

POR Number: 409-07
Contract Number: 51019-071031/001/CY
Award Date: 2008-02-08

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Canadian Perceptions and Attitudes around Remembrance

Prepared for Veterans Affairs Canada

information@vac-acc.gc.ca

Ce sommaire est aussi disponible en français.

March 2008



Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc.
1678 Bank Street, Ste. 2, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 7Y6
Tel: (613) 260-1700 Fax: (613) 260-1300 Email: info@phoenixspi.ca
www.phoenixspi.ca

This report is formatted for double-sided printing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary1
Conclusions and Implications8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) commissioned Phoenix SPI to undertake research related to Remembrance and commemoration in Canada. The main purpose of the research was to explore Remembrance-related issues with members of three audiences:

- Members of the general public.
- Former members of the Canadian Forces (CF) who joined after the Korean War.
- Educators.

The research consisted of four distinct elements:

- Focus groups with former CF members: A set of six focus groups was conducted March 4-6 2008 in three locations: Halifax, Montreal (French), and Edmonton. One group per city was held with former CF members who served in Special Duty Areas (SDAs), and the other with those who did not. There were at least five participants in each group, with most groups having eight participants.
- Survey of former CF members: In total, 225 interviews were conducted by telephone with former CF members March 8-13, 2008. The sample was drawn from VAC client lists.
- Survey of the general public: In total, 1,536 interviews were conducted by telephone with Canadian residents, 18 years of age and older, March 8-18, 2008.
- In-depth interviews with educators: A set of 31 in-depth telephone interviews was conducted with educators between March 17- May 2, 2008. Two different sets of educational materials were tested – Veterans Week learning materials and multimedia learning packages about Canada’s participation in the First World War, the Second World War, and the Korean War.

The focus groups and in-depth interviews were qualitative in nature, not quantitative. As such, the results provide an indication of participants’ views about the issues explored, but cannot be generalized to the full population of any of the groups involved (i.e. former CF members and educators).

The overall results for the survey of the general public can be considered to be accurate to within +/- 2.7%, 19 times out of 20. Since the sample used for the survey of former CF members was not a probability sample, no margin of error can be applied to the final results. Phoenix did not have access to a list that included all former CF members from which to draw a random sample. **This should be considered an exploratory survey, and is the first of its kind undertaken by VAC.**

Focus Group Results – Former CF Members

This part of the executive summary presents the results for the focus groups conducted with former CF members.

Self-Identity and Perceptions of ‘Veteran’

There was a consensus that anyone who served in combat during a war is a veteran, with many feeling that this is a necessary criterion. Many others, however, felt that additional experiences, most of which involve some level of danger or risk, also entitle one to be

called a veteran. This includes serving in a war zone or an active theatre of operations, serving in overseas missions, and serving in situations where one's life is at risk or one is under threat of harm or personal injury (e.g. clearing mines, search and rescue operations). Finally, some participants felt that the term veteran should designate everyone who served honourably in the Canadian Forces.

Most participants who did not serve in SDAs do not think of themselves as veterans, primarily because they did not serve in combat or in an active theatre of operations. On the other hand, most of those who served in SDAs considered themselves to be veterans or 'veteran-like' because of having shared experiences similar to those they consider to be 'real' veterans. That said, there was still some reluctance among those who served in SDAs to do so. In Montreal, the issue of self-identification was complicated by the existence of two expressions (i.e. 'vétérán' and 'ancien combattant'). The former was more acceptable to participants in terms of self-definition than the latter.

In the course of the discussion, however, self-perceptions tended to evolve so that, at the end of the day, the situation was as follows: Most participants saw themselves as veterans or were willing to accept this designation. Most of those who served in SDAs accepted this in an unqualified way. Some said they would accept qualified recognition as 'peacekeeping veterans' or 'veterans of peacekeeping operations'. Most of those who did not serve in SDAs were willing to accept the designation, though most accepted this reluctantly, with many saying they would be comfortable with qualified recognition as 'veterans of the Canadian Forces'.

There was a wide range of opinions, where many did not agree with the Government of Canada definition according to which all former CF members who have taken basic training and been honourably discharged are veterans. Disagreement with the GC definition was based primarily on the perception that it is too inclusive (i.e. it includes *all* former CF members, including those who have not even been with the Forces for three years).

Current and Future Participation in Remembrance Activities

Nearly all of the former CF members participate in Remembrance activities in their community. Typically, this involves participating in Remembrance Day ceremonies. Most said they participate as civilians, primarily because they do not think of themselves as veterans or do not want to be perceived as placing themselves in the same category as traditional veterans. Some, however, said they participate as veterans, or at least as former CF members. Those who served in SDAs were more likely to participate in ceremonies as veterans or ex-military.

Regardless of how they participate, nearly all of those who do said they feel that they are part of what the ceremonies are about. There was also a near unanimous sense of personal responsibility to make sure Canadians recognize and remember the accomplishments and sacrifices of veterans. Participants feel it is their duty to carry on the legacy of wartime veterans. This sense of personal responsibility manifested itself in a near unanimous willingness to take a more active role in Remembrance activities in the future.

While willing to take an active role in such activities, most of those who did not serve in SDAs said they would prefer to do so as former members of the Canadian Forces, not as 'modern-day veterans'. For their part, participants who served in SDAs were more willing to participate in such activities as veterans. Participants identified relatively few obstacles to their taking a more active role in Remembrance activities, the main one being not knowing where to start or what to do.

When it came to things they would be willing to do to take a more active role in Remembrance activities, many said they would be willing to help organize such activities, take part in poppy sales, and help get traditional veterans to and from Remembrance activities. Many also said they would be willing to talk about their experience in schools, but these were more likely to be participants who had served in SDAs. There was a willingness among most, albeit grudging for some, to be recognized as veterans at ceremonies. Participants who did not serve in SDAs were much more likely to be reluctant about this. Moreover, many specified that they would not be comfortable being singled out in any way, but that they would accept general or collective recognition.

Role of VAC

Asked what VAC could do to encourage them and other former CF members to take a more active role in Remembrance activities in future, participants routinely said that the department should stay in touch with them, and tell them what to do. Many also felt that making November 11th a statutory holiday would make it easier for them to participate and would also show that the government takes Remembrance seriously. More generally, some suggested that ensuring that former members of the Forces are recognized is the best way to encourage them to take a more active role. In other words, if they feel recognized and appreciated, they will be more willing to take an active role in such activities.

Asked what type of support or assistance from VAC would be needed in order to help them in this regard, many re-iterated that they would need clear guidance in terms of what is needed. Specific suggestions included presentation materials (e.g. background information on issues, templates for PowerPoint presentations), materials for distribution (e.g. posters, bookmarks, pins, poppies), training in public speaking, a document identifying activities and events for which assistance is required, and contact information for, or some way of connecting with, people who are looking for someone to speak about their experiences in the Canadian Forces (e.g. through a website bulletin board).

All focus group participants said they would be willing to stay in touch with VAC in order to be contacted about Remembrance in future. Asked about the best way for VAC to keep in touch with them, participants routinely identified the telephone and email, with regular mail also identified relatively frequently. While the departmental newsletter (i.e. *Salute*) was routinely identified as a way to keep in touch, it was seen as a way to maintain contact in a general as opposed to personal or individual way.

Survey Results – Former CF Members and the General Public

This part of the executive summary presents the results for the survey of former CF members and the survey of the general public.

Self-Image and Experiences of Former CF Members

Over three-quarters (79%) of the former CF members surveyed consider themselves to be veterans. Those who do most often pointed to their service with the CF (56%) or service overseas or in an SDA (37%) to explain why. Among those who do not consider themselves veterans, almost half (47%) said that they did not take serve in combat, while 28% pointed to lack of service overseas to explain why.

The vast majority of former CF members (93%) said they have a strong sense of pride in the contributions and sacrifices they made while serving their country. Moreover, 78% expressed *complete* agreement with this (using a 5-point scale). Underscoring this sense of pride, over three-quarters disagreed that their service with the CF did not involve accomplishments or sacrifices different from those made by people in other careers. There were more mixed views when it came to being designated a veteran. While 51% disagreed that they feel uncomfortable being called a veteran because their experiences do not compare with those of wartime veterans, 29% agreed that they are uncomfortable with this (19% neither agreed nor disagreed).

Perceptions of What Makes a Veteran

Former CF members and members of the public tended to agree that the main elements of what makes a veteran are service with the Forces, taking part in combat, and service overseas. Asked in an open-ended way to identify what makes a veteran, former CF members were most likely to identify having served with the CF (65% vs. 38% of the general public). They were also more than twice as likely to identify having served overseas (29% vs. 11% of the general public). For their part, members of the public were more likely to identify having taken part in combat (56% vs. 36% of former CF members).

Asked which of three definitions comes closest to defining who they think should be considered a veteran, over two-thirds of the general public (69%) and a majority of former CF members (56%) indicated that all former CF members who have been honourably discharged should be considered veterans, no matter where they served. Former CF members were almost twice as likely to identify traditional wartime veterans and those who served overseas (34% vs. 18% of the general public), while members of the general public were slightly more likely to identify traditional wartime veterans only (12% vs. 8% of former CF members).

Majorities of members of the general public and former CF members agreed that numerous factors should be part of what it means to be a veteran (using a similar 5-point scale). That said, the level of agreement varied. Former CF members were more likely to think the following should be part of what it means to be a veteran: receiving a lifelong injury in combat (95% vs. 86% of the public), taking part in peacekeeping operations (94% vs. 84%), receiving a lifelong injury from friendly fire or training (84% vs. 72%), helping keep peace during the Cold War (81% vs. 74%), and training hard and being prepared to sacrifice one's life (76% vs. 69%). Members of the general public and former CF members

and were similarly likely to think the following factors should be constitutive elements: making personal sacrifices to serve (77-78%), taking part in international humanitarian efforts (68-71%), and helping out during domestic crises (57-61%).

Perceptions of Remembrance and Related Issues

Three-quarters of the general public said they are at least somewhat familiar with the accomplishments and sacrifices made by Canada's veterans (26% said *very* familiar). As well, 78% said they are interested in learning more about this, though interest was much more likely to be moderate (53%) than strong (25%).

The vast majority of former CF members (90%) agreed that Canada's modern-day veterans are carrying on the traditions, values, and legacy of wartime veterans (using a 5-point scale). At the same time, just over two-thirds (68%) think the Canadian public does not understand or appreciate the contributions and sacrifices of these veterans, and nearly everyone (97%) believes that Canada's youth should be made aware of the accomplishments and sacrifices made by modern-day veterans.

Members of the general public tended to have similar perceptions on these issues. Three-quarters agreed that Canada's modern-day veterans are carrying on the traditions, values, and legacy of wartime veterans. Well over half (60%) think the Canadian public does not understand or appreciate the contributions/sacrifices of these veterans, and 89% believe that Canada's youth should be made aware of the accomplishments/sacrifices of modern-day veterans.

Asked to identify the most important things that should be remembered by Canadians about the contributions and sacrifices of modern-day veterans, members of the public were most likely to identify personal sacrifices made for others (26%), followed by readiness to sacrifice one's life (21%), and the level of global involvement through CF peacekeeping (14%). For their part, former CF members were most likely to point to the soldiers' personal sacrifices (32%), followed by service to Canada (29%), and readiness to sacrifice one's life (21%). Former CF members were much more likely to think that the private sector has a role to play in terms of engaging Canadians in Remembrance (90% vs. 70%).

Participation in Remembrance Activities

Nearly all former CF members (97%) said they feel at least a moderate amount of personal responsibility for recognizing the accomplishments/sacrifices of veterans, with 70% saying they feel a *great deal* of responsibility. In response to the same question, 78% of the public said they feel at least a moderate amount of personal responsibility for recognizing the accomplishments/sacrifices of veterans, with 38% saying they feel a *great deal* of responsibility.

Members of the general public were most likely to say they acknowledge the services of Canadian veterans by wearing a poppy (32%) or attending Remembrance activities (25%). Approximately one in ten said they do not do anything in this regard. Asked specifically how often they attend Remembrance Day ceremonies or watch or listen to them through the media, over half said they do so always (31%) or usually (22%). Conversely, 28% said they rarely or never attend or observe Remembrance ceremonies.

For their part, 64% of former CF members said they always participate in Remembrance activities, with another 24% saying they sometimes do; only 11% do not participate in Remembrance activities. Among those who do attend, 52% attend Remembrance activities as a veteran (vs. 47% who attend as members of the public).

A majority of former CF members (56%) said they were not aware of the VAC's Remembrance program that includes recognizing the contributions of CF veterans. Among the rest, one-quarter said unequivocally that they were aware of the program (another 18% were vaguely aware of it). Just over half (51%) of former CF members said they are prepared to take an active role in Remembrance activities, with an additional 36% willing to take a more active role depending on what they are asked to do.

Most of the former CF members willing to take a more active role were at least tentatively willing to take part in all of the specific activities presented to them, although the level of interest varied considerably from activity to activity. Expressions of *definite* interest were highest for speaking to youth/school children about their service with the CF (44%) and taking part in organizing Remembrance activities (43%). It was lower in relation to speaking to the general public about one's service with the CF or being recognized as a veteran at Remembrance ceremonies (36% each). Former CF members were least likely to express definite interest in having their stories told at Remembrance ceremonies (26%). More generally, the vast majority of former CF members (88%) are interested in staying in touch with VAC as members of the veterans' community.

Government's Role in Remembrance

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of eight activities in terms of engaging Canadians on veterans' issues (using a 5-point scale; 1 = not at all effective, 5 = very effective). Majorities of former CF members and members of the public rated most of these activities as effective (scores of 4-5), though former CF members were somewhat more likely to do so. This includes creating and supplying learning materials for schools (77% of former CF members vs. 67% of the public), supporting youth organizations (76% vs. 61%), taking youth overseas to battlefields/commemoration activities (74% vs. 58%), taking veterans overseas to battlefields/commemoration activities (72% vs. 53%), and helping communities organize Remembrance activities (72% vs. 59%).

Members of the public and former CF members offered similar assessments for creating and supplying of learning materials (71-73%), but former CF members were much more likely to rate an innovative website as effective (68% vs. 49%). Fewer than half of the members of the public and former CF members rated printing pamphlets and posters as effective.

When considering which term better describes activities that honour the contributions and sacrifices of veterans, Canadians were more likely to point to 'Remembrance' (61%), rather than 'Commemoration' (24%). Twelve percent volunteered both work fine.

Educational Materials

Because reaction to these resources was strongly positive among educators, the focus will be on suggestions for improvement and ways to increase use of the resources, and these can be found in the conclusions and implications.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Survey and Focus Groups – Former CF Members and the General Public

Presented below are some of the main conclusions and implications that flow from the focus group and survey results. It should be reiterated that the focus of the research was on Remembrance, and how related policies and programs can remain relevant in future. As such, the findings cannot be directly applied to other aspects of VAC's mandate, benefits or departmental programs.

What Makes a Veteran?

The survey results suggest that members of the general public and former CF members tend to share certain basic assumptions regarding veterans and issues related to veterans. Clear majorities in both communities selected the broad, inclusive definition of a veteran as coming closest to their view of who should be considered a veteran. Significantly, most of the rest, particularly former CF members, would include modern-day veterans who have served overseas (but not all former CF members), while few picked the most restrictive option – traditional wartime veterans. As well, majorities of both groups (i.e. former CF members and members of the public) agreed with each of the potential criteria that were assessed being included in what it means to be a veteran, and offered similar rankings of the various factors.

Not only do most members of both communities share similar views about who is a veteran, they tend to agree with the definition used by the Government of Canada. Here it is important to recall that while most participants in the focus groups with veterans felt the government's definition was too broad, their disagreement with the definition was not so much that it includes former CF members, but rather that it includes *all* former CF members, including those who have not even been with the Forces for three years. In short, there is no major disagreement on the basic question of who is a veteran.

That said, while former CF members overall are receptive to the government's inclusive definition of a veteran, some differences do exist. Former CF members who served overseas or have been in combat are more likely to see such experiences as integral to defining what it means to be a veteran. Meanwhile, former CF members who did not serve overseas, although in agreement with the importance of the aforementioned factors, also point to the demanding training, commitment to protecting the country, and personal sacrifices in terms of what defines a Canadian veteran.

The extent to which the inclusive definition of a veteran resonated among former CF members was underscored by the fact that over three-quarters of them said they consider themselves to be veterans, the main reason being that they served in a branch of the CF, followed by having served overseas. While former CF members who did not serve in an SDA were much less likely to view themselves as veterans and more likely to express discomfort at being called a veteran because their experiences do not compare to those of wartime veterans, they were nevertheless *more* likely to embrace the inclusive definition of 'veteran'. To be clear, then, even those former CF members who are less likely to see themselves as veterans embraced the more inclusive definition of 'veteran' and positively acknowledged the various factors that go into defining who is a veteran.

This speaks to the value of VAC referring to modern-day veterans in a collective manner, rather than in a more individualistic or singling-out manner. Many former CF members will be uncomfortable with the latter, in part because they do not see their experiences as comparing to wartime veterans. However, it appears that virtually all former CF members would be comfortable with the former – i.e. being included in a ‘community of veterans’. For many, including those who do not see themselves as veterans, being included as part of Canada’s veterans community for Remembrance purposes is linked to the personal responsibility they feel for Remembrance, and represents a continuation of their service to Canada – i.e. they are willing to be included as a veteran because this is what is best for Canada, where modern-day veterans need to carry on the legacy of wartime veterans.

Related to this, both the survey and focus group results underscore the importance of appropriate positioning or ‘labelling’ – terms such as ‘modern-day veterans’ or ‘former CF members’ work well, while ‘wartime veterans’ does not. This is particularly important in French, where the term ‘vétérán’ is deemed to be much more appropriate than ‘ancien combattant’.

There was also widespread agreement in both communities that Canada’s modern-day veterans are carrying on the traditions, values, and legacy of wartime veterans and that youth should be made aware of the accomplishments and sacrifices of these veterans. Majorities in each community also agreed that the Canadian public does not understand or appreciate the contributions of these veterans. In other words, majorities in both communities think there is a knowledge gap when it comes to the recognition of the accomplishments and sacrifices of Canada’s veterans in the post-Korean War era.

Remembrance

The findings also suggest that issues related to Remembrance resonate both with the general public and former CF members. Like their counterparts in the focus groups, the vast majority of surveyed ex-CF members regularly take part in Remembrance activities, although only about half do so as veterans. Moreover, virtually everyone feels personal responsibility to make sure Canadians recognize and remember the accomplishments and sacrifices of Canada’s veterans. This was underscored by the fact that most are willing to take a more active role in Remembrance activities and the large majority is willing to stay in touch with VAC as members of the veterans’ community.

Receptivity to, and interest in, Remembrance among members of the general public was evident in the fact that over three-quarters expressed interest in learning more about Canada’s veterans (even though three-quarters said they are at least somewhat familiar with the accomplishments and sacrifices of Canada’s veterans). What is even more important is that most Canadians feel personally responsible for acknowledging the contributions made by Canada’s veterans. This personal responsibility is most often expressed through wearing a poppy, attending Remembrance ceremonies, donating to Remembrance-related charities, and taking time to reflect on the issue. In terms of images, ‘Remembrance Day’ and honouring the veterans themselves are the main top-of-mind associations with the word ‘remembrance’, a term which Canadians appear to prefer to ‘commemoration’ as being more appropriate in describing such events and activities.

In short, when it comes to Remembrance issues, there are complementary tendencies evident in both communities. There is a willingness on the part of former CF members to take a more active role in making sure Canadians recognize and remember the accomplishments and sacrifices of Canada's veterans, and a receptivity and willingness on the part of members of the general public to learn more about this.

As well, both former CF members and Canadians are generally in agreement that the legacy and traditions of wartime veterans is being carried on by modern-day veterans. To this end, personal sacrifices made in service to Canada and contributions made through peacekeeping appear to be the main top-of-mind perceptions of modern-day veterans. That said, both Canadians themselves, as well as former CF members, recognize that the general public's knowledge of the modern-day veterans' 'story' is limited. Familiarity with the accomplishments and sacrifices of Canada's veterans was generally higher among men, older Canadians, those with at least some post-secondary education, those living in rural areas, and respondents who were born in Canada.

Involving Modern-Day Veterans in Remembrance Activities

As noted, nearly all former CF members already attend Remembrance ceremonies, and many do so as veterans. Moreover, the strong degree of personal responsibility for Remembrance felt by former CF members translates into a near-unanimous willingness to take a more active part in Remembrance activities. What VAC needs to keep in mind, therefore, is that the key requirement is to enable/marshal/coordinate their participation, and provide guidance in terms of what needs doing, rather than to generate or firm up interest in participating (since this is already there).

It is important to note that the degree to which former CF members see themselves as veterans plays an important role in the ways that they are willing to get involved. Those who served overseas and experienced combat first hand are more comfortable with being recognized as veterans and having their stories told at Remembrance ceremonies. Conversely, former CF members whose military service did not include missions abroad appear to be more comfortable in roles that would not single them out, but would still allow them to make a contribution as members of the veterans' community. In terms of specific activities former CF members would be willing to do, speaking with school children/youth and helping organize Remembrance activities top the list. They are less comfortable speaking with the public about their service, being singled out as a veteran at Remembrance ceremonies, or having their individual stories told at such events.

Since most former CF members are not even aware that VAC has a Remembrance program that includes recognizing the contributions of CF veterans, let alone that the government definition of a veteran includes them, there is clearly a need to increase awareness among former CF members. The best means of doing this would appear to be through a newsletter, one that also helps them stay in touch with VAC regarding participation in Remembrance activities (identified by over half as the best way to stay in touch). The VAC website might also be effective as long as former CF members are informed and encouraged to visit the site for information and/or material specifically relevant to them.

In terms of the type of assistance that would help former CF members play a more active role in Remembrance, focus group participants tended to focus on support related to public

speaking. This includes presentation materials (e.g. background information, PowerPoint templates, talking points), materials for distribution (e.g. posters, bookmarks, pins), basic training in public speaking, and contact information to connect with people interested in hearing about their experience (e.g. an online bulletin board). It was also suggested that the department put in place something that identifies activities for which assistance is required (including the type of assistance needed). The VAC website would appear to be an appropriate delivery vehicle for all of these types of assistance.

Engaging Canadians

As engaged stakeholders, former CF members were generally more likely than Canadians at large to view all of the proposed means of public engagement as being effective. Members of the public were less positive overall about the efficacy of the different engagement activities, but were more likely to differentiate between the activities.

Surveyed Canadians singled out creation of learning materials for schools as being the most effective means of engaging Canadians on veterans' issues. This finding is supported by the public's strong support for making Canadian youth aware of the accomplishments and sacrifices of Canada's modern-day veterans. Also noteworthy was the fact that while former CF members saw taking veterans and youth overseas to battlefield sites, etc. as effective, the general public was considerably less enthusiastic about this. Activities that were seen to be more effective relative to others, which VAC should consider, include producing TV vignettes (like Heritage Minutes) and supporting youth organizations. There was very limited support, among both groups, for producing pamphlets or posters, although there was no context to describe how these would be used.

While TV shorts were nearly universal in their appeal, there were some notable differences in Canadians' views on the efficacy of the various means of engaging them on veterans' issues. Namely, taking veterans overseas was more popular with men, older Canadians, Atlantic Canadians, and those born in Canada. Meanwhile, having an innovative website was more popular with women, residents of Ontario and Atlantic Canada, and urban Canadians.

Finally, former CF members were nearly unanimous in their agreement that the private sector has a role to play in engaging Canadians on Remembrance issues. Conversely, a smaller proportion of the general public shared this sentiment, possibly due to concerns that this may lead to the commercialization of Remembrance.

Concluding Remarks and Related Observations

On the whole, the findings confirm that Canadians at large, as well as former CF members, are quite comfortable with a broad and inclusive definition of what it means to be a Canadian veteran. Furthermore, the public is already engaged on the issue of Remembrance. For the most part, Canadians appear to be willing to support Remembrance without differentiating between 'old' and 'new' veterans, open to a broader, more holistic view of who is a veteran.

There does, however, appear to be a knowledge gap when it comes to recognition of the accomplishments and sacrifices of Canada's veterans in the post-Korean War era. The

good news is that most former CF members are very much willing to take a more active role in ensuring that the contributions and sacrifices of Canadian veterans are recognized and remembered. It is here that VAC has a significant opportunity for engaging former CF members.

Related observations:

- When communicating with Canadians and with former CF members about who is a veteran, VAC might want to consider incorporating into its communications messaging the various characteristics or factors that survey respondents identified as being part of what it means to be a veteran. These include things like receiving a life-long injury in combat or from an accident (including ‘friendly fire’), taking part in overseas missions, making personal sacrifices in service to Canada, etc. Each of the factors assessed, as noted, was seen to be appropriate by majorities. Naturally, the factors near the top of the list resonate more strongly with Canadians and former CF members. While the rankings provided by each group are generally similar, some factors resonate more with specific audiences – something that VAC should consider when developing related communications.
- While Canadians were generally quite inclusive when it came to what makes a veteran, some groups were particularly flexible/inclusive. Women, older respondents, respondents with less formal education, as well as those born in Canada were more likely to have a broader view of what it means to be a veteran. On the other hand, men, younger respondents, those with a university degree, rural Canadians, and those born outside of Canada were more likely to point to overseas service and life-long injuries as the criteria that most define what it means to be a veteran.
- The focus group findings appear to be at odds with the survey findings in one key area – the extent to which former CF members consider themselves to be veterans. While 79% of surveyed ex-CF members said they saw themselves as veterans, the proportion in the focus groups who felt this way was much lower, in particular near the beginning of the groups. Part of this might be explained by the composition of the focus groups, since we know that certain types of former CF members are more likely to see themselves as veterans – i.e. those who served overseas, served in combat situations, received an injury while in service, served in the Forces for a long time, etc. Moreover, part of this difference might be explained by the public versus private expression of whether they see themselves as veterans – some might be less likely to say this in public compared to the privacy of their own home. As well, other survey data suggest that the 79% of survey respondents who consider themselves to be veterans is not firm (e.g. almost 30% are not comfortable being called a veteran compared to wartime veterans; only 58% think all former CF members should be considered veterans). This underscores the need for caution when interpreting this particular result.
- Related to the preceding point, the fact that only about half of former CF members take part in Remembrance *as* veterans highlights the need to firm up individuals’ self-perceptions in this area.
- Survey respondents sometimes inflate their levels of awareness/knowledge about something. With respect to this survey, the proportion of Canadians and former CF

members who claimed to be aware of the government definition of a veteran should be treated with caution.

- The ability to coordinate former CF members to enable them to play a greater role in Remembrance activities needs to be supported by an accurate list of former CF members, with up-to-date contact information. Our understanding is that such a list does not exist. The absence of a centralized registry of former CF members appears to be a significant impediment to the development of a veterans' community. As such, VAC might consider the most effective way to develop this list, perhaps contacting former CF members shortly after they leave the Forces. Should such a list be compiled, it would likely go a long way in facilitating the communication between VAC and former CF members, and in fostering an engaged and active community of Canadian veterans.

In-Depth Interview Results – Educators

This part presents results from the in-depth interviews with educators who reviewed VAC educational resources (i.e. Veteran's Week learning materials or multimedia learning packages).

Suggestions for additional content

Most educators who reviewed the Veteran's Week learning materials suggested topics or components that would be useful additions. However, the only one made with any frequency was to include content about where CF members are serving today (i.e. Afghanistan and other regions outside Canada). The following were identified as potentially useful additions by individual teachers or no more than a few: information on medals given to Canadian veterans; content related to the contributions of aboriginal and immigrant Canadians; personal accounts from veterans; information on trenches; a greater number of activities for students; a website component that allows students to access veterans' stories; and a short video that could be shown at Remembrance Day ceremonies.

Many reviewers of the multimedia learning packages suggested topics that could be valuable additions, but many others did not, viewing the resources as comprehensive. The following topics, organized by resource kit, were seen as potentially valuable additions:

All Kits

- Provide teachers with direction on how to teach the philosophical issues of war and peace in the context of these conflicts.
- More first-hand accounts and information, such as diaries, letters, and military records.

WWI

- More information on what it was like to be a soldier in WWI (e.g. information on a typical day on the front lines).
- A section to deal with the family impacts of war.
- Propaganda posters used by both sides of the conflict.
- Audio recording of key speeches by Robert Borden (Prime Minister of Canada 1911-1920).

WWII

- More detail on the invasion of Normandy.
- More information on battles in which Canada was instrumental.
- A section on the contributions of Canada's navy and air force, and the role they played in the war.
- Canadian perspectives on the Holocaust and Canada's role in liberating the victims.
- Canada's involvement in the battle to defend Hong Kong.
- More information on the battle of the Atlantic, including information about German U-boats sunk off the coast of Nova Scotia.
- Information on the relationship between Dieppe and D-Day.
- More stories of Canadian heroes, such as Tommy Prince and others.
- More examples of WWII artwork.

Korean War

- Maps of the conflict, including Canadian positions.

A few teachers suggested creating a separate multimedia learning resource kit for Canada's modern peacekeeping activities (i.e. post-Korean War).

Suggestions to Increase Use of VAC Learning Resources

Few teachers offered suggestions on how to increase their use of the materials. They tended to explain that they already use the resources to a considerable extent, and many explained that time constraints make greater use of any one resource unlikely. Indeed, many educators observed that the need to meet all of the expectations of the curriculum makes it difficult for them to devote as much time as they would like to specific topics. They are routinely obliged to adjust the amount of time they devote to a topic in order to ensure that they have sufficient time to cover them all. In short, VAC should be aware that despite the acknowledged quality of its resources, external factors have an impact on the extent to which they are used.

With this in mind, the most frequently-made suggestion to increase use of the materials was to include more visual components and primary resources (i.e. letters, pictures, maps, audio recordings) for the multimedia learning resource kits. While not identified as a way of increasing use of VAC materials per se, it should be noted that the only frequently-cited weakness of the multimedia learning kits was the lack of digitalized media (i.e. the fact that videos are in VHS not DVD format). In addition to digitalizing materials, it was suggested that components of the kits be available electronically through VAC's website.

Looking beyond what could be done to increase their own use of these resources, many suggested that the full benefit of these teaching materials was not being actualized because many teachers are not aware that they are available. Several participants suggested ways that VAC could ensure that teachers across Canada are made aware of these resources. This includes contacting schools and/or social studies and history department heads directly, sending letters to teachers with information about the kits, advertising them in provincial teachers' magazines, and simply sending a set of the kits to all schools.

More Information:

Supplier Name: Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc.

PWGSC Contract Number: 51019-071031/001/CY

Award Date: 2008-02-08

To obtain more information on this study, please email information@vac-acc.gc.ca.