

Dominion Command Defence & Security Committee

Meeting Minutes 27 August 2025

*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.*

Legion 

**DOMINION COMMAND
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
27 August 2025
MEETING MINUTES**

File: 82-27

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andrea Siew	-	Chair
Brendan Heffernan	-	Vice – Chair
Brian Sauvé	-	Member (Absent)
Mindy Pearson	-	Member
Jeff McGowen	-	Member
Vacant	-	Coordinator
Carolyn Hughes	-	VSS Committee Chair (absent)

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed all members and provided an update on Committee activities since the last meeting. She noted that 2025 has been marked by significant changes in Government policies and priorities.

Key developments of interest include:

Federal Budget and Defence and Security Priorities:

The Government is expected to table a new budget this fall, which is likely to include a strengthened military and national security mandate to meet NATO's spending commitments. It is also anticipated a much awaited National Security Strategy and revised Defence Policy will also be released.

Support for the RCMP:

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is also anticipated to receive enhanced funding, particularly in the area of border security.

Changes in Ministerial Leadership:

In May, the Honorable David McGuinty was appointed Minister of National Defence by Prime Minister Carney. The Honorable Gary Anandasangaree also now serves as Minister of Public Safety, and the Honorable Eleanor Olszewski has been named Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience. These leadership changes, along with the forthcoming budget, may

influence the Government's approach to Defence and Security, including our advocacy priorities related to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the RCMP. This includes issues such as policy commitments, procurement, operational readiness, and personnel support.

Operational Impacts of Wildfires:

With over 700 wildfires and in all provinces except PEI and forcing over 30,000 residents to evacuate their homes, the Committee will continue to monitor the operational implications on both the CAF and RCMP.

Legion Centennial Celebrations:

Looking ahead, the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL) will celebrate its 100th Anniversary in Winnipeg next year. Commemorative events are scheduled from Sunday, August 23 to Wednesday, August 26, 2026.

The Chair concluded by emphasizing the importance of staying engaged as the defence and security landscape evolves and reaffirmed the Committee's dedication to advocating for those who serve.

2. REVIEW PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the previous minutes from the last meeting on 4 February 2025. No changes or concerns were noted.

MOTION: To approve the Minutes of 4 February 2025. CARRIED

3. UPDATES

CAF Update

Comrade Andrea highlighted the appointment of Lieutenant-General Jamie Speiser-Blanchet as Commander of the RCAF, marking a historic milestone as the first woman to assume this position. Comrade Andrea will explore the possibility of inviting LGen Speiser-Blanchet to speak at an upcoming Legion event.

While the Government has imposed significant operational funding cuts across all Departments, the CAF and RCMP are faced with only a 2% reduction in their operational budgets. However, specific details on how this cut will impact the CAF and the RCMP remains unclear, especially in light of recent announcements regarding new initiatives and projects.

Comrade Andrea also commented on the recently announced improvements to CAF compensation and benefits. This substantial adjustment represents the largest significant improvement since the Quality of Life initiatives in 2000 and is expected to address longstanding issues related to recruitment and retention. More information on the improvements can be found here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2025/08/improvements-to-compensation-and-benefits-for-the-canadian-armed-forces.html>

RCMP Update

Comrade Brendan provided an update on RCMP-related matters since the last meeting:

Creation of Strategic Office

A new Strategic Office has been established to assess and address any overlap between federal-level initiatives and policing activities. This move is in response to the federal government's mandate for a 2% reduction in the RCMP's budget.

Uniform Policy Changes

In alignment with the May National Indigenous Week, the RCMP has made revisions to its uniform policies. Cultural items such as the Métis sash, the Eagle feather, Indigenous nametag and the ribbon skirt are now included as part of the standard uniform.

Indigenous Language Course

The RCMP now offers an online Indigenous Language course for its members, available in several specific languages, further enhancing cultural competency within the force.

Equipment Enhancements

The RCMP continues to advance various equipment initiatives, including new body armor vests, pistols, and duty flashlights. Additionally, a new duty shirt is now available to members.

Health Claims Update

A new eight-year contract with Medavie Blue Cross is now in effect for health claims, ensuring continued support for members' health needs.

A detailed report on these initiatives compiled by Comrade Brendan is attached for further reference.

VSS Committee Update

As Comrade Carolyn, Director of Veterans Services, was unable to attend the

meeting there is no update.

On the CDA front, the 2025 annual dues have been paid. The Association has appointed Gaelle Rivard Piché as the new Executive Director and Comrade Andrea will explore the possibility of arranging a meeting with her in the coming months. Lastly, Comrade Nujma represented the RCL at the Graduate Student Conference held on May 6-7, 2025.

4. ADVOCAY ISSUES UPDATES

The Chair highlighted that the RCL Welcome Letters to newly appointed Ministers will be issued shortly. These letters will convey our ongoing concerns and advocacy positions across various issues.

RCMP Definition of Veterans for Commemoration Purposes

There has been no significant movement on this issue since the last update. Comrade Jeff mentioned that this topic will be included in the upcoming RCMP Veterans delegation discussions during the fall meeting with Members of Parliament.

RCMP Cadet Training Allowance

No progress has been made on this matter since the previous report. The Committee is hopeful that the upcoming federal budget will address this issue.

Requirement for a Canadian Public Safety Broadband Network

The Chair noted that we can anticipate increased Government attention to this issue following the challenging summer wildfire season. This matter will continue to be closely monitored.

ACVA - Experience of Women Veterans

Although the Chair mentioned that several support organizations are collaborating with the Veterans Women's Council to implement the 42 recommendations outlined in the report, progress remains slow and ongoing.

CAF Sexual Misconduct and Cultural Change

While significant strides have been made in addressing sexual misconduct within the CAF, the necessary cultural transformation is still lagging. The challenges of effecting meaningful change are compounded by the rise of extremist events involving CAF members.

National Women Veterans' Monument

Although being a recommendation in the ACVA report, there has been no response from the Legion's May 2024 letter. We will continue to advocate for the creation and recognition of a monument dedicated to women Veterans.

Victoria Cross

Despite recent media attention, there has been no indication that the government intends to alter its position on this issue.

5. NEW ADVOCACY ISSUES

Recognition of Veterans and Service Pins

The Veterans Ombud has reported in their latest annual report that the CAF may be expanding eligibility for the Bronze Service Pin to include CAF members who release after achieving their occupational functional point. The Committee will monitor this possible program change. It is important to note that this change will not affect the eligibility criteria for the Canadian Decoration (CD) medal, which still requires a minimum of 12 years of overall service for qualification.

Additionally, the Chair addressed the RCMP Family Members Pin, officially known as the Generational Service Insignia. Introduced in 2016, this pin recognizes families with multiple generations of service to the RCMP. The design features maple leaves to indicate the number of generations and immediate family members who have served. Eligible recipients include regular and civilian members, as well as Public Service employees who have served in the RCMP for 10 or more years. The Chair will circulate a link to Committee members with the intent of discussing advocacy for a similar recognition program for CAF families.

CAF Housing

The Chair reported that recent developments in the CAF compensation program have addressed some of the financial impact surrounding off-base housing. However, much work remains to be done regarding on-base housing, where there continues to be a significant waiting list and a shortage of housing units — currently in the thousands.

6. SPONSORSHIP

a. Indigenous Youth Program

This initiative has not been pursued in 2025, as it is led by the Committee Coordinator. A new Coordinator will be appointed in October, and the topic will be revisited for the 2026 season.

b. WIDS Breakfast

The Committee will continue to provide sponsorship of the WIDS Breakfast. Further details and discussions will be scheduled for the October meeting.

c. Nijmegen March 2026

Historically, the RCL has sponsored one member to attend the Nijmegen March as part of the CAF contingent. However, there has been no Canadian representation since the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee Coordinator will follow up with the Marketing Department to confirm support for this upcoming event.

The Committee Coordinator received the following response from Dion Edmonds when the minutes were compiled:

"We (Marketing) do not sponsor the event. The process has always been that the CAF sent a team, and a Legion member was allowed to accompany the team. Veteran Services used to provide funding for this, but Comrade Carolyn would be the best person to confirm this. To my knowledge, the CAF has not sent a team since before COVID, and I'm unsure if there are plans to do so again. I would recommend reaching out to the CAF representatives for clarification. Our role has always been to promote the event."

The Veterans Services Director will provide an update on their involvement for the upcoming year, and a report will be delivered at the next Committee meeting.

ACTION: C HUGHES

7. VISITS AND MEETINGS

Nothing to report.

8. UPCOMING EVENTS

- a. **VIMY GALA:** The Chair will distribute invitations once the event details are finalized, as done in previous years. The Coordinator will also confirm the RCL table reservations for the event.

- b. **CDA Security Conference:** Scheduled for February/March 2026, the CDA Security Conference presents a valuable opportunity for Committee members to attend and represent the Legion. More details will be shared closer to the event.
- c. **WIDS Breakfast:** As in previous years, the WIDS Breakfast will be held in March 2026, with the Royal Canadian Legion expected to have a strong presence. Further details will be provided as the event approaches.
- d. **RCL 100th Anniversary Ceremonies & National Convention:** The Royal Canadian Legion's 100th Anniversary Ceremonies and National Convention will take place in August 2026 and will be led by the National Executive. As details become available, they will be disseminated to all members.

9. OTHER ITEMS

The Coordinator will explore the possibility of amending the budget to include a new funding line for the RCMP Benevolent Fund Gala, in which the RCL has been invited to participate and support.

ACTION: Committee Coordinator

10. NEXT MEETING AND CLOSING

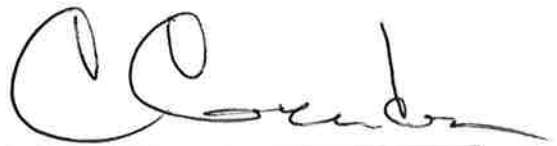
The Chair expressed appreciation to the Committee members for their patience during the extended interval since the previous meeting and offered sincere gratitude to all members for their valuable contributions and insightful discussions.

The Committee plans to tentatively reconvene in October, with the exact date to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 hours.



Andrea Siew
Chair



Charls Gendron
A/Coordinator

Dated this day on 4th September 2025.

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