



**DOMINION COMMAND
PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 7, 2021, 2:00 p.m. ET**

In Attendance	Sharon McKeown	-	PR Committee Chair
	Donna McRury	-	PR Committee Vice Chair
	Owen Parkhouse	-	Immediate Past PR Committee Chair
	Nujma Bond	-	PR Committee Coordinator
	Ronn Anderson	-	Past Pres. MB/NWO Command
	Jerry Lava	-	Pres. MB/NWO Command
	Jack Clayton	-	Exec. Dir. NB Command
	Roberta Taylor	-	PRO SK Command
	Karen Kuzek	-	PRO BCY Command
	Bryan Lutz	-	Mar-Comm BCY Command (guest)
Regrets	Nathan Lehr	-	PRO NL Command
	John Mahon	-	Pres. AB/NWT Command
Regrets	Carolyn McCaul	-	PRO Ontario Command
	John Yeo	-	PRO PEI Command
	Marion Fryday-Cook-	-	Pres. NS/NU Command
	Paulette Cook	-	Exec. Dir. QC Command

(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 of President. Currently the format is similar to what was used in previous PRO meetings to report on local updates, but that format is likely to be modified to focus more directly on overall organizational PR topics).

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

1. Opening

Sharon

- a. Comments: August meeting

There were no outstanding issues. Note that a past idea of possibly wearing orange ribbons at Convention to honour those who were lost at residential schools was not something eventually discussed or approved at the appropriate Dominion committee level in part due to timing.

2. Consultation/updates: timely national topics

Sharon, Owen, Nujma

- a. Introduction from Sharon and Owen
 - i. PR-related updates from DEC

Sharon discussed whether an opening ceremony should be required for this meeting, a decision was made not to require this.

Owen thanked members for their contributions over the past 3 years and welcomed new ones. He talked about how the committee can help the organization put its best foot forward and help get stories out into the public eye.

Sharon outlined how she hopes the committee will be a place for discussion, to come to an agreement on issues and make sure time is well-spent. She reiterated that those who decided to represent their Commands on the committee should have the needed experience and commitment.

Sharon discussed ongoing concerns related to membership numbers. She noted membership revenue is down and the overall number of members is down. She explained one focus now is for everyone to commit to getting information out to recruit more members.

- b. New tools: Ceremony locator, lawn signs

There are some new tools related to the Poppy Campaign this year. Nujma talked about a new ceremony locator for the public and media to reference, whereby Branches can now list their ceremony details via Legion.ca. In addition, the Legion's Supply Department has created special new "We will Remember Them" lawn signs in English and French as another way for people to visibly show support.

- c. Poppy Campaign 2021 updates

Nujma shared a few details about what's to come during this year's campaign, including an expanded number of Pay Tribute electronic Tap to Pay boxes (1000), and the 2021 iteration of the Digital Poppy which is a project of the Legion National Foundation. The theme this year remains the 100th anniversary of the Poppy as Canada's symbol of Remembrance. Canadian landmarks will be lit in red this year, in commemoration of the Remembrance period and the 100th anniversary. Canada Post is issuing a special stamp and the Royal Canadian Mint will issue a commemorative coin.

There was some discussion about the participation of cadets in the campaign this year. Jerry mentioned it is a decision of the RCSU locally and may be different in each province.

3. Regional matters

All

BC – Karen noted it's Legion week next week, and they have received a grant from government to help promote it. Their campaign includes radio, Facebook, Global BC, TikTok, videos, promotion of the poster and literary competition, lighting of landmarks. / Also doing what they can to invite participation from schools.

AB – John M. noted they are recommending the cancellation of all indoor ceremonies, but still trying to clarify the rules for inside vs. outside, with Alberta Health Services. A main ceremony at Kingsway will be held outside. / The second annual Jasper "VetFest" is taking place and John will be a guest speaker on Nov. 13. / In Slave Lake, a nice program is underway for the 100th of the Poppy, kindergarten/Gr. 3 kids are placing crosses and flags of Remembrance along streets, and Poppies on cenotaphs. / In Bonnyville, there is a show of support for Indigenous communities with a new monument. / The Calgary Flames plan a ceremony on Nov. 9 with Veterans on the ice and a tribute to the Poppy, the 50-50 draw proceeds will go to AB Command's Poppy Fund.

SK – Roberta shared the COVID situation in that province is not good. Even so, indoor services are permitted but with mitigation processes required. / The Command is currently dealing with the aftermath of a questionable Branch event that was shared through social media.

MB/NOW – Ronn noted that most of the province is open, including all VLTs however the number of customers is down for games like Chase the Ace. / On Nov. 11 CTV Winnipeg will have a show hosted via Skype. / Jerry indicated there are currently some challenges with liquor inspectors – everyone now needs a lottery license for meat draws and 50-50, the exception is for funds raised for some capital projects. / Most Branches have now opened with some restrictions. Most are still struggling and are coming up with alternative routines to stay alive. / A streaming/live event is planned for ceremonies. / An interesting project in one community entails ice candles for Veterans, with youth lighting them on Christmas eve, they will burn for two days – project is in conjunction with the community.

NB – Jack noted that their Provincial Convention two weeks ago collected 19,000+ for the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League. / The Command recently received \$23,000 for the Poppy Fund anonymously from a donor. / Remembrance Day services will be almost like normal, with Gagetown still planning to send contingents to Branches. / COVID rules are currently changing in NB./ The Command focus now is to double up on renewals letters.

NS/NU – Marion says their Provincial convention is a go. / The province is allowing outdoor ceremonies. / Indoor rules are in effect related to vaccination, ceremonies, and liquor licences. / New Veteran banners are being unveiled, and they are waiting to hear about cadet participation.

PEI – John Y. noted it was a challenging week due to the loss of their oldest Veteran. / Sept. 21 an event was held to mark the anniversary of the cessation of the Korean War. / PEI is looking at something similar to the Ontario Veterans Week for next year. / Remembrance Day ceremonies will be dependent upon local areas; most will be held outside.

4. Any other business

All

Sharon reminded everyone once again about the “low slow renewals” and the need to concentrate on the recruitment of Veterans.

Nujma invited the new Vice Chair Donna McRury to introduce herself to the committee members. Donna explained she is the new 1st VP of NS/NU Command and used to be the treasurer. Her husband is an RCMP Veteran, her son is posted in Gagetown, and her daughter is a teacher. Donna says she has also been with Canada Post for many years.

There was interest in the organization’s latest advocacy-related Position Paper which will be shared and reviewed by all members.

5. Adjournment

Sharon

Next meeting – planned for **Thursday December 9, 2021** (*moved from Thursday, December 4*) at 2:00 pm ET.