

**DOMINION COMMAND
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
20 September 2022
MEETING MINUTES**

File 82-27

In Attendance:	Andrea Siew	-	Chair
	Brendan Heffernan	-	Deputy Chair
	Dean Young	-	Coordinator
	Mike Smith	-	A/Coordinator
	Carolyn Hughes	-	Observer

Absent:	Brian Sauvé	-	Member
	Mindy Pearson	-	Member

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair introduced and welcomed Comrade Dean Young as the new Coordinator for the Committee. Comrade Carolyn has taken over as Coordinator for the Veterans, Services and Seniors (VSS) Committee and has handed the position of Coordinator for the Defence and Security (D&S) Committee to Comrade Dean. She will remain as an Observer from the VSS Committee.

The Committee acknowledged Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's death and the succession of King Charles III.

The Chair highlighted key defence and security issues:

- The war in Ukraine has continued now for eight months and Canada continues to offer support with equipment and training. The RCMP also continues to investigate war crimes on the ground.
- The global security challenges in the Indo-Pacific area and Canadian assets deployed on international deployments.
- The CAF is facing personnel challenges related to recruitment and retention.

Comrade Brendan advised that a global conference on climate change will be held in December 2022 in Montreal.

2. ADMINISTRATION POINTS

The previous minutes were reviewed and approved by the Committee.

3. UPDATES

- a. **RCMP 150th Anniversary & Definition of Veteran for Commemoration** – There has been no response from the Government on this initiative. As the anniversary is three months away, Comrade Carolyn will check on next steps and advise the Committee.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

- b. **Cost of Housing** – A letter from the President was sent to the Minister of National Defence (MDN) and the Minister of Public Safety last May regarding the rising cost of housing.

Both the RCMP and National Defence have responded. National Defence indicated that they are monitoring the cost of living and that they are continuing to review the Post Living Differential policy. The RCMP stated that RCMP Members receive a Northern Allowance when posted to northern communities but did not address the issue in the rest of the country.

The average cost of a house in Canada is \$637,000 and the military Post Living Differential allowance has not been updated since 2009. We will continue to follow up with both Ministers reinforcing our concern of financial security related to the high cost of housing coupled with rising inflation, interest rates, and cost of oil.

- c. **Louise Arbour Report regarding MST** – There have been no public announcements since the joint press conference last May. Of concern are Recommendation 47, which is the requirement for a report to Parliament on the status of all recommendations by the end of the year, and Recommendation 48 which requested the immediate appointment of an Independent External Monitor to monitor implementation of the recommendations.

ACTION: Comrade Dean

- d. **Merlo-Davidson Class Action Lawsuit Clawback** – As Comrade Brian was not available no update was provided.
- e. **Mass Casualty Inquiry in NS** – The Committee discussed the inquiry regarding the mass shooting in Portapique, NS. It is in the final week of testimony and the report, with recommendations, is due in the spring. The Committee will continue to monitor with regards to implications for the RCMP.
- f. **Use of Emergency Act Inquiry** – The public inquiry into the federal government's rationale for the use of the Emergency Measures Act for the Freedom Convoy blockade in Ottawa commenced on 19 September 2022. We will monitor for the Parliamentary Committee's report which is expected in February.

g. Victoria Cross Initiative – Petition e3636 by the group Valour in the Presence of the Enemy to the Minister of National Defence for Pte Jess Larochelle was initiated by Bruce Moncur. The Royal Canadian Legion does not advocate by petition. The Committee will continue to monitor for any progress, however it does not appear there is any will by the Government or the CAF to review the actions of Pte Larochelle with a view to awarding the Victoria Cross.

h. OP Harmony and Indigenous Summer Programs – Comrades Dean and Carolyn have arranged for Comradeship Awards to be presented at the RCMP summer Indigenous Pre-Cadet Training Program (IPTP) graduation at Depot by the local Branch President.

Regarding CAF Programs for Indigenous Peoples, Comrades Dean and Carolyn continue to reach out to the CAF for next summer's training periods.

ACTION: Comrades Dean

i. CDS Visit – Comrade Carolyn has checked with the National Executive Director and the meeting is on hold for the time being. The annual meeting between the CDA/CDAI and the CDS is scheduled for 28 October and Comrade Andrea will participate.

ACTION: Comrade Andrea

j. Acting Chief Military Personnel Meeting – Comrades Bruce, Steven, Andrea and Carolyn met with MGen Lise Bourgon the day following the D&S meeting, and this is a secretarial update.

MGen Bourgon provided an update regarding the Transition Centres which are now opening across the country following trials at CFB Petawawa and CFB Borden. She provided an update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Chief Justice Louise Arbour's report indicating that the independent monitor (recommendation 48) should be appointed soon. CAF is also studying the impact of housing affordability and the impact of the increase in cost of living on members. These items will be monitored by the D&S and VSS Committees.

ACTION: Comrade Dean

k. VSS – Comrade Carolyn advised that the VSS meeting was postponed for a few weeks due to scheduling conflicts. The meeting on 6 October 2022 will be the first meeting with her as the Committee Coordinator.

Service Officer Professional Development (SOPD) in Charlottetown was scheduled from 26 to 30 September and normally occurs every two years. It had been postponed since 2018 due to COVID.

Secretarial Note: SOPD was cancelled due to Hurricane Fiona and Comrade Carolyn will look at rescheduling shortly.

The selected candidate for the Legion's annual entrance scholarship to a master's level student specializing in research related to Veterans and their families will be announced at the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) forum from 17 to 19 October in Halifax, NS.

I. Comrade Brendan provided the following updates on RCMP Programs and Initiatives:

As Government of Canada employees, the RCMP have been invited to participate in the "Ask Me Anything Series" – Enhance your Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Accessibility Awareness program hosted by Employment and Social Development Canada. These experiential events feature panelists from the 2SLGBTQI+, Visible Minority and Employees with disabilities communities to discuss personal and lived experiences. The series of discussions are designed to increase awareness and understanding of the history and issues that are important to these communities. The topics include:

- Ability through Accessibility
- Inclusion 101
- Accessibility for Managers: Building Trust
- Privileges and Barriers
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) at work for Managers
- Management for and with Racialized People
- Barriers: The Long Fight
- Gender and Sexual Identity Inclusive Language

RCMP Before Operational Stress (BOS) Program - The Before Operational Stress (BOS) Program is an evidence-based program that builds mental health resiliency, skills, and knowledge about managing the stress related to traumatic experiences expected as part of many frontline public safety jobs. The program is facilitated by three renowned experts in the field of public safety mental health. It provides the key concepts to help mitigate the effects of operational stress, with opportunities for reflection and implementation. While BOS is geared towards front-line workers, it is available to all categories of employees of the RCMP. It consists of eight modules:

- Operational service culture
- Psychology of operational stress
- Markers of operational stress

- Cognitive impacts
- Emotions
- Behaviour change
- Communication
- Empathy & functional disconnection/reconnection
- Highlights

RCMP - Know Suicide Wallet Card - A downloadable wallet size card has been produced and distributed to RCMP Members that lists the Risk Factors, Signs and Symptoms of Suicide (threatens to harm themselves; has a history of previous suicide attempts; expresses a plan to kill themselves; angry, highly agitated, sad or depressed; dependent upon drugs or alcohol; hopeless, helpless; having problems at work or home; socially isolated, withdrawn; increased risk-taking behavior; and problems with sleep, appetite or weight). On the other side of the card, it outlines the ALBRA Model:

- Ask – the individual directly if they are contemplating suicide.
- Listen – to what they have to say.
- Believe – what the individual says and take all threats seriously.
- Reassure – the person help is available
- Act Immediately – make contact with professional help and ensure the person is safe and not left alone.

4. NEW ITEMS:

- Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping** – DEC supported the designation of 2023 as “75 Years of Veterans in Peacekeeping” rather than the proposal to call it the Year of the Peacekeeping Veteran. This is a distinction that celebrates the 75 years of Peacekeeping but does not create a separate group of Veterans. While some Veterans did not deploy on a mission, they provided support to ensure the success of the mission. A Veteran is a Veteran. We are also requesting it not interfere with the 150th anniversary of the RCMP and that the fifth figure on the Peacekeeping monument on Sussex Drive be an RCMP member.
- Vimy Gala 9 November 2022** – The CDA/CDAI’s annual Vimy Gala has been postponed several years due to COVID. It is presided by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Chief of Defence Staff and the Deputy Minister of the Defence to honour fallen comrades and heroes, celebrate the accomplishments of those currently serving, and highlight an exceptional individual who has made a significant and outstanding lifetime contribution to Canadian security and defence and to the preservation of our democratic values. This year it will be held at the Canadian Museum of History on 9 November.

5. FUTURE MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 8 November 2022. Comrade Dean had sent out a Doodle to determine availability.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1415 hours.



Andrea Siew
Chair



For.

Dean Young
Coordinator

Dated this day of 14 October 2022.

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