

**Dominion Command
Veterans, Service and Seniors Committee
18 September 2019, 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
Larry Murray	-	Ex-Officio

ABSENT:

Jill Carleton	-	BSO Legion OSI Special Section
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DOMINION COMMAND STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Raymond McInnis	-	Coordinator
Dwayne McCarthy	-	Assistant Coordinator

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed all to our third and final VSS teleconference in 2019, the next meeting is scheduled on 23 November at 0900 in the Memorial Boardroom, Legion House. The meeting was conducted using GoToMeeting.

In July, Comrades Steven, Ray and Nujma joined the Chair for a visit to Project Trauma Support in Perth to present our cheque for \$100K to the founder of PTS Dr. Manuela Joannou. Stephen Thorne from CANVET was present as well to take photographs and research for an article. It was an emotional visit as there was a cohort of female veterans in-house and they publicly shared their stories with us. All were supportive of the program and thanked the Legion for our financial support.

We had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Suzette Bremault-Phillips from the University of Alberta who was there to conduct research on the program. It is our hope that within three years, the federal government will certify this program as a treatment benefit and finance the program.

Dr. Joannou invited the team back to a PTS Mental Health Conference the following week. Comrades Ray and Nujma returned to Perth for the one-day conference, another

very emotional day. The Legion received many thanks for our contribution from not only the presenters but all attendees at the conference.

The President received a letter from Wolf Solkin; he is the veteran in Ste. Anne's Hospital who started a class action lawsuit against the government for the lack of care since the government handed over the hospital to the province a few years ago. We responded to Mr. Solkin stating that although we do not get involved in class action lawsuits, we do support increased support to veterans' care in all long-term care centres.

We requested through VAC to arrange a visit to Ste. Anne's and on 29 July, the Legion visit team consisting of Comrades Tom, Steven, Ray, Nujma, and Ken Ouellet travelled to Ste. Anne's. The visit team had the opportunity to attend a Veteran's Committee meeting, which was chaired by Wolf Solkin. Also in attendance was Manuela Fonseca, who is the VAC Liaison Officer at Ste. Anne's and the coordinator for the visit, the Deputy Minister VAC, Gen (Retd) Walt Natynczyk, LGen (Retd) Michel Maisonneuve, MGen (Retd) Eric Tremblay, Isabelle Labrie, Stephanie Tomé (Quebec Veterans Foundation), LCol (Retd) Bruno Noury and Dr. Richer.

It was a very productive meeting where the veterans voiced their concerns and the staff responded to the concerns, and without violating any privileges of the class action suit.

The visit team had lunch with the veterans, toured the facility and met with members of the Veteran Day Care Program. Veterans who live near Ste. Anne's have the opportunity to attend the Day Care Program two to three days a week, they are picked up at their home, do arts and crafts/exercises in the morning, enjoy a nice lunch with other veterans and then are transported back to their home. All veterans in the Day Care program had nothing but praise for the program and the staff.

We will continue to monitor the support provided to veterans in long-term care across the country.

2. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The previous minutes of 22 May 2019 were reviewed. Some of the items will be updated during this meeting.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded that the members approve the minutes of the last Committee meeting held on 22 May 2019.

CARRIED

3. OUTREACH AND VISITATION INITIATIVE

The Legion signed the extension for year two of the renewal contract to visit 5,000 veterans a year. This contract will now end in October 2020; however, it is anticipated that a further two-year contract offer will be published in the summer of 2020.

Through this partnership, our RCL OVI volunteers completed 4,066 visits with veterans receiving financial support for long-term care from Veterans Affairs Canada.

4. VETERANS HOMELESSNESS – UPDATE

Comrade Dave provided the Homeless Veterans report. The report is attached to the minutes.

Action: Coordinator

5. HOMELESS VETERANS MONTHLY REPORT - UPDATE

Comrade Ray provided a breakdown from Commands. It was noted that reporting was sporadic and a discussion ensued to continue the monthly report or go to a quarterly report. It was decided to remain reporting monthly until it is discussed at the next Committee of the Whole with the provincial VSS representatives.

- NL Command reported no homeless veterans
- NS-Nunavut Command reported 12 homeless veterans
- PEI Command reported three homeless veterans
- NB Command reported five homeless veterans
- ON Command reported assisting 760 homeless veterans in 151 communities since their program started in 2010
- Manitoba Command, no report
- Saskatchewan Command reported 12 homeless veterans
- Alberta-NWT Command reported eight homeless veterans/nine in transition housing/three at risk
- BC-Yukon Command reported 100 homeless veterans have made the transition from homelessness through Cockrell House since 2009, the Command is aware of 25 at risk veterans in Whitehorse, Yukon area.

Action: Coordinator

6. SENIORS

Comrade George provided some statistics on aging and it is no surprise that we will see a steady increase in the senior population over the next decade. He mentioned the Canadian Medical Association and the work they are doing for seniors, on their outreach programs, advocacy and the National Seniors Strategy. Home Care and Long-Term Care are problem areas that require attention by the government. As veterans can access the Veterans Independence Program, we would like to see a version of this program for seniors in Canada. A lengthy discussion took place on long-term care, a LTC report recently released by VAC and the Preferred Access Beds.

7. BSO LEGION OSI SPECIAL SECTION

Coordinator's Note: As Comrade Jill was absent from the meeting, she will present her report at the next meeting in November.

8. MISSION VAV

Comrade Ray advised that DEC approved Legion participation in the new MissionVAV (Vétérans Actifs/Active Veterans) program at McGill University. Their team of health professionals and researchers have developed a health promotion program for veterans.

The following information was disseminated to all Commands:

Launching in September 2019, MissionVAV is a web-based program designed to help veterans, their families and supporters of Veterans by promoting healthy lifestyle habits, improving physical and mental health, and supporting social connectivity with other veterans. They have been awarded a 5-year grant from VAC (The Veterans and Family Well-being Fund) to develop a customized program available to veterans free of charge. Also, note, **no charge to The Royal Canadian Legion.**

Teams are created in three ways. After registering, a new user can:

- 1) Start a team and become the Team Captain. This is the best option because it's the simplest. Captains then add e-mail addresses for everyone they want to invite to join their team and email invitations are automatically sent out.
- 2) Join an existing RCL team. This would rely on the user putting in a legion branch number during registration for a legion branch that already has a team started. The team must already have assigned a Captain to it.
- 3) You ask MissionVAV to put you on a team. Here they could have RCL Command teams and if you indicate you are a RCL member and put in your Command (or branch number) during registration, they automatically put you on the RCL Command team.

MissionVAV will also collect age, current physical activity level and whether you have a disability that affects your physical activity. You will have to sign a Consent Form to participate in MissionVAV. Please visit the MissionVAV.com web page <http://missionvav.com/> for registration and information on the website privacy policy.

Coordinator's Note: The first challenge started on 30 September; however, people can still join this mission if they register within the next two weeks.

9. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS / ROUNDTABLE

The Chair advised that VAC, DND and the Department of Finance have acknowledged receipt of the resolutions that were passed at the last Convention in Winnipeg and have provided responses. Comrade Ray advised that Legion responses to the government responses have been drafted and will be reviewed by the National Executive Director before the Green Book is published.

Comrade Chair mentioned that the next RCL-Bilateral meeting is scheduled for 7 October 2019 with the DM and the VAC Executive. We will request an update on the Service Dog Standards and the Homeless Veterans Strategy. However, we doubt much will be discussed as the writ has been dropped and the department is in election silence mode.

Coordinator's Note: This meeting has been rescheduled to late November as a result of the Federal election on 21 October 2019.

ROUNDTABLE

Comrade Bruce spoke on the excellent work being done on veteran's homelessness and Op Vet Build.

Comrade Dave provided information on recent developments in Ontario on long-term care (Priority Access Beds, Contract Beds, and Preferred Access Beds). There has been no information from the province on the new health care hubs to replace the LHINs.

Comrade Larry thanked Ontario Command and District G for their support of the new Veterans House in Ottawa.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the VSS Committee will be on 23 November 2019 at 0900 in the Memorial Boardroom, Legion House.

11. ADJOURNMENT

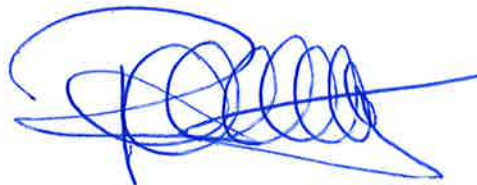
The Chair thanked all for joining the teleconference, your knowledge and experience is invaluable to the Committee and to the Legion.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1430.

CARRIED



Tom Irvine
CHAIRMAN



Raymond McInnis
COORDINATOR

Dated 01 October 2019

Homeless Veterans Report
VSS Committee
Dominion Command
September 18, 2019

Since our last meeting Comrade McInnis and I attended the Press Conference held by MP Neil Ellis who introduced a proposed motion calling for the end of Veteran Homelessness by 2025. At the time all political parties were in agreement, however the next day when the Motion was introduced the Conservative Opposition party let the time expire and the Motion was left to die on the table. Dominion Command responded echoing the disappointment as did many others and the following day the motion was approved.

I have since met twice with Neil Ellis at his office in Belleville to discuss the Homeless program. Also at the Press Release I spoke to Adam Vaughn, MP for Spadina West in Toronto and also the Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs. I have just received documents from him pertaining to a Bilateral Agreement under the 2017 National Housing Strategy – CMHC – Ontario- Bilateral Agreement. There are also similar agreements in all provinces, but I have yet to research.

Ontario Command has contacted the Association of Chiefs of Police, which covers Municipalities, OPP and the RCMP and all have endorsed the Homeless Veterans program. July 3, 2019, we met with the RCMP and invited Comrade McInnis to attend along with Comrade Garry Pond, Provincial President. The slide show was presented at this time and the Inspector was very impressed and requested additional information. We also had an additional meeting with the OPP and they will also be involved. I note that our intake document is being revised and once completed will become part of the police computer program, meaning that all police cars will have the ability to print the form complete the required information and have the Veteran sign it and send it to the designated location within hours. This is a huge step forward and I hope all commands will step to the plate.

I have been invited by the RCMP and OPP to do a presentation to the National Association of Chiefs of Police in late November or early December. I note for you that having the various police organizations involved will mean that we have to coordinate with Manitoba NWO Command for their portion of Ontario and I have been in contact with Rob Cutbush, VSS Chairman.

Recently VAC announced the 2019 Funding Recipients who will be receiving funding from the Veteran and Well Being Fund. There are 22 organizations many of which I have never heard of and there projects range from establishing seminars, creating reference guides and the list goes on. One organization based in Calgary, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness has put forward the proposal to pick 10 cities across the country to end veteran Homeless ness in each location. I wonder why only 10 cities and which cities will be chosen. One interesting factor is that VETS Canada did not receive any funding. Time will tell if the funds for approval were well spent.

Recently I requested a meeting with ADM Michel Doiron and the meeting was held at Ontario Command with ADM Steve Harris and Director General, Maryse Savoie attending. Much time was spent discussing the Homeless program and there is no time given as to when VAC will be releasing their Homeless Veterans National Strategy. It was noted that in Ontario Command more than 10% of the Homeless Veterans identified are female. VAC indicated that there is a new program coming out this month regarding Female Veterans and this topic will be covered. Once received the document will be released to the VSS Committee.

We know that there are Provincial Conventions to be held and new Provincial Chairmen may be appointed. We are still waiting for reports to be filed and from those received there is not a lot of information. The Royal Canadian Legion, is the leader for the Homeless Veterans program and we need everyone on board. Guidelines were sent to all members of the VSS Committee and I believe all Commands, and although not mandatory it is a great tool to set up the program. PEI Command has done so and they have also had donations from their branches to establish a Homeless Veterans Fund. BC/Yukon Command has also requested assistance in establishing a program and as previously noted we are working with Manitoba, NWO.

Finally, we are working on a Legion Strategy for the Homeless program and hope to have it in time for presentation to the DEC.

Respectfully Submitted

Dave Gordon