



**DOMINION COMMAND  
PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, December 9, 2021, 2:00 p.m. ET**

**In Attendance**

Sharon McKeown	PR Committee Chair
Donna McRury	PR Committee Vice Chair
Paulette Cook	Member
Karen Kuzek	Member
John Mahon	Member
Carolyn McCaul	Member
Roberta Taylor	Member
John Yeo	Member
Tom Young	Member
Nujma Bond	PR Committee Coordinator
Leah O'Neill	Assistant Coordinator

**Regrets**

Jerry Lava	Member
Nathan Lehr	Member
Roberta Taylor	Member
Dion Edmonds	Assistant Coordinator

*(NOTE: this new iteration of the PR committee is composed of all PROs (Public Relations Officers) from each Command, and in cases where such a position does not exist, the Command has delegated a representative such as an Executive Director or President).*

## **RECORD OF DISCUSSION**

### **1. Opening**

**Sharon**

- a. Comments: October notes

The meeting commenced at 2:02pm. Sharon greeted all present. October meeting minutes were accepted by the Committee. One concern over a possible error in the attendance list was later investigated. It turned out to be a formatting misunderstanding and formatting will be altered for future minutes.

### **2. Consultation/updates: timely national topics**

**Sharon, Nujma**

- a. Advocacy

Sharon highlighted three recent national Legion advocacy articles (i. Apology request: sexual misconduct; ii. Support for Afghanistan war Veterans/allies; iii. Victoria Cross for Jess Larochelle). Nujma shared the importance of disseminating national media articles to Commands and Branches. National articles can be found at <https://www.legion.ca/news>. Committee members, Branches, members and the public can subscribe to get the latest updates.

- b. Media issues of note

**Nujma**

Nujma highlighted the media attention that came during the Remembrance Period when an Alberta community, with involvement from the local Legion Branch, painted Poppies on a crosswalk. The city and the Branch did not seek the required approval through Dominion Command to use the Poppy, so didn't realize until after the fact that it was not permitted to paint Poppies where people could walk on them. This highlighted the importance of helping ensure all levels of the Legion are fully aware of the use and required approvals needed for the Poppy symbol. John M. noted that when the situation came to light and the Legion responded, the Command and head office had to deal with a lot of comments and criticism of the Legion and of those who painted the Poppies.

Another media issue is still circulating showing an opinion video of an individual who wore a Legion uniform while speaking negatively of the Legion and who touched upon vaccinations. Dominion Command is aware of this video, and Nujma explained it highlights that members cannot promote their opinions while representing the Legion and wearing the Legion uniform.

Significant media attention was given to the question of raising and lowering flags for Remembrance Day while the flags had been lowered to recognize the Indigenous children lost and impacted by residential schools. Nujma reminded the Committee that a notice was sent to Branches that it would be at the Branches' discretion whether to keep

the flags lowered or raise them after Remembrance Day. This highlights the importance for PR Committee members to be aware of national or regional Legion policies and positions so they can respond to questions they may receive from media in their area.

Carolyn commented/suggested she personally would like to see the government create a new flag for the Indigenous commemoration, so that the traditional lowering of flags for Veterans who pass can still be recognized.

d. Committee work

**Sharon, Nujma**

Sharon noted the Terms of Reference document has been circulated among the Committee members. All members accepted the Terms, with no changes.

In following the Terms of Reference, Nujma clarified that while the Committee does not specifically work on developing membership projects, the work we do in raising the awareness and profile of the Legion supports our membership mandate.

e. Other

**Nujma/Others**

Nujma updated the Committee on the Tap to Give campaign. This was the second year of the pilot project. Not all Pay Tribute Poppy Boxes sent out were used. Some Branches that had been identified by Commands to participate did not wish to use the boxes. Other Branches misunderstood the campaign and thought donations went to Dominion Command. Karen noted that there is mistrust among some Branches, and they did not understand the process or how the campaign would work. Other Branches thought that if there was no HSBC Branch in their community, they would not be eligible to participate. John Y received feedback from smaller Branches in his Command that Branches who were not able to sign up for EFT (they think it requires them to approve receipt of funds through a personal email address) and would not receive the donations. Other Branches thought there would be a cost to participate in the campaign. These concerns highlighted the importance for clear, comprehensive communications. Nujma clarified that Branches will still receive funds collected this time around, but it will take longer without EFT. More communications to Branches from all levels, on the EFT and overall process will be helpful and Nujma will forward this feedback to the Poppy and Remembrance Committee.

c. DEC items affecting PR

**Sharon**

Sharon noted that Op Harmony is a new Committee created to strengthen organizational diversity. She highlighted that some segments of the Legion continue to be weak in demonstrating inclusiveness and diversity. She asked Donna to recount her story demonstrating this challenge. Donna is a mom to a serving Canadian Armed Forces member who frequently serves abroad. Her son told her that he and his comrades went to a Legion. Shortly after sitting down, they were approached by a member who blatantly told them they were not Veterans, and how dare they consider themselves Veterans. Donna's son and his brotherhood left the Legion and vowed

never to return. When Donna was elected President of her Command, she was hesitant to break the news to her son as she was not sure how he would react. Her son told Donna he was very proud of her and asked her to promise him one thing...to get the word out that a Veteran is a Veteran is a Veteran. This promise has become a personal mission for Donna in her leadership role in the organization. Sharon has also taken up this promise and highlighted that as part of the PR Committee role, we must work to make sure the grass roots of this organization are getting the message – a Veteran is a Veteran is a Veteran.

Nujma reminded the Committee that the PR Report to DEC was shared with them. She highlighted that at Convention a resolution was passed that the Legion will support and work with First Nations communities where possible. Nujma encouraged Committee members to think of ways we can do this... from relationship building to working with indigenous Veterans to asking Trevor Jenvenne (from BSO/OSI) to join a Committee meeting to speak with us.

### **3. Regional matters**

**All**

Sharon noted that this portion of the agenda will focus on sharing significant updates that are relevant from a PR perspective. John M shared that he worked with the Calgary Flames to change the format of the November 9 game, to replace serving military members with Veterans on the field as Remembrance Day was a time to honour Veterans. The Flames have a day for serving members in the Spring, so this was appropriate for the Remembrance Period. Karen and John Y shared similar situations, whereby their regional sports teams honour Veterans on the field during the Remembrance period.

### **4. Any other business**

**All**

Donna introduced Thomas Young as a new member of the Committee. Tom looks forward to working with the group.

### **5. Adjournment**

**Sharon**

Sharon wished the Committee a Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year. The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 pm

**Next meeting** – planned for **Thursday February 3, 2022** at 2:00 pm ET.