

**Dominion Command
Veterans, Service and Seniors Committee
VIA ZOOM
12 October 2023, 1100 –1300h
Record of Discussion**

File: 65-1

IN ATTENDANCE:

Bruce Julian	-	Chairman
Bill Chafe	-	Member
John Mahon	-	Member
Dave Gordon	-	Homeless Veterans
Trevor Jenvenne	-	BSO Legion OSI Special Section
Owen Parkhouse	-	Vice-Chairman
George O'Dair	-	Seniors Advisor
Larry Murray	-	Ex-Officio
Carolyn Hughes	-	Coordinator
Alexa Pasha	-	Assistant Coordinator

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Comrade Bruce welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for their time. The Veterans Consultation Assembly will take place on 14 October at Legion House. He and others from the Legion are looking forward to meeting with other veteran organizations to discuss important issues that affect still serving members, veterans and RCMP.

1. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

MOTION: It was moved and seconded that the members approved the minutes of the last Committee meeting held on June 2023 with the amendments.

CARRIED

2. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. CIMVHR- Ms. Kathryn Reeves and Upcoming Forum

The scholarship for a master's student was awarded to Ms. Reeves for her research proposal on the Intergenerational Impacts of Military Service-Related Moral Injury. It will focus on identifying the experiences of adult children as a potential detection method of the members/veteran's moral injury and by exploring how moral injuries in a veteran impact children and adult children.

Discussion was had on the importance that reservist's information also be captured and considered in the data in these types of studies.

This will be Comrade Carolyn's first attendance at CIMVHR.

b. Last WWII and Korean War Veterans Update

Messaging from the National Executive Director Steven Clark was sent to members of the VSS committee on this matter regarding what was provided to how to recognize and honour the last WW1 Veteran.

For the last WW2 and Korean War Veterans, advance guidance must be developed for Commands and Branches to recognize the passings. This guidance will result from coordinated proposals involving both P&R and R&A Committees, with final approval to be given at DEC.

c. Class Action Regarding Various VAC Benefits

Some Veterans may have been impacted by miscalculation of their benefits over the years and there a Class Action lawsuit is being pursued. Those within the time frame of 1 April 2006 to 1 October 2016, may be eligible and could receive some additional funds.

At this time, no one needs to opt in as VAC will review all from that period of time but if anyone wishes to opt out, they will need to contact the legal firm of Murphy Battista at 1-888-683-9621 to take appropriate steps.

d. The Burns Way (TBW)

Members from TBW will be at the upcoming Veterans Consultation Committee to speak on the work being done by their program.

They have recently released information on the Voices One Year Anniversary article and the overview of their program. Four 15 second commercials have now been released and can be viewed at the following links:

July Video:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjwMYHhHZfs
Indigenous:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8iQ2BKc0tM
August Video:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vj0p3QUeB18
September Video:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rsxh8o2Umlc

A meeting is to be set with Comrade Carolyn, Comrade Bruce, and Comrade Steven with the Deputy Minister and TBW team. Further details to come.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

e. Homeless Veterans/ TPS Program

Please see attached report from Comrade Dave for the full overview.

Comrade Dave has been working with Built for Zero (BFZ) Canada and will be doing a virtual Homeless Veterans Seminar in November at their annual two day convention being held in Halifax this year.

BFZ is expanding their program throughout the country and are developing programs to assist the municipalities, with their programs. They have two draft documents, Confirming Veteran Status Information Sheet and a Veteran and Homeless Veteran Myths and Facts Sheet. Both documents will be very useful for educational purposes and will be circulated once finalized.

The quality of the quarterly reports is of concern to this Committee as not all Commands are accurately reflecting and reporting the homeless Veteran statistics. Some are not submitting any reports. Comrade Bruce suggested that Comrade Dave highlight the concerns over the tracking and reports during DEC.

Further discussions and contact needs to occur with TPS, the Military Veteran Well-being Program and Dominion Command staff. As the program continues to expand across the country, national engagement and support is essential. Comrade Carolyn will continue to connect with TPS on the roll-out.

f. Seniors

Please see attached report from Comrade Bruce for full overview.

Ontario seems to be working hard to fulfill promises of Long-Term Care (LTC) builds as there are frequent notices of either new or re-constructed LTC homes in Ontario, primarily in the Greater Toronto area.

There are others in smaller cities with one completed in Cornwall and another to be finished in 2025. The latter is a private enterprise, 3 generational family-owned with few reported problems and a preferred wait list. It's anticipated that the new facility will be equally well run.

g. BSO Legion OSI Special Section

BSO is looking at new alternatives for Mental health First Aid, as to find options that support the Veteran community.

Operation VET Build had some recent restructuring and Comrade Trevor is seeking guidance from the National Executive Director on the matter.

Buddy Check Coffee in ON has been successful. BC is now coming up next. Comrade Trevor noted they are looking for new and upcoming programs for our Veterans which could be utilized in the BSO OSI Special Section.

Comrade Bill inquired as to the Buddy Check Coffee and the necessity of the Special Use form. Comrade Trevor noted that it is used for tracking of programs and allow the tracking of requested poppy funds from Branches that are being used under the OSI program/ initiative.

3. VETERANS SERVICES UPDATE

a. New Minister of VAC- Ginette Petitpas Taylor

The new Minister of VAC and Associate Minister of National Defence is Ginette Petitpas Taylor. She formerly served as the Minister of Official Languages, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, as the Minister of Health and as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

Comrades Bruce, Carolyn and a few others at Dominion Command met with her on the 2nd of August and she is focused on the backlog amongst other top issues, such as Homelessness, Commemoration, Women Veterans, various programs etc.

b. Review of the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces

Implementation of the recommendations of the report by Honourable Louise Arbour, former justice of the Supreme Court of Canada - The Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (IECR).

The Committee has been monitoring the recommendations of the Honourable Louise Arbour and the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (IECR). While many recommendations have been implemented, there is still more work for them to do.

c. The Pepper Pod - Retreat Centre for Women Veterans

Comrades Steven Clark, Carolyn and Alexa attended an appreciation dinner hosted by the Pepper pod on their property. The event took place in their forest with several other Veteran stakeholders and agencies in attendance. It was a fantastic networking opportunity and great way to demonstrate support.

The Pepper Pod will be attending Veterans Consultation Assembly, so further information on the organization will be shared after that event. Comrade

Carolyn will do draft report to be shared with the VSS committee.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

4. ACTION ITEMS

a. Resolution from NS/NU – Contract Beds for Post WWII and Korean War Veterans

It was decided to put this topic on hold as VSS needs to further research on the best way forward. Questions arose at looking to the eligibility of preferred access beds as a potential option of movement forward.

To reopen the criteria for Contract beds, would require the opening and reviewing of the Veterans Health Care Regulations in Parliament, which also includes VIP, treatment benefits and other benefits that are now available and could be scrutinized.

Discussion was had on the potential negative impact of opening up legislature and is this the best method of change. Further discussion and information to be shared with the VSS committee.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

b. Multisite Veterans Healthcare Hub for Ottawa

At this time, it is recommended to send this action item to Ontario Command as it is an Ottawa based program. Comrade Carolyn will provide research she has done to Ontario Command, so that they may have all the information for their consideration.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

c. Canada Life – New PSHCP – Transition from SunLife

Many VSS members noted concerns and lived experiences of delay with service from Canada Life. Individuals are being placed on hold as long as two and a half hours while waiting to get through the phone line to a representative. Complex health services seem to be negatively impacted; however simple health services seem to move at a fast rate.

VSS would like to send a letter, sharing Comrade Bruce's concerns of this negative impact to the Treasury Board and to advocate for our Veteran community.

VSS will continue to monitor as Canada Life will be administering the Pensioners Dental Plan next year also.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

d. Royal Commission/Commission of Inquiry on Veterans Issues – for further discussion

Comrade Andrea will be invited to share her presentation to the VSS members.
Comrade Carolyn will reach out to her, to set this up for the New Year.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

5. Additional Agenda Items/ Round Table

MOTION: That a letter of request be sent to Veterans Affairs Canada to reinstate funding for the Mental Health First Aid training from the Dominion President. Motion was moved and seconded.

CARRIED

Comrade Bill will send resolution to Carolyn who will then circulate to the remainder of the group. Comrade Carolyn will ensure this is included in the report to DEC.

Comrade Bill has asked Comrade Carolyn to approach Veterans Affairs Canada and for the eligibility or admission criteria for preferred access beds.

Comrade Owen noted that Veterans Affairs Canada does not track Veteran suicide and feels that the VSS committee should be looking at this in the future. Comrade Owen would like this added on the next agenda item for our next meeting in January.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

6. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting for the VSS Committee will be scheduled for **January 2024** via Zoom.

7. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

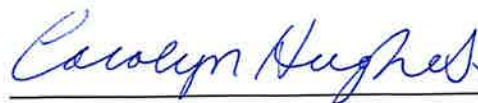
The Chair thanked all for their input, and the discussion.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1300.

CARRIED



Bruce Julian
CHAIRMAN



Carolyn Hughes
COORDINATOR

Dated this day of 7 November 2023