



Soldier On  
Annual Report  
FY 2022/2023



**TRANSITION  
GROUP**  
PAST · PRESENT · FUTURE

**GROUPE DE  
TRANSITION**  
PASSÉ · PRÉSENT · FUTUR



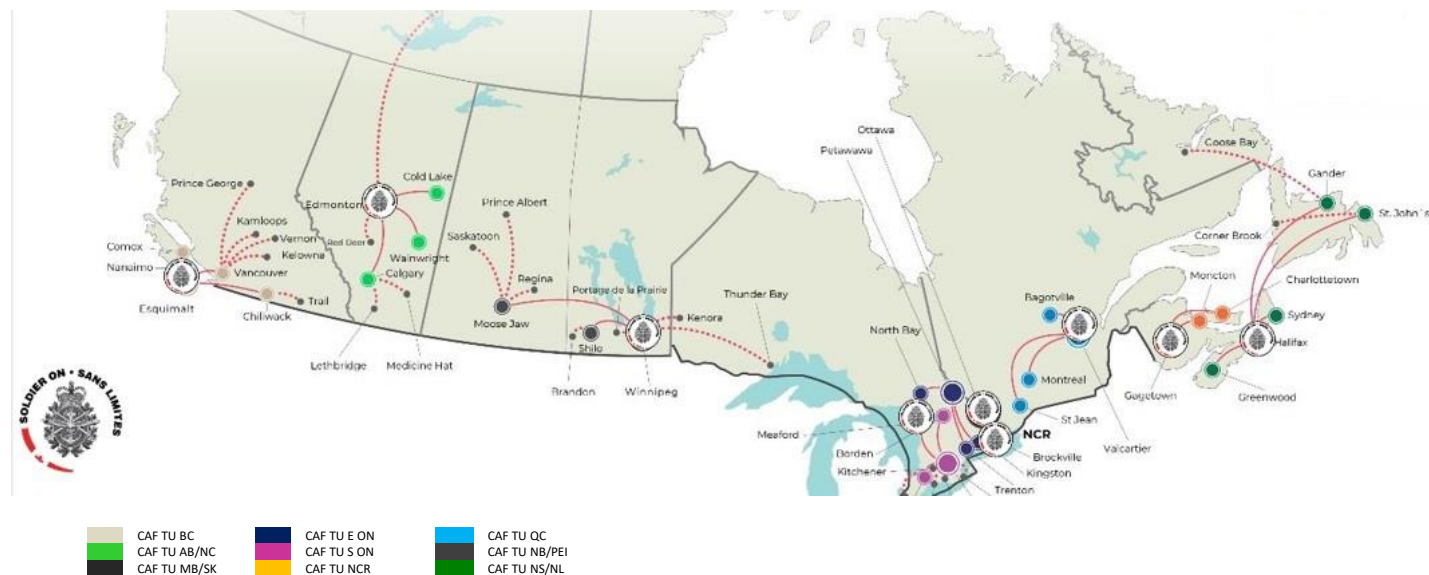
Canada 

## Overview of Soldier On

Soldier On is a Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) program delivered through a partnership between the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) / Personnel Support Programs (PSP) and the Canadian Armed Forces Transition Group (CAF TG). Governed by a Service Level Agreement, Soldier On is embedded in CAF TG and in each of the nine CAF Transition Units (TUs) across Canada, implementing priorities as outlined by Comd CAF TG. Although primarily funded by Public Funds, Soldier On also has a charitable arm, a Crown Trust Fund administered by CFMWS, which augments programming and provides grants to both serving members and Veterans.

Soldier On is led by a National Manager. The Ottawa based Soldier On HQ staff is located within the CAF TG HQ and is comprised of two sub-sections led by a Senior Manager Operations and a Senior Manager Outreach and Communications. There are nine Soldier On Regional Coordinators (RCs) responsive to each of the CAF TU Commanding Officers (COs).

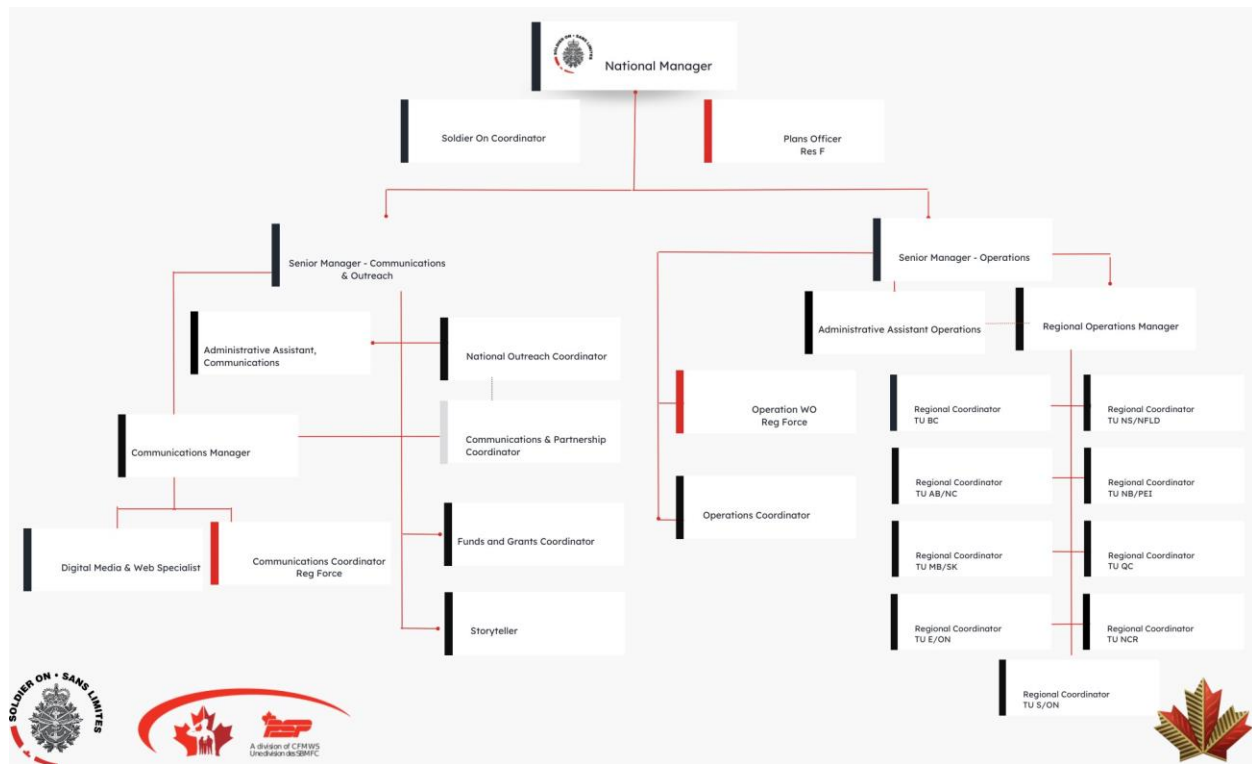
**Figure 1. Soldier On Footprint**



In 2022/23 the Soldier On team continued to grow in size in order to continue to deliver excellence in operations across the country. With the support of CAF TG, a Senior Manager and a Coordinator of Operations was added to the team, in order to provide more sustainable focus on high profile activities, while still ensuring a focus on local and regional operations. Additionally, and in order to better tell the Soldier On story, a communications coordinator and a producer/storyteller was added to increase capacity within the Communications and Outreach section.



**Figure 2. Soldier On Organization**



As CAF TG moved towards FOC, Soldier On continued its strategic growth in an effort to find the baseline of sustainable support that would meet the increasing demand of the ill and injured membership, and also ensure staffing and resource sustainability. As event programming and organizational staffing stabilized, the total number of supported members since Soldier On’s inception in 2007 surpassed 12,000 in FY 22/23.

## Soldier On Activities

Soldier On activities and camps serve as an introduction, or re-introduction, to sport, recreation and creative activities for ill and injured CAF serving and retired members (Veterans). Overall, the aim of Soldier On activities is to build confidence and motivate our ill/injured to adapt an active lifestyle. Additionally, Soldier On activities are crucial in connecting with and challenging ill/injured members while demonstrating that they are not alone as they continue to recover, rehabilitate, and reintegrate in the CAF and their local communities.

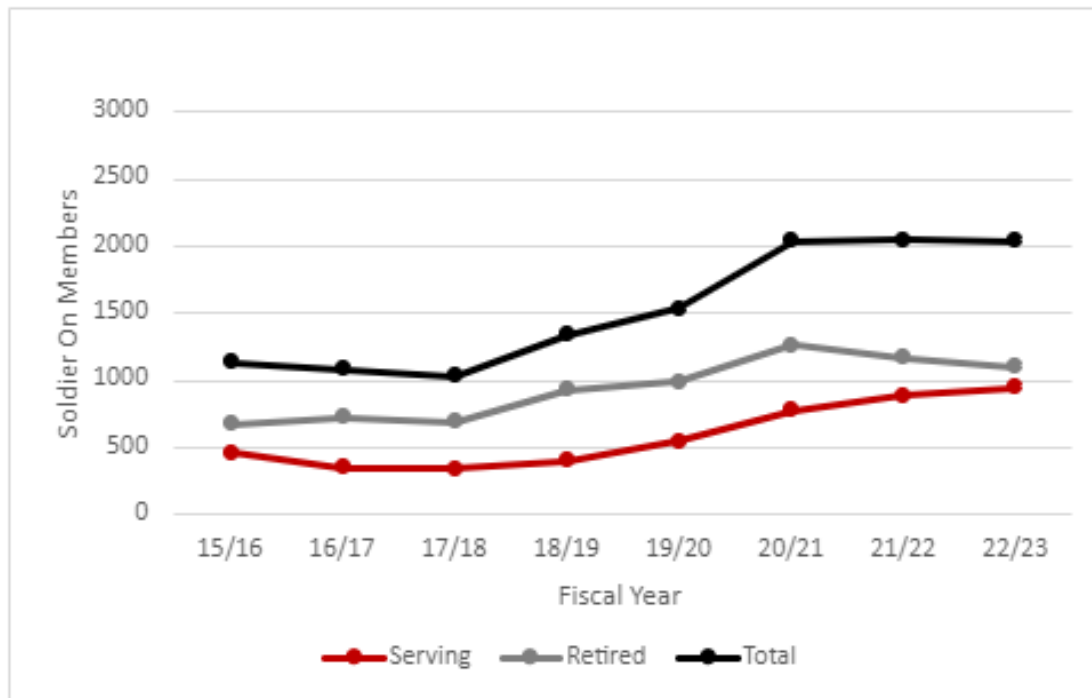
As Soldier On continued to expand in FY 22/23 and find the right balance of output vs sustainability, the program delivered 128 events across Canada and internationally. The international events, also known as High Profile events included the 2022 Warrior Games and the 2022 Invictus Games.

**Figure 3. Soldier On Output Summary (FY 2022-2023)**

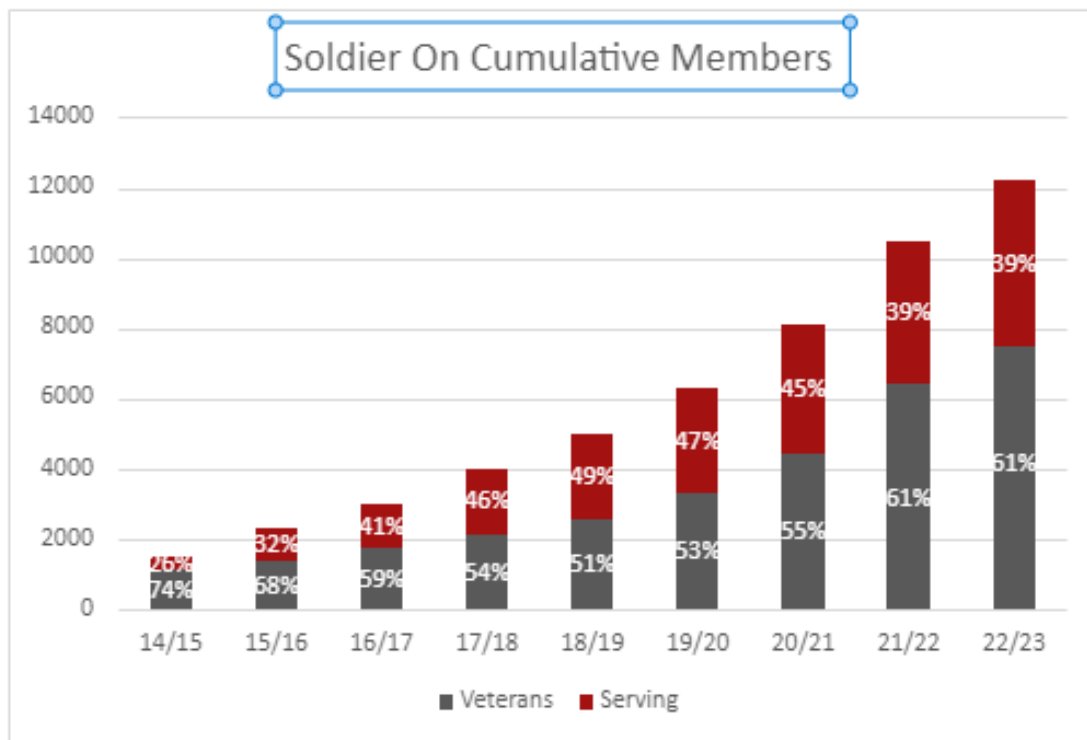




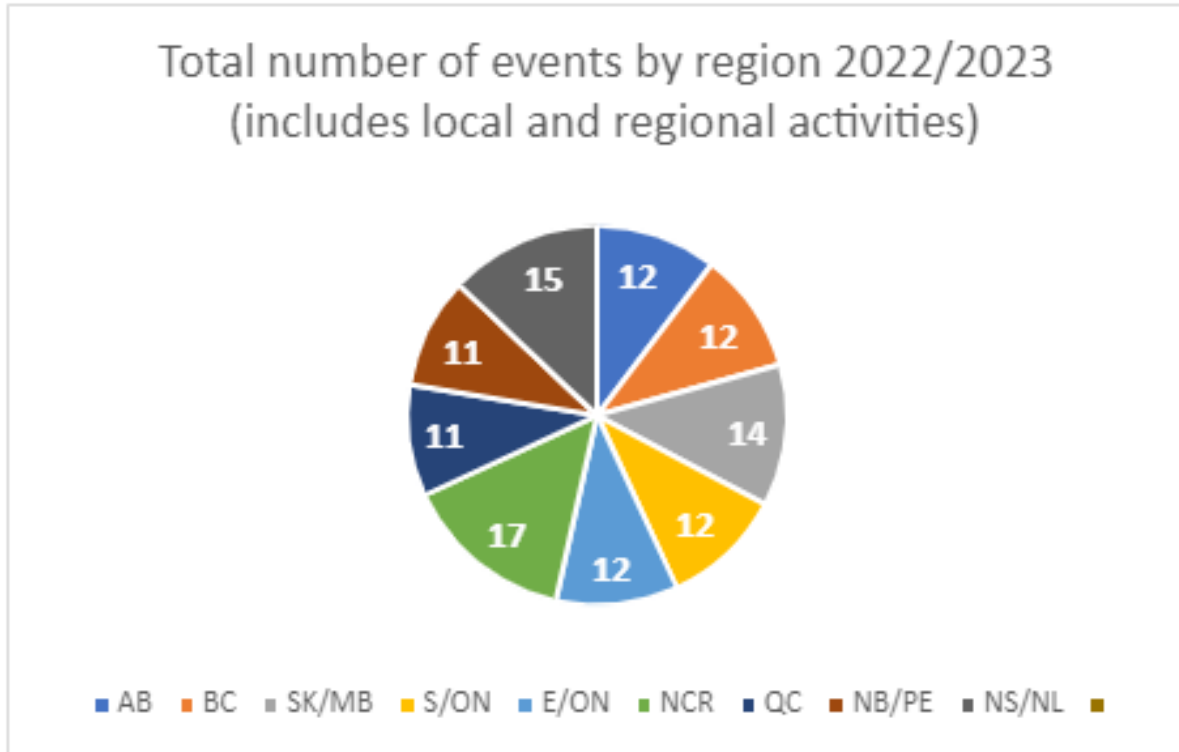
**Figure 4. Soldier On Registered Participants Year to Year (2041 Total – 942 Serving Members/1099 Veterans in FY 22/23)**



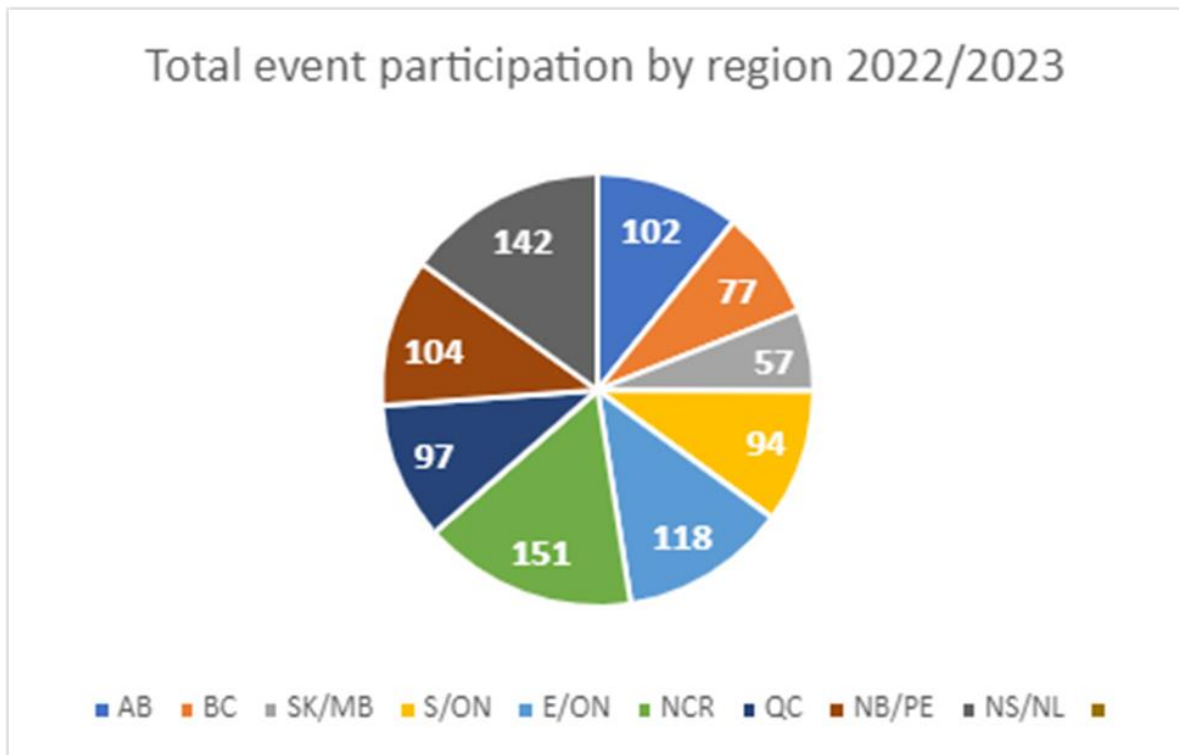
**Figure 5. Soldier On Cumulative Registered Participants/Membership (12,230 Total - 4698 Serving Members/7532 Veterans)**



**Figure 6. FY 22/23 Events Hosted per CAF TU (116 Events)**



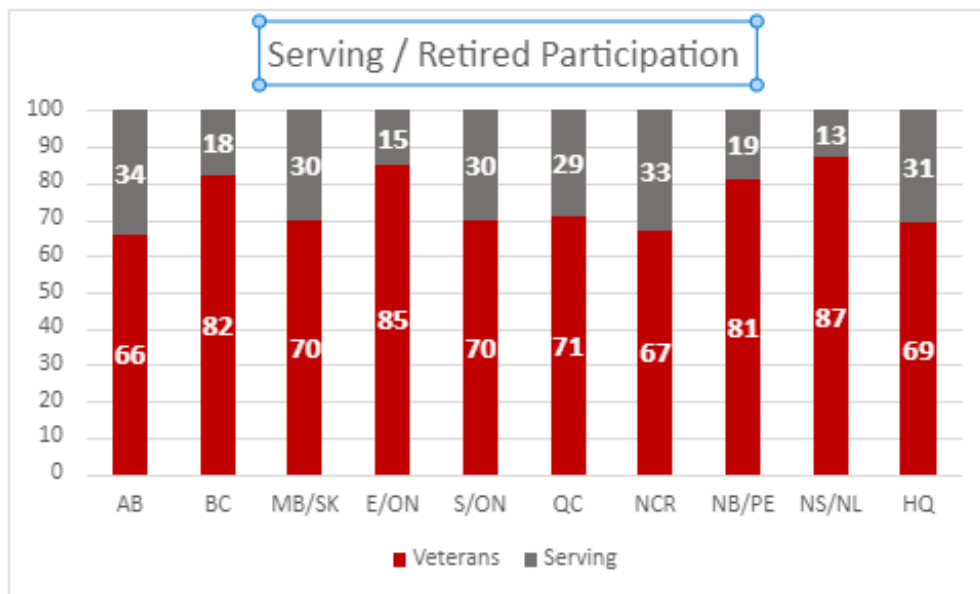
**Figure 7. FY 22/22 Event Participation per CAF TU (942 Participants at Local/Regional Events)**





The percentage of Veterans accessing Soldier On programming has continued to grow over recent years. During FY 22/23, 74% of activity/camp participants were retired members, while 26% were serving members. Additionally, 62% of grant recipients were retired members, while 38% were serving members. The combined average for the year was 69% Veterans and 31% CAF members, with the numbers varying throughout each region. While the participation of retired members continues to be funded through the Soldier On Fund with donations and fundraising, the increasing Veteran participation continues to increase the pressure on the Fund and the fundraising initiatives that are required to sustain the growth in demand. At the close of the FY 22/23 a three year MOU was set in place between CFMWS and Veterans Affairs Canada to assist with some of this pressure. This MOU is a collaborative arrangement to extend access to ill and injured Veterans to Soldier On programming during the lead up and participation of Invictus Games 2025 (IG25), specifically providing funding to extend support for Veteran participation in training and sporting events up to and including IG25, which also includes equipment, instruction and other special needs. This support does provide relief, however the concern over sustainability beyond 2025 still exists in terms of Soldier On’s ability to maintain the same level of support to Veterans in the longer term.

**Figure 8. FY 22/23 Event Participation Serving Members vs Veterans per Region (measured in percentage)**



*“The cycling event gave me confidence to get out on the trails myself. It also helped to engage me to be around people again. I have stayed away from everything military since my retirement. I enjoyed the being around the Soldier On group. I look forward to trying more events.” - CPO2 Retired - Todd Smith*



*“There is nothing bad to say about the Soldier On program, it is there for you, the Veteran or serving member, to use for whatever your injury or illness you may be living with. For those people that don't know what Soldier On is all about, I'm here to tell you it's all about you. Please take advantage of this great program, and if you're not sure, learn more about the program and engage with what interests you. I did and I'm glad I did! Thank you Soldier On!” - Scott Klein*

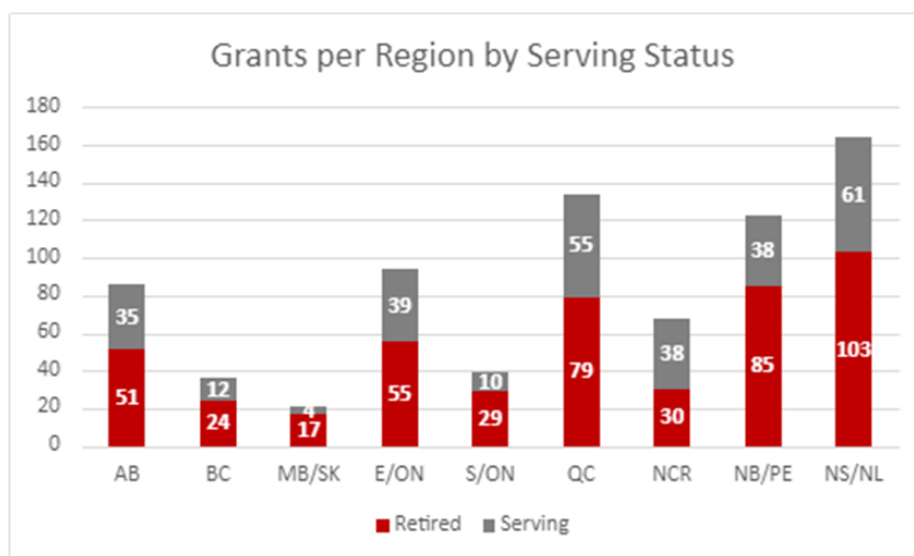


## Soldier On Grants

To enable an active lifestyle, the Soldier On Grant program provides access to equipment and facilities to ill/injured members. In FY 22/23, 765 (292 serving and 473 Veteran) successful grant applications were administered representing a total of \$551K disbursed in equipment grants. This was a slight decrease from FY 21/22 as the grant program was closed for approximately five months to keep within allocated resources. During the year, a new process of formalized application windows was established to better manage the application processing and adjust according to available funding throughout the year. This change will assist maximizing the impact of the grants, however growing demand continues to outstrip the current capacity of the Fund. The end of FY 23/24 will begin to show how this new process is working and better track the overall demand.

*“After attending a Soldier On event in Tofino BC, involving kayaking, paddle boarding and surfing, I requested a Soldier On Grant to assist in purchasing a kayak. I was looking for a low impact activity that would get me outside and active. The grant process was straight forward, uncomplicated and the response time was impressively quick. Since then, kayaking and paddle boarding has become an integral part of our families’ summer activities and I have Soldier On to thank for that, both for the financial assistance and for the experience that got it all started. My husband and I are now retired and will be spending our 2022 summer kayaking Slocan and Kootenay lakes with our two beagles. Forever grateful to Soldier On and I do highly recommend taking part in the Soldier On events, as it could change your life for the better, as it did mine.” - Kim Doucette*

**Figure 9. Grants – Serving Members (292) / Veterans (473) Grant Disbursement per CAF TU Region**



## Outreach and Communications

In year three of five of the current Soldier On Strategy, the aim of the communications and outreach team was to implement and execute on a cascading annual plan. The main goals were to increase activation among serving Soldier On members and to produce compelling storytelling, maximizing new Soldier On creative capabilities. Enhancing awareness of Soldier On by, and advertising compelling opportunities for, the ill and injured community has and will continue to be of paramount importance.

### Registration

Registration with Soldier On allows the program to inform interested ill/injured members of Soldier On’s activities and connect with the community to provide news, information, and opportunities. Additionally, the registration process provides some tombstone data on those interested in Soldier On, which assists in shaping future programming based on demand from those we serve.

The total annual registration in FY 22/23 was 2041, which was an increase of 35 new registrations from the previous FY. In FY 22/23, Soldier On’s community of ill and injured (total registrations since 2007) exceeded 12,000, from coast to coast to coast.

**Figure 10. FY 22/23 New Registrations per CAF TU Region (2041 Total (942 Serving / 1099 Retired))**

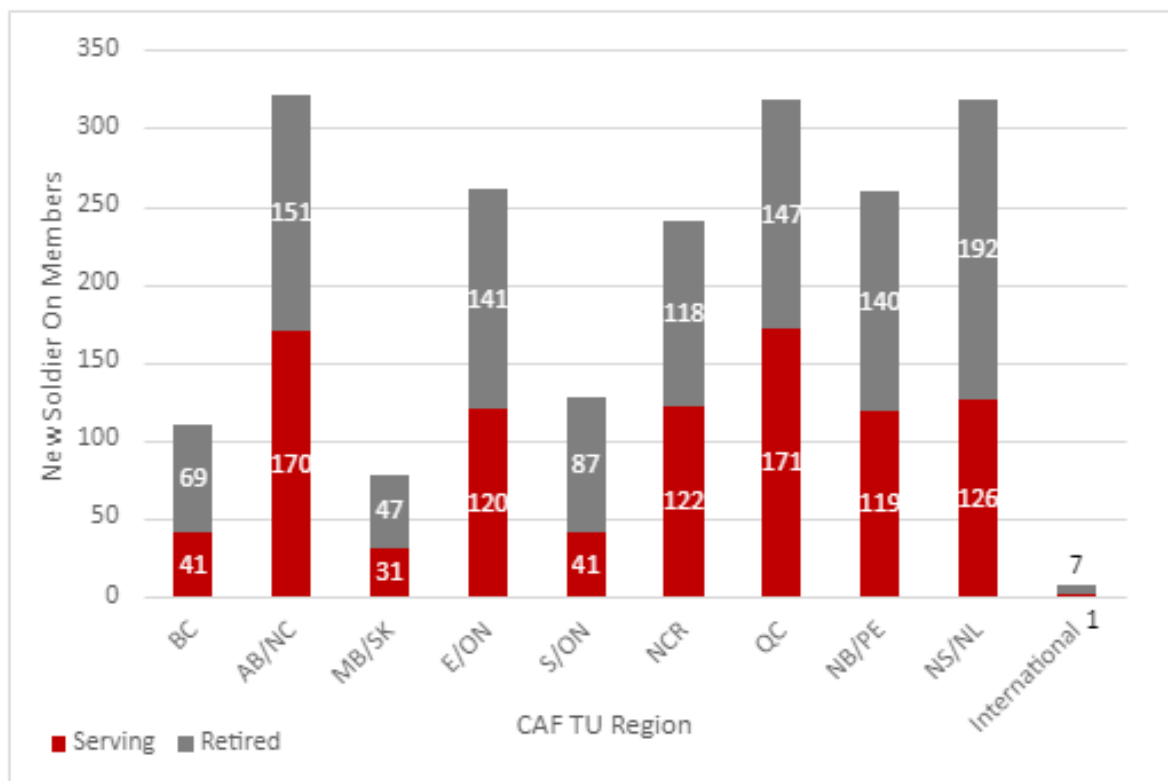
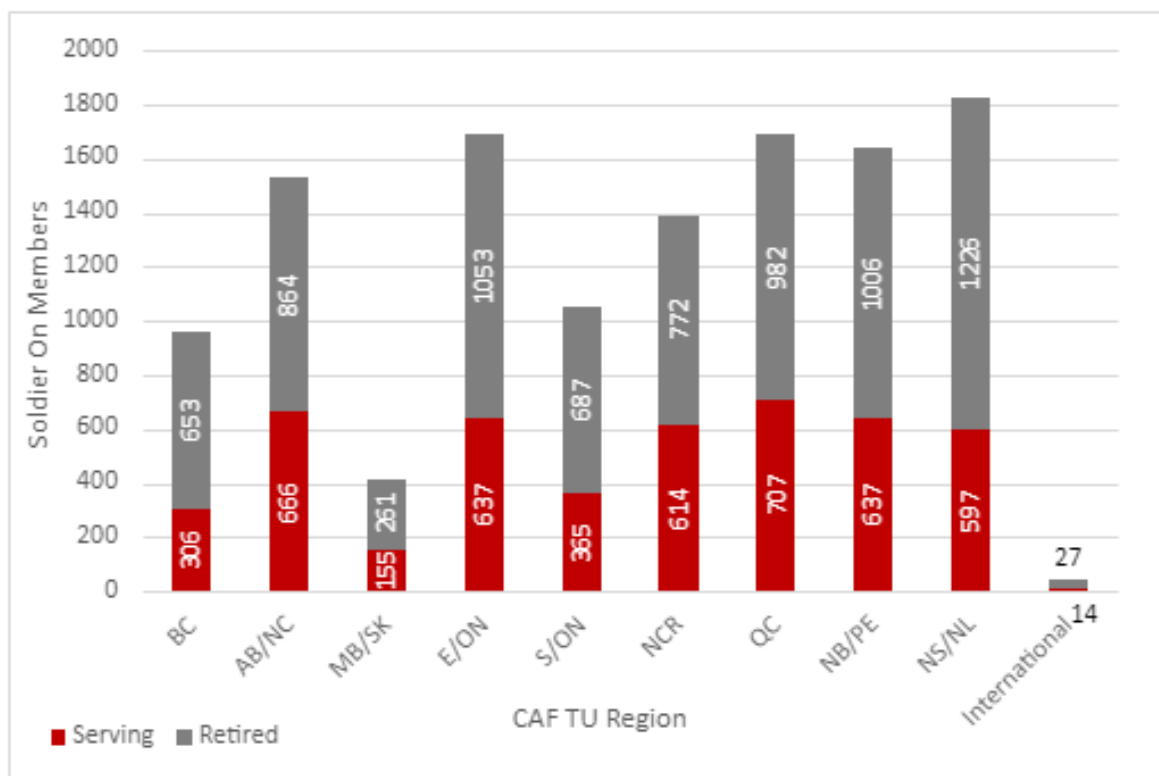


Figure 11. Total Registration per CAF TU Region – 12,230 (4698 Serving / 7532 Retired)



## Outreach

Soldier On staff across Canada engaged in an ambitious Outreach plan, with awareness presentations conducted in every major centre. Soldier On conducted outreach briefings, including both virtual and in person, to key internal and external stakeholders throughout the year including CFEWC, SCAN seminars, Virtual Canada Army Run, Navy Bike Ride, Army Command Team Courses, Designated Assistant Courses, OSISS working group presentation, CAF TG Indoctrination, and Donor, partnership and Sponsorship engagements. Of particular note was a focussed effort to re-engage with CF Health Services (Rehab and OT teams) in order to increase awareness amongst the serving ill and injured demographics.

## Communications

With the increase of Soldier On staff. And in particular the Communications team, significant efforts were invested in storytelling. A centralized repository of articles and videos can be found on the Soldier On website at: <https://www.soldieron.ca/About-Us/In-the-News-1>




## Social Media Growth

The return of in-person events and activities led to an increase in website traffic as members eagerly visited to stay in the know and resort to normalcy and rejoin their community. We also saw an increase



in website visitors due to the fact that there were far more fundraising opportunities made available. This growth demonstrated how our members continue to overcome, adapt and Soldier On.

*Soldier On's website, soldieron.ca/sans-limites.ca, experienced a 25% increase in unique users, reaching a total of 71,748 visitors. These users viewed a total of 222,283 pages and had 101,703 total sessions, indicating active engagement with the website.*

	Facebook – 3246 new followers on Facebook (25 502 total followers - 13% growth) 1,370 new page likes (6.1% growth)
	Instagram – 1226 new followers on Instagram (27% growth) (5762 total followers)
	X (Twitter) – 44 follower loss (5982 total followers)

## Fundraisers

Over 50 grassroots fundraisers and events took place in FY 22/23, enabling not only much-needed fundraising (\$381,039.73) but critical relationship building and program outreach opportunities. These were primarily third-party in nature, with Soldier On Outreach and regional support integrated where possible.

- Walk with Veterans
- 19 Wing Comox Suicide Prevention (Keep Going)
- Objective Rendezvous 2.0
- Fairways For Heroes
- CANSEC Event - Genoa Design
- Canex Gift Of Giving
- New Brunswick Golf Events
- KCKF Fishing Tournament
- SUP Around the Island
- Atlanticade (Dale Hicks)
- John Fife Memorial Golf Tournament
- Swings for Soldiers
- Stalker 822
- Niagara Ice Dogs Game
- Petawawa Golf Tournament
- Jackie Deveau Golf Tournament
- 1 CAD 4X4X48
- Curse of Woodland Cres Haunted House
- 17 Wing Beerfest
- Run for Veterans
- Naden Band Concert
- Kyle Scott Fundraiser (Why Not)



ATCVEO Veterans Ride  
Oilers Ticket Sales  
Royal Imperial Court of London and SW Ontario  
Susan Kruzel Gallery Splash  
Mt Kilimanjaro Summit  
K of C Flag Day Dinner  
Tracey Dean PCT Hike (She Walks Thru)  
15 Wing Battle of the Bands  
3CFFTS  
Biggs Bass  
Canex Barbershop  
Footsteps of Canadian Heroes  
Freedom Syrup  
Grizzly Bear Challenge

### Signature Events

- **The 2022 Canada Army Run**  
\$92,695 to Soldier On
- **The 2022 Navy Bike Ride**  
\$14,000 to Soldier On

### Major Gifts

World Wide Securities  
Scotiabank Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Collins Aerospace  
True Patriot Love  
Anonymous Foundation  
Shakerhill Foundation  
Royal Canadian Navy Benevolent Fund  
Harbour Grace Holdings Inc  
Anonymous Donor  
Veterans Affairs Canada

All major gifts totalled \$1,071,365.72 towards the Soldier On Fund in FY 22/23.

The ongoing support of True Patriot Love should be highlighted, as they have been and continue to be a major partner for Soldier On, specifically in the delivery of the High Profile events, providing funding to support the costs for Veterans, and Friends and Family, as part of Soldier On Team Canada's participation in both Invictus and Warrior Games.

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## *Unconquered Award*

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*SERGEANT (RETIRED) JASON ISRAEL RECEIVES THE 2022 CAF UNCONQUERED AWARD*

Jason is a shining example of perseverance in the face of adversity. Active in supporting various community veterans' initiatives, Jason lives his life in a way that exemplifies facing adversity and choosing to adapt and overcome while inspiring others. He has truly demonstrated an unconquered spirit.

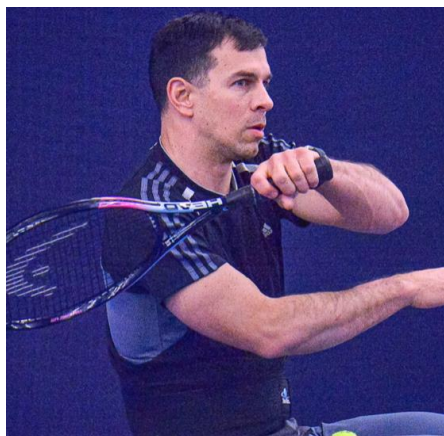
As a soldier, father, volunteer, Soldier On participant, coach or community leader, Jason brings a positive attitude and an approachable and honest character to whatever challenge he faces. He has used his challenges as opportunities for personal growth, and has used his opportunities within Soldier On to inspire his peers to Adapt, Overcome and Soldier On!

The Unconquered Award recognizes a serving or retired Canadian Armed Forces member who has confronted a life-altering situation and used perseverance and determination through sport or physical recreation to overcome challenges and, most importantly, serve as a role model to give hope and inspiration to others in similar situations.

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## *SoldierOn – Patrick Levis*

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Throughout my military career, I experienced several physical, mental, and emotional challenges from sleep deprivation during training to dealing with friendly casualties following improvised explosive device (IED) strikes. Over the years, these challenges helped build the perseverance and resilience required for what was about to be my hardest struggle.

In January 2019, I received the dreaded news that I had a cancerous tumour, the removal of which would require radiation followed by surgery. I lost my ability to walk. The excruciating pain and the ongoing rehabilitation that followed were amongst the hardest challenges of my life, but thanks to the perseverance and resilience I had developed over the years, I have been able to get through my moments of despair.

This new disability impacted many activities I used to enjoy. However, it did not stop me from finding new opportunities. I am grateful for organizations that exist for people living with disabilities as they allow myself and others to continue enjoying life. The BC Wheelchair Sports Association and Soldier On have enabled me to remain active with sledge hockey, wheelchair basketball to scuba diving.

In January 2020, I participated at the Soldier On Western Scuba Diving Camp in Comox, BC. I knew this was going to be a challenge, both mentally and physically. Fortunately, I was part of a group with other military members that bonded together and helped each other out. This activity quickly turned into a most reassuring and enjoyable experience because of the teamwork, esprit de corps and professionalism.

Living with a disability may pose new challenges in life and be difficult at times, but with proper personal and organizational support, the efforts to overcome and the satisfaction of success far outweigh the struggle and disappointment.

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## Conclusion

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2022/23 was a year of recovery and growth for the Soldier On program. With CAF TG support, Soldier On grew its HQ staff in order to better support regional delivery of programming, as well as special projects and high-profile events. The year of growth was an important one, as the program worked towards a sustainable baseline of operations; delivering outstanding opportunities for our ill and injured community, while balancing resources to achieve that objective.

Priorities for Fiscal year 23/24:

- **Program Delivery.** Continue to balance output at all levels with sustainable delivery, focusing on maximizing impact while maintaining a healthy team.
- **High Profile Games.** Continue to develop and plan for Team Canada's participation at upcoming Invictus and Warrior Games.
- **Pathway Development.** Focusing on the coaching pathway, Soldier On will continue to develop various areas to further support ill/injured members, including Soldier On Ambassador Program and Friends of Soldier On.
- **Partnership Development.** Seek, strengthen, and formalize partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, including Soldier On's key partners: VAC and True Patriot Love.
- **Sponsorship Development.** Seek to align with like-minded organizations to realize mutual benefits while offsetting strain on Soldier On Fund.
- **Implementation of Marketing and Communication Plan.** Deliver a robust marketing and communication plan to continue to grow the Soldier On brand, services, and support.
- **Performance Measurement.** Continue to develop performance measurement tools to illustrate the impact of Soldier On.



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