

**DOMINION COMMAND  
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE  
09 JANUARY 2024  
MEETING MINUTES**

**File: 82-27**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

<b>Andrea Siew</b>	-	<b>Chair</b>
<b>Brendan Heffernan</b>	-	<b>Vice-Chair</b>
<b>Dean Young</b>	-	<b>Coordinator</b>
<b>Brian Sauvé</b>	-	<b>Member</b>
<b>Mindy Pearson</b>	-	<b>Member</b>
<b>Eric Poissant</b>	-	<b>Observer</b>
<b>Carolyn Hughes</b>	-	<b>Observer</b>

**1. OPENING REMARKS**

The Chair advised the Committee that it will be a busy year as this year the Legion will be hosting the first in-person Dominion Convention in 6 years which will require additional work by the Committee. It will be held in St John, New Brunswick.

**2. ADMINISTRATION POINTS**

The Committee reviewed the Previous Minutes from our 27 September 2023 meeting. Comrade Andrea advised that while we tried to meet with the RCMP Commissioner in November we were unable to schedule it. We were also trying to meet with Nadine Huggins, RCMP Chief Human Resource Officer, and she has left the RCMP.

**3. UPDATES:**

- a. **CAF** - Comrade Andrea provided an overview of the CAF stating that since our meeting in September the Legion met with the Minister of National Defence on 02 November 2023. The Dominion President, Executive Director, Communications Manager and the Committee Chair met with the Honourable Bill Blair. They discussed the Legion's key advocacy issues including CAF cultural change, recruiting and retention challenges, the anticipated Defence Policy Update, and operational capability and modernization of the CAF. The discussion was frank and the Minister was very open about the challenges facing the CAF.
- b. **RCMP** – Comrade Brendan provided an update - Please see **Annex A**.

- c. **VSS** – Comrade Carolyn provided an overview of Veterans Service Officers across the country including the shortage of Command Service Officers. As a result, Dominion Command, Veterans Services, is assisting Provincial Command Service Officers until new Service Officers can be hired and trained. She is planning a Command Service Officer course to run in May 2024 at Dominion Command in Ottawa.

The Legion Leave the Streets Behind initiative regarding Homeless Veterans is being rolled out across the country by the Veterans Services and Seniors Committee. Dominion Command is coordinating the verification of service and then engaging with Provincial Commands for help on the ground through the Branches.

4. **ADVOCACY ISSUES** – Comrade Andrea provided updates:

- a. **RCMP to be included in the Government’s Definition of a Veteran for Commemoration Purposes** - The Dominion President sent a follow-up letter on 03 November 2023 to the new Minister of Veterans Affairs. A response has not yet been received. Action – Comrade Andrea to monitor
- b. **RCMP – Eliminate the VAC Clawback on Disability Pensions for Merlo Davidson Class Action Recipients** – The Legion received a response on 01 November 2023 to the Dominion President’s letter dated 09 May 2023. The Committee discussed the response in conjunction with the Winter 2023 SAGE (National Association Federal Retirees) article on the issue and is confident that progress is being made as corrective payments have been made to affected Veterans.
- c. **CAF Sexual Misconduct and Cultural Change** – The second report by the external monitor for oversight of the implementation of the Independent External Comprehensive Review (IECR) (Arbour Report) recommendations was released on 20 November 2023. The report confirms continued progress of the implementation of all 49 IECR recommendations. The Committee is also pleased that the external monitor has been extended for another year.

The independent review of the Royal Military Colleges, recommendation 29 of the IECR, was announced on 6 December. The review committee includes 5 independent/external expert members and two internal executives, and it will have 12 months to complete the review.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/departmentnationaldefence/news/2023/12/minister-blair-announces-establishment-of-canadian-military-colleges-review-board.html>

The Committee discussed the 5 December 2023 Statistics Canada Survey on DND/CAF Sexual Misconduct which found an increase in reporting of sexual misconduct in the CAF.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231205/dq231205b-eng.html>

- d. **Defence Policy Update** – The Committee continues to monitor and wait for the release of the Update. It is hoped that it will be released before Budget 2024. Action – Committee to monitor
  
- e. **National Women Veteran's Monument** – The establishment of a national women Veteran's monument to honour Canadian Women Veterans and recognize their significant contributions and sacrifice to Canada was approved by DEC in November. The Legion President sent a letter to the Minister of Veterans Affairs cc the Minister National Defence, Public Safety, CDS and Commissioner of the RCMP on 15 January 2024. Action – Comrade Andrea to monitor

## 5. OTHER ITMES:

- a. **Parliamentary Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) Study on the Experience of Women Veterans** – Comrade Andrea advised that the hearings have been completed and the report is expected in the Spring. Action – Committee to monitor for the release of the Report.
  
- b. **CDA Update** – The VIMY Dinner was held on 8 November in Ottawa. The D&S Committee hosted a table with the Dominion President, Silver Cross Mother and the Veterans Ombud. The event was highlighted with the Vimy Award being presented to the Women Peace and Security Ambassador, Jacqueline O'Neill. Her acceptance speech is available online. <https://cdainstitute.ca/remarks-by-ambassador-jacqueline-oneill-vimy-gala-2023/>
  
- c. **OP HARMONY Initiative CAF and RCMP Indigenous Youth Programs** - Op Harmony Committee tasked the Defence and Security Committee to investigate outreach opportunities related to the CAF and RCMP Indigenous Youth Programs. Comrade Dean has coordinated with the RCMP for Legion recognition of the top student of the RCMP's Indigenous Youth Program. However, he advises that progress to coordinate Legion recognition of the CAF programs has been challenging and slow. Comrade Mindy offered to investigate the slow response. Action - Comrades Mindy and Dean

There are 5 CAF indigenous youth programs across the country that are held annually for six weeks each summer. Participants are paid approximately \$4,500. The program provides Indigenous youth the opportunity to experience a taste of Army life to see if they would like to join the CAF. There also is an

RMC Leadership Course. More information can be found at <https://forces.ca/en/programs-for-indigenous-peoples/>.

- d. **Convention** - The Chair asked the Committee Secretary to advise Committee requirements including attendance at convention, report and resolution requirements, and the milestone dates. Action – Comrade Dean
- e. **Veteran Farm Project Society** – Comrade Andrea briefed that this initiative, established by a Veteran, Jessica Miller, provides peer support for women Veterans and food hampers to Veteran families in Nova Scotia. The Chair connected Comrade Carolyn and Don McCumber, Nova Scotia Nunavut Command President with Jessica Miller for possible Legion engagement.
- f. **The DND/CAF Modernization** – Comrade Andrea highlighted the recent modernization announcements:

The Maritime Patrol Aircraft replacement was announced on 30 November 2023. Canada finalized a government-to-government agreement with the United States for the acquisition of up to 16 P-8A Poseidon aircraft for the RCAF. Fourteen multi-mission aircraft will be procured, with options for up to an additional two. The first aircraft will be delivered in 2026. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2023/11/canada-purchasing-up-to-16-p-8a-poseidon-multi-mission-aircraft-for-the-royal-canadian-air-force.html>

On 19 December 2023 the Government announced the acquisition of the Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) capability through a direct commercial sale contract with General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, and with some specific components acquired through a Foreign Military Sale with the United States Government.

The RPAS will provide the CAF with a large and sophisticated remotely piloted aircraft, roughly the size of a fighter jet. Unlike small drones, these RPAS will be designed and certified to the rigid airworthiness standards applicable to crewed aircraft. The purchase includes 11 remotely piloted aircraft and related infrastructure. The first delivery is anticipated in 2028. <https://www.canada.ca/en/departmentnationaldefence/news/2023/12/canada-acquiring-remotely-piloted-aircraft-systems-for-the-canadianarmedforces.html>

On 20 December 2023 the Government announced the awarding of the CAF Army Technology contracts to General Dynamics Mission Systems–Canada. The project will provide support for the Land Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (LC4ISR) system.

LC4ISR is a fully integrated tactical network composed of computers, sensors, telecommunications equipment, hardware, firmware, and software elements that provides commanders with the information and information services required to make effective and timely Command and Control decisions about their operations and missions.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-servicesprocurement/news/2023/12/canada-announces-168-billion-investment-in-technologynetworkforcanadianarmy.html>

## 6. VISITS AND MEETINGS:

- a. **RCMP Commissioner** – Comrade Andrea will follow-up with Steven Clark to organize a meeting with the RCMP Commissioner.
- b. **CAF Chief of Military Personnel** – Comrade Andrea will discuss with Steven Clark the requirement for a follow-up meeting with LGen Lise Bourgon.

## 7. UPCOMING EVENTS:

- a. **1 March 2024 - WiDS Breakfast 1 March** – D&S Committee has sponsored a table at the Women in Defence and Security (WiDS) breakfast. Comrades Larry Murray and Steven Clark will be attending. Committee members will advise the Chair their availability to attend.
- b. **06 March 2024 CDA AGM-** Comrade Brendan will advise the Chair of his availability to attend.
- c. **7-8 March 2024** - Veterans Affairs Canada is planning a Women Veterans Forum in Montreal. Details have yet to be confirmed.
- d. **07 – 08 March 2024 CDAI National Security Conference** - Comrade Dean to coordinate Committee participation. Committee members will advise their availability to attend at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa.
- e. **26-27 April 2024 – DEC**
- f. **August 2024 – Dominion Convention**
- g. **29 June – 3 July 2025** - Royal Commonwealth ex-Services League (RCEL) Conference

## 8. OTHER ITEMS: All



- a. Comrade Andrea advised the Committee of a recent CBC news article announcing that the National Security and Intelligence Advisor's retirement on 26 January 2024. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/jody-thomas-national-security-retire-1.7063866>
- b. The Committee discussed the 8 January 2024 CBC news article that reported on the increasing incident rate of CAF sexual misconduct experienced by men CAF members and the lack of support to meet the needs of men. CAF sexual misconduct is not just a women issue. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/dnd-sexual-misconduct-canadian-forces-1.7075817>
- c. Comrade Mindy advised on a recent CAF recruiting policy change to eliminate the aptitude tests (CFAT) for certain occupations. The Committee discussed possible impacts of the policy change.
- d. Comrade Brian advised that 2024 marks 50 years of women serving in the RCMP. The Committee discussed what initiatives are being done to celebrate this significant milestone and possible opportunities for Legion collaboration. Action – Comrade Brian to advise the Committee.
- e. Comrade Andrea highlighted the recommendations of the recently released report by the Parliamentary Committee on National Defence – CAF Health Care and Transition. Comrade Carolyn will engage with Communications about sharing the Report and Legion endorsement of the implementation of the recommendations. Action – Committee to monitor the implementation of the recommendations. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/NDDN/report-6/>

9. **Next Meeting** – Date to be confirmed.




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**Andrea Siew**  
Chair




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**Dean Young**  
Coordinator

Dated this day on 19 January 2023.

**DISTRIBUTION LIST**

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## **ANNEX A**

### **RCL D&S Committee Meeting**

**09 January, 2024**

### **RCMP Report – Brendan Heffernan**

#### **General Administrative/Organizational Notes**

2024 marks 50 years since Troop 17 became the first group of women to take the oath to become regular members of the RCMP and begin their training at Depot.

#### **Appointment of a new Chair to the Management Advisory Board for the RCMP**

Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Dominic LeBlanc, announced the appointment of Professor Angela Campbell as Chairperson to the Management Advisory Board (MAB). Professor Campbell was an inaugural MAB member when it was created in 2019 and now fills the position of Chairperson. The Board provides the RCMP Commissioner with independent, expert advice and guidance on the administration and management of the RCMP.

With the other appointments made earlier this year, the MAB is now almost at full capacity with 12 of 13 possible members. The next Quarterly meeting will be held in Ottawa in February 2024.

#### **Departure of Associate Deputy Minister, Chief Administrative Officer Kathy Thompson**

Kathy Thompson, Associate Deputy Minister, Chief Administrative Officer from the RCMP left the Force in November 2023. She will begin a new appointment as Assistant Superintendent leading a new National Security Sector at the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) on November 3, 2023.

#### **Departure of Nadine Huggins, Chief Human Resources Officer**

Ms. Huggins joined the RCMP in 2020 and took on the role of CHRO in May 2022. She also left the Force in November 2023. Ms. Huggins supported our key organizational priority of recruitment, led the development and implementation of the RCMP's first Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and contributed to our modernization efforts through the People Strategy.

#### **Appointment of Rob O'Reilly as Acting Chief Human Resources Officer**

Mr. Rob O'Reilly became the acting CHRO, effective Friday, December 8, 2023.

Mr. O'Reilly has been with the RCMP since 1996, starting his career in the Training Directorate, developing new media tools for Human Resources and Contract & Indigenous Policing. He has held a number of positions across the organization. Most recently, he has served as our Chief Learning Officer since 2021.

## **Various Organizational Initiatives/Communiques**

### **Update 2 on body-worn cameras**

The latest information on body-worn cameras.

Following a thorough and multi-faceted evaluation of the field test, the RCMP has exercised its discretion under the contract to pivot to the next ranked bidder. A contract with Axon Public Safety Canada Inc has been signed and the RCMP will start field testing in January 2024, in detachments located in H, K, and V Division. A successful field test is necessary for any further contract award to support rolling out the service on a national level.

### **Inaugural DICE program a success!**

On October 6, 2023, the RCMP saw its first graduates of the inaugural Diverse and Inclusive Pre-Cadet Experience (DICE) Troop. DICE is a new RCMP recruitment and retention initiative focused on removing systemic barriers that impact racialized and underrepresented persons who aspire to join the RCMP. Spearheaded by Inspector Dawkins and a dedicated team of employees, this program brought candidates from all over Canada to Depot Division (RCMP Training Academy) for the 3-week experience.

Candidates learned about:

- working as part of a policing team
- the Criminal Code and RCMP policy
- physical fitness and drill
- skills to help apply for a career in the RCMP

The program also assists candidates by working through portions of the application process such as the suitability interview, in order to streamline the recruiting process.

To help ease candidates into the Depot lifestyle and provide them with real world experiences, the DICE program brought in mentors from across Canada. These mentors had varying service and expertise and their time with the candidates was invaluable.

Like other troops at Depot, the DICE candidates lived in dorms, enjoyed meals at the Mess and interacted with other troops on base.



This first DICE troop was the most culturally diverse troop hosted at Depot. Candidates represented 12 countries including Pakistan, India, Brazil, Columbia, Uganda, Bahamas, China, Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Bolivia and Haiti.

## **New Accessibility Passport**

Dear Colleagues,

In January, we published [the RCMP's first Accessibility Strategy and Plan](#), aimed at creating a barrier-free work environment. This milestone aligns with broader efforts to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion, one of the key elements of our *People Strategy* which provides an overarching vision for modernization through concrete actions that will shape the workforce of the future.

An important part of advancing the [Accessibility Strategy and Plan](#) is to ensure that you, as public service employees (PSE), can easily request accommodations when needed. That is why we are happy to announce that the [GC Workplace Accessibility Passport](#) (the Passport) is now available to RCMP PSEs. The website will help you to launch your passport and is your first source of information about the Accessibility Passport.

The Passport was created to facilitate conversations between an employee and their manager about optimal tools and workplace conditions and any necessary adjustments, including adaptive equipment or measures. The Passport:

- allows you to document your personal circumstances;
- can serve as a record of conversations and agreed-upon solutions;
- can be shared with your manager or other stakeholders to efficiently obtain the tools and support measures you need to succeed; and,
- supports consistency in meeting employees' needs when they change jobs.

We encourage all PSEs who may benefit from adaptive tools or support measures to start using the Passport right away, and to discuss it with their manager.

In order to support your PSEs, managers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the [Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport: Supporting your employees](#). Managers can direct any questions regarding the GC Accessibility Passport, to their divisional [Public Service Labour Relations Advisor](#).

The RCMP's launch of the Accessibility Passport signals an organizational shift to an employee-centered approach to accessibility management, in line with our ambition to shape a culture of inclusion.

The RCMP is also committed to continuing to uphold the duty to accommodate the needs of regular members with disabilities in a manner that respects the dignity of members with

disabilities. Members are encouraged to discuss their needs with their supervisors, who in turn will work their divisional Disability Management and Accommodation Program offices. For information on the policies, processes and tools that apply to members, members and supervisors are advised to refer to the [Disability Management and Accommodation Program Manual](#).

Moving forward, we will continue to examine potential approaches to augment accommodation supports for the CM and RM community as needed.

We thank you all for your support as we work together to ensure that the RCMP is an inclusive and accessible organization for all. For more information about accessibility at the RCMP, visit our [Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion page](#).

Rob O'Reilly  
A/Chief Human Resources Officer

Tahanee McKnight  
Designated Senior Official Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion  
Executive Director Human Resources Policies, Strategies and Programs

### **Race Based Data Collection Implementation**

Addressing systemic racism and discrimination at the RCMP is an organizational priority. It's also a key element of our *People Strategy*, which provides an overarching vision and a concrete action plan to shape our workforce of the future. In 2022, the RCMP received federal funding for various efforts to address these issues within our organization, including the implementation of Race Based Data Collection (RBDC).

The RCMP's RBDC initiative, set to begin in January 2024, will help our organization become more transparent and accountable, and it will enhance our community engagement. This initiative isn't about singling out individuals – it's about helping us identify and improve our policies, practices, and training to better support our members. The evidence-based solutions it provides can empower us to better serve communities.

RBDC will begin on a pilot basis in select detachments across the country: Burnaby (E Division), Wood Buffalo/Fort McMurray (K Division), Thompson (D Division), Whitehorse (M Division), and H Division (TBD). These sites were chosen based on extensive consultations held throughout 2022 and 2023. Training regarding RBDC is now available on Agora and is mandatory for employees in the pilot detachments. The pilot will provide an opportunity to test our processes (including training) and make improvements along the way, which will help guide the national rollout to follow.

Through continued engagement with employees, community members, leaders, and other partnering organizations, we will ensure that this initiative has a positive impact on RCMP employees and resonates with all the communities that we serve.

Everyone at the RCMP has a role to play in advancing our efforts to address systemic racism and discrimination within our organization. Launching RBDC is an important milestone in becoming a more modern and inclusive policing organization, and I look forward to the progress we'll make through this initiative.

Mike Duheme  
Commissioner

## **Recruitment Modernization: What's a Recruitment Evaluation Centre?**



The Recruitment Evaluation Centre (REC) is a special two to three day in-person event that candidates attend to ensure they meet the required characteristics, qualities and attributes of a police officer. Recruitment Evaluation Centres can significantly improve the candidate experience, reduce processing times and remove systemic barriers. Throughout the duration of the Recruitment Evaluation Centre, candidates are assessed by a team of serving members and civilian recruiters to measure their aptitude for the role.

Individual and group-based activities:

- icebreaker exercise and network with other applicants/share motivations and commonalities
- presentations and with opportunity for candidates to ask officers questions on:
  - Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
  - Life at Depot
  - Field Coaching Program and Mobility
- organizational culture and bias reduction exercise to emphasize our core values and modern-day policing
- an individual scenario assignment where candidates will present to an RCMP panel on a range of topics including their motivations, strengths, personal achievements and cultural views
- an interactive fitness challenge to prepare candidates for the job's physical requirements
- a group presentation assignment where candidates will present back to others on which core value of the RCMP they see as the most important
- a larger group time-bound simulation to test each candidate's ability to work in a team environment under stressful conditions

So far, seven divisional Recruitment Evaluation Centres have been hosted over the past year, ranging from eight participants up to 28:

- L Division – Summerside in July 2022
- D Division – Winnipeg in Sept. 2022
- K Division – Edmonton in Oct. 2022 and November this year
- F Division – Regina in Oct. 2022
- C Division – Rigaud in Nov. 2022
- B Division – Gander in Nov. 2022

More than half the applicants who have attended belong to an Employment Equity Group and more than a third were trooped.

Some examples of Recruitment Evaluation Centres are:

- Federal Policing and Experienced Police Officer events
- Diverse and Inclusive Pre-Cadet Experience (DICE) events

Most recently, the Recruitment Modernization team held an Evaluation Centre in partnership with K Division recruiters and assessors in Edmonton, given the high interest and filled class of early applicants. This year's K Division event was dedicated to helping Indigenous applicants across Canada, including northern communities, through first aid certification, uniform fitting, physical assessments such as bloodwork, sight and vision testing, passport photos, fingerprints and psychological evaluations.

In the future, Recruitment Evaluation Centres will evolve to focus on those who have experienced systemic barriers such as access to education, internet or public services. In order for evaluation centres to meaningfully speed up application processing, the Recruitment Modernization team will look to add Suitability testing to its events and other assessments – the ultimate goal is to partner with the divisions to reduce processing times by up to 50 days and deliver a positive applicant experience.