

**DOMINION COMMAND
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
29 May 2024
MEETING MINUTES**

File: 82-27

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andrea Siew	-	Chair
Brendan Heffernan	-	Vice – Chair
Mindy Pearson	-	Member
Dean Young	-	Coordinator

ABSENT:

Brian Sauve	-	Member
Carolyn Hughes		VSS Committee Chair

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair advised the Committee that it was a remarkably busy spring beginning with the Women in Defence and Security (WiDS) breakfast on 02 March which members of the Committee and Legion Headquarters staff attended. It was another outstanding event honouring extraordinary women in the community. There were over 1,000 people attending the breakfast and the keynote speaker was Senator (RAdm Ret'd) Rebecca Patterson. The following week the Chair also attended the Veterans Summit and Women Veterans Forum hosted by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) in Montreal. Lastly, the Defence Policy Update and Budget were announced in early April, followed by a highly informative Dominion Executive Council (DEC) at the end of April and the submission of our Convention Report.

2. ADMINISTRATION POINTS

The Committee reviewed the Previous Minutes from our 09 January 2024 meeting. The Chair commented on the excellent notes from Comrade Brendan regarding new equipment and recruitment initiatives in the RCMP. No changes were noted in the minutes.

3. UPDATES:

- a. **CAF** - Comrade Andrea highlighted key points from the Defence Policy Update, titled *Our North, Strong and Free, A Renewed Vision for Canada's Defence*, and the 2024 Budget which were announced on the 8th and 16th

of April, respectively. The Legion published statements on the policy update and the budget. The Committee encourages everyone to read them.

<https://legion.ca/news/articles/2024/04/18/the-royal-canadian-legion-on-the-defence-policy-update> and

<https://legion.ca/news/articles/2024/04/16/the-royal-canadian-legion-assessment-2024-federal-budget>

- b. **DEC UPDATE** – Comrade Andrea provided an update on the DEC held 25 – 28 April. The revised Committee’s Terms of Reference (TORs) were approved. The revision included the Committee’s commitment to the Legion’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity Statement. Comrade Dean confirmed that the TORs have been finalized.
- c. **RCMP** – Comrade Brendan provided an update on RCMP related initiatives - Please see **Annex A**.
- d. **VSS** – While Comrade Carolyn was not in attendance, she provided a written update.

The Legion’s Leave the Streets Behind program continues to expand across the country. Many police departments are now referring homeless Veterans to the Legion, VAC and OSISS for assistance. It begins with service verification from Veterans Services at Dominion Command and then it is forwarded to the appropriate Provincial Command for action to assist the Veteran. There is a process in progress to develop a form with the RCMP which will include Dominion Command Veterans Services’ email and toll-free number. Veterans Services are also working on Homeless Veterans programs with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAeH) and Built for Zero (BFZ).

Veterans Services has seen an increase in First Applications for VAC disability claims and are currently assisting four other Commands during their staff transition. Across the country, some Command Service Officers have retired, and the newly hired officers will be trained on procedures and processes which include the usage of the VAC Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN). Once granted the appropriate security clearances, they will have access to the Network.

Dominion Command Veteran Services has recently hired a new Service Officer Assistant and will soon be hiring an additional Service Officer.

Service Officers across the country are expecting more requests for poppy fund assistance due to the increase in cost of living and still high mortgage rates.

Command Service Officers have provided presentations on the role of Service Officers to organizations as the Military Family Resource Centres, Transition Centres, and at several Second Career Assistance Network (SCAN) courses.

The VSS Committee is reviewing five requests for financial grants from various Veteran organizations and is monitoring four active class action lawsuits.

4. **ADVOCACY ISSUES:**

- a. **RCMP Definition of Veteran for Commemoration Purposes** – There has been no response to the second letter that the Dominion President sent on 26 October 2023 to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Comrade Andrea advised that she has engaged with the RCMP Veterans Association on the status of the issue and that she met briefly with the President RCMP Veterans Association, Sandra Conlin, who provided their continued assurance of their support. Comrade Andrea also noted that at the April DEC several members asked the Minister Veterans Affairs about the issue. The Minister stated that she would follow-up.
Action – The Committee will continue to follow-up.

- b. **CAF Sexual Misconduct and Cultural Change.** The third status report by the independent monitor, Jocelyn Therrien, on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations from the former Chief Justice Louise Arbour's Review was released on 17 May. The status report confirms that progress is being made on all 48 of the Arbour recommendations. The status report is available here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/external-monitor-report-third-status-report.html>

Comrade Andrea briefed on a 2023 CAF survey which reports that five percent of women attending CAF military colleges stated that they were sexually assaulted in the previous 12 months.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canadian-military-colleges-sexual-assault-misconduct-survey-1.7217449>

Action: The Committee will continue to monitor.

- c. **National Women's Monument** – The Committee discussed the January 2024 letter that the Dominion President sent to the Minister of Veterans Affairs to request the Government establish a national monument to honour Canadian Women Veterans and recognize their significant contributions and sacrifice to Canada, and the disappointing response received from the Minister. Comrade Andrea advised that the Dominion President sent a follow-up letter on 31 May 2024.

- d. **Canada Victoria Cross Initiative** – The Committee discussed the National Post's series of articles related to the awarding of the Canadian Victoria Cross. There is no indication that the government will retrospectively award a Canadian Victoria Cross.

Action: The Committee will continue to monitor for a response.

5. **OTHER ITMES:**

- a. **Parliamentary Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA)**. – ACVA completed their study on the Experience of Women Veterans. The report should be tabled in the House of Commons on 12 June. This is a ground-breaking study – the largest ever conducted by the Committee with 23 sessions and over 50 women Veterans testifying.
- b. **CDA Update** – Comrade Andrea briefed that the Legion no longer has representation on the CDA Board. The position has rotated to another member association.
- c. **VIMY Dinner** - Comrade Dean has confirmed that the dinner is scheduled for 6 November 2024 and that the Legion is a sponsor.
- d. **Domestic Operations** – The Committee discussed the wildfire season and the limited capacity of support available from the CAF and RCMP. Public Safety Canada confirmed that they will be using the new Humanitarian Workforce Program. This pilot program will involve multiple non-governmental organizations including the Canadian Red Cross, St. John Ambulance, Salvation Army, veteran-led Team Rubicon and Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada (SARVAC). This program is in the initial development stage.
Action: The Committee will continue to monitor progress.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/wildfires-climate-military-canada-1.7200878>
- e. **Federal Policing** – Comrade Brendan provided information related to changes within the RCMP on federal policing as a result of a recently released study on the sustainability of federal policing. The study, the result of a task force set up by the RCMP external Management Advisory Board, states that the RCMP must change to survive, and the federal government needs to step up to protect the safety of Canadians.
Action: Comrades Brendan and Brian will provide updates on changes and the impact on the RCMP.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/rcmp-federal-policing-mab-1.7182615>
- f. **Esprit de Corps – Breaking Down the Barricades Award Event** – Comrade Andrea attended the annual award event which recognizes 20

women in the defence and security community. The event is supported by multiple sponsors.

Action - Comrade Dean will investigate sponsorship opportunities.

6. SPONSORSHIP:

- a. **WiDS Breakfast** – Comrade Andrea talked about sponsorship opportunities next year to ensure that the Legion’s sponsor recognition is included within the program.
Action – Comrade Dean
- b. **RCMP Celebrating 50 Years of women’s service** – The Committee discussed whether there are any requests for Legion support of related events.
Action – Comrade Brian
- c. **Nijmegen and Victory March** – The Nijmegen March is cancelled until 2026. Last year it was replaced with the Victory March held in Ottawa.
Action - Comrade Dean will confirm with Legion Marketing for support.
- d. **Indigenous Youth Programs** – Comrade Dean provided an update that both the CAF and RCMP summer programs have been approved for Legion Comradeship awards to the top student of each course.
Action – Comrade Dean

7. VISITS AND MEETINGS:

Meeting with RCMP Commissioner – The Committee Chair will confirm with the Executive Director of possible dates for a meeting.

8. UPCOMING EVENTS:

The Royal Canadian Legion’s 49th Dominion Convention – 24 - 29 August 2024 in St John, New Brunswick

9. OTHER ITEMS: All

- a. The Committee discussed the study released in February on RCMP Mental Health. The study reports high rates of mental health issues. <https://npf-fpn.com/mentalhealthreport/>
- b. The Committee discussed that the CAF Chief of Defence Staff, General Eyre will be retiring this summer and that his replacement should be announced soon.

- c. Comrade Andrea advised that VAC is establishing a Women Veterans Council to include both serving and retired CAF and RCMP women. A call letter for volunteers to participate on the Council has been announced. Applications are due 28 June. For more information: <https://veterans.gc.ca/en/about-vac/what-we-do/women-and-2slgbtqi-veterans/vac-women-veterans-council>
- d. The Committee discussed the class action lawsuit recently certified by the Federal Court related to CAF members and Veterans mental health and breaching the duty of care to members. Of concern to the Committee is that this is the sixth-class action lawsuit for serving members and Veterans in the last 10 years.
<https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/court-certifies-lawsuit-against-military-mental-health>.

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



Andrea Siew
Chair



Dean Young
Coordinator

Dated this day on 13 June 2024.

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“What We Heard” report on contract policing program

On May 27, 2024, the Minister of Public Safety released the [What We Heard report](#) on the RCMP’s contract policing program. The report summarizes the views and feedback received during engagements led by Public Safety Canada supported by the RCMP with provinces, territories, municipalities, Indigenous partners, and other stakeholders to assess the contract policing program, which were held between March and December 2023.

As the report says, all contract partners are considering the future of the program beyond 2032 when the current police service agreements expire. Policing is an essential service in communities across the country. We all have an interest in taking stock of how things are working and considering future needs in advance of the renewal of the contract policing program. While some partners may explore different policing options beyond 2032, as is their right, most partners indicated that their preference was to maintain the RCMP as their contract policing service provider. Rest assured that we are committed to the RCMP’s three core mandates: Contract Policing, Federal Policing and Specialized Policing Services.

This report represents an important milestone in the contract policing assessment. We now have an opportunity to work collaboratively with our partners to improve the program and our service in response to their feedback. We are also working with Public Safety Canada on next steps with respect to the contract renewal process.

Spiritual Wellness Services

Spiritual Wellness Services (formerly known as the Chaplaincy Program) is the oldest member wellness service in the RCMP. Spiritual Wellness Service Providers are respected professionals in their local communities and come from a variety of backgrounds that have a heart to support employees.

Spiritual Wellness Service Providers embrace a faith neutral position to provide spiritual and religious care in a multi-faith environment for all employees and their families. They provide a confidential listening environment, while respecting spiritual sensitivities, religious heritages and diversity of faith traditions.

Spiritual Wellness Service Providers provide assistance for:

- work related incidents/conflict
- marriages/relationships/family issues
- traumatic events/investigations
- employee/family deaths – grief support
- sick, injured employees- hospital visits
- spiritual and emotional support

A listening ear, a helping hand, a calming presence can all help someone facing stressful issues.

Introducing the RCMP Ribbon Skirt



On February 14, 2024, the Commissioner approved the addition of the [RCMP Ribbon Skirt as an Indigenous cultural item of honour and distinction to be worn as part of the uniform](#). The Ribbon Skirt offers a gender-based option of wearing cultural items in uniform that includes non-binary and Two-Spirited Indigenous members. As of May 2024, there were 311 self-identified Indigenous Regular Members in the RCMP who identified as women, non-binary and Two-Spirit. The Ribbon Skirt is an initiative of the [Women's Indigenous Network \(WIN\)](#).

The Ribbon Skirt provides an opportunity to advance and promote culture change in the organization, both internally and externally, and to build and mend relationships with Indigenous communities and people. The Ribbon Skirt, along with our Eagle Feather and Métis Sash-wearing ambassadors, will serve as a powerful recruiting tool for the RCMP demonstrating the values of reconciliation, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The Ribbon Skirt is a symbol of resilience, survival, identity and hope. The colours (Yellow, Red, Blue, White) represent the four directions as well as the RCMP colours. The satin ribbons are adjacent to each other as they signify that all of us from the four directions are united rather than divided.

The Ribbon Skirt was designed in collaboration with the Uniform & Equipment Program (UEP) and with support by RCMP Indigenous Collaboration Co-Development and Accountability (RICCA), Indigenous Policing Services – National (IPS-N) and the Warrant Officer Group to assist with recruiting efforts, employee pride, recognition, and retention.

Commissioner's Broadcast – extension of tenure

On April 29, 2024, the Prime Minister announced that my tenure as Commissioner of the RCMP has been extended. It continues to be an honour to lead this great organization and I am extremely proud of everything we are accomplishing together. Your commitment to the safety and trust of the public is exemplary. Thank you to each and every RCMP employee for your dedication. Let's maintain this momentum – especially on our key priorities – and continue making positive changes for each other and the communities we serve.

“The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced the appointment of Michael (Mike) Duheme as Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Commissioner Duheme previously served in this role on an interim basis.

Since his appointment in March 2023, Mike Duheme has been actively engaged in advancing the organization's modernization goals, strengthening its relationships with partners and Canadians, supporting the active participation of employees, and protecting the safety of communities in Canada and beyond. His innovative ideas and dedication to fostering a positive work environment to improve the RCMP have made a real difference. His permanent appointment to this role will provide stability to the RCMP as it continues to evolve into the modern, inclusive, and diverse police organization that Canadians expect and deserve.

Appointment of New Corps Sergeant Major

On March 11, 2024 Commissioner Duheme announced that Sergeant Major Elaine Maisonneuve will be the RCMP's next Corps Sergeant Major, the first woman to hold this role.

Elaine has been with the RCMP for over 25 years, beginning her career at the Whitehorse Detachment in 1998. She spent the next 10 years serving in contract policing in Yukon Territory, where she held positions on General Duty, General Investigations, Major Crimes, and Commercial Crime.

In 2008, Elaine moved her family to Ottawa where she remained until her recent deployment to Geneva, Switzerland. Elaine has served in National Division's Federal Investigations Unit, Integrated National Security Enforcement Team, and finally, in Sensitive and International Investigations, leading major case files related to international anti-corruption for several years.

Moving away from investigations after two decades, Elaine transferred to International Peace Operations at National Headquarters as a desk officer coordinating deployments of Canadian police officers to peacekeeping missions abroad. It was during this time that she developed a passion for providing service and support to her fellow members and it was the driving force in her pursuit of a

position within the [Warrant Officer Program](#). She was appointed to the rank of Sergeant Major by Commissioner Brenda Lucki in November 2020.

Currently, Elaine is deployed with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in Geneva, Switzerland, supporting the design, development and delivery of pre-deployment training for uniform personnel deploying to peace operations.

In addition to her warrant-related duties, Elaine oversaw the roll-out of the division's own Health and Wellness Unit which served to provide division-focused strategies and initiatives to optimize employee health.

Employee wellness will continue to be a priority for Elaine as the newly appointed CSM, as well as aligning with the RCMP's top priorities of recruiting and retention, operations and culture. She looks forward to building on the great work of CSM Al McCambridge and A/CSM Mike McGinley.

"It is an indescribable honor to be selected to take on this role. I look forward to supporting ongoing efforts to recognize our history and traditions as we learn from our past and continue our path towards modernization. I believe that collectively, we can achieve great things not only in the service of our communities but in our capacity to ensure wellness within our workforce."

In addition to Elaine's appointment, I am also pleased to announce the creation of the new position of Sergeant Major, Ceremonial and Protocol, and the appointment of Mike McGinley to the role.

Mike joined the RCMP in 1996 following a Short-Career Commission with the Royal Navy. He first served in K Division as an Investigator, Operations NCO and Detachment Commander, receiving a promotion to Corporal in 2006 and to Sergeant in 2009.

In 2014, Mike transferred to the Performance Centre (Northwest) in Regina as a Leadership Coordinator, instructing junior and senior NCOs in leadership, strategic planning and performance management. In 2017, he moved to Depot Division and became the NCO in charge of the Drill and Department Unit. He was appointed to Sergeant Major in December 2018 by Commissioner Brenda Lucki.

Mike accepted the interim CSM role following Al McCambridge's retirement. Every day, he upholds the RCMP's Core Values in his work and I am eager to see what he will do in his new position as Sergeant Major Ceremonial and Protocol.

Addressing the Mass Casualty Commission Recommendations

On March 27, 2024, the RCMP provided further updates in the areas of:

- critical incident management
- advice of the Management Advisory Board
- improving RCMP policies
- improving recruitment
- responding to gender-based and intimate partner violence
- focusing on the wellness of our personnel and of victims

March 2024 updates

We are pleased to provide this update as we continue to advance on the recommendations from the Mass Casualty Commission. There is still more work to be done, and we are committed to being transparent and accountable to the public through regular updates on our progress.

Critical incident management – improving our response to managing crises

Importance

The Mass Casualty Commission, as well as the Public Order Emergency Commission, clearly stated that we must renew our approach to managing crises. This includes, but is not limited to:

- mass casualty incidents
- illegal occupations
- natural disasters

That's why we have launched an expansive effort to refresh our approach to managing crises. This marks the first time we have examined the entire cycle of crisis management from this holistic perspective, including:

- pre-incident preparedness and planning
- management of the incident itself
- victim-centric, post-incident response

As part of this approach, we're working to make sure that all RCMP employees and first responders who have a responsibility during a critical incident understand their role, and how they contribute to the broader response.

Actions

- Increased use of emergency alerts (across Canada, including Nova Scotia) in situations where an emerging or active incident may put the public in direct harm following the creation of new policies and training. These alerts inform the public of a direct or emerging threat, as well as provide necessary directions on how to stay safe. Alert Ready is also now part of the learning curriculum for all cadets at the RCMP's training academy. Its use is now more clearly outlined in our operational policies.
- Developed a comprehensive checklist and quick reference guide to help front-line personnel better plan and respond to a crisis. These new tools will also help ensure we are taking a

trauma-informed approach to supporting affected members of the public, as well as our own personnel.

- Rolled out software across the RCMP that will allow us to track the exact locations and movements of all our officers in the field in real-time. All police officers in Nova Scotia are using this software and all RCMP divisions the country have access to it. Knowing where our officers are will help us coordinate responses to incidents more effectively and help us identify anyone who may be pretending to be an RCMP officer.

In addition, we are currently:

- developing a searchable inventory of all employees' specialized skills and capabilities that can be centrally supported from national headquarters. This can help us quickly and efficiently identify and deploy employees with specialized skills during a crisis. This inventory will help RCMP divisions better access specialized capabilities during a crisis such as air support, operational intelligence analysis, geospatial mapping and more.
- reviewing our command-and-control model used during critical incidents to integrate more seamlessly with other police and emergency services during these situations. This work will be done in consultation with police services from across the country. Having a standardized model will also help us with our response to critical incident or other emergency situations.

Advice of the Management Advisory Board

Importance

In November 2023, the Management Advisory Board began publishing its advice and recommendations to its website. Unless there are immediate concerns from an operational perspective, or the information is subject to mandatory exemptions under the *Access to Information Act* or the *Privacy Act*, the Board will continue to make its advice public.

Actions

We agree with this approach and have started posting [our official responses to the Board's advice](#) on our website for transparency.

Improving our policies

Importance

We are working on updating many of our policies to reduce access to our uniforms, equipment and decommissioned vehicles to ensure they don't fall into the wrong hands. This will severely limit a person's ability to pose as an RCMP officer.

Actions

- Strengthened our policies for how we manage and dispose our police uniforms and equipment. We have reviewed and updated our procedures for the uniform disposal process and continue to monitor compliance to better track and prevent possible misuse. We have also improved our process for disposing equipment and uniform items when an officer leaves or retires. These efforts are further strengthened in Nova Scotia, where legislation enacted in May 2023 now prohibits the use, possession, sale or reproduction of police-issued items by the public.
- Reviewed our police vehicle decommissioning process, both by internal and external experts. This is to ensure that we can safely decommission and sell our police vehicles in the event the current moratorium on the sale of them is lifted, and will better allow us to publicly report these sales. These policies will reduce the ability for people to purchase or build replica police vehicles, regardless of intent.

Improving recruitment

Importance

We have strengthened our efforts to enhance recruitment to meet our current and evolving needs, and to better reflect the diverse communities we serve. In recent years, we have made significant strides to make the recruitment process easier, faster, and more accessible to a broader range of candidates.

Our recruitment program has prioritized initiatives promoting diversity and inclusivity. We are implementing programs aimed at attracting individuals from underrepresented groups, such as racialized communities, women and Indigenous peoples, to create a workforce that mirrors the demographics of Canadian society. These inclusive recruitment practices not only enrich our organizational culture but also enhance our ability to effectively serve diverse communities across the country.

Actions

- Modified our approach to how we deploy new RCMP officers across the country. Under this new approach, we're working to place new graduates from our training academy in their preferred province for their first posting. We're also working to help them continue their careers in their home province or community, including in rural and remote postings. Allowing our officers to stay in their home community will help with recruitment efforts, and will lead to better quality policing services with improved knowledge of specific community needs and geography namely in rural areas, and enhanced relationship building.

- A major market-based research project to inform an evidence-based approach for recruiting new officers. This market research data will allow us to attract a greater number of police applicants within our ranks to fill ongoing vacancies. It will also enable us to better attract and select candidates that possess the right skillsets and characteristics required to become an RCMP officer.
- The launch of our [Diverse and Inclusive Pre-Cadet Experience program](#) in October 2023. This program is aimed at attracting racialized and underrepresented persons wishing to join the RCMP. It also reflects our efforts to foster a culturally diverse workforce that is representative of the communities we serve.

Responding to gender-based and intimate partner violence

Importance

We have begun work on specific initiatives aimed at supporting survivors and preventing future incidents of gender-based and intimate partner violence. These focused efforts reflect our unwavering commitment to fostering safer communities and upholding the rights and dignity of all individuals.

Actions

- Updates to our policies to better reflect Clare's Law, which will be applied in provinces where the law has been enacted. This allows individuals to seek, and police to release, information about their intimate partners' past abusive behaviour. In addition, we are making updates to our policies to ensure we apply a trauma-informed, victim-centered approach to our intimate partner violence investigations. We're also adding the need to consider other elements, such as coercive control.

Ongoing efforts include:

- working with experts to examine the use of supportive reporting centres within the communities we serve, so that those faced with gender-based and intimate partner violence can safely report instances of abuse in a victim-focused centre. Access to such resources can be especially important to those in rural and remote communities, where support services may not be readily available. In these situations, the RCMP could play a crucial role in providing victim support.

Focusing on wellness of our personnel and of victims

Importance

Recognizing the importance of mental health support, particularly in the aftermath of crises, we have taken proactive steps to ensure that our employees and their families have access to comprehensive resources and guidance.

Actions

- The creation of a [resource guide for our employees and their families](#). This offers more guidance and direction on how to access the various mental health supports available after a crisis. This extensive document provides all employees and their families with valuable information on how to access these vital services.
- The expansion of psychological health screenings, which we've offered to officers in almost every RCMP division since 2021. We've since been expanded this to include officers working in the National Capital Region. This is an important step in support of the physical and mental health of our employees. We are committed to addressing the psychological impacts associated with police work, regardless of geographic location or rank.

Additional updates

Recommendation P.59: RCMP Management Culture

The RCMP has prepared an update to its action plan from September 2023 and has shared it with the Management Advisory Board as well as with the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs

Recommendation C.28: Management and Disposal of Police Uniform and Associated Kit

The recommendation called for the RCMP, and other police services, to carry out quality assurance reviews of their inventory and disposal systems within one year of the publication of the Mass Casualty Commission report, and every three years thereafter. The RCMP's initial review was completed by its Audit and Advisory Services in 2023 (Review of Uniform and Dress Manual Policy Changes), and subsequent re-assessments will be considered as part of the organization's risk-based audit planning process.