

**DOMINION COMMAND  
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE  
25 April 2023  
MEETING MINUTES**

**File 82-27**

In Attendance:	Andrea Siew	-	Chair
	Brendan Heffernan	-	Deputy Chair
	Brian Sauv�	-	Member
	Mindy Pearson	-	Member
	Dean Young	-	Coordinator
	Carolyn Hughes	-	Observer
Absent:	Mike Smith	-	A/Coordinator

**1. OPENING REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed everyone providing an overview of D&S highlights since the last meeting including:

- 24 February 2023 marked the one year since the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia.
- The Emergency Act Parliamentary Inquiry Report was released in February.
- Retirement of the RCMP Commissioner and announcement of interim Commissioner Michel Duheme.
- Announcement of the new CAF Housing Benefit Policy and CAF economic increase on 21 March 2023.
- Federal Budget announcement on 28 March 2023.
- Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission Report was released on 31 March 2023.

**2. ADMINISTRATION POINTS**

The previous minutes were reviewed and approved by the Committee.

**3. RCMP UPDATE – Comrade Brendan provided the following updates:**

Commissioner Brenda Lucki retired and an Interim commissioner has been appointed – Michel Duheme. Mr. Duheme was the Deputy Commissioner of Federal Policing prior to assuming the interim commissioner role.

There has been the release of two Commission reports:

- The Report of the Public Inquiry into the 2022 Public Order Emergency
- The Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission

Both Commissions have submitted their findings and the recommendations are being reviewed by the RCMP. The Commission reports are specific to each incident and speak to the health and welfare of RCMP members in terms of some recommendations for practices, policies and equipment. There is a residual impact on the membership at large because these were traumatic events, although significantly different in nature. The RCMP Veterans Association has written letters of support for the Members and positive acceptance of the recommendations.

**4. VSS UPDATE** - Comrade Carolyn provided an update on VSS Committee activities including:

- a. Disability Wait Times - VAC has been making progress on reducing the backlog of disability claims and it is expected that it will be cleared up by the summer of 2023. The Committee continues to monitor delays resulting from the public service strike and is concerned that it may slide backwards if the strike continues.
- b. The Legion is meeting with the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the Deputy Minister on Thursday (April 27) and will highlight the Legion's advocacy issues.
- c. Vocational Rehabilitation Third Party Contract - Partners in Canadian Veterans Rehabilitation Services (PCVRS). The Legion is still monitoring the implications of this new contract. At this time, Veterans Services hasn't received any complaints but are closely monitoring the transition to the new third-party service provider.
- d. Veterans Experiencing Homelessness - Comrades Larry Murray and Carolyn went to opening of the Veterans Village Legion in Surrey, British Columbia. There are 91 affordable housing units, and the model is impressive in what it offers in terms of integrated health services and housing affordability.
- e. BSO Legion OSI Special Section - There is concern that the RCMP appears to lag behind the CAF in terms of Mental Health support and this an issue that the VSS Committee is looking into.
- f. Legion Support to RCMP Veterans – Some RCMP members are filling out their own VAC disability claims not knowing that the Legion offers this service free of charge. Veteran Services continues to outreach to offer their services and Membership will engage the RCMPVA again.
- g. The Burns Way (TBW) Initiative – TBW Initiative is an online Peer Support program for Indigenous Veterans using an APP called the Talking Stick. It is now being used in Saskatchewan but there are plans to expand across the country and to other Veteran communities. Comrade Carolyn confirmed a letter of support for the Initiative has been sent to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. A briefing from TBW on the initiative will occur at DEC.

- h. Command Service Officer Stats for 2022 – First applications submitted by Command Service Officers increased 12% from 2021 to 2022 and the number of VRAB appeals and RfRs completed have increased by 17%. However, Departmental Review and VRAB Entitlement Reviews have decreased due to the VAC backlog.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	+ / -
First Applications	3478	2819	2394	2678	12%
Departmental Reviews	601	310	247	151	-39%
Entitlement Reviews	161	219	204	141	-31%
Entitlement Appeals/RfRs	143	99	83	97	17%

## 5. UPDATES

### a. WiDS Breakfast on 2 March 2023.

Over 1,000 women attended from across the defence and security community including government and the private sector including virtually from the Canadian Embassy in Kiev. The Legion sponsored a table and Comrade Dean will work with Marketing to sponsor again next year.

### b. CDA Update

8 March 2023 – CDA AGM was held. The Legion will continue to be represented on the Board for one more year.

8 March 2023 – CDAI Ross Munro (a World War II journalist) Media Award presentation. Sharon Adams from Legion Magazine was the 2023 recipient recognizing her lifetime of work supporting Veterans.

9 - 10 March 2023 - CDA Defence and Security Conference. Comrades Dean and Andrea attended the 2-day conference which covered current defence and security issues including the war in the Ukraine, Indo Pacific region, Arctic, Climate Change etc. The highlight was the CDS and VCDS presentations providing overviews of the state of the CAF. The Legion also had a display booth with a Service Officer providing information about the support provided by Veterans Services.

### c. 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the RCMP and Definition of Veteran

A second letter was sent on 7 February 2023 to the Minister Veterans Affairs. No response has been received.

### d. High Cost of Housing

The CAF Housing Differential (CFHD) Policy was announced on 21 March 2023 replacing the Post Living Differential (PLD) benefit effective 1 July 2023. The aim of the CFHD is to ensure that CAF members who are renting or purchasing primary residences on the economy will only pay 25% of their gross monthly salary towards their housing cost. The amount of the benefit is based on salary and geographic location. If members are in single quarters, they won't receive the benefit but can ask to have their rent reduced to 25% of salary. Members can only receive the benefit for seven years if in the same location and it is based on the cost of a two-bedroom house. The amount of the benefit will be evaluated every year. The Legion released a statement on the benefit.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/pay-pension-benefits/benefits/canadian-forces-housing-differential.html#>

**e. Chief Justice Louise Arbour Report on Sexual Misconduct in the CAF – What's next?**

The Committee is waiting for the recently appointed Independent Monitor to provide feedback on the status of the implementation of the recommendations.

**f. Budget 2023 – Impact on CAF and RCMP**

Budget 2023 was announced on 28 March 2023. It did not include any new significant funding for the DND/CAF, however it proposed \$49 million over three years to help the RCMP protect Canadians from harassment and intimidation by foreign governments. It also provided \$13.5 million over five years starting in 2023-24 and \$3.1 million ongoing to Public Safety Canada to create a National Counter-Foreign Interference Office. The Committee will monitor the implementation of these initiatives.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/freeland-says-2023-federal-budget-to-be-presented-march-28-1.6308009>

**g. Implementation of the Emergency Act Parliamentary Inquiry Recommendations**

The Committee discussed the impact of the Inquiry report on the RCMP and will monitor the progress of implementation of the recommendations.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/trudeau-met-threshold-to-invoke-emergencies-act-commission-finds-1.6277311> .

**h. Mass Casualty Commission Report 31 March 2023**

The Committee discussed the impact of the Commission's recommendations on the RCMP. There will be a significant impact on not only the RCMP, but

on policing in Canada. The Committee will continue to monitor the RCMP response to the implementation of the recommendations.

<https://masscasualtycommission.ca/final-report/>

**i. Op Harmony Initiative - CAF Indigenous Summer Programs**

Comrade Dean advised that he has connected with the CAF Indigenous Advisor to the Commander of the Canadian Army and 38 Canadian Brigade Group career manager. Future talks and meetings have been scheduled to get Comradeship awards out to the CAF Indigenous Summer Programs.

The Comradeship award for the RCMP Indigenous summer program top cadet at Depot in Saskatchewan has been organized and will be implemented for summer 2023.

**6. 2023 Advocacy Priorities**

The Committee discussed and confirmed that their 2023 advocacy priorities will focus on:

- Security related recommendations from Mass Casualty Commission Report
- Operational capabilities and modernization of the CAF
- The Defence Policy Update
- CAF Cultural Change and Op Reconstitution
- RCMP Cultural Change

**7. 2023 Visits and Engagement**

The Committee discussed their priorities for Legion visits/engagement for 2023:

- CAF Chief of the Defence Staff – General Eyre (occurred at DEC on 29 April 2023)
- Chief Operations Officer - CAF Morale and Welfare Services – Ian Poulter
- CAF Chief Military Personnel – LGen Lise Bourgon
- RCMP Chief Human Resource Officer – Nadine Higgins

**8. NEW ITEMS**

- a. Comrade Andrea provided information on the CAF Economic increase which was announced at the same time as the housing benefit – 10.5% over 3 years.
- b. The Committee discussed the recent announcement by the Ontario government of new rules to protect jobs of Military Reservists who have been injured during deployments. Comrade Carolyn to discuss with the VSS Committee and look at how to engage with the other provinces.

[https://betactvnewsca.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/beta.ctvnews.ca/local/toronto/2023/3/16/1\\_6316882\\_amp.html](https://betactvnewsca.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/beta.ctvnews.ca/local/toronto/2023/3/16/1_6316882_amp.html)

- c. Comrade Andrea shared that the Legion issued a statement on 20 March 2023 on the current state of CAF operational readiness and risk to CAF members.

<https://www.legion.ca/news/articles/2023/04/20/legion-calls-for-immediate-action-on-defence-policy-and-spending>

**9. UPCOMING EVENTS**

DEC will be held from 28 April to 02 May 2023.

**10. NEXT MEETING** – Date TBC.

**11. ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 hours.



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Andrea Siew  
Chair



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Dean Young  
Coordinator

Dated this day of 17 May 2023.

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