



Dominion Command EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) Committee

Our Mission is to serve Veterans, which includes serving military and RCMP members and their families, to promote Remembrance and to serve our communities and our country.

Meeting Minutes 3 April 2024



Legion 

**DOMINION COMMAND
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES- ZOOM MEETING
3 April 2024**

File: 32

IN ATTENDANCE:

Berkley Lawrence - Chair
Bill Chafe - Vice Chair
Larry Murray - Member
Valerie MacGregor - Member
Marg Emery - Member
Marion Fryday-Cook - Member
Andrea Siew - Member

Eric Poissant - Committee Coordinator

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed all members for the first official EDI meeting since the EDI committee was stood up. He highlighted that in the meantime, a great deal of progress had been made on some items. Additionally, we will review and update the EDI Action Plan Priority 1 Items.

2. ADMINISTRATION POINTS

The committee did not review the previous meeting, as it was the first EDI meeting. The Chair mentioned that we would not stick to the agenda sequence, even though we would cover all the items on the agenda.

3. AGENDA ITEMS:

A. REVIEW EDI STATEMENT: Committee Member Andrea Siew

1. Comrade Siew volunteered to develop the EDI Statement, which was shared with all the committee members last February for review and comment. Following the comments of the Chair and members, it was updated. Two titles were initially identified: Together the future of the Royal Canadian Legion is equitable, diverse and inclusive or Together the Royal Canadian Legion is committed to equity, diversity and

inclusiveness. The decision was made to use the second as the title: **Together the Royal Canadian Legion is committed to equity, diversity and inclusiveness.**

2. Comrade Siew, opened the discussion to have last minute comments and updates. Many comments from the committee members were discussed as follows: Minor typo was noted. Additionally, clarification on the EDI Principles for Human Rights, that is applied to everyone. Also, a suggestion to change the terminology, Grass Roots, for Branches. The Royal Canadian Legion from the **grass roots** to the highest echelons at Dominion Command. In order to better demonstrate the importance of the Branches in the Legion, the new version is now "The Royal Canadian Legion from the Branches and members to Dominion Command and from Dominion Command to its Branches and members". This demonstrates a better positive message.
3. Modification and translation will be completed. Will be presented for Ratification at DEC in end April 24.

B. SUMMARY AND UPDATE FEEDBACK FROM THE DIFFERENT DOMINION COMMITTEES – Committee Coordinator- Eric Poissant

1. With respect to the review of the EDI Action Plan Priority 1, we communicated via email, with all Dominion Committee Chairs & Coordinators, asking their collaboration with some points to consider in their capacity to better reflect equality, diversity and inclusion in their committees, with their manuals, directives and instructions.
2. Most of the Dominion committees got back with at least a confirmation that they are working on it. Here are some of the general comments about the work to reflect EDI in their respective committees.
 - Look for standardization on wording. Should **get a Glossary / Lexicon** of recommended wording to share, in order to have all Committee Directives use the same language regarding EDI. **It was recommended to compile a list of EDI terminology. This will be referred to DEC.**
3. Gender neutral terminology – example. Instead of 'widow', 'female', use 'widowhood'. **Recommended to use Veterans Affairs Canada, terminology of Survivor**

4. Differences with English and French wording. French is more challenging for gender neutral terminology.
5. Recommendation that committees share all feedback with other committees to learn from each other.
6. Suggest a new banner to better reflect Diversity. Current banner used for presentations does not reflect this and is mainly “white men focussed”.
7. Facilitate and get a better standardization with EDI terminology. **It was recommended to use and share Writing Tools from Government of Canada**

- **Inclusive writing – Guidelines and resources**

<https://www.noslangues-ourlangues.gc.ca/en/writing-tips-plus/inclusive-writing-guidelines-resources.html>

- **Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology**

[Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology \(noslangues-ourlangues.gc.ca\)](https://www.noslangues-ourlangues.gc.ca/en/guide-on-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-terminology)

8. In the discussion, the general comment from the committee members is to **avoid any military acronyms** and to get a Glossary for the terminology of the EDI in order to make sure every Dominion Committee and Legion Member understands.

C. SUMMARY AND UPDATE FROM PROVINCIAL COMMANDS - EDI Committees: Committee Coordinator- Eric Poissant

1. With respect to the Review of the EDI Action Plan Priority 1, we communicated by letter with all Provincial Executive Directors and Special Section Presidents asking their cooperation in establishing an EDI Committee at each level within the Legion including the Provincial Command, Special Section, Zone/District and the Branch levels.
2. Most of the Provincial Commands confirmed they are working on it. Here the breakdown:
 - **New Brunswick** confirmed they are working on it.

- **Alberta/NWT** opened the discussion with Branches at District Rallies. They are reviewing by-laws and policies at Branch and Command Levels for appropriate language. They will further discuss EDI at their PEC in April 2024 and establish a committee. There will be a review of their website and Facebook images and wording to reflect diversity.
- **Quebec** contacted me for questions, no confirmation.
- **Saskatchewan** e-mailed to acknowledge, however, it seems they very busy with other committees and tasks.
- **Ontario** updated during the meeting they are moving on it.
- **Other provincial commands** - no returns.

During the general discussion, the point was brought up to use the DEC to reassure, provide expectation and provide guidelines regarding the implementation of EDI committees, in the Provincial Commands.

D. DISCUSSION REGARDING TYPE OF TRAINING SEMINAR FOR DOMINION CONVENTION 2024- Committee Chair – Berkley Lawrence.

1. The Chair confirmed it will not have EDI workshops at the Dominion Convention. Only 5 workshops were allocated with no EDI this year. We will still need to provide an EDI Report for the Convention. In the future, we will need to develop what type of EDI training there will be for members.

E. REVIEW OF THE PRIORITY 1 ITEMS AND WAY FORWARD - Committee Chair – Berkley Lawrence.

1. The Chair confirmed after reviewing the last couple of days, most of the Priority 1 items are in progress.
2. **Priority 2 - Establish an EDI Evaluation Framework.** A comment was made regarding how we will develop this evaluation framework. This requires budget allocation to contract a company to assist in the development of the product. **Way forward: Chair confirmed at the next EDI Meeting we will focus on this topic and look for all options. Additionally, it was mentioned, we may looking to have Budget allocation at the DEC to give flexibility to hire a contractor, to develop the evaluation framework**

- 3. Priority 3 - Establish an Annual Budget.** The Chair stated this Priority has not been addressed regarding the allocation of an annual budget for EDI initiatives and programs. **Discussion and Comment: As mentioned, it was suggested to get a budget allocation at DEC, to allow the Committee flexibility regarding training development and an evaluation framework contractor using their expertise to assist in the development of training and an Evaluation Framework.**

- 4. Priority 4 - Land Acknowledgement is completed.**

It was discussed that Land Acknowledgement needs to be adapted by region, not only generic land acknowledgement that could be used everywhere across the country. It needs to be personalized. Land acknowledgement should be developed in consultation with local Indigenous communities.

It was brought to the attention of the committee, the wording in the Land Acknowledgement, using the words unceded/ceded, may want to consider a recommendation to remove the unceded reference, and keep it simply as a land acknowledgement. **ACTION- the Chair will ask for clarification.**

Link for an article talking about the sensitivity of Unceded /Ceded

<https://vancouversun.com/opinion/columnists/unceded-why-we-acknowledge-or-dont-that-b-c-first-nations-never-signed-away-land#:~:text=Acknowledgments%20raise%20concerns%20about%20the,the%20traditional%20territories%20to%20settlers>

- 5. Priority 5 - EDI Statement.** It was drafted and approved by the committee. The Bilingual EDI Statement will be presented for discussion and approval by DEC, in April 2024.
- 6. Priority 6 - Training and Leadership.** The Chair confirmed there will be no training at Convention unfortunately. We will begin to develop training after DEC. It was mentioned that Dominion HQ has as potential idea, such as online training for example. This is why the budget allocation will be important in the future.
- 7. Priority 7 – Establish Regular Posts through external and internal (Magazine and Social media Platforms)**

An official request was made by e-mail asking Canvet (Magazine), Marketing and PR for their collaboration with some points to consider to better reflect Equality, Diversity and

Inclusion with any promotions and/or products in your respective Departments. They all confirmed they are using all possible initiatives to talk about implementation of EDI across the RCL. **This item has been completed.**

Aaron Kylie, Legion Magazine, wrote about the RCL EDI initiative in a news story on last spring's DEC meeting in our July/Aug 2023 issue and it was covered in a subsequent Front Lines column (Sept/Oct 2023) by our senior staff writer Stephen J. Thorne.

Legion magazine link

<https://legionmagazine.com/tough-talk-advocates-mince-no-words-delivering-inclusion-message-to-legionnaires/>

Dion Edmonds- RCL Marketing PR- Everything they do from a marketing and PR standpoint tries to incorporate EDI, whether that be language used in promotion/comms to creatives used that depict a diverse group of people, to specifically calling out notable dates that highlight marginalized groups. See attached list that shows the varies days/events we showcase.

Below is an example of how we are highlighting black history month.

Comment from Dion think at the end of the day the work needs to be done at Branch level, and ensuring the Commands push it down as well, as this is needed to keep us relevant. We need to act swiftly and strongly when we see any instance of any behaviour that goes against EDI.

Example of RCL Social media post:

https://www.instagram.com/p/C3SyVPEO80V/?img_index=1

List of the National notable date 2024. (Annex C)

8. **Priority 8 - Review Existing By-Laws and Policy Manuals.**
 - ii. This still on under review.
9. **Summary from the Chair for the Priority 1 items.** All the Priority 1 items are in progress, except the Budget item which requires more discussion and the same for Training.

- **Comment following the review:** It was mentioned that the intent with the EDI Statement is to present at DEC in April to get approval.
- It was asked what will be next for the EDI Statement after it receives approval by DEC. How it will be socialized through the RCL. It should be on our website and very visible for demonstrating the commitments for EDI across the community.

4. **UPCOMING EVENTS.** Committee Chair – Berkley Lawrence.

- **Dominion Executive Council** - 27-28 April 2024. The EDI Committee will be presenting a report and note the feedback.
- **Dominion Convention**, Saint John, NB, 24-28 August 2024. The EDI Committee will be presenting a report and acknowledge the feedback.

5. **ROUND TABLE:** Committee Members.

Comrade Larry Murray: The report for DEC and Convention is very important to explain the progress and way forward with EDI. Do not know how it will be structured. It requires discussion with the appropriate amount of time.

Comrade Bill Chafe: The EDI Statement is very important for not only the RCL organization, but for our nation and for our future success. My recommendation when presenting the EDI report at Convention is to give a brief instruction, have the EDI Statement with the Report. Read the Statement and explain the EDI Statement was ratified by DEC and you are looking for Convention ratification. The EDI Statement should stand on its own at Convention to get a motion for approval.

The **Chair, Berkley Lawrence, strongly agrees** that should be the way to proceed, to get a motion for approval for the EDI Statement on its own.

Comrade Andrea Siew, I would like to thank Comrade Valerie MacGregor regarding the issue we had last February 2024, when I found a comment on Facebook made by a Veteran. I have highlighted why we need to do EDI and why it is so important. It was shared with everybody

and found that it was a Military Sexual Trauma survivor, it is a group that I am in. Reminder, it needs to be handled very carefully.

Comrade Marg Emery. It is great that we stood up these committees for EDI. I hope it is okay to bring the Ontario Command some perspective and information from the Dominion Command EDI Committee, to make sure they get the information.

Comrade Valerie MacGregor. Excellent meeting, very pleased to hear the approach with DEC. It is very important this EDI Statement is presented. To get all Provincial Presidents and DEC representatives to understand completely where we are going with EDI. More clarification that could be provided at DEC will help to get everyone on board.

Comrade Marion Fryday-Cook, That is great to get the EDI Statement ready for DEC. Thank you for the explanation on how that should work. It is very important at Convention that all agree with the EDI Statement. After the approval of DEC, it is going forward to Convention to explain how it works, to get support. If it is not supported it is because they are not in the right organization.

Chair Berkley Lawrence. Thanks everybody for the great work. We will work on the DEC report. After DEC, we will plan another EDI meeting before Convention.

6. **Next Meeting** – Date to be confirmed. Between DEC and Convention



Berkley Lawrence
Chair



Eric Poissant
Coordinator

Dated this day on 15 April 24.

ANNEXES:

Annex A- Agenda

Annex B- National Notable dates 2024

DISTRIBUTION LIST

DEC

EDI Committee

Dominion Past Presidents

Provincial Executive Directors

Directors

Committee Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators

National Notable Dates for the 2024 Calendar Year

The following are national days of relevance to The Royal Canadian Legion that raise awareness of an issue, commemorate a group or event, or celebrate something. Also included are national Legion activities. Branches may wish to promote these dates or organize related activities.

Dominion Command promotes many of these dates through our social media channels. Selected commemorative dates may be promoted on significant anniversaries.

We encourage Branches and members to share Legion national messaging from our social media channels:

[Facebook.com/CanadianLegion](https://www.facebook.com/CanadianLegion) [Twitter.com/RoyalCdnLegion](https://twitter.com/RoyalCdnLegion) [Instagram.com/royalcanadianlegion](https://www.instagram.com/royalcanadianlegion)

JANUARY

- 1 New Years Day
- 24 [Bell Let's Talk](#) (mental health)
- 27 [Holocaust Remembrance Day](#)
- [Membership renewal reminders](#)

FEBRUARY

- [Black history month](#)
- 14 Valentines Day
- Family Day (day varies by province)
- 15 [National Flag of Canada Day](#)
- 28 [Gulf War](#) ends (1991)
- [Lapsed member reminders](#)

MARCH

- 3 [World Hearing Day](#)
- 8 [International Women's Day](#)
- 2nd Monday - [Commonwealth Day](#) (RCEL support)
- 15 Last Canadian soldiers return from [Afghanistan](#) (2014)
- [Lapsed member reminders](#)

APRIL

- Month of the Military Child
- 1 [Royal Canadian Air Force founded](#) (1924) – 100th anniversary
- 3 [Battle of Moreuil Wood](#) (1918)
- 4 [NATO](#) Accord signed (1949)
- 9 [Battle of Vimy Ridge](#) (1917) - *Legion flags lowered to half mast*
- 14-20 [National Volunteer Week](#)
- 25 [Anzac Day](#)

- 25 [Battle of Kapyong](#) (1951)

MAY

- 1st Sunday [Battle of the Atlantic](#) (1945)
- 6-10 [CMHA Mental Health Week](#)
- 4-10 National Youth Week
- 3 John McCrae wrote '[In Flanders Fields](#)' poem
- 4 [Royal Canadian Navy](#) founded (1910)
- 5 [Liberation of Netherlands](#) (1945)
- 8 VE Day (1945)
- 12 Mother's Day
- 15 [International Day of Families](#)
- 18 [International Museum Day](#)
- 31 – June 16 [RCAF Run](#)
- 19 [Canadian Army](#) founded (1855)
- 21 [National War Memorial](#) unveiled (1939)
- 20 Victoria Day
- 23 [RCMP](#) (1873)
- 25 [Ypres](#) (1915)
- 24 - June 2 Memorial Cup
- 28 [Tomb of Unknown Soldier](#) (2000)
- 29 [International Day of UN Peacekeepers](#)
- 31 [End of South African \(Boer\) War](#) (1902)
- 27 US [Memorial Day](#)

JUNE

- Pride Month
- [Legion Riders](#) promotion
- 1st Sunday Canadian Armed Forces Day
- 4 Miracle at Dunkirk (1940)
- 6 [Normandy Invasion \(D-Day\)](#) (1944) 80th anniversary
- 14 World Blood Donor Day
- TBD [Navy Bike Ride](#)
- 16 Father's Day
- 21 [National Indigenous Peoples Day](#)
- 27 [Canadian Multiculturalism Day](#)

JULY

- 1 [Beaumont Hamel](#) (1916)
- 1 Canada Day (Legion supports Operation Canada Day)
- 7 Canada ceases combat operations in [Afghanistan](#) (2011)
- 26 Vimy unveiling (1936)
- 27 [Korean War](#) armistice (1953)

AUGUST

- 1 NORAD formed (1957)
- 7-13 [Legion National Youth Track and Field Championships](#)
- 9 [Canadian Peacekeepers Day](#)
- 12 [International Youth Day](#)
- 15 Victory over Japan (1945)
- 19 [Dieppe Raid](#) (1942)

SEPTEMBER

- Legion Early Bird campaign / [Renewals](#)
- 2nd Sunday Firefighters' National Memorial Day
- 2 [Second World War](#) ends (1945)
- 3 [Merchant Navy Veterans Day](#)
- 8 [Battle of Medak Pocket](#) (1993)
- TBD [Canada Army Run](#)
- 10 [World Suicide Prevention Day](#)
- 11 Attacks on September 11 (2001)
- 17 [Operation Medusa](#) (2006)
- 21 [International Day of Peace](#)
- 3rd Friday Military Family Appreciation Day
- 3rd Sunday [Battle of Britain](#) (1940)
- Last Sunday [Police and Peace Officers Memorial](#)

OCTOBER

- Legion Early Bird campaign / [Renewals](#)
- 1st week of the month [National Family Week](#)
- 1-7 [Mental Illness Awareness Week](#)
- 10 [World Mental Health Day](#)
- 14 Thanksgiving
- 14 Van Doos anniversary (1914)
- 17 [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#)
- 24 Anniversary of United Nations (1946)
- Last Friday in October start of [Poppy Campaign](#)

NOVEMBER

- Legion Early Bird campaign / [Renewals](#)
- 1 Announcement of [National Silver Cross Mother](#)
- 8 [Indigenous Veterans Day](#)
- 10 [Passchendaele](#) ends (1917)
- 11 [Remembrance Day](#)
- 11 [First World War ends - Armistice Day](#) (1918)
- 14 King Charles III birthday (1948)

- 18 [Battle of the Somme](#) (1916)
- 30 John McCrae's birthday (1872) ([In Flanders Fields](#))

DECEMBER

- 3 [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- 3 [#GivingTuesday](#)
- 5 [International Volunteer Day](#)
- 6 [Halifax explosion](#) (1917)
- 6 [National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women](#)
- 10 Nobel Prize for Peace awarded to peacekeepers (1988)
- 25 Christmas (Legion supports Operation Santa Claus)
- 25 [Fall of Hong Kong](#) (1941)
- [Membership renewal reminders](#)