

**DOMINION COMMAND
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
15 December 2021
MEETING MINUTES**

File 82-27

In Attendance:	Andrea Siew	-	Chair
	Brendan Heffernan	-	Deputy Chair
	Carolyn Gasser	-	Coordinator
	Mike Smith	-	A/Coordinator
	Ray McInnis	-	Observer
Absent:	Mindy Pearson	-	Member
	Mike Smith	-	A/Coordinator

1. OPENING REMARKS

The meeting of the Defence and Security (D&S) Committee commenced at 0900 hrs and began with an introduction of Comrades Steven Clark, National Executive Director (NED), and Ray McInnis, Director of Veterans Services and Coordinator for the VSS Committee.

Comrade Ray will be an observer on this committee and Comrade Carolyn will observe on the VSS committee as some activities and responsibilities crossover between the two committees.

Comrade Ray advised that some of the main issues the VSS committee monitors are the VAC disability application backlog, long term care, and homeless Veterans. He advised that there are no RCMP Veterans currently residing at Cockrell house at this time and that RCMP members and Veterans do not have priority access to long-term care beds at Perley Health in Ottawa. While Perley Health does not ask about service affiliation for community admissions we were advised that there were six known RCMP Veteran residents.

2. ADMINISTRATION POINTS

- a. **Review of Past Minutes** – The previous minutes were reviewed and approved by the committee.
- b. **DEC and TORs** – Comrade Andrea provided an update from DEC on 27 November 2021 and advised that the revised TORs and the recommendation to support the Victoria Cross initiative were approved.

- c. **CDA/CDAI Gala and Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence** – The Gala was rescheduled from November 2021 to 11 March 2022 and the Ottawa Conference is scheduled for 9 to 11 March. Both are dependant upon COVID restrictions.

3. UPDATES

- a. **Meeting with CDS and RCMP Commissioner** – The committee reviewed and updated the briefing slides for the upcoming meetings. Fine tuning continues. Comrade Carolyn will work with the NED to coordinate the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and RCMP Commissioner invitation to Legion House to meet with the Legion President for the 30 April – 1 May timeframe. The RCMP Commissioner is an Honorary Vice-President and that title has not yet been bestowed.

ACTION: Chair and Coordinator

- b. **RCMP** – Comrade Brendan advised that the National Police Federation will propose a candidate to join the committee. A resume will be provided for review by the President and NED.

Comrade Brendan advised of the Red Brigade, which provides an honour guard at the funerals for deceased RCMP members and Veterans.

The committee will look into opportunities to support the RCMP in community engagement, special runs, bike rides etc. and Comrade Brendan advised the RCMP assisted with the torch runs for the special Olympics. Comrade Carolyn will speak with Marketing in January 2022.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

The Defence and Security briefing will also be provided to the RCMP Veterans Association at a later date.

Regarding the BSO OSI, Comrade Carolyn will reach out to Comrade Trevor about the engagement they have with the RCMP for Op Vet Build and other key activities.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

Comrade Brendan spoke about the RCMP equity, diversity and inclusion strategy “Uniting against racism”, and advised there is a new learning series that is mandatory to complete by September 2022 by all members.

VAC is now promoting LifeSpeak to Veterans, former RCMP members and their families. It is free of charge, operates 24 hours a day and 7 days a week and is provided as part of the VAC Assistance Service. It can be accessed at <https://veterans.lifespeak.com/login?returnUrl=%2F>.

Six RCMP members were honoured by the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT) for improving mental health in their organizations. The inaugural recipients can be found at <https://www.cipsrt-icrtsp.ca/en/cipsrt-champions-of-mental-health-2021-winners>.

The Commissioner posted a nationwide broadcast of the 100th year of the Poppy as a symbol of remembrance, the 90th anniversary of the first official Remembrance Day ceremony held in 1931, and other significant days for Remembrance, including the 10th anniversary of the end of Canada's combat phase in the mission in Afghanistan and the 30th anniversary of the end of the Gulf War.

- c. **Canadian Victoria Cross** – In November 2021, DEC endorsed adding the Legion's voice to the growing Veteran community calling for consideration of Private Jess Laroche to be awarded this honour to the CDS and the Canadian Forces Decorations Advisory Committee.

On 1 December 2021, the President sent a letter to the CDS and the Canadian Forces Decorations and Advisory Committee calling for a further review with a view of honouring him with the Victoria Cross. The CDS responded quickly, acknowledging and thanking the President for the letter. The Legion post can be found at <https://www.legion.ca/news/articles/2021/12/01/legion-supports-awarding-victoria-cross-to-afghanistan-veteran>.

Comrade Carolyn attended the virtual Shots with Soldiers on 21 December where Gen (Ret'd) Rick Hillier advised that there are more than 15,000 followers in social media and over 12,000 have signed the petition. The RCL as advocates were highlighted. It has now been endorsed by four past Battle Group Commanders, Units, and Associations.

- d. **CAF Sexual Misconduct** – The Class Action lawsuit closed on 24 November 2021 with 19,244 applicants. The total number of claims approved for initial payment and/or paid is 6,105 and almost 5,000 requested to participate in Restorative Engagement. Of note, 42% of applicants were male.

A virtual apology from the Defence Minister, Anita Anand, the Deputy Minister, Jody Thomas, and the Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen Wayne Eyre, occurred on 13 December 2021 and was viewed by almost 8000 people live on Facebook. The full apology can be reviewed at <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/ottawa-delivers-long-awaited-apology-to-victims-of-military-sex-misconduct-1.5704787>.

- e. **Afghanistan Refugees** – A Conservative motion asking for a special committee to be created to investigate Canada’s handling of the Afghanistan crisis was approved. The committee consists of six Liberals, four Conservatives, one Bloc MP and one New Democrat and is tasked with studying the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban, including, but not limited to, the government’s contingency planning for that event and the subsequent evacuation efforts. The Defence and Security Committee will continue to monitor.

Peer Support Programs - RCMP – In June 2021 the OVO published a report recommending a CAF Peer Support program for those who have experienced military sexual trauma. The RCMP were not included in the scope of the report’s investigation.

While the RCMP were not officially included in the CAF OSISS program when it was developed, the RCMP operates the Support of Operational Stress Injury (SOSI) Peer Support program. However, it is not known if this program supports the specific needs of RCMP members who have experienced service related sexual trauma.

VAC and the CAF are establishing a separate Peer Support program for CAF members who have experienced military sexual trauma. Comrade Ray noted that the VSS Committee will examine the requirement with VAC and the RCMP for a RCMP Peer Support program for RCMP members who have experienced service related sexual trauma.

- f. **Nijmegen** – Comrade Carolyn sent an email to the Provincial Executive Directors as a reminder of the 14 January 2022 deadline for applications. As of the beginning of January 2022, only two applications have been received with only the endorsement of the Branch Presidents. Approval of the Provincial President is necessary for them to be considered.

Update - As of 20 January 2022, three more Commands have submitted applications and Comrade Carolyn and the Provincial President’s endorsement has been received.

4. UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- a. **Anniversaries** – For the 150th anniversary of the RCMP in 2023 and the 100th anniversary of the RCAF in 2024 the Committee will coordinate with Dominion Command Marketing on potential initiatives to support these significant milestones as needed.

ACTION: Comrade Carolyn

5. NEW ITEMS

- a. **Impact of Housing Crisis on CAF and RCMP Members** – The average house price in Canada is now over \$720,000 which is out of the financial range of many CAF and RCMP members. CAF members have an allowance that helps support the high cost of living in certain areas; however, the allowance rate has been frozen and under review since 2009. Additionally, Base housing for CAF members where available, is limited and the rent is at fair market value regardless of rank or salary. It has also been reported that members on House Hunting Trips (HHT) have put in multiple offers on houses, are often outbid, and cannot afford the over asking prices.

Like the CAF, the RCMP have limited housing supports which exist mainly in northern communities. Many first postings for newly graduated RCMP members are to the BC lower mainland where it is very difficult to find affordable housing. Comrade Brendan noted there is a Northern Allowance for those working in remote locations in northern Canada. He will also reach out to the National Police Federation for additional information on RCMP compensation related to the high cost of housing.

A resolution is being drafted for consideration by DEC in April 2022.

ACTION: All

- b. **Bar for Special Service Medal for Swiss Air Crash Recovery** – DEC tasked the Defence and Security Committee to review the requirement for a bar for the Special Service Medal for CAF members supporting the Swiss Air disaster in 1998. Initial findings follow.

A Bill for a medal for Domestic Operations was first brought to the House of Commons by Alexa McDonough in 2004, and was known as Bill C-514, Special Service Medal for Domestic Operations (SSM-DO). The bill never made it past first reading. It was not supported because “the provision of aid to civil power in Canada, is a standing, integral responsibility of the CAF mission.”

In 2018, a Petition to the House of Commons was put forward as a follow-on to the 2004 initiative and called for the award of a special service medal for domestic operations that would recognize the contribution of members of the CAF who participate in rescue and salvage operations during national emergencies in Canada. e.g. Swissair Flight 111, Manitoba Red River Flood of 1997, Quebec Ice Storms of 1998 and any other natural emergency in the country of Canada. The Petition received only 72 signatures and did not proceed.

This initiative/proposal also contravenes the “five-year rule” established by King George VI in 1950 which directed that consideration would not be given to recognize events that happened more than five years previously to ensure that proposals would be judged by the standards of the time and against contemporary events, ensuring that earlier decisions would not be second-guessed. It has been followed for over 50 years and was entrenched in Canadian Honours Policy in 2005. It applies to the modern Canadian Honours System and more information can be found in Chapter, Section 26 of the Honours Policy Manual at <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/medals/cf-honours-policy-manual/chapter1.html>.

The Committee will continue to review and will provide a response to the DEC for consideration.

ACTION: All

- c. **Commander-in-Chief Unit Commendation for the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) for their Actions during the 1974 Cyprus Mission** – DEC tasked the Defence and Security Committee to review the requirement. Initial findings follow.

The Canadian Airborne Regiment was created in 1968 and was disbanded in 1995 after the Somalia affair.

In April of 1974, the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR), which had stood up only six years prior, was deployed to Cyprus for its first peacekeeping mission. Three months later it was in the centre of an all-out war when Turkey, a NATO ally, invaded the island. Within the peacekeeping mission’s extremely restrictive rules of engagement, the CAR exchanged fire with both belligerents while attempting to keep the United Nations mandate intact. At the same time, CAR soldiers rescued civilians and tourists caught up in the erupting conflict. During the months of August and September 1974, two unit soldiers were killed and 30 were wounded.

More about this deployment and the CAR's engagement can be read at <http://espritdecorps.ca/1974-lest-we-forget/1974-lest-we-forget-part-2>.

Two Stars of Courage and six Medals of Bravery were awarded for actions during this operation, and five members were also made Members of the Order of Military Merit. All members who participated in the 1974 tour were awarded the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal (CPSM) for their tour in Cyprus.

The Commander-in-Chief Unit Commendation was not created until 2006 and is an award given to military units for an extraordinary deed or activity of a rare high standard in extremely hazardous circumstances.

National Peacekeepers' Day was established in 2008 to recognize the CAF, RCMP, and provincial and municipal police forces, as well as Canadian diplomats and civilians who have worked in support of international peace and security operations. Over 125,000 Canadians have served in Peacekeeping missions around the world since 1948. August 9 was selected as National Peacekeepers' Day to recognize the greatest single loss of Canadian lives on a peacekeeping mission, which occurred on that date in 1974. All nine Canadian peacekeepers who were on a United Nations-marked Canadian transport aircraft were killed when their plane was shot down by Syrian missiles during a regular resupply mission in the Middle East. It was the largest single-day loss of CAF personnel in a peace support operation.

Similar to the above request for a bar for the Swiss Air Recovery, the "five-year rule" would apply and the Canadian Honours System would not consider this request.

The Committee will continue to review and will provide a response to the DEC for consideration.

ACTION: All

- d. **Persian Gulf Veterans** – DEC tasked the Defence and Security Committee to review the request by the Persian Gulf War Veterans Association to call for a change of status of Persian Gulf War Veterans to "War Service Veterans." Initial findings follow.

The Gulf and Kuwait Medal recognizes the participation of military members deployed, or in direct support of the operations against Iraq, during the Gulf war. It is awarded to those employed during the build up of troops before the beginning of hostilities and a bar is awarded for those deployed during the actual war. It is the third highest highest of war and operational service medals. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department->

[national-defence/services/medals/medals-chart-index/gulf-kuwait-medal.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/medals/medals-chart-index/gulf-kuwait-medal.html).

The Committee finds the request confusing and will continue to review and provide a response to the DEC for consideration.

ACTION: All

- e. **Op Harmony Initiative – CAF Indigenous Youth Programs (5) and Indigenous Pre-Cadet Training Program** – Op Harmony Committee tasked the Defence and Security Committee to investigate outreach opportunities related the CAF. Initial findings follow.

There are 5 CAF indigenous youth programs across the country that are held annually for six weeks each summer. Participants are paid approximately \$4,500. The program provides Indigenous youth the opportunity to experience a taste of Army life to see if they would like to join the CAF. There also is an RMC Leadership Course. More information can be found at <https://forces.ca/en/programs-for-indigenous-peoples/>.

The RCMP also have a similar program called the Indigenous Pre-Cadet Training Program which is a three-week training session at the RMP Training Academy (Depot) in Regina. It is open to Indigenous peoples of Canada (First Nation, Inuit or Métis) who are Canadian citizens, a Secondary School or equivalent graduate, aged 19 to 29 and able to pass the enhanced reliability security check.

Comrade Carolyn is investigating into a Comradeship Award and free one-year member for the participants of both CAF and RCMP programs.

ACTION: Andrea, Brendan and Carolyn

- f. **CDS Message to Defence Team** – General Wayne Eyre was officially promoted to CDS from A/CDS in November 2021. His message to the Defence Team can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2021/11/cds-message-defence-team.html>.
- f. **CAF Promotion Selection Process** – In October 2021, the CAF took its first steps to develop and improve its promotion selection process to be more inclusive and to ensure those selected embody CAF ethics and values. More can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2021/11/caf-improves-promotion-selection-process.html>.

6. FUTURE MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 2 February 2022 via videoconference at 1000 hrs.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1200 hours.



Andrea Siew
Chair



Carolyn Hughes
Coordinator

Dated this day of 20 January 2022

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