

Comrades:

Discussions about Legion support for Seniors is always interesting and today's should be no exception.

In the 1980's, the Legion was totally behind Seniors issues and at some point, had a contract with Government to develop an official Seniors program. The Feds paid the salary of a young lady to put together a Manual that was intended to be used by Branches to build and maintain local Seniors programs inside and outside the Branches.

The Manual was good, however, the Feds pulled the grant and Dominion Command let the author go following the Dominion Convention in Quebec City when Ontario decided it would be too expensive and pulled an end-run on the final morning of the Convention to re-consider a motion.

Meanwhile, Dominion Command continued supporting Gerontology Fellowships, in large numbers and did so through most of the 1990's. Interestingly, in a reversal of prior intentions, Ontario Command raised proper hell when DC stopped funding the Fellowships.

Let's consider this for a moment. Let's say that the average WWII Vet was age 25 at war's end. That would make them 65 years old in 1985 and that's the period when there was a great commitment to Seniors – when the Vets and their spouses were becoming Seniors. They knew darn well that whatever was in store for civilian Seniors would also be in store for Veteran Seniors. And, they were correct. And, that holds true today.

VAC estimates average ages of Veterans as follows:

	<u>Ave Age</u>	<u>Survivors</u>
War Service Veterans	95	88
CAF Veterans	59	68
RCMP Veterans	59	73

For your interest, there are about 7 million Canadians aged 65 and over.

Current CAF members approaching 60 should certainly be concerned about the treatment of Canadian Seniors. Not all who have served are recipients of large pensions resulting from their service.

The Legion keeping an eye on Governments with respect to Seniors Care and Healthcare in general benefits all because those folks know we're watching and that we're not afraid to speak out. And, make no mistake about it, what we do for Seniors also directly affects our Veteran Seniors.

Ontario Command made changes to Committee names. I simply don't buy the notion that current CAF members won't join us because we put too much emphasis on Seniors. VSS became Veterans Services – chaired by John Dalley and Seniors became a stand-alone committee, perhaps of one – called Legion Seniors – LTC and it's chaired by Past Ontario Command President/Dominion VP Sharon McKeown. It appears that the work goes on.

With regard to a name change for the Dominion Committee, 10 years ago DC decided to officially add a Seniors component. We've been calling the committee, "Veterans, Service and Seniors". It likely should be entitled, "Veterans Services and Seniors" or "Veterans Services/Seniors". I think the name inadvertently changed over the years and that the emphasis should remain on the words "Veterans Services".

George