

Speaking Notes
ANAVETS PRESENTATION TO ACVA COMMITTEE
ON CAREER TRANSITION AND VETERAN EMPLOYMENT (2
FEBRUARY 2023)

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee;

I would like to thank you for inviting me here today. My name is Gord MacEachern and I am the newly appointed chair of the advocacy committee for The Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans in Canada, or ANAVETS as it is more commonly known.

Since the New Veterans Charter was enacted in 2006 there have been many contracts and programs aimed at assisting Veterans transition to civilian jobs. Initially there was the Job Placement Program in 2007 which was aimed at providing job finding assistance, job search training and career counselling. It was replaced by 2012 to direct reimbursement of up to \$1000.00 for Veterans to hire their own companies to provide the same support. In 2016 Economic and Social Development Canada (ESDC) contracted Canada Company who created the MET and MET Spouse programs to complement the assistance offered by Veterans Affairs. It included a job bank for Veterans and Employers and developed relationships with over 200 employers nationwide. This program ceased when the contract was given to Agilec in 2018, who then launched a redesigned Career Transition Services program to again assist with career counselling, job-placement and job-finding assistance and was renewed in 2022. I give you this history, to show that in the past 17 years, while many things have changed in the job market and technologies, there hasn't been much change to what we offer Veterans to support their career transition. This is why we are excited to see the creation of a new National Veterans Employment Strategy. This is not to say that there haven't been improvements along the way.

Understanding the transfer of military occupations to civilian is a key component to transition and while the creation of the MNET program, which converts military occupations to a civilian equivalent is certainly a helpful tool to link transferable occupations. However, it needs to be one of many tools being incorporated into a holistic approach to career transition.

We have learned from research and engagement that a large number of those leaving the forces are not interested in the same type of career they had while in service, as in

some cases it was a job the military required and not what interested them. In other cases, performing similar tasks can become triggers for those struggling with operational stress injuries and we need to take these factors into account, as well as what the Veteran believes will bring them a fulfilling second career when creating strategies to assist them.

We also need to help Veterans and employers translate the skills and values gained by military service into those that they can employ in their new career. Along with how to highlight skills like time management, teambuilding, and mentoring others.

Thankfully there are many supports to gain the additional skills necessary for such a career change. Certainly, education and training are the most beneficial resources. The Education and Training Benefit has given many of them opportunities to afford pursuing these goals. Due to its design based on service time instead of current skills it allows many to undertake a more fulfilling goal than simple translatable employment

We have seen a number of Veterans who were either utilizing SISIP Vocational Rehab or VAC's Vocational Rehab programs turn to the Education and Training benefit due to its lack of constraints on current skills. In addition, the Legion's Military Skills Conversion Program with the British Columbia Institute of Technology, (BCIT) created an Advanced Placement and Prior Learning (APPL) module which evaluates and recognizes the skills and expertise acquired through military training. Block credits or advanced placement into the second year of educational programs has allowed Veterans a fast-track to credentials or certifications required. Having this program nationalized with over 30 additional educational institutions would give Veterans a boost in their educational goals based on their real-life knowledge and experience.

There are many other external partners that should be considered as we develop a robust Veterans Employment Strategy. Programs like Operation Entrepreneur run by The Prince' Trust could potentially link with a small business grants program through Industry, and Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED). Also Leveraging members of the Treble Victor Group when creating Veteran job fairs could increase employers interested in participating. A Veteran hiring initiative for Canadian companies could also be a strategy to assist Veteran employment. If we are to consider a holistic approach to assisting our Veterans to gain meaningful civilian employment, we also must utilize a whole of government approach.

The Veterans Hiring Act for public service jobs could improve outcomes of those looking to continue to serve Canadians. Veterans Affairs Canada does have a Veterans Public

Service Unit (VPSU) that assists Veterans in applying for jobs in the public service, however the last we heard the Unit only had two employees and was not very well publicized, By developing a more robust outreach to government departments, HR managers and translating militarily acquired skills to public service hiring language we can hopefully increase departments hiring Veterans. Simplifying the eligibility requirement for priority status also could give all Veterans an equal opportunity when applying to public service positions.

In conclusion, we believe that creating this new employment strategy for Veterans provides an opportunity to change how we have been viewing career transition assistance and create new opportunities to collaborate with other parts of government, external stakeholders and employers.

When a recently transitioned Veteran who asked their career transition agent to assist them with creating a professional LinkedIn profile, they were told, "we don't really do that, but I can send you different resume formats" it shows that we need to engage in new and relevant ways to support those who have put their lives on the line to protect us to give them the best possible opportunities for fulfilling careers after service.

Thank you.

Gord MacEachern
Dominion Vice President
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The Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans in Canada