

**DOMINION COMMAND
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
10 JULY 2023
MEETING MINUTES**

File: 82-27

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andrea Siew	-	Chair
Brendan Heffernan	-	Vice-Chair
Dean Young	-	Coordinator
	-	
ABSENT:		
Brian Sauvé	-	Member
Mindy Pearson	-	Member
Mike Smith	-	Assistant Coordinator
Carolyn Hughes	-	Observer

1. OPENING REMARKS

Overview of Defence and Security Landscape since our last meeting on 25 April:

- This past weekend marked the milestone of 500 days since of the Russian invasion and war in the Ukraine.
- The PM, in Latvia this morning, announced an additional \$2.6B commitment including an additional 1200 CAF members for land, maritime, air and special ops support as well as weapon systems and intelligence and cyber activities. Currently, there are 1,100 CAF members deployed as part of Op Reassurance supporting Canada's contribution to the conflict. Part of this announcement was previously announced in Budget 2022. Current information on Canada's commitment is available here:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-reassurance.html>
- This week is the NATO leaders' summit in Lithuania and there is lots in the media of the expected discussion of member nation's military spending commitment. If the 2% of GDP will be the minimum contribution. Canada's military spending is currently at 1.3% of GDP.

- There has been an unprecedented number of wildfires across Canada especially for this early in the summer. This impacts both the RCMP and CAF for domestic operational commitments. Of note, the number of CAF domestic operations has increased 250% in the last 5 years.
- Op Canada Day packages were sent to deployed CAF and RCMP members. This year the Legion sent out 2,600 kits to deployed CAF members and 90 kits to RCMP.

2. **ADMINISTRATION POINTS**

The previous minutes were reviewed – No comment.

3. **UPDATES**

- RCMP Update** – Comrade Brendan’s report is attached.
- CDA Update** – Andrea

Association membership dues were updated, finalized and Legion dues were paid. The CDA discussed expanding their membership base and including the RCMP Veterans Association. Comrades Andrea and Brendan will follow-up with the President of the RCMP Veterans Association.

CDA hosted their first meeting with Defence and Security related parliamentarians at the Rideau Club on 6 June. As it was the Anniversary of D-day the Legion provided commemorative pins. About 12 Members of Parliament and Senators participated.

A strategy session with CDAI and CDA board members was held on 6 July 2023. Key issues addressed were advocacy priorities and how to execute, CDA hosting an Army day on the Hill to meet with parliamentarians in the Spring 2024, and how the CDA and CDAI should jointly communicate. There will be lots of follow-up action on these items.

4. **ADVOCACY ISSUES:**

- RCMP - Definition of a Veteran** – Comrade Dean advised that a response has not been received from the February letter sent by the Legion President. Comrade Dean is going to discuss with Communications about possible next steps. The Committee discussed the RCMP role at the

King's Coronation leading the parade and that the King is now the Honourary Commissioner in Chief of the RCMP.

- b. CAF Sexual Misconduct and Cultural Change – The Committee discussed the first status report which was released on 17 May 2023 (<https://globalnews.ca/news/9706357/canadian-forces-sexual-misconduct-reform-progress-report/>) by the Independent Monitor, Madame Jocelyne Therrien, on the CAF efforts to implement the recommendations in the Honorable Louise Arbour's report on sexual misconduct. The next report is due in late fall. Our concerns include:
- When can we expect the announcement about the external review committee of the military colleges including members, key tasks and deliverable dates?
 - While the Minister has accepted all the recommendations what is being done to ensure timely implementation of all the recommendations? And what is that time frame?

In response to the 17 May 2023 report, the legion posted in social media <https://www.facebook.com/CanadianLegion/posts/pfbid0nSB6CSUedpHmsiXbNBvxF4kNCvyqG9mCiYM4EWrZnjoI95SPkoYKZjftD93oSRZJl>.

The Committee will continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations from the Honorable Louise Arbour Report on sexual misconduct.

- c. VAC Clawback from the Merlo Davidson Class Action Lawsuit. The Legion President sent a letter on 9 May requesting that the Minister Veterans Affairs immediately implement the recommendations made by the Veterans Ombud in her December 2022 letter. <https://ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/en/publications/systemic-reviews/merlo-davidson-settlement-compensation>. Comrade Andrea briefed that there has not been a response to the letter and that the Committee will continue to monitor and will follow-up in the fall.
- d. Defence Policy Update – The announcement of the Strong, Secure, Engaged Defence Policy update was made in Budget 2022. While we expected that the update would be published in early spring 2023, the Minister of National Defence announced public consultation in February 2023. There is no indication when the policy will be released. The Committee anxiously awaits the updated Defence Policy.

5. UPDATE ON VISITS AND ENGAGEMENTS:

- a. Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) General Eyre – On 30 April 2023 the CDS attended the DEC Meeting in response to the statement the Legion released on Defence policy and spending:
<https://legion.ca/news/articles/2023/04/20/legion-calls-for-immediate-action-on-defence-policy-and-spending>
General Eyre provided a candid overview of the CAF operations and challenges and took questions from DEC members.
- b. The National Executive Director (NED), Director Communications, Director Poppy and Remembrance, Veterans Services staff and Defence and Security Committee Chair hosted a meeting with the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare (CFMWS) CEO Ian Poulter on 27 June 2023 to discuss how The Legion and CFMWS can enhance engagement and partnership opportunities. The NED provided an overview of the Legion and current engagement with the CAF. Marketing, sponsorship and communication initiatives were discussed. Opportunities for Legion directed support/gifts for troops deployed as part of the Latvian Battle Group similar to the gifts provided to deployed troops during the Afghanistan mission were discussed and CFMWS will follow-up on possible options.
- c. A meeting with the Minister of National Defence COS Taras Zalusky and the NED, Director of Communications, Director Veterans Services and the Defence and Security Committee Chair was held on 29 June 2023. The very candid and open discussion focused on The Legion's three key Defence and Security advocacy priorities:
 - CAF cultural change and recruiting and retention challenges (CAF Housing and new housing benefit)
 - The Defence Policy Update
 - Operational capabilities and modernization of the CAF. A future meeting between the Minister of National Defence and the President of the Royal Canadian Legion is being planned.

- d. A meeting with RCMP Chief Human Resource Officer - Nadine Higgins is being planned for the fall. Comrade Brendan will assist in the coordination.

6. **NEW ITEMS:**

- a. The Committee Chair discussed the Parliamentary Committee on Veteran Affairs (ACVA) current investigation on the “Experience of Women Veterans” (CAF and RCMP). The hearings started in April 2023 and it is planned that there will be 20 hearings which will continue into the fall.

Comrade Andrea highlighted that to date no RCMP Members or Veterans have testified. Comrade Brendan will follow up with the RCMP Veterans Association.

- b. Women Veterans Monument – Testimony at the ACVA hearings from women Veterans are consistently highlighting that they do not see themselves as Veterans and that they are invisible. Commemoration of women Veterans both CAF and RCMP and their accomplishments in service to Canada are significant and date back over 100 years. Comrade Andrea suggested that a monument to recognize the unique service of women Veterans to Canada is long overdue. Comrade Brendan added that this is an important government acknowledgement of their service and should be visible and prominent. The Committee will continue to investigate.

- c. Comrade Dean provided an update on the unveiling of the Afghanistan Monument which was held at the War Museum on 19 June 2023. Information on the Monument is provided in this video.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/afghanistan-monument>

7. **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- a. Army Run - 17 September 2023 - Event activities at Ottawa City Hall and Cartier Square Drill Hall, <https://armyrun.ca/>
- b. Comrade Dean advised that The Legion has purchased a table for the Vimy Gala - 08 November 2023 at the Canadian War Museum. Committee members are requested to mark their calendars.

8. Next Meeting will be in September and the date TBC.



Andrea Siew
Chair



Dean Young
Coordinator

Dated this day on 28 July 2023.

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