamentary Veterans Friendship Group Meeting	MP Anita Vandenbeld and Senator Rebecca Patterson co-chair the Parliamentary Veterans Friendship Group.
Jun. 12, 2026	Second anniversary of the Invisible No More (INM) Report —ministerial and parliamentary engagement	INM project representatives meet with the MVAC and the Parliamentary Veterans Friendship Group. Two Members' Statements in the House of Commons also draw attention to the report and its implementation.
Sep. 24, 2026	Women Veterans Council (WVC) releases its first annual report	The WVC releases its first annual report, covering December 2024 to December 2025 and describing governance and communication challenges. Its reporting period ends before the January 2026 resignations; the publication date requires confirmation against the release record.
Oct. 18, 2026	Invisible No More (INM) and Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) research roundtable	The INM project and CIMVHR plan a national research roundtable in Halifax for October 18, 2026. It aims to advance ACVA Recommendation 1 through decisions on governance, research priorities, coordination, funding, accountability and actions, building on existing capacity. As of this draft, the event remains forthcoming.

Appendix A: Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACVA — House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

AWECF — Association for Women's Equity in the Canadian Forces

AWSE — Acting while so employed

CAF — Canadian Armed Forces

Capt — Captain

Cdr — Commander

CDS — Chief of the Defence Staff

CF — Canadian Forces

CFHS — Canadian Forces Health Services

CFMWS — Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services

CHRA — Canadian Human Rights Act

CHRC — Canadian Human Rights Commission

CHRT — Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

CIMVHR — Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research

CMM — Commander of the Order of Military Merit

CMWRIG — Canadian Military Women's Research Interest Group

COATS — Cadet Organizations Administration and Training Service

Col — Colonel

CPCC — Chief Professional Conduct and Culture

CPCoE — Chronic Pain Centre of Excellence

CPO1 — Chief Petty Officer 1st Class

CPO2 — Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class

CREW — Combat Related Employment of Women

CWAAF — Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force

CWAC — Canadian Women's Army Corps

CWO — Chief Warrant Officer

DGMPRA — Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis

DND — Department of National Defence

DRDC — Defence Research and Development Canada

DWAO — Defence Women's Advisory Organization

EE — Employment equity

GBA Plus — Gender-Based Analysis Plus

INM — Invisible No More

LCol — Lieutenant-Colonel

LGBTQ — Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer

LGen — Lieutenant-General
MAB — Minister's Advisory Board
MND — Minister of National Defence
MOTP — Military Officer Training Plan
MP — Member of Parliament
MSVU — Mount Saint Vincent University
MVAC — Minister of Veterans Affairs
MWO — Master Warrant Officer
NAFR — National Association of Federal Retirees
NATO — North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCM — Non-commissioned member
OVO — Office of the Veterans Ombudsman
P.C. — Privy Council (Order in Council identifier)
RAdm — Rear-Admiral
RCAF — Royal Canadian Air Force
RCMP — Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RCSW — Royal Commission on the Status of Women
Ret'd — Retired
ROTP — Regular Officer Training Plan
SSE — Strong, Secure, Engaged
SSHRC — Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
SSMCAF — Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces
SWINTER — Servicewomen in Non-Traditional Environments and Roles
UN — United Nations
US — United States
VAC — Veterans Affairs Canada
VAdm — Vice-Admiral
WPS — Women, Peace and Security
WRCNS — Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service
WREN — Women Veterans Research and Engagement Network
WVC — Women Veterans Council

NCM leadership: CWO corresponds to CPO1, and MWO corresponds to CPO2. Promotion to a rank and appointment as a wing or command chief are distinct milestones. The earliest woman MWO across all trades remains unconfirmed. Distinguish trade-specific firsts from CAF-wide firsts.

Appendix B: Representation of Military and Veteran Women

1971–1999 figures refer to the Regular Force; 2011–2024 figures combine the Regular Force and Primary Reserve.

Year	Percent	Number	Notes
1971	1.8%	1,600	RCSW recommendations (1970)
1978	5.9%	4,986	CHRA
1985	8.9%	7,467	
1989	9.9%	8,641	CHRT
1999	10.8%	6,664	1990s defence reductions
2011	14.8%	12,677	
2013	14.8%	14,251	
2015	15.0%	13,908	Deschamps report, Mar 2015
2017	15.2%	14,132	
2021	16.3%	15,582	CAF commits to addressing health barriers; research released specific to veteran women
2024	16.6%	14,132*	Committee report “Invisible No More” tabled in Parliament
* Combined PRes/Reg percentage; however, PRes numbers not currently available (verification required)			

Veteran Women’s representation snapshot

This snapshot compares the 2021 Census with VAC client figures from March 2022. The dates, coverage and gender/sex categories differ, so cross-source percentages are illustrative rather than measures of eligibility or unmet need.

Population / Measure	Women’s Representation	VAC Reach
Canadian military Veterans (2021 Census)	74,935 of 461,240 Veterans are Women+ (16.2%).	VAC serves 118,820 CAF Veteran clients in March 2022—about 25.8% of the Census Veteran population. Its 14,009 female CAF clients equal about 18.7% of the enumerated Women+ Veteran population. Both percentages are approximate because the classifications and dates differ.
Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Veterans	No authoritative public denominator by sex is available in the cited sources for the full living former-RCMP population.	VAC serves 19,135 RCMP Veteran clients in March 2022; 3,220 are female (16.8% of its RCMP Veteran clients). The percentage of all RCMP Veterans who are VAC clients cannot be calculated without a population denominator.
Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) Veteran clients (March 2022)	17,229 of 137,955 CAF and RCMP Veteran clients are female (12.5%).	This is VAC client representation, not the share of all CAF and RCMP Veterans reached by VAC.

Appendix C: Leadership and Champion Roles Specific for Women

These are distinct functions: Defence Champions advocate across the Defence Team; CAF health leaders hold policy or clinical responsibilities; VAC's health champion is departmental; and the WVC is advisory. Appointment dates and current incumbents below remain subject to formal-record verification.

Role	Officeholder(s) and Period
Defence Champion for Women	VAdm Drew Robertson (2008-13); RAdm Jennifer Bennett (2013–18); RAdm Rebecca Patterson (2018–22); LGen Lise Bourgon (2022–25).
Defence Champion for Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Women	LGen Jamie Speiser-Blanchet (2025-).
Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Women's-Health leadership	Col Helen Wright—Women's health advisor to the Surgeon General (2019); Directorate of Women and Diversity Health (2023–25) Dr. Nour Shehata (2025–)
Director, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) Office of Women Veterans and 2SLGBTQI+ Veterans	LCol (Ret'd) Christina Hutchings (2019-2021) Ms. Pamela Harrison (2021-25) Mr. Moussa Drame (2025-)
Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) Women Veterans' health champion	Capt(N)(Ret'd) Cyd Courchesne—"Champion of Women Veterans' Health" in 2023; then as "Women and 2SLGBTQI+ Health Champion" Mar 2025.
Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) Lead for the Invisible No More Project	Ms. Julie Drury is named as VAC lead for coordination on government implementation of the ACVA report recommendations on the experiences of women veterans.
Veteran Advocates	Women Veterans Research and Engagement Network Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada Various online military sexual trauma networks

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