

**Dominion Command
Veterans, Service and Seniors Committee
VIA ZOOM
19 May 2021, 1330 – 1430
Record of Discussion**

File: 65-1

IN ATTENDANCE:

Tom Irvine	-	Chairman
Bruce Julian	-	Vice-Chairman
Ronn Anderson	-	Member
John Mahon	-	Member
Dave Gordon	-	Homeless Veterans
George O'Dair	-	Seniors Advisor
Trevor Jenvenne	-	BSO Legion OSI Special Section

ABSENT:	Larry Murray	-	Ex-Officio
	Jill Carleton	-	BSO Legion OSI Special Section

DOMINION COMMAND STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Raymond McInnis	-	Coordinator
Dwayne McCarthy	-	Assistant Coordinator

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He mentioned that Budget 2021 was a nice surprise for Veterans, we were not expecting much as we knew the Budget would be concentrating on restarting the economy; however, there were several items for veterans and seniors.

A 3-Billion-dollar commitment to Long Term Care and an additional 90 million in funding for a Stay-at-Home Wellness Program, VAC has been working with ESDC and sharing the details of the Veterans Independence Program to assist with the development of the new Wellness Program.

We will continue to advocate for both programs as we need to see the details of these programs and the time for action is now for both programs.

45 million over two years for Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to pilot a program aimed at reducing veteran homelessness. At the Ministerial Policy

Advisory meeting last week, Comrade Ray asked for details on the VAC/ESDC report to Parliament that was due last June, no response was provided. A brief discussion ensued regarding the proposed VAC Homelessness Strategy that is apparently sitting on the Minister's desk for approval and what the impact of this pilot program will have on the strategy.

Another new initiative was the 150 Million in immediate funding to VAC that will cover mental health treatment costs for Veterans with a range of diagnoses while they wait for their disability benefit applications to be processed. VAC policy folks are working on the implementation, Comrade Ray advised that implementation should be kept simple, for example, once a mental health condition is registered with VAC, treatment should begin.

The Chair stated that the Committee received the Budget media release so no need to go over all the funding items, now we need to see the details of the new initiatives.

The news about Project Trauma Support was very disturbing, our media releases were distributed to the Committee. The most recent news from last weekend was that Dr. Manuela Joannou has stepped down as the Medical Director, Paul Rutherford resigned as the Chair of the PTS Board and LCol Besseman is no longer volunteering with them. This program did terrific work and has saved lives, evidenced by the number of testimonials we received over the past two years.

The Chair advised that Dr. Rebecca Van Iersel will take over as the new Medical Director.

Comrade Ray will reach out to the University of Alberta to determine if the research/data analysis will continue and a report forthcoming to VAC.

Action: Coordinator

The Chair mentioned that the Deputy Minister VAC Walt Natynczyk is retiring on Monday. Paul Ledwell was announced as the new Deputy Minister, the announcement and biography was previously disseminated.

On a positive note, the Chair advised that the last of the federal funding was disbursed last week, in the third and final distribution phase, 885 branches shared the remaining 3.8 million.

2. MOTION TO DEVIATE

MOTION: It was moved to deviate from the agenda if so required.

CARRIED

3. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were distributed on 5 March. Prior to reviewing the minutes, the Chair advised that there is one time from our last meeting on 24 February that has not been completed but is pending. The Letter to the PM/Premiers on Long-Term Care and the new wellness program is being drafted and reviewed by Communications before release.

The Chair requested a motion to approve the minutes.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded that the members approve the minutes of the last Committee meeting held on 24 February 2021.

CARRIED

4. VETERANS HOMELESSNESS REPORT

Comrade Dave presented the Veterans Homelessness Report, the report is attached to the minutes.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded that the members approve the Homeless Veterans Report.

CARRIED

Comrade Dave presented new Guidelines for the RCL National Law Enforcement Program including the TPS & OPP Military Veterans Wellness Program (MVWP) – Strategic Framework and the Military Veteran Assistance Form.

Comrade Trevor asked why the RCMP were not included in this program as they are included under the Legion's definition of Veteran. On the back of the Veteran Assistance Form, the brochure from VAC states service in the RCMP. Comrades Ray and Dave will again attempt to not only change the title of the Assistance Form but to ensure the RCMP veterans are included on the Assistance Form.

Action: Coordinator/Homeless Veterans Rep

CARRIED

5. SENIORS REPORT

Comrade George presented the Seniors report, it is attached to the minutes.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded that the members approve the Seniors Report.

CARRIED

6. BSO LEGION OSI SPECIAL SECTION - REPORT

Comrade Jill previously advised the Committee in writing there would be no OSI Special Section report for this meeting. Comrade Trevor advised the Committee that the section have distanced themselves from Project Trauma Support until they see a change in how they conduct their business.

7. VETERANS SERVICES - UPDATE

Comrade Ray advised he is in constant communication with VAC and they have implemented new monthly and quarterly meetings with VAC on various topics, including the backlog, new programming, new computer software, etc.

He advised that new information is passed to the Command Service Officers in their monthly Zoom videoconferences. He wanted to pass on to all members that the Command Service Officers are doing a tremendous job taking care of veterans and their families.

DC Service Officers are busy with Entitlement Reviews/Appeals with the Veterans Review and Appeal Board. Veteran Services have implemented monthly meetings with the VRAB Director of Operations to discuss scheduling of appeals, operations, etc. The monthly meetings will continue until the 123 Appeals are scheduled and decisions rendered. At that time, the meetings will be scheduled on a quarterly basis.

8. VETERAN SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

The Chair advised that no new requests have been received, we did receive a request to review a previous submission from Dispatches Adventure Ride to enhance the application for re-submission.

9. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS/ROUNDTABLE

There were no additional agenda items and no discussion items at roundtable.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the VSS Committee is tentatively scheduled for **22 September 2021** via Zoom at 1330.

11. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

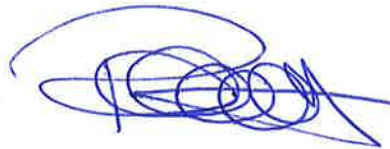
The Chair thanked all for their input and advice during the past three years. Stay safe and be well!

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting

CARRIED



Tom Irvine
CHAIRMAN



Raymond McInnis
COORDINATOR

Dated 20 May 2021

Dominion Command
Homeless Veterans Report
May 18, 2021

Covid-19 has not stopped Homeless Veterans. We continue to see more and more Homeless Veterans coming forward and seeking assistance from the Legion.

The following is a review of the 2020 Quarterly reports (numbers assisted) by Command.

BC/Yukon – over 100 from Cockrell House (I used the 100 number) a few female. Note there has been indication of Homeless Veterans being assisted in the interior, Comox Valley, however they were not reported through the Quarterly report.

Alberta/NWT – 9 – 1 Female

Saskatchewan – 30

Man/NWO – 1 – Female

Ontario – 907 – 93 female

Quebec – 130

Nova Scotia – 15 – 2 Female

New Brunswick - 2

PEI - 2

Newfoundland - 0

Total: 1,096 of which 97 are Female.

NOTE: Female numbers are included in the totals.

Other than Ontario Command there was not much information given to the monetary funds spent on the program and we will be asking for more detail in the future. Ontario Command has disbursed over \$ 2.7 million for their Operation Leave the Streets Behind program.

The Toronto Police Services and OPP are finalizing their Officer Training program regarding Homeless Veterans and have hired a company to produce a video for their training program, which should be available in 6-8 weeks. The video is being paid for by Ontario Command at a cost not to exceed \$ 9,000.00. This program is going National and will be shared with the Committee and all Commands once finalized. This is a big step forward as every police officer in Canada, Municipal, Provincial, RCMP, and the list goes on will all have access to the program through a national police portal. Many thanks to Comrade Rob Cutbush, Man/NWO Command for his assistance. With the exception of the video the paperwork is ready to go and can be sent to the VSS Committee for approval and then to each command for consideration.

Veterans House in Ottawa has more than 23 new Veterans who have taken up residence with two being female. The outdoor area is being finalized with the BBQ hook up patio furniture being installed. No Covid Vaccine for the residents is seriously reducing any activities. A request has been made for a visit for the vaccinations.

CAEH has been expanding their program and have been in contact with several regions in Ontario and St. John's, NFLD. Comrade Paul Hillier, has noted he has been contacted and also has been in contact with the local Salvation Army Homeless Shelter. Also Chris Strong is dealing with the questions regarding Fort McMurray. One interesting note is the announcement that London has achieved Functional Zero and many were celebrating they have ended Veteran Homelessness in that city. This is not the case as Functional Zero means the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness is less than or equal to the number of Veterans a community has proven it can house in a month and sustain this number. For example, if they started with 10 and reduced the number to 3 and maintained it for 3 months or more they reach Functional Zero. I should also note that the Legion housed 14 Veterans in the month of September, 2020 in London.

I presented the OC Homeless slide presentation to the Ottawa Respect forum and was later contacted by the Minister's office (Joshua Bragg) for an update regarding the program. I participated in a Zoom meeting with him, Karen Breeck and Greg Burt, Chairman of the Respect Forum. Karen was most interested in statistics especially for Female Veterans. However, because of the Privacy Act, I would not provide the requested information, names, phone numbers, location etc. It was interesting that he was suggesting ways VAC was stepping to the plate but didn't have an answer when I questioned the fact the VAC has yet to release a Homeless Veterans Strategy. He noted it was on his desk and didn't have a release date. I noted this has gone on too long and the release date should have been a couple of years ago.

The Ottawa Veterans Task Force is moving along and have set in place a number of committees to take on the various tasks. There was some difficulty with VAC but I believe the concerns are being corrected.

I would like to thank Comrade Ray for his support and assistance.

Respectfully Submitted

Dave Gordon

**GUIDELINES
ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION
NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM**

INTRODUCTION

Last 9, November, 2020, the Ontario Provincial Police and Toronto Police Services announce their partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion, Ontario and Manitoba/NWO Commands in the Operation: Leave the Streets Behind, Homeless Veterans program.

Dominion Command is providing the following document as a Guideline, to assist Royal Canadian Legion, Provincial Commands, Districts, Zones and Branches to understand the Law Enforcement program. Perhaps, you will be encouraged to contact local Police Services to also partner in the program and help eliminate Homeless Veterans throughout Canada.

MILITARY VETERAN REFERRAL FORM

A copy of the Military Veteran Referral form is attached and can be completed by police officers from their squad cars or from an electronic device capable of completing the form. Note there are three pages with the 2nd and 3rd pages given to the Veteran.

VETERAN'S INFORMATION

This section provides the personal information of the Veteran and is **mandatory**. It is important to provide a Shelter name and contact or phone number, as this will allow the Legion or VAC to contact the Shelter as a follow up and speed the process for immediate assistance for the Veteran.

INSTRUCTIONS

This section provides contact information for Veterans Affairs Canada, Royal Canadian Legion and Operational Stress Injury Special Support Program.

NOTE: Each Provincial Command will have a designated form and their contact information will be inserted in their respective document.

CONSENT FOR CONTACT

The Police Officer engaging with the Veteran at the time of the interview must complete this section to obtain the consent of the Veteran to proceed. The officer will also advise the Veteran once consent is given by the Veteran to receive support from the parties noted. Further, once consent is given, it can also be withdrawn at any time by the Veteran.



MILITARY VETERAN ASSISTANCE FORM

Date: _____
(yyyy/mm/dd)

VETERAN'S INFORMATION

Date of Birth: _____ (yyyy/mm/dd)

Surname

Maiden Name

Given Name (G1)

Military Branch / Nationality

Military Service Number

Currently
Serving?

Years of
Service: _____ to _____
(yyyy/mm/dd) (yyyy/mm/dd)

Address (Street number and name, Apt. #, City, Province, Postal Code)

Phone Number (10 digits)

Shelter Name

Shelter Phone Number (10 digits)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. If you encounter a Veteran who requires assistance, please submit the form via the link at the bottom.
2. In addition, for immediate assistance during regular business hours contact the following and speak to a service agent
 - Veterans Affairs Canada (1-866-522-2122),
 - Royal Canadian Legion (1-888-207-0939), or
 - Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program (1-800-883-6094).
3. If you are not able to speak to a service agent, attempt to assist the Veteran with any other local services, to ensure the Veteran's well-being until a care provider can contact them within 72 hours.

CONSENT FOR CONTACT

- The Veteran indicated they wish to receive support from Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program.

I have advised the Veteran of the following:

- The information collected on this form is solely to link Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program to the Veteran and for no other purpose.
- The provision of any information, together with the Veteran's participation in a program, is strictly voluntary.
- The consent provided can be withdrawn at any time.
- The Veteran provided consent to allow the Toronto Police Service to provide the collected information contained on this form to Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, and/or the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program.

SUBMITTING OFFICER

Surname, Given Name

Badge / Employee Number

Contact Number

Police Service

Division / Unit / Detachment

ONE HOMELESS VETERAN IS ONE TOO MANY



AVAILABLE RESOURCES ARE:

- Veterans Emergency Fund
- Health Care
- Financial Support
- Employment
- Vocational Training and Support
- Peer Support
- Veteran & Family Well-Being Fund
- Case Management
- Local Service Providers

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO SERVED IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES OR THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE WHO IS HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF BECOMING HOMELESS?

CALL US.
1-866-522-2122
veterans.gc.ca/services

1-800-268-7708

VAC assistance Service, to speak to a mental health professional

Veterans Affairs Canada / Anciens Combattants Canada

Canada



Operation Leave the Streets Behind Homeless Veterans Assistance

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

- Medical Needs
- Assistive Devices
- Emergency Transportation
- Emergency Assistance
- Addiction Programs • Rental Payments
- Furnishing Assistance • Moving Expenses
- Utility Payments • Shelter • Food

For more information, contact:

The Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Provincial Command
89 Industrial Parkway North, Aurora, ON L4G 4C4
rclontariocommand@on.legion.ca

TOLL FREE: 1-888-207-0939 • PHONE: 905-841-7999 • FAX: 905-841-9992



OPERATIONAL STRESS INJURY SOCIAL SUPPORT
SOUTIEN SOCIAL BLESSURES DE STRESS OPÉRATIONNEL

Operational Stress Injury Social Support

The Power of Peer Support

The OSISS program includes CAF members, veterans and family members in multiple locations across Canada who provide mentorship, firsthand lived experience and practical knowledge of what life is like with an OSI. Our program is for peers, by peers.

- National standardized program
- One on One support as well as group support
- Community engagement
- Confidentiality



1 800 883 6094



OSISS-SSBSO@forces.gc.ca



osiss.ca

24 Hour Assistance Lines

Veterans Affairs Canada Assistance Service Line: 1 (800) 268-7708 TDD/TTY: 1 (800) 567-5803

Canadian Forces Family Information Line: 1 (800) 866-4546

TPS & OPP - Military Veterans Wellness Program (MVWP) - Strategic Framework

Ultimate Outcome:

Prosperity for all our Canadian Forces Veterans,
and increased public safety for all communities across Canada

Vision: To be an integrated partner with Veterans Affairs Canada, The Royal Canadian Legion, Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program, and Police Services across Canada in providing streamlined assistance and support to improve the well-being of our Canadian Forces Veterans while they are in crisis, homeless and / or suicidal

Training and Education	De-escalation and Referral	Policy / Planning / Support	Collaboration	National & Comms Plan
<p>Strategic Effect: <i>Canadian Police officers have the knowledge and skills necessary to help Veterans in crisis</i></p> <p>Strategic Objectives: Educate police officers to better understand Veterans and how they can help</p> <p>Create and maintain an online, self-guided training course</p> <p>Engage stakeholders and participants to evaluate the training program</p> <p>Integrate research with key partners into training and education content</p>	<p>Strategic Effect: <i>Police officers have the capacity to de-escalate emergency situations and easily refer veterans help</i></p> <p>Strategic Objectives: Streamline a 24 hour referral process for Veteran support services for all police agencies</p> <p>Optimize police services and resources by reducing repetitive calls of service for Veterans</p> <p>Provide police officers with tools for de-escalating emergency situations with Veterans</p>	<p>Strategic Effect: <i>Effective Military Veterans Wellness Program policy and support system</i></p> <p>Strategic Objectives: Develop and maintain the MVWP program policy, including the values mission, vision, and direction</p> <p>Implement and maintain the performance measurement framework to monitor program effectiveness</p> <p>Inform program policy through an annual report</p> <p>Provide ongoing policy support and resources to external police services</p>	<p>Strategic Effect: <i>Integrated partnerships with National Veterans Service Agencies and Police Services across Canada</i></p> <p>Strategic Objectives: Collaborate with stakeholders and partners to streamline the referral of Veterans to support services</p> <p>Collaborate with external police units to support the delivery of the program across Canada</p> <p>Maintain and establish new partnerships to improve the training and assistance provided to Veterans</p>	<p>Strategic Effect: <i>National awareness and implementation of the Military Veterans Wellness Program</i></p> <p>Strategic Objectives: Develop and deliver an internal and external communications strategy that includes the program values, vision, and policy</p> <p>Develop and deliver a national implementation plan with stakeholders</p> <p>Develop and maintain the Month of Remembrance Epaullette Program for TPS</p>

Mission: To improve the well-being of Veterans by providing police services across Canada with a better understanding of the sacrifice and struggles our Veterans endure, the ability to safely de-escalate potentially dangerous situations with a Veteran in crisis, and a streamlined referral process to the appropriate national support services which can help address veteran homelessness, suicide and improve their overall well being

Plans & Priorities, Guidelines, Strategies: Our Core Values and Service Governance

Government of Canada: Societal / Legislative/ Regulatory: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Criminal Code of Canada, Police Services Act, and the Veterans Affairs Canada Mandate, and the Canadian societal agreement to take care of those who risk their lives to take care of us

Seniors Report

Since our last meeting, COVID 19 vaccination supplies have been arriving in great numbers and many seniors have had their first shot in the arm with the second to be received in June or July or perhaps sooner if supplies continue to arrive as promised and if our politicians and specialists can get over themselves and decide what brand is best for protection from the virus. Confusion still reigns about danger and effectiveness of the various offerings and public confidence is lacking in some quarters. Nonetheless, it appears that serious consequences of the virus including death have now been largely reduced in the Seniors community and especially in LTC. Now that Provinces are making an effort to seek out and vaccinate people wherever they live, we should see a huge reduction in infection numbers, provided that the vaccines are the answer that they appear to be.

There have been many lessons learned from this plague and there have been promises of more money for PSW's, especially creating situations whereby PSW's don't have to work at multiple facilities to make a living. Provinces have promised more LTC beds and more facilities. That's all well and good if Provinces maintain proper standards and strong control over quality of care whether the facilities are public or private, large or small or by the provision of Home Care.

Long Term Care will continue to be an issue, pandemic or otherwise. Care must be provided either in a LTC facility or with some degree of Home Care.

Governments have promised more funds for Home Care and I think that most Canadians would prefer to live at home for as long as they can. We've talked about Home Care funding to help maintain an acceptable standard of living such as provided in VIP to Veterans. It's doubtful that we'll ever get there; however, it's worth a consistent try.

As we hopefully near the end of this pandemic, future VSS committees should consider extreme vigilance on these matters and consistently apply pressure on Governments to practice what they preach and to never again let senior's health care fall into the death trap that happened in this past year. And, let's remember that ageing and pandemics don't differentiate between community seniors and Veteran seniors. We're all in the same boat.