

**DOMINION COMMAND  
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE  
VIDEOCONFERENCE – 23 March 2021  
MEETING MINUTES**

**File 82-27**

<b>In Attendance:</b>	<b>Andrea Siew</b>	-	<b>Chairman</b>
	<b>Brendan Heffernan</b>	-	<b>Member</b>
	<b>Carolyn Gasser</b>	-	<b>Coordinator</b>
	<b>Mike Smith</b>	-	<b>A/Coordinator</b>

**1. OPENING**

The videoconference of the Defence and Security (D&S) Committee commenced at 1400 hours.

This was the Committee's first meeting since January 2020 and a new Chair has just recently been appointed. Comrade Andrea Siew was warmly welcomed and introductions were made between all. Comrades Andrea and Brendan are extremely knowledgeable and have vast experience in defence and security matters in the CAF and RCMP.

The new Chair and Comrade Carolyn recently met via videoconference with Comrades Tom Irvine and Steven Clark, to discuss objectives and expectations for this committee, which are to support service members and RCMP, to improve their moral and welfare, and to promote the Legion.

**2. OVERVIEW OF PAST ACTIVITY**

Comrade Carolyn advised little has occurred with the Committee but that secretorially it has continued to monitor various aspects of national defence, to disseminate as appropriate, and to support the Conference of Defence Associations, Nijmegen, Op Santa Claus, Op Canada Day, and Comradeship Awards to a top Private and Officer Cadet graduating from their initial training.

**3. CDA/CDAI**

The CDA/CDAI Ottawa Conference was held from 10 – 12 March virtually this year given the pandemic. The topics were extremely relevant to the current world situation including threats from cyber attacks and disinformation, China and the two

Canadian's being jailed in China, Russia, Iran, impact of COVID 19 on the economy, and sexual misconduct in the CAF.

The AGM will be held on 27 April and The Legion's Grand President, Comrade Larry Murray will be a guest speaker. Comrade's Andrea and Carolyn will attend virtually.

#### **4. CAF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

The committee has significant concern over the recent allegations of sexual misconduct at the upper echelon of the CAF leadership and the Legion fully supports the CDA/CDAI Statement regarding allegation of sexual misconduct in the CAF.

We are concerned about the lack of confidence and trust CAF members may experience towards their leadership. The allegations will potentially impact negatively operational effectiveness, morale, and challenges the efforts to recruit new military members. The CAF needs to have a professional and inclusive work environment that is respectful and safe for all members to serve in. We will continue to monitor the evolving events..

#### **5. NAVAL SURFACE COMBATANT PROJECT**

Canadian Surface Combatants (CSC) are advanced and modern combat ships, equipped with next generation technology. They are replacing Canada's HALIFAX class ships that have been in the fleet for almost 30 years. These fifteen new ships will ensure that Canada can continue to monitor and defend its waters and make significant contributions to international naval operations.

This project is part of Canada's Defence Policy of Strong, Secure and Engaged (SSE) with additional major equipment projects including fighter jets, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and NORAD modernization.

The Committee continues to monitor this major ship procurement project with a budget now at \$77.3 billion, more than double the original estimate for the program in 2008, and spoke of concerns about how the escalating government deficit from the pandemic may impact this and future projects and the defence budget.

#### **6. RCMP**

Comrade Brendan briefed the committee on the composition of Regular Member positions within the RCMP. Of the approximately 20,000 sworn members the majority fill positions that are under contract to the provinces or local municipalities. Approximately 3000 hold positions under the Federal Policing business line.

He provided an update on the newly certified National Police Federation (NPF). The NPF is the sole Bargaining Agent that represents the Non-Commissioned members of the Force and was certified just over a year ago. The NPF will be commencing formal contract negotiations with the Employer (Treasury Board) on

25 June. The NPF will be seeking salary and benefit packages to closer align the RCMP with other police services within the Canadian Police Universe (a comparative composition of various sized Canadian police services).

There are a number of internal and external issues that are currently impacting the Force including; the Merlo-Davidson Class Action Law Suit settlement, regarding those who faced gender-based discrimination, harassment and assault and the outcry regarding “Defunding the Police” and systemic racism concerns.

Part of the challenge in dealing with some of the aforementioned issues is that there is a need to have a “right sizing” of supporting associated organizations and service providers particularly in the field of mental health and to provide them with the right funding as well. More public education is required as it is a multi-faceted problem with more than the policing aspect.

The 150th Anniversary for the RCMP is coming up in 2023 and we are seeking ways to promote and coordinate this momentous event.

## 7. UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- a. **Nijmegen 2021** – The overseas event has again been cancelled due to the pandemic. We are optimistic that the marches in 2022 will occur and the committee has extended the invitation to Comrade Joan Cook, should she still wish to represent the Legion.

If for any reason she is unable to participate, we will consider the alternate candidate but may have to begin our call-out for applications later this year should either not wish to proceed.

- b. **Victory March 2021** – This year there is a new challenge in lieu of Nijmegen marches. The Joint Task Force Nijmegen Canadian Contingent invites all Canadians to march virtually in their own locations for two days between 1 to 9 May 2021 with members of the CAF.

The goal is to support the CAF team’s preparation for the Nijmegen Marches and to highlight the symbolic and unifying relationship between Canada and the Netherlands.

Dominion Command is providing \$5000 to sponsor this event.

- c. **Reports** – Comrade Carolyn advised of the dates for submissions of various reports including DEC, Convention and CDA. No resolutions have been received to date.
- d. **CDA AGM** – The annual general meeting with the CDA will occur on 27 April. Comrades Andrea and Carolyn will attend virtually.

## 8. POTENTIAL COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

The Committee has identified several areas of potential activities for the future:

- a. Meetings with the RCMP Commissioner, Brenda Lucki, and Chief HR Officer, Gail Johnson will be revisited once we are able to meet in person.
- b. Promotion of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the RCMP. Comrade Carolyn will speak with the Poppy and Remembrance Committee and Marketing for possible coordination and promotion.

**ACTION: Coordinator**

- c. Comrade Carolyn will speak with Comrade Steven for coordination of meetings with the Acting CDS, Lieutenant General Wayne Eyre in the future.

**ACTION: Coordinator**

- d. The Committee will continue to monitor the defence policy of SSE and the Naval Surface Combatants project as well as optional other areas we may advocate for on behalf of the CAF and RCMP.

## 9. NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT

As the committee has lost many of its members in the last several years due to retirement, the Committee discussed several persons who may be interested to volunteer with the committee. The Chair will approach several in the near future.

**ACTION: Chair**

Comrade Carolyn knows of one potential CWO who is retiring and may wish to volunteer. She will speak to her to see if there is any interest.

**ACTION: Coordinator**

It was acknowledged that any new member would need to be approved by the President and be a Legion member.

## 10. FUTURE MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 6 May 2021 via videoconference at 1400 hrs.

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1530 hours.



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**Andrea Siew**  
Chair



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**Carolyn Gasser**  
Coordinator

Dated this day of 31 March 2021.

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