



**DOMINION COMMAND  
PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, June 1, 2023, 2:00 p.m. ET**

**In Attendance**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Sharon McKeown        | PR Committee Chair (ON Command)                  |
| Donna McRury          | PR Committee Vice Chair (NS-NU Command)          |
| Ernie Tester          | Member (MB-NWO Command)                          |
| Mary-Ann Latimer      | Member (QC Command, new representative)          |
| Michelle Courtney     | Member (BC-Y Command, on behalf of Dale Johnson) |
| Nathan Hoffmeister    | Member (SK Command)                              |
| Rosalind "Roz" LaRose | Member (AB-NWT Command)                          |
| Tom Young             | Member (NS-NU Command)                           |

**Regrets**

|                |                         |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Carolyn McCaul | Member (ON Command)     |
| Jack Clayton   | Member (NB Command)     |
| John Yeo       | Member (PEI Command)    |
| Law Power      | Member (NL & L Command) |
| Nujma Bond     | Coordinator             |
| Leah O'Neill   | Coordinator             |
| Dion Edmonds   | Assistant Coordinator   |

*(NOTE: this "new" iteration of the PR committee is composed of all PROs - Public Relations Officers - from each Command, and in cases where such a position does not exist, the Command has delegated a representative such as an Executive Director or President.)*

## RECORD OF DISCUSSION

### 1) Opening

Sharon

#### a) Roundtable welcome

Sharon welcomed members including some new faces. Comrade Mary-Ann Latimer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of Quebec Command has replaced Comrade Paulette Cook, as Committee Rep. Comrade Michelle Courtney, new Executive Director of BC/Y Command sat in for Comrade Dale Johnson. This was an opportunity for Comrade Michelle to meet some of the Dominion PR Committee members.

#### b) Review/comments: April notes

A date change from 2022 to 2023 will be made to the February and April notes. The April minutes were reviewed, there were no questions. Sharon apologized for not having obtained the additional information on the policing initiative being piloted in Ontario Command, advising she will have more for the next meeting.

### 2) Discussion

Sharon, All

#### a. Regional PR updates

- The latest from SK:
  - Branches across the province will be having ceremonies and parades for Decoration Day.
  - SK has a monthly command newsletter that goes out (70%+ open rate).
  - The command is planning several symposia around the province (first one in September). They will be a mix of providing valuable information to existing members and serving as an “open house” for the public to get an idea of what the Legion is all about. There will also be a veterans-only session where valuable information will be gathered about what the younger veterans in the community want/need from the Legion
  - Branches across the province have been informed of Legion Week coming up in September and the command is encouraging all of them to do something within their community.
  - Some concerns have been raised over the timing of Legion Week. A lot of the branches in Saskatchewan are in farming communities and the people who usually volunteer their time to help the Legion will be busy harvesting.
- The BCY report:
  - Legion Veterans Village Whalley Branch #229 is now officially open. Former BCY Executive Director, Veronica Brown, has been named Executive Director of the Legion Veterans Village Research Foundation.
  - National Legion Week – BC/Yukon Command is looking at ways to promote Legion Week within our branches. The Command would like to tie in the

RCMP 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations with Legion Week. Considering reaching out to their E Division headquarters to partner with them.

- The Command is looking at potential tradeshow opportunities and other community initiatives to boost public recognition – example, a tradeshow in October targeting the 45-65+ demographic.
- The Command continues to send their monthly newsletter on the first Friday of every month – The BC/Yukon Blazer – anyone is welcome to join the mailing list to see what is happening at the Command.
- The AB update:
  - With the fires affecting many areas in Alberta, many legionnaires have been outplaced throughout the northern portion of the province. District 1 Commander, Lisa Peterson went above and beyond to keep spirits up. Lisa is a member of the Fox Creek Legion No. 280, and this community was hit the hardest by the fire. The branch runs a campground and unfortunately the building housing all the equipment and supplies we destroyed by the fire. The area was taken over by officials, and many Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP personnel were on the ground. Lisa connected with many, handing out over 100 Branch Pins and contact information – and spoke with them regarding assistance through VAC. Possibly 40 CAF members may attend their Remembrance Day Service. Some planned to look at the Cenotaph and offer suggestions for upgrades. It was an example of something positive coming out of a devastating situation.
  - Lac La Biche, McGrane Branch No. 28 received very negative publicity from a local Councilor, who took aim at the branch, which was publicly compared to the Fat Unicorn pub. A response letter was presented with a very positive tone, focusing on what the Legion is about and does for Veterans, RCMP and their families, and communities.
  - Former ABNWT President and Dominion President, Hugh Green of Ponoka Branch No. 66 will happily celebrate his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday on July 24, 2023. Birthday wishes may be sent via Roz, or to the Ponoka Legion Branch No. 66, 3911 AB2A, Ponoka, AB T4J 1M1.
- The MB/NWO Ontario command update:
  - Ernie had been invited to participate in a June 4 Decoration Day Parade in Stonewall by their local Legion. On June 11<sup>th</sup> he planned to head to the Transcona Branch join another Decoration Day Parade.
  - On July 13<sup>th</sup> Ernie will attend the unveiling of the Special Operations Executive Memorial Plaque. The SOE Memorial Plaque recognizes the service and sacrifice of 26 Manitobans who served in and supported the SOE, from 1940 to 1945.
- The latest from NS-NU:
  - The Command was dedicated to hosting the provincial convention, so there were no new updates of relevance.
  - Branches are doing well despite now facing the latest natural disaster – fires. So far none of them have been compromised, though a couple hundred homes had been consumed as of the meeting date. Tom mentioned he had

been evacuated from his home the day before the meeting, related to fires in that region.

- For QC Command:

- There were no updates to report.

- b. National items affecting PR

**Sharon**

- Comrade Sharon spoke on the Nova Scotia/Nunavut Convention held in Sydney, on Cape Breton, May 19 to 22, and suggested Congratulations be extended to the newly elected Officers of NS/NU Command, adding we wish them all a successful term of office.
- Ashby Legion was thanked for offering their facility to host branch Whitney Pier, which had sustained severe water damage during hurricane Fiona, preventing them hosting.
- Comrade Sharon suggested everyone read and share the comments by Comrade Marion Fryday-Cook, found in the latest Legion Magazine online Weekly Feature. The information came from Marion's OP Harmony Report to Delegates.
- (*The following short points had been provided for sharing at the meeting*):
  - National Headquarters was set to release a June video pertaining to Ruck to Remember in Ontario which raises funds for Operation Leave the Streets Behind.
  - Things are heating up for Legion Nationals in Sherbrooke this summer – there is a special Ambassador in 2023, Michael Trauner – he was an Invictus Games participant and is a competitive cyclist. He will provide inspiration for this year's students.

### **3) Any other business**

**All**

Comrade Roz mentioned the Senior 1<sup>st</sup> place winner in the colour poster contest was from Altario, a hamlet in east central Alberta.

Concerns about the forest fires burning in some areas were shared, with 'stay safe' wishes expressed.

### **4) Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm

**Next meeting** – Next meeting date – Thursday, August 3, 2023, 2 PM ET