

**DOMINION COMMAND
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
VIDEOCONFERENCE – 17 September 2021
MEETING MINUTES**

File 82-27

In Attendance:	Andrea Siew	-	Chair
	Brendan Heffernan	-	Deputy Chair
	Mindy Pearson	-	Member
	Carolyn Gasser	-	Coordinator
	Mike Smith	-	A/Coordinator

1. OPENING

The videoconference of the Defence and Security (D&S) Committee commenced at 13:00 hours.

The Chair welcomed Comrade Mindy to the Committee and her first meeting.

Comrade Brendan has graciously agreed to act as Deputy Chair for the Committee.

2. ADMINISTRATION POINTS

- a. **Review of TORs** – The Chair asked everyone to review the TORs. They will be put forth for approval at DEC in November. Committee members are asked to provide their comments and suggestions by 15 October.
- b. **CDS and RCMP Commissioner Meetings** – Discussion topics and agenda items are welcomed for the meetings and some will be taken from the Legion's Position Paper. Presentation slides are also being amended from those used by Comrade Larry Murray at the CDA Annual General Meeting. It is requested that Committee members provide any feedback on agenda items or the presentation slides to the Chair by 15 October.

Comrade Carolyn spoke with the National Executive Director and he agreed the best time to meet each, would be the morning of the annual Christmas meet and greet, tentatively scheduled for 26 November 2021. The President will be at Legion House at that time and invitations to meet will be sent to the CDS and Commissioner concurrently.

Other attendees may include the CAF's Chief of Military Personnel LGen Steve Whelan and the CEO of CF Morale and Welfare Services, Sean Cantelon and from the RCMP, the Chief Human Resource Officer.

3. UPDATES

- a. **Convention 2021 and Resolution** – The Chair advised the Committee resolution related to sexual misconduct in the CAF was approved at Convention. It calls for meaningful change in the CAF with a fully Independent Office of the Inspector General who would be responsible to address the issues of leadership and sexual misconduct in the CAF and report directly to Parliament.
- b. **CDA and Afghanistan Refugees** – The Chair advised that the CDA received 3300 volunteers for resettlement of Afghan translators and others who worked with Canadians during the conflict in Afghanistan. The RCL and the RCMP Veterans Association were mentioned specifically at the CDA meeting for the support of this initiative.

There is still potential for fund raising as there are many still in Afghanistan in safe houses. The Federal Government turned down a funding request due to the election. The Veterans Transition Network (VTN) is expending \$20,000 per day to help keep them safe. So far, a total of 3700 have made it out of the country and now they are moving through other countries in the geographic area to escape retribution from the Taliban. The VTN has appropriately 7500 names on a list. The Chair will advise if a fund-raising request will be circulated among CDA member associations.

The annual Vimy Gala is scheduled to be held on 5 November 2021 at the War Museum in Ottawa. Due to COVID-19, the event will be confirmed or cancelled at the beginning of October.

- c. **RCMP** – Comrade Brendan requested a briefing for more information about the Legion as a whole. Comrade Carolyn will locate and send out separately, an organization chart. In the future, post-pandemic, the Coordinator will take him and other Committee members on a tour of the building.

ACTION: Coordinator

He advised there is a great awareness in the RCMP Executive for more diversity. The Chair advised the Committee about Op Harmony and that it is a very relevant and important initiative for the Legion.

He noted there were no specific advocacy points regarding the RCMP in the Legion's recent Position Paper. He advised there are 30,000 retired members and many serving members who could provide a voice for the Legion. In the future, we will seek greater coordination through Marketing and Communications and Membership to ensure the RCMP needs are considered.

The RCMP HQ in Ottawa, has now implemented rapid COVID testing for those not fully vaccinated.

Comrade Carolyn advised that plaques are given out at Depot for top student graduates and will look into providing free one year membership to each top student as is done for the CAF top recruit and top officer cadet. There are approximately 52 serials that go through each year. Comrade Carolyn will liaise with the Membership and Marketing and cost out the initiative for budget purposes.

ACTION: Coordinator

The Chair requested that the National Police Federation be followed by National Headquarters Marketing and Communications and the Coordinator confirmed that they are followed.

d. NIJMEGEN 2022

Comrades Carolyn and Mike will update the application form and share with the Committee for review prior to the call for applications to Provincial Commands.

ACTION: Coordinator

- e. Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (SMRC)** – Comrade Carolyn advised that the previous week she, and the Director Veterans Services, spoke with the SMRC manager and her team and provided an overview of the Legion, regarding how we are helping with Veterans Affairs Canada disability applications. The SMRC initially was intended to help still-serving members of the CAF but their services have recently expanded to retired members.

4. UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- a. Canadian Victoria Cross** – The Victoria Cross is awarded for the most conspicuous bravery, a daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty, in the presence of the enemy.

Since inception on 1 January 1993, it has never been awarded. A recent Legion Magazine article calls for the honour to be awarded to Private Jess

Randall Larochelle. Several Veterans organizations have requested that Private Larochelle should be considered for the Canadian Victoria Cross. The Committee is investigating whether the Legion should support the initiative through a formal letter to the Chancellery of the Office of the Governor General.

b. Reports, presentations, and meetings as noted above.

5. FUTURE MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 3 November 2021 in person, if possible and if not, via videoconference at 1000 hrs.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1430 hours.



Andrea Siew
Chair



Carolyn Gasser
Coordinator

Dated this day of 6 October 2021

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