

**Dominion Command
Veterans, Service and Seniors Committee
24 November 2018, 1300 – 1645
Record of Discussion**

File: 65-1

IN ATTENDANCE:

Tom Irvine	-	Chairman
Bruce Julian	-	Vice-Chairman
Larry Murray	-	Ex-Officio
John Mahon	-	Member
Ronn Anderson	-	Member
Dave Gordon	-	Homeless Veterans
George O'Dair	-	Seniors Advisor
Glynne Hines	-	BSO Legion OSI Special Section

ABSENT:

Christopher Richardson	-	BSO Legion OSI Special Section
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DOMINION COMMAND STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Raymond McInnis	-	Secretary
Dwayne McCarthy	-	Assistant Secretary

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to our first meeting of 2018 and he is looking forward to working with the Committee over the next two years. The VSS mandate is to provide dedicated advocacy, support and compassionate assistance to all Veterans including serving CAF members, RCMP, Veterans and their families. We have a complex program and it is essential that we focus our efforts, provide knowledgeable advice and direction. There is a need to communicate internally and externally. The Chair encouraged the Committee members to ask questions, provide their input and offer suggestions for action. The Chair opened the meeting with the opening ritual.

2. CORPS OF COMMISSIONAIRES PRESENTATION

The Chair introduced Comrade Bob Cleroux who provided a short presentation on the Corps of Commissionaires. Comrade Bob is a member of the Defence and Security Committee and President of the Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund. He shared the story of the Commissionaires and how they assist Veterans. It is meaningful employment for Veterans where they live. Comrade Dave asked about employment for homeless veterans and the Commissionaires are open to employing all Veterans.

3. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The previous minutes of 27 June 2018 were reviewed.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded that the VSS Committee approve the minutes of the last Committee teleconference from 27 June 2018.

CARRIED

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair requested the Committee to review the current terms of reference and provide recommendations for amendment. The Chair called for amendments to be reported to the Secretary no later than 18 January 2019, they will be consolidated and reviewed at the next meeting in February 2019. A copy of the Program Description was provided to the Committee.

Composition of the Committee has to be reviewed to ensure that we have a sufficient amount of members and not Ex-Officios. The Committee list was promulgated with three Ex-Officio appointments, the only Ex-Officio should be the Grand President, all other appointees are members.

ACTION: Chair/Secretary

5. CIMVHR FORUM REGINA

The Chair advised that he attended the CIMVHR Forum in Regina in October and presented the fifth scholarship to Massimo Cau. He informed the Committee of the importance of this Forum and the networking capabilities.

The Chair stated that there would be a request to DEC to ratify the next scholarship, although it is approved, in accordance with Poppy Fund regulations, as we have to ratify it before DEC each year.

2019-2020 is the last scholarship year. Information is included in your package on this scholarship and it is a great initiative. All the previous recipients have been extremely grateful to the Legion and provided their research to CIMVHR for review. He recommended that we continue this scholarship for another three scholarship cycles ending in 2023; he asked for a motion to send the request through the Poppy and Remembrance Committee for their concurrence and onward transmission to DEC in April.

Comrade Ray and Comrade Larry explained our participation in CIMVHR as well as our appointments to the CIMVHR governance. Comrade Larry is on the Advisory Board and Comrade Ray is on the Technical Advisory Committee.

MOTION: Recommend to the Poppy and Remembrance Committee and DEC to continue the RCL Masters Scholarship for another three-year cycle, starting in 2020-2021 ending in 2022-2023, for a total of \$90,000.00 from the Dominion Command Poppy Trust Fund.

CARRIED

ACTION: Secretary

6. VETERANS SUMMIT (PFL)

The Chair reported that he attended the Veterans Summit in Ottawa at the end of October. He provided a copy of the Summit Agenda including Summit correspondence; it was another information gathering session for the Department, no action taken. A very disappointing Summit. We provided the Committee a copy of the latest presentation from VAC on Pension for Life (PFL) that will be effective 1 April 2019. Latest information received was that VAC would send initial letters to all of the previous Disability Award (DA) recipients from 2006 to present and post a calculator so that personnel can ballpark what they may or may not be entitled to in April. They will announce this on My VAC Account; however, we will promulgate the information as soon as received. There will be additional letters promulgated in 2019 stating exactly what personnel will receive. There will not be any Appeal rights as this is a strictly financial action. There will be regional centres and a call centre set up to receive inquiries. Comrade Ray explained the Wait Time Tool that will be released in early December.

Secretarial Note: VAC released The Wait Time Tool early December without any of the recommendations proposed by the Legion. They state they will amend the Wait Time Tool based on our recommendations on the next release.

7. OUTREACH AND VISITATION INITIATIVE

The contract was renewed on 1 October 2018 for the next two years, to visit 5,000 Veterans each year. Since the start of the new contract on 1 October 2018, we received 50 taskings to see 1,015 Veterans, completing 216 visits to date.

We have 116 trained volunteers with 13 on the waiting list for training, albeit most are not in areas of need. The next course will be conducted in May 2019. Comrade Ray provided details of the OVI contract to the new members of the Committee. The updated areas of need are:

- Winnipeg (Manitoba)
- Swift Current, Maple Creek and Shaunavon (Saskatchewan)
- Mississauga, Scarborough, Toronto and Sault Ste Marie (Ontario)
- Sydney and Yarmouth (Nova Scotia)

The areas of need in Manitoba and Nova Scotia have recently been identified to us so we have not reached out to the Commands as of this date.

ACTION: Secretary

A discussion ensued on long-term beds paid by VAC that are vacant, Priority Access Beds (PAB). Comrade Dave provided information about PABs in Ontario, and he discussed with the DM and the Minister. He is still waiting for information from the Department. Comrade Dave will provide the correspondence to the Secretary on this issue from Comrade Earl Kish.

8. SERVICE DOGS PILOT AND STANDARDS

A copy of the latest correspondence on the pilot project and our letter to the Minister requesting an update on either Government of Canada standards or the criteria VAC will use regarding Service Dogs was provided to the Committee for review. The Department has been rather silent in responding and during our Executive meetings in November; there was no response to our repeated questions on the issue.

9. ROUNDTABLE ON SENIORS

Comrade George attend the Seniors Roundtable that was held in Ottawa on 1 October 2018. It was hosted by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Sherry Romanado and titled "Discussion on Canada's Aging Population". The group provided recommendations, there was no information provided for a follow-up meeting. The Summary is attached to these minutes.

Further to his report, Comrade George advised that he suggested the concept of a SIP (Seniors Independence Program) with the example of the existing VIP (Veterans Independence Program) as a reference. During the discussion, he also noted that the Legion helped develop and fully agreed with the CMA Demand-A-Plan movement, especially as it relates to Aging at Home, etc and the Legion has developed its own Seniors Support Guide. While not specifically mentioned in the Meeting Summary, these issues were recognized by their Group.

Six years ago, the Dominion President of the day decided that the Legion was not fulfilling its mandate with respect to seniors. The Seniors Support Program Guide (The Home Away Initiative) was developed. Comrade George would like the Guide to be more visible on the Dominion Command website. To locate the Guide currently is a complicated process and he has requested that it be moved to the public site. He asked the questions has the program been helpful? Does it need updating? How can we and should we make this more accessible to Branches, members and the public? The Committee concurred with making the Guide more visible on the site.

The Secretary will send the link to the Seniors Support Program Guide and an explanation of the Guide. The Secretary will check on the distribution and how it was communicated to the Committee when the Guide was released.

The Chair also asked that a letter be forwarded to the Prime Minister recommending that the Veterans Independence Program be adopted for seniors in Canada.

ACTION: Secretary

Secretarial Note: The website has been be updated to include the Guide on the public site.

<http://www.legion.ca/support-for-veterans/support-for-seniors>
<http://www.legion.ca/fr/soutien-aux-veterans/soutien-aux-aines>

10. VETERANS HOMELESSNESS

Comrade Dave thanked Comrade Tom for the appointment as the Homeless Veterans representative on the VSS Committee. He reported that from the beginning in Ontario Command, this program has grown in leaps and bounds and the numbers are staggering to say the least. However, if we could include all Commands together to provide one strong report representing all of the Commands, it would provide the opportunity for all to present a picture of the great work we are doing across Canada in the Legion for homeless veterans. The Legion is the leader in ending homelessness among Veterans and now is the time to let everyone know exactly what steps we are taking and the programs we have initiated. He would like to have a report available early in the new year if he has the approval of the Committee. There are many aspects to the Homeless Veterans Program, it will be necessary to include Poppy and Remembrance Committees, Provincial VSS Chairs and create a much needed communications structure.

We have to keep pressuring VAC on their national strategy. Other items that must be addressed include Transition to Civilian Life, After Care Programs, Mental Health Programs, Affordable Housing, Centres of Excellence, collaborating with various outside organizations in particular Aboriginal Veterans. Comrade Dave explained the Homeless Veterans Program from Ontario to the Committee. The Chair approved that he commence working on a National Homeless Veterans Program in order to obtain national statistics on homeless veterans and for Dominion Command to have national statistics when briefing Government. Comrade Dave provided a copy of a homeless veteran's presentation with speaking notes, it will be provided electronically to members.

ACTION: Homeless Veterans
Member/Secretary

11. BSO LEGION OSI SPECIAL SECTION – GLYNNE HINES

MHFA. All of the serials initially contracted for by VAC will have been delivered by early 2019. DND/CAF has contracted for additional serials to be hosted by the MFRCs for up to two serials, per location next year. VAC has also agreed to fund additional serials for non-MFRC locations as a contract extension for the next year. This means that there will be no interruption in the existing program. MHCC/MHFA Canada continues to train

instructors; there is not a shortage of instructors so Branches and Provincial Commands are encouraged to host serials.

ThoughtSpot. The proposal that they worked with CAMH to secure funding through the Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund to develop the ThoughtSpot app was not successful. That said, the app remains relevant and does have support from within the mental health community. They will continue to work with CAMH, VAC, and other potential sponsors and sources of funding to develop and field the app.

Mental Health Advisory Group. Notwithstanding an eight-month hiatus in consultation with the Minister, Minister O'Regan has indicated that the Advisory Groups will be reinvigorated and will continue as a key element of the outreach and engagement activities. We can anticipate updates to the make-up and terms of reference for the groups in the coming months.

Project Trauma Support. The Section has been approached by the Director of Project Trauma Support, an innovative, 6-day residential program to help Veterans and first responders move from post-traumatic stress to post-traumatic growth. They are working with them to better understand where the Section can be of assistance and to support their efforts to raise funds to continue their work.

A Steering Committee has been launched to conduct a review of the Section's Five-Year Strategic Plan and update it as required. The Committee is chaired by Treasurer Jill Carleton, members Alain Blondin (PRO), Brian Harding (Advisory Committee) and Craig Hood (Founding Member and Special Projects).

The Section now has a reciprocal membership agreement with the TVS Section and are information sharing (for instance info on respiratory illness related to mould in ships).

Personnel changes since Dominion Convention:

New Executive

- Nathalie Vanasse (NL) has been appointed as Chair of the Section
- Trevor Jenvenne (MB) has volunteered as VP RCMP

New Provincial Reps

- BC Kent Guilford
- MB Yvan Corriveau
- QC Derek Species
- NL Joanne Gilliland Power

The Section placed a wreath at the National War Memorial this year for the first time. They would like to be grouped with Veteran's organizations vice community groups in the future.

The Section continues to be challenged in its role vis-a-vis the rest of the Legion and other organizations with a Veteran mental health nexus. They continue to stress that the role of the Section does not include service delivery. That is to say, the Section is focused on destigmatization, Veteran and Family Support, and service and support development (by experts and authorities). Well-meaning members want to be involved in "boots on the ground" activities and have been referred to work within the framework of other activities and organizations (Leave the Streets Behind, Porch-light, VETS Canada, OSISS, and others). To reiterate, BSO Legion OSI, will not conduct boots on the ground activities and will leave that to other existing organizations and programs. Their focus is on program awareness, advocacy, destigmatization, and encouraging program development.

12. VSS PROVINCIAL REPORTS

Copies of the VSS provincial reports were provided to the Committee to review what Provincial Commands reported on last year. In addition it is requested that the members review the questions being asked with the intention of amendment/additions for 2019. The only Command that did not provide a report was Alta/NWT Command. NS-Nunavut Command stated there was no change from previous years.

At this time the Chair briefed the Committee on the Committee of the Whole. The first teleconference with the VSS Provincial Chairs will be scheduled for early January 2019 and the agenda item will be the review of the provincial reports. There will be at least three teleconferences in 2019 for the Committee of the Whole, if needed.

ACTION: Chair/Secretary

13. COMMUNICATION

The Chair informed the members that all correspondence that is forwarded to you as a Committee member requesting your concurrence or non-concurrence, should not be forwarded outside of our Committee to your Command until it is discussed at a VSS meeting and the Record of Discussion is promulgated.

Once promulgated, correspondence will be forwarded throughout the Commands down to Branch level and the membership.

ACTION: Committee Members

14. QUINISM FOUNDATION – MEFLOQUINE RESEARCH

The Committee reviewed a proposal from the Quinism Foundation for \$25,000.00 from the Dominion Command Poppy Trust Fund to undertake a formal study of Canadian Somalia-era Veterans who believe they have been affected by mefloquine poisoning.

This study will have as its aims the characterization of the scope and severity of disability that is attributable to mefloquine poisoning among this group. This proposed study will be the first formal study of health outcomes among mefloquine Veterans spanning such a long, 25-year period, conducted anywhere in the world. It is anticipated that preliminary results will be available from this research within a year and that publication of the full case-series may be possible within two to three years, subject primarily to the timeliness of availability of archived medical records from the Canadian Armed Forces.

The Legion has been concerned with the lack of medical research on this medication for some time and despite our repeated requests to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Minister of National Defence and Health Canada, no action has been taken to date to conduct research. The Chair requested a motion to approve to send the request through the Poppy and Remembrance Committee for their concurrence and onward transmission to DEC in April to fund this mefloquine research proposal from the Dominion Command Poppy Trust Fund for a total of \$25,000.00.

The Committee reviewed the proposal, discussion involved around the recruitment of the Veterans for the study, credibility of the study and the results have to withstand scrutiny, links to CIMVHR and the availability of the medical records through our Canadian Privacy Act. After discussion, the Committee concurred with the proposal.

Motion: Recommend to the Poppy and Remembrance Committee and DEC to fund the mefloquine research study with the Quinism Foundation for a total of \$25,000.00 from the Dominion Command Poppy Trust Fund.

CARRIED

ACTION: Secretary

15. PROJECT HEALING WATERS

The Committee reviewed a proposal from Project Healing Waters for \$25,000.00 from the Dominion Command Poppy Trust Fund. This organization was not successful with their request to VAC under the Veterans and Family Well-being Fund. This social rehabilitation program provides life-long skills and equipment to Veterans at a low cost. They will hold five events in 2019 for 91 Veterans, approximately \$275.00 per Veteran attending these events. It is to be noted that they are also submitting proposals to Provincial Commands for \$29,000.00. Overall cost per Veteran from Dominion Command and Provincial Command would be \$600.00 per Veteran.

The Chair requested a motion to approve to send the request through the Poppy and Remembrance Committee for their concurrence and onward transmission to DEC in April to fund this proposal from the Dominion Command Poppy Trust Fund for a total of \$25,000.00.

Motion: Recommend to the Poppy and Remembrance Committee and DEC to fund Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Canada for a total of \$25,000.00 from the Dominion Command Poppy Trust Fund.

CARRIED

ACTION: Secretary

16. SOLDIER ON – CHANGE IN PROPOSAL

Earlier this year, DEC secretarially approved \$450,000.00 be allocated to the Soldier On Program; specifically \$150,000.00 in 2018 to support Soldier On Meet-up, Soldier On Ambassador Program and Soldier On Events: 10 events/year.

Soldier On advised that due to lack of resources on their end, they were not able to fulfill the commitments from this proposal in 2018. No money was forwarded to Soldier On.

Soldier On submitted a revamped proposal. It is a sponsorship agreement now where the Legion will get profile in six of their big events. The funding request is the same, \$150,000.00 per year for three years. Each year, after year one, is contingent on Legion acceptance that funding was used to our benefit. Soldier On will provide a detailed report after each year.

The Chair requested the members to review the sponsorship agreement and requested a motion to approve to send the request through the Poppy and Remembrance Committee for their concurrence and onward transmission to DEC in April to fund this proposal from the Dominion Command Poppy Trust Fund for a total of \$450,000.00.

There was a considerable amount of discussion around the sponsorship agreement, the legality of the agreement, etc. Comrade John advised the Committee that the sponsorship agreement is a standard agreement used by the CFMWS and has JAG approval. Notwithstanding it may be a legal agreement, the Committee agreed to table the motion until additional information is received from Soldier On and the Committee will review secretarially.

Motion: Moved to table the recommendation to the Poppy and Remembrance Committee and DEC to fund Soldier On for a total of \$450,000.00 over a three-year period from the Dominion Command Poppy Trust Fund.

TABLED

Secretarial Note: A request for additional information to support the sponsorship agreement has been forwarded to Soldier On.

17. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS / ROUNDTABLE

The Chair informed the Committee that Mr. L. Craig Dalton is the new Ombudsman for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

18. NEXT MEETING

The next teleconference will be the Committee of the Whole, tentatively scheduled for 9 January 2019 at 1330 EST.

The next teleconference for the VSS Committee will be on 13 February 2019 at 1330 EST.

19. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

The Chair thanked all for their hard work today and he is looking forward to working with everyone.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

CARRIED

20. CLOSING RITUAL

Comrade Tom concluded the meeting with the closing ritual at 1645.



Tom Irvine
CHAIRMAN



Raymond McInnis
SECRETARY

Dated 10 December 2018