

Dominion Command Defence & Security Committee

Meeting Minutes 03 December 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.



**DOMINION COMMAND
DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
3 December 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 (absent)
Richard Coltart	-	Coordinator
Carolyn Hughes	-	VSS Committee Chair
Nujma Bond		Marketing (Observer)

1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Committee Chair opened the meeting with a land acknowledgment.

2. OPENING REMARKS

The Committee Chair highlighted the Federal Budget announcement on 4 November including the increases for DND and the RCMP, notably DND seeing a significant increase to \$81.5B over the next 5 years. The Legion's statement on the budget was made on 24 November: <https://legion.ca/news/articles/2025/11/24/the-royal-canadian-legion-on-federal-budget-2025-big-investments-big-cuts---veterans-want-immediate-clarity>

Also noted in the Budget are changes to the calculation of the CAF and RCMP superannuation (pensions) which is an area to be monitored to ensure there is no erosion of earned benefits. The proposed change to the indexing of the RCMP internal disability pension will also be monitored.

VSS Committee Chair noted a recent meeting she had with a VAC ADM to clarify the Budget position on the Medical Cannabis - Veterans will still receive their allocation, but the cost savings, \$4.23B, will be on the price being paid per gram to the supplier over multiple years. It also noted that the Budget included an additional \$12M over the next two years for additional temporary staff hires to hopefully prevent an increase in the backlog in processing disability benefit applications.

3. REVIEW PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the previous minutes from the last meeting on 27 August.

No changes or concerns were noted; however, the Chair highlighted the 100th Anniversary for Legion and the new RCAF Commander Lieutenant-General Jamie Speiser-Blanchet as a potential guest speaker for future Legion events.

4. UPDATES

CAF – Comrade Andrea spoke about the recent Racism Apology by the Chief of Defence Staff and the CAF Chief Warrant Officer on 30 October 2025. She also advised that the claims period for the corresponding class action lawsuit opened on 14 October 2025 until next October. The Legion posted a reaction on social media to the apology and information related to the application process for financial compensation for those impacted - <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/177xPdewyq/>

Parliamentary Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA) is undertaking a study into suicide prevention by CAF members and Veterans. Many family members tragically impacted by suicide have testified, highlighting a lack of treatment benefits to family members in their own right as recommended in the Veterans Ombud 2021 report – *Mental Health Treatment Benefits for Family Members in their own Right for Conditions Related to Service*. This report is available - <https://ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/en/publications/systemic-reviews/mental-health-treatment-benefits-for-family-members>

Parliamentary Committee on National Defence is studying Bill C11 (previously Bill C66). This Bill proposes that all CAF Sexual Misconduct offences are referred to civilian investigation and prosecution. Some of the key concerns raised by witnesses include:

- The bill does not account for offences occurring outside Canada or at sea, leaving a jurisdictional gap.
- No new resources have been allocated to help civilian courts manage the increased caseload.
- Civilian criminal justice challenges persist in prosecuting sexual assault cases—highlighted in a recent report from the Ombudsman for Victims of Crime.
- The legislation effectively removes victim choice and victims may not come forward.

Since the 2021 Arbour recommendation, 242 cases have been referred to civilian police. However, 308 cases were not transferred, largely because:

- Victims preferred to remain within the military justice system, or
- Victims did not wish to pursue a criminal investigation at the time of reporting.

RCMP – Comrade Brendan provided an update on RCMP initiatives which are attached to these Minutes.

VSS Committee – Comrade Carolyn briefed that there has not been a VSS meeting since before the summer for various reasons. The next meeting is scheduled for 13 December 2025. In the past year they have lost several Command Service Officers resulting in over 500 files being transferred to the HQ. Training and mentoring of new Service Officers is ongoing. Work on the new Service Officer handbook will start in January.

Veterans Consultation Assembly meeting was held at Legion House on 18 October 2025. This annual forum bringing together representatives from 15 Veterans Organizations was hosted by the Legion, chaired by the Legion's Grand President, Larry Murray, and resulted in a letter to the relevant Minister highlighting unanimous consent on key issues including:

- Implementation of the recommendations in the ACVA December 2024 Report on the Persian Gulf War;
- Establishment of a National Monument to recognize the 100+ years of service of women in the Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP; and
- Recognition of the RCMP as Veterans for commemoration purposes.

As last year's letter went unanswered, a response was also requested for the previous letter. Last year's issues included:

- VAC adoption of research on Traumatic Brain Injury;
- Request that VAC automatically recognize all previous partial entitlements to four-fifths, consistent with the revised policy;
- Fix the key financial deficiencies and discrepancies between the best of the *Pension Act* and the *Veterans Well-being Act*; and
- Remove the clause regarding marriage after age 60 in the respective pensions.

Dominion Executive Council (DEC) was held on 22 November 2025; the Committee's budget request was approved for the sponsorship of the annual RCMP Benevolent Gala.

Conference of Defence Associations VIMY Dinner was held on 5 November 2025 at the War Museum. The award recipient for this year was Michelle Douglas who was one of the lead plaintiffs for the 2SLGBTQ+ Class action Lawsuit.

4. **ADVOCACY ISSUES**

Comrade Andrea provided an update on the Legion's Defence and Security advocacy issues:

- RCMP Cadet Training Allowance was included in Budget 2025, increasing the stipend that the Cadets receive to \$1,000 per week (increased from \$500). (addressed)
- Requirement for a Canadian Public Safety Broadband Network was included in Budget 2025 (addressed)
- ACVA – Experience of Women Veterans Report – A study by Mount St. Vincent University to evaluate the Report's recommendations and implementation is ongoing
- RCMP Definition of Veteran for Commemoration Purposes – no progress
- National Women Veterans Monument – no progress
- Victoria Cross Recipients to be reviewed for Afghanistan Veterans – no progress

5. NEW ADVOCACY ISSUES

The Committee discussed recent information regarding suicide in the RCMP Veteran community. Comrade Carolyn advised that she intends to provide testimony into the ACVA study on the prevention of Veteran suicide. Comrade Andrea also mentioned that National Police Federation plans to provide written testimony to ACVA.

The Committee discussed possible changes to the eligibility requirements to the CAF Bronze Service Pin. The recent Veterans Ombud's Annual Report highlighted changes to the Bronze Service Pin including reducing the eligibility for receipt from 12 years of service to completion of occupational training. It is important to note that this does not include the Canadian Forces Decoration. The Committee will continue to monitor possible changes to the Bronze Pin eligibility requirements, and should these changes be implemented, the next concern may be retroactivity to recognize all those who would qualify.

6. SPONSORSHIP

Indigenous Youth Programs supporting the CAF and RCMP including Legion Support via plaque for RCMP and the four CAF youth programs to recognize the top candidates– Comrade Richard to confirm.

The Legion is once again sponsoring the WiDS Breakfast on 12 March 2026.

7. VISITS AND MEETINGS

The Dominion President and Legion National Director met with the Minister of National Defence on 5 November. The meeting was focused on the recently announced budget and its impact on DND/CAF.

8. UPCOMING EVENTS

- CDA Security and Defence Conference – 4-5 March 2026
- WiDS Breakfast – 12 March 2026
- RCL Convention - 22-26 August 2026 (100th Anniversary, in Winnipeg)

9. OTHER ITEMS

If there are resolutions from Provincial Commands for the Dominion Convention we may need to meet to review them. - Nujma to confirm the timeline for response.

10. NEXT MEETING AND CLOSING

Date for the next meeting will be confirmed.

Meeting was closed at 1430 hrs.



Andrea Siew
Chair



Richard Coltart
Coordinator

Dated this day on 18 December 2025.

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