



Veterans Affairs
Canada

Anciens Combattants
Canada

Overarching Commemoration Evaluation

March 2018

Audit and Evaluation Division

Canada 

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Executive Summary

The Overarching Commemoration Evaluation was conducted in accordance with Veterans Affairs Canada's approved Multi-Year Risk-Based Evaluation Plan 2017-22 and with the directive and standards specified in Treasury Board of Canada's *2016 Policy on Results*.

The Overarching Commemoration Evaluation assesses Commemoration from a strategic perspective, providing information on the linkages between programs, and capturing items that the previous individual evaluations (*Evaluation of Commemorative Benefits and Services* and *Evaluation of Public Recognition and Awareness*) were not able to fully assess and report on.

The evaluation findings and conclusions are based on the analysis of multiple lines of qualitative and quantitative evidence.

The evaluation resulted in the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1:

It is recommended that the Director General, Commemoration, develop a long-term strategic plan for all initiatives falling under the core responsibility of Commemoration and pursue stable long-term funding to allow for efficient planning and implementation.

Recommendation #2

It is recommended that the Director General, Commemoration, conduct a comprehensive cost analysis of operations, maintenance, and preservation requirements associated with the 14 overseas memorial sites and identify medium- to long-term investments that may be required.

Recommendation #3

It is recommended that the Director General, Commemoration, take measures to ensure the ongoing commemorative integrity of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial in France.

1.0 Introduction and Organizational Context

As outlined in Veterans Affairs Canada's (VAC's) *Departmental Results Framework*, the department's programs/activities are carried out through three core responsibilities:

- 1. Benefits, Services and Support:** supports the care and well-being of Veterans and their dependents or survivors through a range of benefits, services, research, partnerships and advocacy.
- 2. Commemoration:** pays tribute to the sacrifices and achievements of those who served in Canada's military efforts.
- 3. Veterans Ombudsman:** provides an independent and impartial review of complaints and issues related to programs and services delivered by the Veterans Affairs Portfolio and upholds the Veterans Bill of Rights.

This overarching evaluation focuses on core responsibility number two, Commemoration. VAC's commemorative responsibility is delivered through the Canada Remembers Program and the Funeral and Burial Program. These programs were recently assessed through two evaluations: the *Evaluation of Commemorative Benefits and Services*; and the *Evaluation of Public Recognition and Awareness*.

VAC's commemorative responsibilities are identified in the *Government of Canada Remembrance Policy*, which defines remembrance as "honouring and commemorating the sacrifices, achievements and legacy of those who served in Government of Canada sanctioned wars, conflicts, peacekeeping and aid missions, in both military and civilian capacities". The primary responsibility for implementing this policy resides with the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Appendix A outlines VAC's commemorative responsibilities as listed in the *Government of Canada Policy on Remembrance*.

During fiscal year 2016-17, VAC's Commemoration core responsibility:

- utilized 91 full-time equivalent employees (FTEs), representing 3.45% of VAC's total 2,636 FTEs;
- had total expenditures (program and operating) of \$55,553,811, representing 1.5% of VAC's annual expenditure of \$3,702,281,327.¹

Further details on VAC FTEs and expenditures for fiscal years 2011-12 through 2016-17 can be found in Appendix B.

¹ Does not include operating costs for Ste. Anne's Hospital.

2.0 Scope and Methodology

The overarching evaluation assesses Commemoration from a strategic perspective, providing information on the linkages between programs, and capturing items that the previous individual evaluations (*Evaluation of Commemorative Benefits and Services* and *Evaluation of Public Recognition and Awareness*) were not able to fully assess and report on.

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the directive and standards specified in Treasury Board of Canada's *2016 Policy on Results*. It covers the time frame from April 1, 2012 to September 30, 2017, and was conducted between September 2017 and December 2017.

Table 1: Evaluation Themes

Planning and Funding
➤ Long-term strategic planning
➤ Program funding
➤ Funding pressures
Commemorative Integrity
➤ Canadian National Vimy Memorial, Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial
Alignment
➤ Opportunities for enhanced alignment internally - Departmental
➤ Opportunities for enhanced alignment internally - Divisional
Management/Organizational Structure
➤ Do the current structures facilitate efficient and effective decision making for Commemorative objectives/priorities?
Opportunities
➤ International comparison
➤ Best practices

2.1 Methodology

The research methodology incorporated multiple lines of evidence, ensuring reliability of collected information and reported results. The evaluation was formative² in nature and relied on a mix of qualitative and quantitative lines of evidence, including evidence gathered in previous commemorative evaluations, as well as the *Audit of Overseas Ceremonies and Events*, as shown in Table 2.

² Formative evaluations are used as part of program planning and improvement. A formative evaluation is used to determine if a program is on track and how it might be improved to better meet clientele needs.

Table 2: Sources of Information Reviewed During the Program Evaluation

Methodology	Source
Non-departmental document reviews	Key non-departmental documents such as: Parliamentary reports, Federal Budget documents, Speeches from the Throne, media articles, and evaluations of commemoration programs in other federal departments.
Interviews and/or work observation	Approximately 20 interviews with key informants were conducted during the fieldwork phase of this evaluation. In addition, this report was informed by approximately 40 interviews conducted during the <i>Evaluation of Public Recognition and Awareness</i> and the <i>Evaluation of Commemorative Benefits and Services</i> . Interviews were conducted with VAC senior management; VAC staff involved in the delivery of commemorative programs; VAC partners and external departments delivering similar programs; and other subject matter experts. Direct observations were conducted of VAC memorial sites in Europe.
Departmental documentation and secondary research review	The following types of departmental documents/information were reviewed to gain an understanding of the components, their authorities and requirements, and key issue areas: memoranda of understanding and their annexes; previous audits and evaluations; policies; business processes; records of decisions; strategic and business planning documents; performance reports; research papers; survey results; third-party contracts; invoices; social media; media reports; and correspondence.
Statistical analysis	Financial and operational data collected by VAC for fiscal years 2012-13 to 2016-17 was examined.
Survey	Results from the recent <i>Survey of Commemorative Initiatives</i> conducted during the <i>Evaluation of Public Recognition and Awareness</i> were examined. The survey was completed by 67 VAC staff who self-identified as Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Veterans or still-serving members.

2.2 Limitations and Analytical Challenges

The following limitations and challenges were identified:

- The evaluation team did not speak directly with Canadians. Where available, the evaluation team used existing public opinion research.

This limitation/challenge should be considered when reviewing the evaluation findings.

3.0 Overview – Veterans Affairs Canada, Commemoration Division

Commemoration Division responsibilities by unit are identified below (as of September 30, 2017).

Commemorations Operations – responsible for the planning and execution of commemorative ceremonies and events, both in-Canada and overseas; provides funding through the Commemorative Partnership Program to communities and organizations undertaking remembrance initiatives; responsible for honours and awards, the Books of Remembrance, cemetery and grave maintenance, and the Funeral and Burial Program.

European Operations – represents VAC in Europe on all matters that affect the commemoration of Canada's war dead and the contribution of the Canadian Armed Forces in times of peace and war; oversees the day-to-day operations and maintenance of 14 Canadian war memorials (including asset and facilities management); conducts ceremonial and remembrance activities; provides memorial interpretation and visitor information; manages VAC's Student Guide Program; and works to preserve the cultural integrity of Canadian memorial sites.

Learning and Special Projects – responsible for learning, digitization, and distribution; provides resources for the classroom and general public in print form, digitally (on-line), and in other formats to encourage youth, educators, and the general public to become engaged in remembrance-related activities and learn more about Canada's military history; maintains partnerships both inside and outside the department with respect to cultural/creative initiatives; maintains the Canadian Virtual War Memorial, the National Inventory of Canadian Military Memorials, and the Heroes Remember video collection.

Policy and Planning – responsible for policy development for the Canada Remembers Program and the Funeral and Burial Program; undertakes research projects, including public opinion research; manages new memorial projects; leads division business planning; produces division input for departmental results reports, department plans, and corporate risk profiles; develops, in consultation with division management, service standards, program information profiles, and strategic reports.

Correspondence Unit – responsible for responding to all public enquiries pertaining to commemoration.

4.0 Planning and Funding

4.1 Planning

As stated in the *Government of Canada Remembrance Policy*, VAC has the responsibility to “Prepare ongoing strategic plans for remembrance” and to “Provide leadership among federal government departments in the remembrance of the service of Canadians in the cause of international peace and freedom”.

The evaluation confirmed through interviews and a documentation review that VAC requires a long-term strategic plan for remembrance.³ However, a documentation review identified that various studies and reports have been completed pertaining to commemoration activities at VAC, including:

- *A Renewed Approach to Commemoration – Commemorating Post-Korea* (June 2015);
- *Commemoration in the 21st Century – Report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs* (December 2011);
- *A Review of the Government of Canada Remembrance Policy* (March 2008);
- *Commemoration in the 21st Century Review Project* (November 2001).

Based on these studies, VAC’s recent program evaluations, observations and feedback from key informant interviews, the evaluation team concludes that the following themes should be considered during the development of a strategic plan for remembrance:

- Continued importance of youth education and engagement;
- Increased focus on recognizing the sacrifices, achievements and legacy of Canadian Armed Forces Veterans;
- Accessible and timely information for Canadians to support awareness and involvement;
- Specific efforts aimed at female Veterans, families, Indigenous Veterans, and new Canadians;
- Effective partnerships across Government of Canada departments and external organizations;
- Future expectations for international events (types of events, size, locations, public participation, etc.);
- Consideration of alternative approaches to event planning and logistics for international events;
- Reducing the backlog of Veterans graves requiring maintenance; and
- Preserving the commemorative integrity of VAC’s national historic sites and ensuring the ongoing maintenance and preservation of VACs commemorative real property in Europe.

³ The *Government of Canada Remembrance Policy* defines remembrance as “honouring and commemorating the sacrifices, achievements and legacy of those who served in Government of Canada sanctioned wars, conflicts, peacekeeping and aid missions, in both military and civilian capacities”.

To fulfill its responsibilities assigned within the *Government of Canada Remembrance Policy*, VAC must create a strategic plan for remembrance. The plan should include the key themes listed above, be communicated and socialized effectively across all sections of VAC, and be shared with relevant federal departments and partner organizations. Please see recommendation #1 in section **4.2.1 Program Funding**.

4.2 Commemoration Funding

Interviews conducted during the commemorative program evaluations highlighted challenges with respect to program funding for the Canada Remembers Program and the departmental integrated business planning process. It was identified that the absence of stable long-term funding is impacting the efficient planning and implementation of commemorative initiatives. Funding pressures were also identified in the following areas:

- major ceremonies and events⁴; and
- capital expenditure projects and ongoing operations and maintenance associated with VACs commemorative real property in Europe.

In order to understand these challenges, the evaluation examined program funding and current/recent funding pressures.

4.2.1 Program Funding

A breakdown of Canada Remembers 2016-17 funding by program/initiative and funding source is provided below:

Table 3: 2016-17 Commemoration Core Responsibility Funding Sources by Program/Initiative

	Grants and Contributions	Government Advertising Costs	Salary/ Employee Benefit Plans	Operating and Maintenance Costs	Total Costs
Commemorative Partnership Program	\$8,383,699	-	\$869,228	\$220,504	\$9,473,430
Maintenance of War Dead Graves	\$11,086,868	-	-	-	\$11,086,868
Funeral and Burial Program	\$9,098,755	-	\$587,110	\$20,199	\$9,706,064
United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea	\$22,327	-	-	-	\$22,327

⁴ An assessment of planning/funding processes and controls associated with VAC's overseas ceremonies and events can be found in VAC's *Audit of Overseas Events*.

	Grants and Contributions	Government Advertising Costs	Salary/ Employee Benefit Plans	Operating and Maintenance Costs	Total Costs
Canadian Veterans Association of the UK	\$5,000	-	-	-	\$5,000
Public Recognition and Awareness (includes Ceremonies and Events, Learning and Public Information)	-	\$2,499,999	\$5,085,744	\$9,136,605	\$16,722,348
Maintenance of Memorials, Veteran Graves, Departmental Cemeteries	-	-	\$1,082,722	\$7,455,052	\$8,537,774
Total	\$28,596,649	\$2,499,999	\$7,624,803	\$16,832,360	\$55,553,811
Percentage of Total Program Costs	51.5%	4.5%	13.7%	30.3%	100%

Source: VAC Finance Division

The Commemoration Division relies heavily on operating funds to deliver core elements of the Canada Remembers Program (e.g., ceremonies and events, learning and public information). This results in substantially higher operating and maintenance costs compared to the VAC departmental average (30.3% for Commemoration programs vs. 2.0% for VAC). It also presents a risk that core programming could be affected if departmental operating funds are reduced.

Reliance on operating funds presents the Commemoration Division with another challenge. Since operating funds are requested through annual internal integrated business planning, funding levels for core programming such as Veteran grave maintenance, memorial maintenance, ceremonies and events, and learning and public information (especially Veterans' Week) could be re-allocated based on other departmental needs. In contrast, the majority of VAC programs outside of Commemoration are delivered through grants and contributions and special purpose allotments. Non-operating funds (program expenditures) for these programs are secured through a regular funding submission processes, rather than annual internal requests.

The evaluation team finds that the Canada Remembers Program, including elements such as ceremonies and events, Veteran grave maintenance, memorial maintenance and learning and public information is a core responsibility of the department (as referenced in Appendix C). To ensure that planning and implementation of commemorative initiatives is not impacted by the timing and stability of funding, stable long-term funding must be established.

Recommendation #1

It is recommended that the Director General, Commemoration, develop a long-term strategic plan for all initiatives falling under the core responsibility of Commemoration and pursue stable long-term funding to allow for efficient planning and implementation.

Management Response:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management Action Plan:

Corrective Action to be Taken	Office of Primary Interest (OPI)	Target Date
The Director General, Commemoration, will develop costed strategic plans to guide regular commemorative activities over ten-year periods (starting with the 2019-20/2028-29 period). To ensure that these plans can be implemented, long-term budget confirmations will be sought. Should new projects require resourcing, the Director General, Commemoration, will build a case for additional resources through the Department's annual Integrated Business Plan process.	Director General, Commemoration	January 2019

4.2.2 Funding Pressures

The evaluation team learned through key-informant interviews, observation, and a documentation review that formal processes are not in place for funding major capital projects related to the restoration, maintenance, and/or preservation of commemorative real property assets (buildings, tunnels, forests, etc.). The Director, European Operations, is currently responsible for pursuing/justifying funds in support of these projects. The evaluation finds that a more fulsome risk analysis and priority setting exercise is required for funding and managing capital projects. A more collaborative approach should be taken, capitalizing on the expertise of internal and external partners, such as Parks Canada, VAC's Real Property directorate, and other relevant partners/stakeholders as needed.

As identified through a documentation review, no recent formal site management plans or costings have been conducted for VAC's national historic sites. In 2007, a site management plan was completed for the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, however many items within that plan require reassessment and further consideration based on updated information.

In addition to funding pressures associated with capital projects, interviews highlighted that European Operations has been challenged to maintain regular operations and

maintenance in support of the overseas memorial sites (Appendix D).⁵ Impacts from the European-Canadian exchange rate, inflation, and incremental costs of suppliers have not been reflected in the annual funding allocation.

Recommendation #2

It is recommended that the Director General, Commemoration, conduct a comprehensive cost analysis of operations, maintenance, and preservation requirements associated with the 14 overseas memorial sites and identify medium- to long-term investments that may be required.

Management Response:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management Action Plan:

Corrective Action to be Taken	Office of Primary Interest (OPI)	Target Date
Expert advice will be sought to develop detailed costings for actions required to appropriately operate, maintain and preserve the 14 overseas sites for future generations.	Director General, Commemoration	April 2020

Observations

The evaluation team has learned that, unlike other VAC divisions, the Commemoration Division is responsible for covering costs related to accommodations and utilities at its memorial sites in France. Fluctuations in the foreign exchange rate pose a challenge to European Operations as increases in the value of the Euro result in higher than expected operating and maintenance costs.⁶ VAC should explore the possibility of developing a contingency for potential foreign exchange rate increases. This would allow the Division to pursue its work within its allocated resources without making adjustments to its commemorative activities in order to pay for basic accommodations and utilities.

Through interviews with other federal government organizations, the evaluation team was informed that funding opportunities often exist through Government of Canada capital expenditure initiatives/programs. VAC should explore whether alternative funding is available through these programs for capital projects at VAC's overseas national historic sites.

⁵ In addition to the 14 overseas memorials, the Commemoration Division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of 17 overseas structures/buildings, including a new Visitor Education Centre located at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.

⁶ For example, \$1.00 Canadian was worth €0.71 Euros on March 2, 2017. The same \$1.00 Canadian was only worth €0.64 Euros on March 1, 2018, a reduction in buying power of approximately 10%. Source: Bank of Canada Exchange Rate Lookup.

5.0 Commemorative Integrity

VAC is responsible for the maintenance, preservation, and presentation of 14 memorials located in Europe. Two memorials located in France, the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial, are National Historic Sites of Canada.

Approximately 800,000 people visit the Canadian National Vimy Memorial annually, while the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial site has approximately 180,000 visitors each year. A 2015 comparison of visitation rates to National historic sites in Canada can be found in Appendix E. When comparing visitation between VAC and Parks Canada national historic sites, the Canadian National Vimy Memorial has the second highest visitation. The Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial has the sixth highest visitation.

As stated in the *Parks Canada Agency Act* (1998), it is in the national interest to ensure the commemorative integrity of national historic sites. A national historic site possesses commemorative integrity when:

- the resources directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site are not impaired or under threat;
- the reasons for designation as a national historic site are effectively communicated to the public; and
- the site's heritage values (including those not related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site) are respected in all decisions and actions affecting the site.

As identified during interviews and through a review of current maintenance plans, VAC must increase efforts to put processes in place aimed at preserving the commemorative integrity of its overseas national historic sites. Interviews highlighted that although a commemorative integrity statement (CIS) has been developed and approved for the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, a CIS has not been formally approved for the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial. In addition, processes are not in place to initiate formalized commemorative integrity assessments for either of VAC's national historic sites.

Further, as stated in the *Government of Canada Remembrance Policy*, VAC is obligated to “*Build knowledge and skills capacity in remembrance programming calling upon the expertise of other government departments and stakeholders in this regard as required.*” As it pertains to national historic sites, the *Government of Canada Remembrance Policy* identifies that Parks Canada Agency is responsible to “*Ensure the commemorative integrity of national historic sites under the Minister’s direction and control, and provide support to other owners of national historic sites in respect of commemorative integrity.*” Key informant interviews identified and suggested that VAC should seek support and guidance from Parks Canada regarding the commemorative integrity of VAC's national historic sites.

Recommendation #3:

It is recommended that the Director General, Commemoration, take measures to ensure the ongoing commemorative integrity of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial and the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial in France.

Management Response:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Management Action Plan:

Corrective Action to be Taken	Office of Primary Interest (OPI)	Target Date
The draft commemorative integrity statement for the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial will be completed and approved. An approach, including criteria and timeframes, will be developed and implemented regarding the assessment of the two National Historic Sites in France based on the approved commemorative integrity statements (Canadian National Vimy Memorial commemorative integrity statement already approved).	Director General, Commemoration	April 2019

6.0 Alignment

Opportunities and best practices impacting multiple elements of VAC's Commemoration core responsibility were reviewed as part of this overarching evaluation. Key findings are highlighted below in the areas of internal departmental alignment and divisional alignment.

6.1 Opportunities for Enhanced Alignment Internally – Departmental

VAC's Communications Division supports the Commemoration Division in the delivery of commemorative initiatives. Interviews and previous program evaluations highlighted that the current partnership between the two divisions is working effectively. However, additional clarity and documentation on roles and responsibilities is required in some areas, such as:

- event coordination and logistics responsibilities;
- production of videos on commemorative initiatives/themes;
- collection of historical information to inform event scenarios and media releases;
- monitoring of the print contract for learning resources; and
- developing content and publishing for website, social media and print products.

Observation

The Commemoration Division should work in collaboration with the Communications Division to clarify roles and services in support of VAC's commemorative initiatives.

Opportunity for improvement

The *Evaluation of Commemorative Benefits and Services* and the *Evaluation of Public Recognition and Awareness* both highlighted process concerns between VAC's Service Delivery Branch and the Commemoration Division that impacted the Funeral and Burial Program, the issuance of Memorial Crosses, and entries to the Books of Remembrance. These concerns led to recommended improvements identified in the recent *Evaluation of Commemorative Benefits and Services – Recommendation #3*.⁷ To ensure issues do not arise in the future, the evaluation team finds that improved communication channels between the Commemoration Division and the Service Delivery Branch should be explored. This concern is further referenced in **Section 7 Management/Organization Structure**.

⁷ [Evaluation of Commemorative Benefits and Services](#)

6.2 Opportunities for Enhanced Alignment Internally – Commemoration Division

In support of 2017 major milestone anniversaries, including the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, the 75th anniversary of the Dieppe Raid, and the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele, the evaluation team observed collaboration between various commemoration program areas/components, including ceremonies and events, learning and public information, and the Commemorative Partnership Program. Efforts to develop and integrate learning resources relating to these milestone events, while concurrently funding projects focussed on these milestones through the CPP, resulted in a cohesive approach to achieving outcomes. Key informant interviews highlighted that program areas found this collaboration an effective means to achieve their project objectives.

The evaluation team finds that this enhanced collaboration between program areas should be considered a best practice and that planning activities for future years should continue to be aligned.

7.0 Management/Organizational Structure

Interviews conducted during previous program evaluations highlighted inefficiencies as a result of having two directors general, the Director General, Commemoration and the Director General, European Operations. This resulted in additional briefings and approval layers for programs/initiatives, adding complexity to the decision making process.

In August 2017, organizational changes were implemented within the Commemoration Division. The Director General position for European Operations was replaced by a Director, European Operations, reporting to the Director General, Commemoration. This change should help to alleviate concerns identified during the previous program evaluations.

VAC's Audit and Evaluation Division recently completed an [Audit of Governance](#) at VAC. The audit found that an approach/framework is required in order to improve organizational integration and communication. This finding aligns with the program/process integration issues that the evaluation notes are occurring between Strategic Policy and Commemoration Branch and the Service Delivery Branch.

Opportunity for Improvement

Commemoration is one of three core responsibilities identified in VAC's Departmental Results Framework (Appendix C). As such, activities and projects relating to Commemoration should be considered as key priorities for the department. Through an analysis of Records of Decisions for the period 2013-2017, the evaluation team found that Commemoration-related decisions and updates are not being brought forward to VAC's Senior Management Committee⁸ on a regular basis. The results of this analysis, as well as information gained through key informant interviews, leads the evaluation team to find that there should be increased discussion/awareness of commemoration initiatives across departmental branches/divisions, including at the senior management table. VAC should undertake efforts to:

- pursue a standing agenda item at VAC's Senior Management Committee meetings for commemoration-related strategic direction; and
- develop an approach to enhance the awareness and understanding of commemoration programs and activities across all branches/divisions within the department.

⁸ As per the Senior Management Committee terms of reference, the committee's role is to review or approve: VAC strategic direction and departmental priorities; resource allocation and reallocation; the Report on Plans and Priorities and the Departmental Performance Report; VAC five-year strategic plans; long-term capital plans; and communications plans.

8.0 Opportunities/Best Practices

8.1 International

A comparison of VAC commemoration efforts with Veterans affairs departments in other countries is difficult due to differences in the way departments are structured in each country. For example, in the United Kingdom, Veterans' matters fall under the purview of the Ministry of Defence, with responsibility shared by a collection of agencies and public bodies; responsibility for commemoration is not centralized under a particular division as it is at VAC.

A comparison of United Kingdom, United States, and Australian departments of Veterans Affairs shows that VAC most closely aligns with the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs when it comes to commemorative responsibilities. A review of Australian on-line commemoration resources revealed a searchable learning portal that could be considered a best practice when compared to other departments. As indicated in the *Evaluation of Public Recognition and Awareness*, the VAC website does not currently have a highly visible, easily accessible section through which to navigate learning resources (i.e., a learning portal).

The Canadian National Vimy Memorial and the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial in France are both national historic sites. Unlike many national historic sites in Canada, both sites are currently open to the public free of admission. The question of monetizing the sites was raised during the conduct of the *Evaluation of Public Recognition and Awareness*, with varying opinions. The evaluation team reviewed similar allied countries memorials in Europe and determined that free admission is common at memorial sites that do not have a museum component. Any change to the current fee structure for the memorial grounds would not be consistent with European standards and may result in decreased visitation.

8.2 Veterans Affairs Canada – Social Media Approach

As identified in the previous *Evaluation of Public Recognition and Awareness*, VAC is effectively using social media to raise awareness of commemorative events and learning/public information resources. The social media initiatives for Veterans' Week 2017 were highly successful, including the Twitter "retweet to remember" campaign which has been identified as one of Twitter's most successful Canadian retweet campaigns to date.

VAC's effort in this area is considered a best practice by other federal organizations and should be continued. Detailed results by social media tool can be found in Appendix F.

9.0 Overarching Conclusion

The *Overarching Commemoration Evaluation* concludes a series of three internal evaluations conducted between 2016-17 and 2017-18 which focused on elements of VAC's Commemoration core responsibility. Evaluations one and two (the *Evaluation of Commemorative Benefits and Services* and the *Evaluation of Public Recognition and Awareness*) assessed core evaluation areas, including relevance, performance, and efficiency and economy. The findings of these two evaluations were largely positive, but did identify areas for improvement in relation to the achievement of outcomes, efficiency, and effective documentation.

This evaluation further reviewed areas identified in evaluations one and two that had an overarching impact across multiple elements of VAC's Canada Remembers Program and the Funeral and Burial Program. It also reviewed areas that the previous evaluations were unable to fully assess and report on. Opportunities and recommendations are highlighted in this report to enhance:

- program alignment with internal and external partners;
- the long-term strategic vision for commemoration;
- long-term stable funding; and
- awareness of Commemoration initiatives across branches within VAC.

Additional analysis of the Canada Remembers Program will be included under the scope of the *Audit of Overseas Events*.

Appendix A: Veterans Affairs Canada Responsibilities identified in the Government of Canada Remembrance Policy

- Maintain primary responsibility for remembrance policy and the Canada Remembers Program through the Minister of Veterans Affairs.
- Chair the Advisory Council on remembrance of Canadian service in war and peace.
- Prepare ongoing strategic plans for remembrance.
- Provide leadership among federal government departments in the remembrance of the service of Canadians in the cause of international peace and freedom.
- Build knowledge and skills capacity in remembrance programming, calling upon the expertise of other government departments and stakeholders in this regard as required.
- Provide encouragement and guidance to other levels of government and other organizations whose responsibilities include the remembrance of Canadian and Newfoundland Veterans and service members.
- Ensure care and maintenance of grave markers and cemeteries for those who died in military operations in the service of Canada, both overseas and in Canada.
- Issue designated, delegated, and closed service medals, awards, and honours.
- Administer the Veterans Funeral and Burial Program.
- Prepare, produce and provide information and support materials related to those service members who served Canada overseas and on the home front in the post-Confederation (1867) wars and conflicts, peacekeeping, and aid missions.
- Promote citizen engagement in remembrance activities both at a national level and through regional remembrance program delivery.
- Organize commemorative ceremonies and events to honour officially designated periods of remembrance year-round across Canada.
- Ensure maintenance, preservation and presentation of Canada's international monuments and memorials and battlefields.
- Organize and participate in appropriate official ceremonies and pilgrimages, both internationally and in Canada, whose primary purpose is commemorative, alone or in conjunction with other federal government departments, other groups, or other organizations.
- Present and maintain the Books of Remembrance and co-ordinate with the House of Commons for their official updating and display.
- Coordinate use of the National War Memorial site in Ottawa.

Source – Government of Canada Policy on Remembrance

Appendix B: Organizational Expenditures and Full-time Equivalents by Strategic Outcome

Strategic Outcome #1 - Financial, Physical and mental well-being of eligible Veterans				
Fiscal Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Actual spending	\$3,303,331,979	\$3,170,464,036	\$3,376,539,433	\$3,561,304,881
Percentage of total departmental spending	96.16%	96.11%	96.18%	96.19%
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees	1,529.6	1,404.4	1,556.5	1,887.2
Percentage of department FTEs	65.36%	64.91%	68.51%	71.59%
Strategic Outcome #2 - Canadians remember and demonstrate their recognition of all who served in Canada's efforts during war, military conflict and peace				
Fiscal Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Actual spending	\$41,150,530	\$45,528,370	\$50,028,142	\$55,553,811
Percentage of total departmental spending	1.20%	1.38%	1.42%	1.50%
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees	90.2	90.2	83.7	91.0
Percentage of department FTEs	3.85%	4.17%	3.68%	3.45%
Strategic Outcome #3 (Veterans Ombudsman) - Veterans' rights to services and benefits that address their needs are considered by the Veterans Affairs Portfolio				
Fiscal Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Actual spending	\$4,953,006	\$4,578,484	\$4,600,441	\$4,630,182
Percentage of total departmental spending	0.14%	0.14%	0.13%	0.13%
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees	35.0	33.4	33.8	32.0
Percentage of department FTEs	1.50%	1.54%	1.49%	1.21%
Internal Services (Communications Division, Human Resources Division, Finance Division, etc.)				
Fiscal Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Actual spending	\$85,846,369	\$78,092,980	\$79,656,670	\$80,792,453
Percentage of total departmental spending	2.50%	2.37%	2.27%	2.18%
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees	685.6	635.6	597.8	626.0
Percentage of department FTEs	29.29%	29.38%	26.31%	23.75%
Department Totals				
Fiscal Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Actual spending	\$3,435,281,884	\$3,298,663,870	\$3,510,824,686	\$3,702,281,327
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees	2,340.4	2,163.6	2,271.8	2,636.2
* For comparison purposes, expenditures and FTEs associated with Ste. Anne's Hospital (SAH) were removed for all years.				
Ste. Anne's Hospital (SAH)				
Fiscal Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
SAH Expenditures	\$78,291,005	\$78,216,084	\$84,209,518	\$68,527,414
SAH FTEs	744.6	742.9	737.6	0

Source: VAC Finance Division

Appendix C: Veterans Affairs Canada, Departmental Results Framework, Core Responsibilities and Programs

Core Responsibility	1 Benefits, Services and Support	2 Commemoration	3 Veterans Ombudsman
Description	Support the care and well-being of Veterans and their dependents or survivors through a range of benefits, services, research, partnerships and advocacy.	Pay tribute to the sacrifices and achievements of those who served in Canada's military efforts.	Provide an independent and impartial review of complaints and issues related to programs and services delivered by the Veterans Affairs Portfolio and uphold the <i>Veterans Bill of Rights</i> .
Programs	1 Disability Pension Benefits and Allowances 2 Disability Awards, Critical Injury and Death Benefits 3 Earnings Loss Benefit 4 Career Impact Allowance 5 Retirement Benefits Program 6 Health Care Benefits 7 Rehabilitation Services 8 Long-Term Care 9 Veterans Independence Program 10 Family Caregiver Relief Benefit 11 War Veterans Allowance 12 Canadian Forces Income Support	13 Canada Remembers Program ⁹ 14 Funeral and Burial Program	15 Veterans Ombudsman

Source: VAC's 2017 Departmental Results Framework

⁹ The Canada Remembers Program includes initiatives such as: commemorative ceremonies and events, the Commemorative Partnership Program, learning and public information, memorials, cemetery and grave maintenance, and honours and awards.

Appendix D: Veterans Affairs Canada Memorial Sites in Europe

Memorial	Location
Courtrai Newfoundland Memorial	Belgium
Hill 62 Canadian Memorial	Belgium
Passchendaele Canadian Memorial	Belgium
St. Julien Canadian Memorial	Belgium
Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial	France
Bourlon Wood Canadian Memorial	France
Canadian National Vimy Memorial	France
Courcellette Canadian Memorial	France
Dury Canadian Memorial	France
Guedecourt Newfoundland Memorial	France
Le Quesnel Canadian Memorial	France
Masnières Newfoundland Memorial	France
Monchy-le-Preux Newfoundland Memorial	France
Canada Memorial at Green Park	United Kingdom

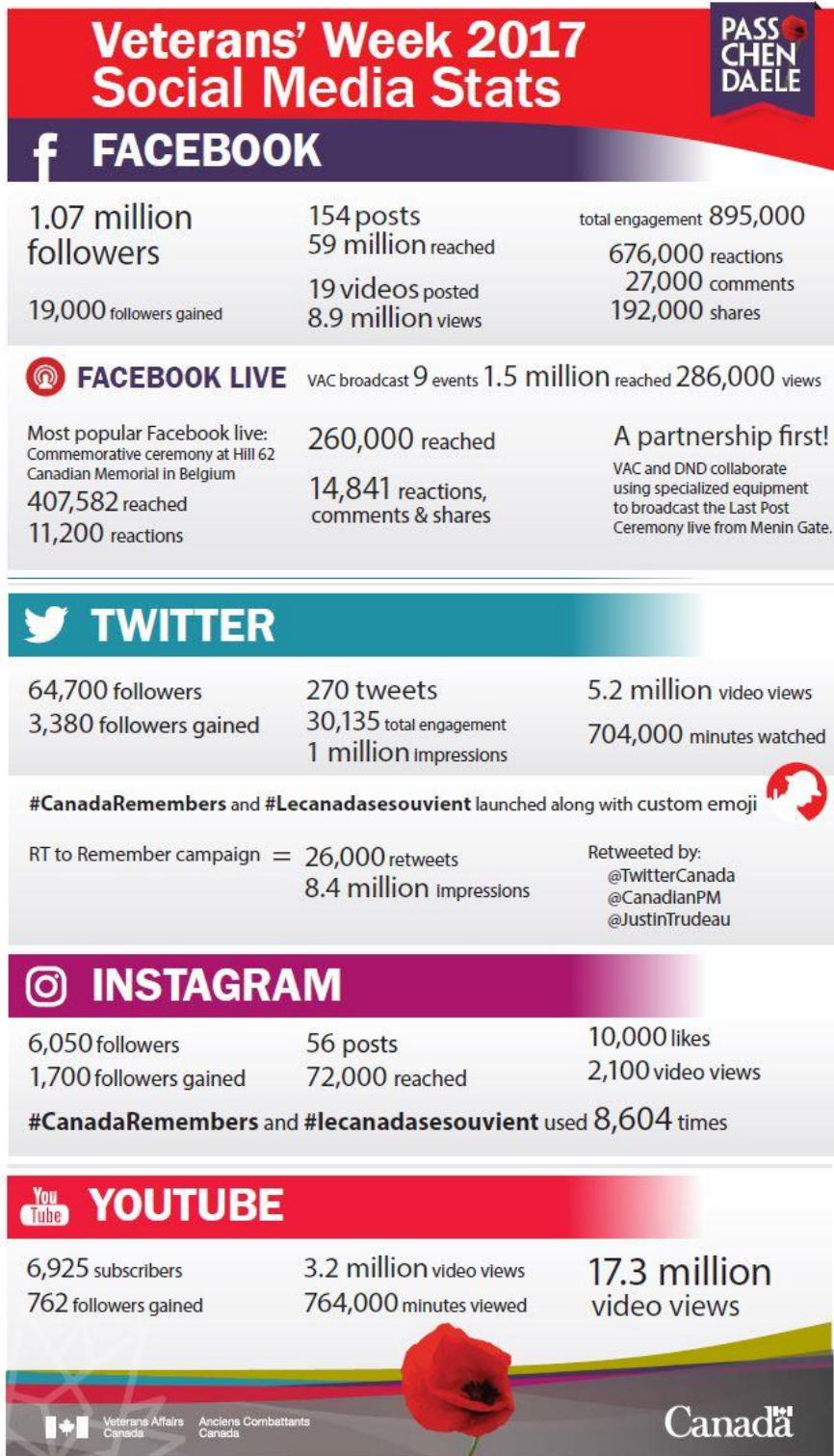
Source: VAC Commemoration Division

Appendix E: Comparison of Visitation Rates for Top 35 National Historic Sites - Fiscal Year 2015-16 Parks Canada (PC) and Calendar Year 2015 Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) (excludes historic canals)

Rank	National Historic Site	Location	Dept.	Visitation
1	Fortifications of Québec	Quebec	PC	1,968,560
2	Canadian National Vimy Memorial	France	VAC	790,878
3	Rogers Pass	British Columbia	PC	523,702
4	Halifax Citadel	Nova Scotia	PC	495,365
5	Sulphur Mountain Cosmic Ray Station	Alberta	PC	271,257
6	Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial	France	VAC	179,045
7	Green Gables House	Prince Edward Island	PC	160,516
8	Cave and Basin	Alberta	PC	148,338
9	Fort Chambly	Quebec	PC	141,197
10	Fort George	Ontario	PC	90,932
11	Fortress of Louisbourg	Nova Scotia	PC	83,892
12	Fort Langley	British Columbia	PC	82,916
13	Alexander Graham Bell	Nova Scotia	PC	77,745
14	Fort Rodd Hill/Fisgard Lighthouse	British Columbia	PC	61,316
15	Gulf of Georgia Cannery	British Columbia	PC	56,205
16	The Forks	Manitoba	PC	48,274
17	Artillery Park	Quebec	PC	39,769
18	Klondike National Historic Sites	Yukon	PC	34,201
19	Grand-Pré	Nova Scotia	PC	30,977
20	Fort Anne	Nova Scotia	PC	28,229
21	Fort Malden	Ontario	PC	26,735
22	York Redoubt	Nova Scotia	PC	25,778
23	Banff Park Museum	Alberta	PC	25,506
24	Lower Fort Garry	Manitoba	PC	25,457
25	S.S. Klondike	Yukon	PC	25,188
26	Fort Lennox	Quebec	PC	25,008
27	L'Anse aux Meadows	Newfoundland and Labrador	PC	23,784
28	Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse	Quebec	PC	23,754
29	Coteau-du-Lac	Quebec	PC	21,246
30	St. Andrews Blockhouse	New Brunswick	PC	20,584
31	Manoir Papineau	Quebec	PC	19,937
32	Port-Royal	Nova Scotia	PC	19,110
33	Cape Spear	Newfoundland and Labrador	PC	18,861
34	Bellevue House	Ontario	PC	18,759
35	Rocky Mountain House	Alberta	PC	17,418

Source: VAC Commemoration Division and Parks Canada

Appendix F: Social Media Results, Veterans' Week 2017



Source: VAC Communications Division