



**DOMINION COMMAND
PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, December 1, 2022, 2:00 p.m. ET**

In Attendance

Sharon McKeown	PR Committee Chair (ON Command)
Donna McRury	PR Committee Vice Chair (NS-NU Command)
Paulette Cook	Member (QC Command)
Rosalind LaRose	Member (AB-NWT Command)
Law Power	Member (NL & L Command)
Ernie Tester	Member (MB-NWO Command)
John Yeo	Member (PEI Command)
Tom Young	Member (NS-NU Command)
Nujma Bond	PR Committee Coordinator
Leah O'Neill	Assistant Coordinator

Special Guests/Observers

Bruce Julian	Dominion President
Steven Clark	National Executive Director

Regrets

Jack Clayton	Member (NB Command)
Nathan Hoffmeister	Member (SK Command)
Dale Johnston	Member (BC-Y Command) – present for initial introduction
Carolyn McCaul	Member (ON Command)
Dion Edmonds	Assistant Coordinator

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

1) Opening

Nujma

The meeting commenced at 2:02 pm. Sharon was having technical difficulties so asked Nujma to lead the meeting. A number of new members have joined the committee and introductions were made.

Dale – President of BC-Y Command

Roz – PR Officer and President for AB-NWT Command

Ernie – President, and first time PR Officer for MB-NWO Command

Paulette – Executive Director and PR Office for QC Command

Donna – President of NS-NU Command

Tom Young – Chair of the Executive Counsel for NS-NU Command

Law (NL) – PR Officer for NL-L Command, Branch President, District Commander, and past RCMP media relations

Steven Clark – National Executive Director

Bruce Julian – Dominion President

2) Consultation/updates: timely national topics

Nujma

a. Advocacy

- i. Juno Beach decision – After months of advocacy against the proposed land development at Juno Beach by the Legion, the government, other organizations and individuals, the Government of Canada announced it will purchase the land from the developer so that the site will remain untouched.
- ii. Jesse Larochelle Victoria Cross – The Legion along with many others has been advocating to government for Jesse Larochelle to be considered for the Victoria Cross. We are disappointed to hear the CDS has declined to initiate a review for the award of the VC.

b. Media coverage of note

- i. National Poppy Campaign – The Legion just finished a very successful Poppy Campaign. There were hundreds of stories in the media highlighting the campaign in communities across the country. Additionally, National Headquarters launched PoppyStories.ca which was very successful.
- ii. Globe and Mail piece on loneliness/Op VetBuild – A recent census showed a number of people identifying as Veterans are living alone. The Globe contacted the Legion to talk about Veteran isolation and loneliness. The Globe ended up doing a story on Veteran isolation and highlighted the Legion's Operation VetBuild program. The Legion was granted permission to [repost the story](#) on Legion.ca This point is also a reminder for PR Committee members to let

Branches know about this program if they are interested in starting up a similar initiative at their Branch.

c. DEC and HQ items affecting PR

i. Summary of key resolutions relating to PR –

- The PoppyStories.ca initiative will be further developed in the future. 50 Veterans were included in the 2022 year, with plans to expand. 2022 stats:
 - o 35,264 individuals access the site
 - o 123,461 Veteran pages were viewed
 - o Spike in clicks started Nov 7 and increased from there
 - o Average age of visitors was 35-44
 - o Most visits were from Ontario followed by Alberta
- Starting in 2023, the 3rd week in September will be pronounced National Legion Week across Canada
- The C&L committee modified section 129 to state that *...random solicitation for financial contributions or payments of money from the public or from the membership of the Legion using internet platforms such as "Go Fund Me" may be authorized with the consent from the higher authority.*
- The cypher of King Charles III is the Tudor or King's Crown. The Government of Canada has not yet initiated a change, and informal chats with the CAF and Government revealed that the change will be a gradual one taking a few years. While under review, it is anticipated the Legion will also recommend a gradual change, using existing stock during the transition.
- Commissionaires – The Legion continues to work with the Commissionaires National Office to develop a communication agreement to share communications with our respective membership base on opportunities within each organization.
- The Legion supported CAVUNP's proposal to designate 2023 as the Year of the Peacekeeping Veteran to recognize the 75th anniversary of UN Peacekeeping efforts and Canada's contributions.
- In 2022 there were 1600 reported infringements involving companies and individuals selling Poppy products under the guise of helping Veterans. Both Amazon and eBay have formed teams to work with Legion HQ to eliminate infringements on their sites.

d. Committee work

- i. Updates on action requests from PR Chair – A reminder that Sharon has requested each PR Committee Member consider the action items below and bring forward new programs or ideas of interest to the Committee.

ACTION ITEM: Sharon requested each Committee Member bring at least one new branch initiative idea to our meetings so that these can be shared

across the organization. This is one way to promote good ideas and attract new members.

ACTION ITEM: Sharon requested that each Committee Member think of ways we can encourage branches to share information and email those ideas to Nujma to share with the Committee prior to the next meeting.

- ii. Ideas for Centenary committee – Sharon is asking members to brainstorm ideas that we might be able to promote nationally. Please forward ideas to Sharon and the group that we can submit to the Centenary Committee for consideration.

e. Other/follow up

- i. Service Officer allegations – The Legion has been contacted by media regarding unproven allegations of a Service Officer accessing a Veteran's files. Media reports indicated there was a lawsuit, but there is no suit we are aware of. If your region receives any inquiries, please forward to Nujma.

Comrade John mentioned their Branch Service Officers are struggling to afford printers required to do their work and they would like to seek VAC financial support. Comrade Steven indicated that the Legion cannot accept funding from VAC to maintain the Legion's arm's length separation from the Government. However, VAC does provide laptops and Steven will inquire with VAC about getting printers for PEI Branches.

(Action item Update: non secure purpose computers must be funded by the Command.)

3) Regional matters

Members with updates

- a. Select regions with significant updates are invited to outline them.

Comrade Ernie indicated his local Legion branch holds an annual Christmas dinner, with all food donated. The event is open to the public and members bring prizes to raffle off. It is a very successful event.

Comrade Paulette highlighted that Quebec Command is in the process of forming Command a marketing committee and will be holding provincial events to engage their Branches.

Comrade Tom shared that he and another comrade attended a rededication ceremony of a monument in Nova Scotia to honour William Hall, Nova Scotia's first VC Award winner and the first person of colour to receive the Medal of Valour. It was a great turnout of Legionnaires, local school students and community members. Tom also shared how great it was to see a huge turnout at the Halifax Remembrance Day Ceremony, including lots of young families. Having a strong Legion presence at these events are a great way to outreach to and attract new people to the Legion.

Comrade Donna added that Nova Scotia-Nunavut Command is brainstorming ways to ignite fire in membership, and support their membership drive. They have invited their Zone and District Commands to attend a meeting to get feedback from Branches on their operations and challenges.

Comrade Law shared that Newfoundland-Labrador will soon be getting a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Commonwealth countries typically have one tomb, and Canada will now have two – commemorating those who fought for the Royal Newfoundland Regiment before the province was a part of Canada. The remains of an unknown Royal Newfoundland soldier from France will be entombed in the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in St. Johns in 2024. The dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in 2024 in Newfoundland and Labrador will take place on July 1st, 2024, which is Memorial Day in NL.

Comrade Law also indicated his Command is getting push back on the Legion blue shirt, with the assumption that the shirts are to replace Legion dress. Comrade Steven clarified that the blue shirts are optional, and that it is up to the group organizing the Legion event to determine dress.

Comrade Law also mentioned that his Command heard complaints about the quality and look of the new biodegradable wreaths. Comrade Nujma reminded that this is the first year, and feedback is welcome so improvements can be made – also that this is a project to reduce our environmental footprint. Comrade Bruce added that this issue was discussed with DEC and that a paper form went out in each shipment providing contact information to share feedback and complaints. Supply indicated they received little feedback. Some of the PR committee members indicated they did not receive that form with their shipments. Members asked to encourage anyone with a complaint to contact Supply with their feedback.

Comrade John indicated that the Summerside Legion in PEI will be commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Korean War ending, and wondered if other Commands were doing anything.

Comrade Nujma added that Legion Headquarters is frequently asked questions about Christmas decorations during remembrance period. If other Commands are asked, the Legion's response is that we respect peoples' and organizations' choice to put of decorations when they choose, but the Legion's advice if asked, is that we recommend they wait until after November 11.

Comrade Bruce and Comrade Steven concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for the efforts of the PR committee and Headquarters staff and Provincial Commands on helping to get the Legion's story out.

5) Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 pm. **Next meeting** – Next meeting suggested – Thursday, February 2, 2023, 2 PM ET